



**Program Name:** Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team

**Program Website:** [coasst.org](http://coasst.org)

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**Locations:** All regions



**Project Summary:**

COASST beached bird participants conduct monthly surveys to systematically count and identify bird carcasses that wash ashore along ocean beaches from northern California to Alaska. As part of their involvement, participants learn about marine conservation and how to identify beached birds using the COASST Beached Birds field guide. A COASST Beached Bird survey is definitely a commitment! Once you get to your beach, plan on 2-5 hours, with the total amount of time variable depending on the width of your beach, the length of your beach section (usually about 3/4 mile), the number of surveyors, the weather, and – of course – how many birds you find. The entire beach area is searched for beached birds, from the surfline up to the live vegetation. Surveyors spread out to cover as much ground as possible, and walk in a slow S-shaped pattern down the beach, looking right and left for beached birds. Once found, documenting, identifying and photographing a bird might take 10–20 minutes. Surveys take place once per month, and photos/data may be submitted to COASST through a digital portal. Data has been used to identify mass mortality events of seabirds, related to starvation, shifts in prey distribution, and harmful algal blooms.

**Potential for application to the following STEM concepts:**

- |                                                        |                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biology/Ecology               | <input type="checkbox"/> Measurement and Scale             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physics                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Precision/Accuracy                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Statistical Analysis and Patterns |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Earth Sciences                | <input type="checkbox"/> Graphing Trends                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cause and effect              | <input type="checkbox"/> Stability and change              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hypothesis testing | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                      |

**Requirements of Participation**

Time/Physical Commitment: 2-5 hours walking on a sandy/rocky beach, once per month

Tools Needed: survey kit, provided by COASST (bird guide, measurement tools, etc.)

Target Age for *Independent* Participation: 18+

**Other Requirements:**

Participants will need to participate in a virtual or in-person COASST training program. Once that training is complete, guests (and students) may accompany the participant on-survey without attending the training themselves.

Monthly surveys should take place at approximately the same time of the month. Time of survey is often determined by the tidal cycle.