

Compendium of Avian Ecology

ZOL 360

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<http://www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/id/framlst/infocenter.html>

Taxonomic information based on the A.O.U. Check List of North American Birds, 7th Edition, 1998.

Ecological Information obtained from multiple sources, including The Sibley Guide to Birds, Stokes Field Guide to Birds.

Nest and other images scanned from the ZOL 360 Coursepack.

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Full Species Names

Common Loon

Gaviiformes
Gaviidae
Gavia immer

Horned Grebe

Podicipediformes
Podicipedidae
Podiceps auritus

Double-crested Cormorant

Pelecaniformes
Phalacrocoracidae
Phalacrocorax auritus

Tundra Swan

Anseriformes
Anserinae
Cygnini
Cygnus columbianus

Snow Goose

Anseriformes
Anserinae
Anserini
Chen caerulescens

Canada Goose

Anseriformes
Anserinae
Anserini
Branta canadensis

Wood Duck

Anseriformes
Anatidae
Anatinae
Anatini
Aix sponsa

Mallard

Anseriformes
Anatidae
Anatinae
Anatini
Anas platyrhynchos

Blue-Winged Teal

Anseriformes
Anatidae
Anatinae
Anatini
Anas discors

Canvasback

Anseriformes
Anatidae
Anatinae
Aythyini
Aythya valisineria

Common Goldeneye

Anseriformes
Anatidae
Anatinae
Aythyini
Bucephala clangula

Red-Breasted Merganser

Anseriformes

Anatidae

Anatinae

Aythiini

Mergus serrator

Hooded Merganser

Anseriformes

Anatidae

Anatinae

Aythiini

Lophodytes cucullatus

Ruddy Duck

Anseriformes

Anatidae

Anatinae

Oxyurini

Oxyura jamaicensis

Bonaparte's Gull

Charadriiformes

Scolopaci

Laridae

Larinae

Larus philadelphia

Ring-billed Gull

Charadriiformes

Scolopaci

Laridae

Larinae

Larus delawarensis

Caspian Tern

Charadriiformes

Scolopaci

Laridae

Sterninae

Sterna caspia

Black Tern

Charadriiformes

Scolopaci

Laridae

Sterninae

Chidonias niger

American Bittern

Ciconiiformes

Ardeidae

*Botaurus lentiginosus***Black-crowned Night-heron**

Ciconiiformes

Ardeidae

*Nycticorax nycticorax***Green-backed Heron**

Ciconiiformes

Ardeidae

*Butorides virescens***Virginia Rail**

Gruiformes

Rallidae

*Rallus limicola***Sora**

Gruiformes

Rallidae

*Porzana carolina***American Coot**

Gruiformes

Rallidae

*Fulica americana***Sandhill Crane**

Gruiformes

Gruidae

*Grus canadensis***Killdeer**

Charadriiformes

Charadrii

Charadriidae

*Charadrius vociferus***American Avocet**

Charadriiformes

Charadrii

Recurvirostridae

*Recurvirostra americana***Spotted Sandpiper**

Charadriiformes

Charadrii

Scolopacidae

Scolopacinae

Tringini

*Actitis macularia***Dunlin**

Charadriiformes

Charadrii

Scolopacidae

Scolopacinae

Calidridini

*Calidris alpina***Common Snipe**

Charadriiformes

Charadrii

Scolopacidae

Scolopacinae

Gallinagini

Gallinago gallinago

Common Snipe

Charadriiformes
Charadrii
Scolopacidae
Scolopacinae
Scolopacini
Scolopax minor

Turkey Vulture

Ciconiiformes
Cathartidae
Cathartes aura

Osprey

Falconiformes
Accipitres
Accipitridae
Pandioninae
Pandion haliaetus

Northern Harrier

Falconiformes
Accipitres
Accipitridae
Accipitrinae
Circus cyaneus

Bald Eagle

Falconiformes
Accipitres
Accipitridae
Accipitrinae
Haliaeetus leucocephalus

Sharp-shinned Hawk

Falconiformes
Accipitres
Accipitridae
Accipitrinae
Accipiter striatus

Broad-winged Hawk

Falconiformes
