

Master Birder FAQs

Q: What is the purpose of Travis Audubon's Master Birder Program?

A: The purpose of the Master Birder Program is to equip enthusiastic birders with the knowledge and skills necessary to become successful leaders in Travis Audubon's corps of volunteers. To do this, the program's foundation rests on three pillars: ornithology, bird identification, and volunteerism. Our vision is to inspire conservation through birding, so knowledgeable and dependable volunteers are the foundation of our organization.

Q: Who is an ideal candidate for the Master Birder Program?

A: The ideal candidate for this program:

- is an individual with several years of experience birding
- has taken a Travis Audubon Introduction to Birds Class or equivalent course and is seeking intermediate-level coursework
- has experience doing volunteer work and is interested in taking on or continuing a volunteer role with Travis Audubon
- enjoys interacting with others
- is excited about birding and wants to pass on that excitement to others

Q: What is the structure of the program, and what content is covered?

A: Please refer to the 2024 Master Birder Syllabus on our website for details.

Q: What should I expect once the program is over?

A: Upon completion, graduates of the Master Birder program are expected to support Travis Audubon's vision of inspiring conservation through birding by completing 30 volunteer hours and 8 continued education hours over the course of 12 months. Service hours should be completed from at least three of the five volunteer categories: Surveys/Assessments, Outreach, Blog Content Contributions, Youth Programs, and Sanctuary Work. Continued education hours can include any Travis Audubon classes or lectures or pre-approved classes or lectures related to ornithology, bird identification, environmental education, and/or conservation provided by other organizations and entities.

Q: I am a very busy person – can I reasonably complete the Master Birder program?

A: That depends – most lectures occur on Tuesdays starting at 7 pm, while most field trips will be on Saturday mornings. Students must be able to attend 8 out of 10 lectures and 5 out of 8 field trips. If you don't think you can reliably fulfill those requirements, we would recommend checking out our classes instead, which have fewer lectures and field trips.

Q: Will I be an expert on identifying birds when I complete this program?

A: We hope to increase your knowledge through expert lectures, field trip opportunities, and sharing of information with fellow students during this class. However, we consider this just one step in a continuing journey of learning about birds and the world they inhabit. You will be encouraged to continue learning by participating in specialized classes offered by Travis Audubon and other entities, reading and studying about the natural world, and, most importantly, going birding with groups and/or on your own.