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Madison Public Library to Offer Birding Backpacks for Checkout Beginning September 6

MADISON, WI -- Madison Public Library is offering Birding Backpacks thanks to a generous donation from the Feminist Bird Club-Madison Chapter and the Madison Public Library Foundation.

In Spring 2022, the Feminist Bird Club joined the Great Wisconsin Birdathon to raise funds to purchase backpacks of birding equipment to have available for check-out from Madison Public Libraries. They were able to raise over \$4,000 during the Birdathon, with 50% of their funds supporting Wisconsin's highest priority bird conservation projects, and 50% funding one birding backpack at each Madison Public Library location. The Madison Public Library Foundation matched that donation by providing funds for an additional 9 backpacks. The goal of this project is to eliminate the cost barrier that can come with trying a new hobby like birding— all of the equipment needed to get out and explore nature through birding is provided in the backpacks.

Birding Backpacks Include:

- 1 pair of binoculars for adults
- 1 pair of binoculars for kids
- 1 Sibley's field guide for adults
- 1 youth field guide donated from Madison Audubon
- 1 birding location guide to help you explore potential birding spots near each library

“Birding is such a joyful hobby, but it can feel exclusionary from the start if you don’t have access to binoculars. They can be a pricey investment,” said Caitlyn Schuchhardt, who is part of the Feminist Bird Club-Madison Chapter’s Leadership Team. “We wanted to make it easier for those who are ‘bird curious’ to get started with this hobby.”

Caitlyn says there are many benefits to birding, including mental health and overall wellness.

“Birding can open up a whole new world of wonder and curiosity! You can feel transported to a different place, mentally. Immersing yourself in nature and the wonder of birds can help you step away from the very real problems of the world and find some needed joy,” said Schuchhardt. “Birding’s benefits for mental health should be experienced by everyone.”

Birding Backpacks can be checked out for 7 days at a time and Madisonians will find two backpacks at each Madison Public Library location. No holds are available for the bags, so they are first-come, first-serve.

A few things to remember when checking out a backpack:

- A Madison Public Library Card is required. Only 1 backpack may be checked out per card.
- No renewals will be allowed.
- **Backpacks MUST NOT be returned in book drops.** Packs should be returned to staff at the circulation desk.
- Backpacks may be returned to any [South Central Library System library location](#)

Learn more about the Birding Backpacks, access birding resources and see some tips for finding maximum bird joy provided by the Feminist Bird Club - Madison Chapter online at madpl.org/birdingbackpacks.

About the Feminist Bird Club

The Feminist Bird Club is a birdwatching club dedicated to promoting inclusivity in birding while fundraising and providing a safe opportunity for members of the LGBTQIA+ community, BIPOC, and women to connect with the natural world. The Madison chapter was founded in 2019 and offers monthly outings that are open to everyone who supports their mission, no birding experience required!

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About Madison Public Library

Madison Public Library's tradition of promoting education, literacy and community involvement has enriched the City of Madison for more than 145 years. Visit the library online at **www.madisonpubliclibrary.org**, **@madisonpubliclibrary** on Facebook, **@madisonlibrary** on Twitter, or **@madisonpubliclibrary** on Instagram.