Accipitres
Accipitridae
Accipitrinae
Buteo platypterus

Red-tailed Hawk

Falconiformes
Accipitres
Accipitridae
Accipitrinae
Buteo jamaicensis

American Kestrel

Falconiformes
Falcones
Falconidae
Falconinae
Falconini
Falco sparverius

Ring-necked Pheasant

Galliformes
Phasianidae
Phasianinae
Phasianus colchicus

Wild Turkey

Galliformes

Phasianidae

Meleagridinae

*Meleagris gallopavo***Ruffed Grouse**

Galliformes

Phasianidae

Tetraoninae

*Bonasa umbellus***Northern Bobwhite**

Galliformes

Odontophoridae

*Colinus virginianus***Northern Bobwhite**

Galliformes

Odontophoridae

*Colinus virginianus***Mourning Dove**

Columbiformes

Columbidae

*Zenaida macroura***Yellow-billed Cuckoo**

Cuculiformes

Cuculidae

*Coccyzus americanus***Barn Owl**

Strigiformes

Tytonidae

*Tyto alba***Short-Eared Owl**

Strigiformes

Strigidae

*Asio flammeus***Great Horned Owl**

Strigiformes

Strigidae

*Bubo virginianus***Barred Owl**

Strigiformes

Strigidae

*Strix varia***Common Nighthawk**

Caprimulgiformes

Caprimulgidae

Chordeilinae

*Chordeiles minor***Whip-poor-will**

Caprimulgiformes

Caprimulgidae

Caprimulginae

*Caprimulgus vociferus***Chimney Swift**

Apodiformes

Apodidae

*Chaetura pelagica***Ruby-throated Hummingbird**

Apodiformes

Trochilidae

Archilochus colubris

Belted Kingfisher

Coraciiformes

Alcedines

Alcedininae

*Ceryle alcyon***Red-headed Woodpecker**

Piciformes

Pici

Picidae

Picinae

*Melanerpes erythrocephalus***Red-bellied Woodpecker**

Piciformes

Pici

Picidae

Picinae

*Melanerpes carolinus***Northern Flicker**

Piciformes

Pici

Picidae

Picinae

*Colaptes auratus***Downy Woodpecker**

Piciformes

Pici

Picidae

Picinae

*Picoides pubescens***Pileated Woodpecker**

Piciformes

Pici

Picidae

Picinae

*Dryocopus pileatus***Eastern Wood-Pewee**

Passeriformes

Tyranni

Tyrannidae

Fluvicolinae

*Contopus virens***Great Crested Flycatcher**

Passeriformes

Tyranni

Tyrannidae

Tyranninae

*Myiarchus crinitus***Eastern Kingbird**

Passeriformes

Tyranni

Tyrannidae

Tyranninae

*Tyrannus tyrannus***Northern Shrike**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Laniidae

Lanius excubitor

Red-eyed Vireo

Passeriformes

Passeres

Vireonidae

*Vireo Olivaceus***Blue Jay**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Corvidae

*Cyanocitta cristata***Gray Jay**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Corvidae

*Perisoreus canadensis***American Crow**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Corvidae

Corvus brachyrhynchos

Horned Lark

Passeriformes

Passeres

Alaudidae

*Eremophila alpestris***Tree Swallow**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Hirundinidae

*Tachycineta bicolor***Purple Martin**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Hirundinidae

*Progne subis***Tufted Titmouse**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Paridae

*Baeolophus bicolor***Black-capped Chickadee**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Paridae

*Poecile atricapillus***Brown Creeper**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Certhiidae

*Certhis americana***White-breasted Nuthatch**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Sittidae

*Sitta carolinensis***House Wren**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Troglodytidae

