

Guide to Major Presentations

The goal of the major presentation is to:

- (1) Introduce students to some of the most important aspects of the ecology of wintering birds in eastern Ontario.
- (2) Provide each student an opportunity to become intimately familiar with one area of ecological research central to wintering birds.
- (3) Provide students with experience in reviewing scientific literature, oral presentations, and answering questions.

Presentations should last 25-30 minutes, with 3-5 minutes of questions per presentation. Powerpoint format is required, but may be supplemented with other material if you wish (not necessary). Below I provide a few hints for your presentation.

- (1) Provide a broad (but short) introduction to the important biological issue(s) to put your presentation in context. By broad, I really mean broad (e.g., all organisms require a source of energy, or many organisms, including birds, maintain body temperatures above the temperature of their environment, etc.).
- (2) Review selected papers covering the subject matter, relevant to the eastern Ontario region in winter. You are welcome to use studies that took place anywhere in the world, but whose results have relevance to the birds in our region. If you are discussing adaptations to environmental conditions, focus on adaptations used by birds in eastern Ontario (although you may briefly mention others).
- (3) If you are feeling overwhelmed with the material, narrow your focus. For example, reviewing all of the literature on a subject may be too much work. If so, focus on a specific group (e.g., perching birds), or on specific adaptations to make your presentation more manageable.
- (4) A good structure for your presentation may be: What is the broad biological issue? Why is this issue important? How is this issue relevant to birds wintering in cold environments like eastern Ontario? Review the relevant interactions between wintering birds and other species or climate. What selective pressures do these other species/climate exert on wintering birds? How have birds evolved in response to these selective pressures? If your topic includes interactions with other organisms, how have these other organisms evolved in response to wintering birds? You may want to include details of a specific study or a specific species of interest. Include examples that you find absolutely fascinating. Finish your presentation by broadening again - why is your subject matter important for our understanding of adaptation, or local ecosystems, or "community" dynamics, or interactions among ecosystems? [Note that this organization is just a suggestion. You may wish to organize your presentation differently.]

Your major presentation will be worth 20% of your final mark. Please see the evaluation sheet/rubric for details on how you will be graded.