

**EEB 287 – ORNITHOLOGY LABORATORY
SPRING 2008
TEST 1 KEY**

1. Using your notes and your field guide, tell me:

a) What “kind” of bird is it (e.g., sparrow, raptor, warbler)? (2 points) **an icterid; I accepted “sparrow-like”**

b) What family does the bird belong to? (2 points) **__Icteridae_____**

c) What age class would you place it in? (2 points) **__adult_____**

d) What time of year was the picture of this bird taken? (2 points) **__summer (breeding season)___**

e) Why (2 points)? **The bird is in full breeding plumage**

f) Make a list of every species in your field guide that it MIGHT be. Even if you think you know what the bird is, you should include all the possible species in this list. (4 points):

A variety of answers was possible here; I expected at least four (and the orioles) for full credit:

**Bobolink
Baltimore Oriole
Orchard Oriole
Audubon’s Oriole
Scott’s Oriole
Eastern Towhee
Spotted Towhee
Lark Bunting**

g) Which (if any) can you eliminate on the basis of field marks? List the species and the field marks that eliminate them as possibilities (4 points):

Again, the answer depends on what you said in the question above, but for example:

All the orioles: nape is black instead of pale; rump is [orange] instead of white

Towhees: nape is black instead of pale; rump is dark instead of white

h) Of the species that remain from your list, what additional field marks would you need to see to positively identify the bird? (2 points)

This bird is positively identifiable in this view, but a frontal view showing the black underparts would have further confirmed the identification.

Points this page_____

i) Using your field guide, and your copy of The Birds of Storrs, which of the remaining candidates is most likely? (2 points) Bobolink

j) Does your identification on the basis of field marks alone agree with the answer to question i? (2 points)?

Yes

k) Explain your answer to the last two questions? (2 points)

On the basis of the field marks, the bird is unmistakably a Bobolink; furthermore, the Birds of Storrs notes that the bird is a common migrant and breeds locally in Storrs.

PART 2: NO BOOKS – PUT THEM AWAY (24 points for this section)

2. We have provided you with a pair of binoculars for the course; tell me what kind of binoculars they are, one advantage of the way they are constructed, relative to other kinds of binoculars, and one disadvantage (3 points).

Our binoculars are porro prism models; one advantage of their construction is: relatively lightweight, focus quickly, relatively inexpensive; one disadvantage of their construction is: relatively large/bulky, generally optics are of lower quality to keep costs down.

3. Describe (don't just list) one source of error that affects the answer you get when you try to get an estimate of how many birds are in a given area (2 points).

There were many possible answers here; they generally fall under these headings:

Behavior of birds

Time of day

Terrain

Weather conditions

Observer behavior

Variance among observers

4. Explain the circumstances under which point counts are the best technique for surveying a bird population (2 points).

Songbirds are being surveyed

Sampling can be distributed randomly

Sampling in patchy habitat

Time and/or money is limited

5. Describe:

a) one potential bias of point count techniques that might influence your estimate (2 points).

Species which are easily disturbed (flee or fall silent near observer)

Bad weather: wind, rain

Short time spent in the field makes point counts sensitive (the estimate changes a lot) to error.

b) one situation in which point counts are useless for estimating population size (2 points)

The birds being surveyed don't sing, or singing is not a good indicator of how many birds are present.

6. What Station are you sitting at? **__THE RIGHT ANSWERS TO THE BELOW DEPEND WHAT STATION YOU WERE SITTING AT**

Points this page_____

Look at the bird on the bench at your station and tell me:

a) What color are the lores? (2 points) _____

b) Does the bird have solid colored remiges, or is there patterning? (2 points)

c) What color are the scapulars? (2 points) _____

Look at the feather on the bench at your station and tell me:

d) What kind of a feather is it? (2 points) _____

e) List the color(s) on the feather, and describe the source of the color(s) (2 points)

f) If you could look at it under a microscope, would you expect to see many barbules, or few? (2 points) _____

7. Write down one question you WISH we had asked you on this test, but didn't (1 point).

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