

# Ornithology

## Biology 360

Department of Biological Sciences  
University of Windsor



## Ornithology Assignment #1 – Scientific Abstract

**Due date: Thursday October 11, 2012 by 10:00 am sharp (prior to start of class)\***

\* Late assignments will be deducted 10% for any portion of a 24-hour period that they are late, starting at 10:00 am sharp on Oct 11

**Goal:** The goal of this assignment is to give you experience in scientific writing, experience with summarizing longer pieces of scientific writing in a concise format, and experience with reading peer-reviewed scientific literature. As a biologist, you will often consult the peer-reviewed, scientific literature and summarize the information you have gathered.

**Academic Integrity:** This assignment should be completed entirely independently. No two submitted assignments should share any writing in common. No strings of text should be taken directly from the source article; instead you should read the source article and then summarize and rephrase the points in your own words. As a general rule, if *five words or more in a row* are the same in your writing and the source article, or any other published writing, it is plagiarism and must be re-worded

**Format:** At the top of the page please include your name and your student number. Follow this with a title for your assignment, such as "Scientific abstract for [TITLE OF PAPER]". This should be followed by your abstract. Please print your abstract double-spaced, in 12-point font, using either Calibri or Times New Roman font.

After your abstract, please type out the following statement: "In submitting this assignment to Dr. Mennill, I certify that this is the product entirely of my own work and that I have followed all of the University of Windsor regulations on academic integrity." (Here is a [link](#) to the U Windsor Academic Integrity webpage.)

Please do not include report covers etc. Simply submit plain print-outs on 8.5 x 11 paper. Staple pages together if your abstract spills onto a second page.

**Word Limit:** As is typical for a scientific abstract, your abstract must be between 250 and 300 words (not including the title, or the words mentioned above in the "Format" section, etc.).

**Voice:** In writing this abstract, you should adopt the voice of the authors. As is typical for modern scientific writing, you should use the personal pronoun. For example, it will be appropriate for you to write in your abstract: "In this study, we found...". This always makes for better writing than using the passive voice alternative: "In this study, it was found...".

**Evaluation:** 50% of your grade will be based on content: Have you summarized all major components of the study? Did you emphasize the most important points? Are the primary conclusions of the paper presented clearly? Etc. The other 50% of your grade will be based on style. Is the writing clear and straightforward? Is your writing succinct; do you avoid unnecessary words and make the writing as efficient as possible? Have you adopted an authoritative scientific voice, as would be typical for a published abstract? Have you minimized use of the passive voice? (Here is a [link](#) for information on active versus passive voice; modern and engaging scientific writers minimize use of the passive voice.) Etc.

This assignment will count as 7.5% of your final grade in this course.