The past two weeks were spent with one of my favorite age groups—2nd grade! Students at Nancy Gomes Elementary learned all about insect characteristics, where to find them, and how to study them! They got to meet Gerald, our resident Madagascar Hissing Cockroach, and practiced being entomologists on a biodiversity survey at their neighborhood park. A highlight for me was finding rabbitbrush galls and Diptych carpenter ants!

Students at Dodson Elementary spent their first day discussing unique bird adaptations and learning how to ID individual bird species.

A highlight for me was watching my group ID an American Coot from a distance, based off of their head-bobbing behavior. I love when our Introductory lesson translates to the field!

To the students at Dodson: Birding is one of my favorite hobbies and I hope it’s one of yours, too. (Brittany, 4/27/23)

**Student question of the week!**

Are American Coots ducks? While they do resemble a duck, American Coots are actually a member of the Rallidae family. In fact, they are more closely related to cranes than ducks! One dead giveaway that they’re not a duck is their feet! Next time you see a coot, be sure to observe their silly-looking toes. You’ll notice they’re not like ducks at all. Can you think of other ways coots are different than ducks?

**Student question of the week!**

Why do all insects have to have 6 legs and 3 body parts? We put animals into groups based on their similarities. This is called classification. All animals within groups like mammals or insects are related. Try this think of a mammal and an insect. Now try to list the physical similarities between them. Chances are the list won’t be very long. Try again with 2 insects. I bet your list will be longer.

Birds, birds, birds!!!

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