*Troglodytes aedon***Golden-crowned Kinglet**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Regulidae

*Regulus satrapa***Blue-grey Gnatcatcher**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Poliioptilidae

Poliioptilinae

Poliioptila caerulea

Eastern Bluebird

Passeriformes

Passeres

Turdidae

*Sialia sialis***Wood Thrush**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Turdidae

*Hylocichla mustelina***American Robin**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Turdidae

*Turdus migratorius***Gray Catbird**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Mimidae

*Dumetella carolinensis***Brown Thrasher**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Mimidae

*Toxostoma rufum***European Starling**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Sturnidae

*Sturnus vulgaris***Cedar Waxwing**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Bombycillidae

*Bombycilla cedrorum***Golden-winged Warbler**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Parulidae

*Vermivora chrysoptera***Yellow Warbler**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Parulidae

*Dendroica petechia***Mourning Warbler**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Parulidae

*Oporomis philadelphia***Ovenbird**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Parulidae

*Seiurus aurocapillus***American Redstart**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Parulidae

Setophaga ruticilla

Scarlet Tanager

Passeriformes

Passeres

Thraupidae

*Piranga olivacea***Eastern Towhee**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Emberizidae

*Pipilo erythrophthalmus***Chipping Sparrow**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Emberizidae

*Spizella passerina***Song Sparrow**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Emberizidae

*Melospiza melodia***White-throated Sparrow**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Emberizidae

*Zonotrichia albicollis***Rose-breasted Grosbeak**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Cardinalidae

*Pheucticus ludovicianus***Northern Cardinal**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Cardinalidae

*Cardinalis cardinalis***Indigo Bunting**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Cardinalidae

*Passerina cyanea***Eastern Meadowlark**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Icteridae

*Sturnella magna***Red-winged Blackbird**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Icteridae

*Agelaius phoeniceus***Brown-headed Cowbird**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Icteridae

*Molothrus ater***Baltimore Oriole**

Passeriformes

Passeres

Icteridae

Icterus galbula

Purple Finch

Passeriformes

Passeres

Fringillidae

Carpodacus purpureus

American Goldfinch

Passeriformes

Passeres

Fringillidae

Carduelis tristis

House Sparrow

Passeriformes

Passeres

Passeridae

Passer domesticus

Common Yellowthroat

Passeriformes

Passeres

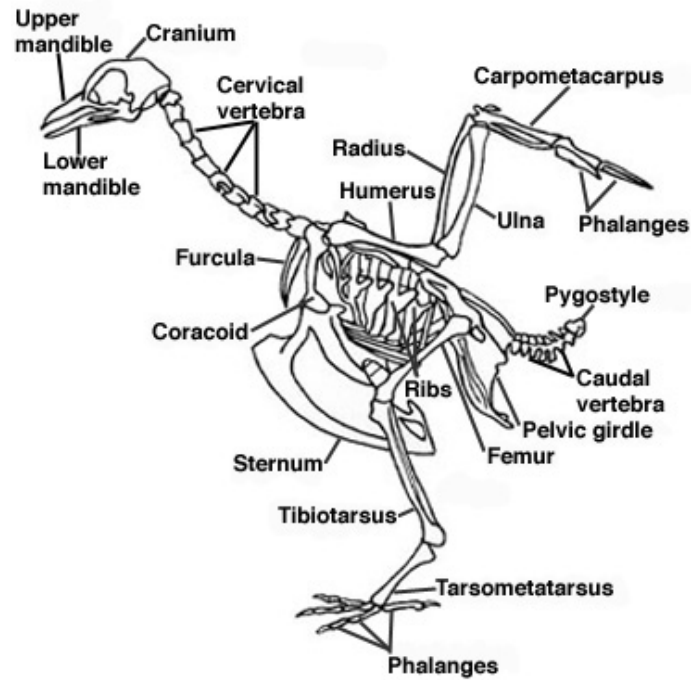
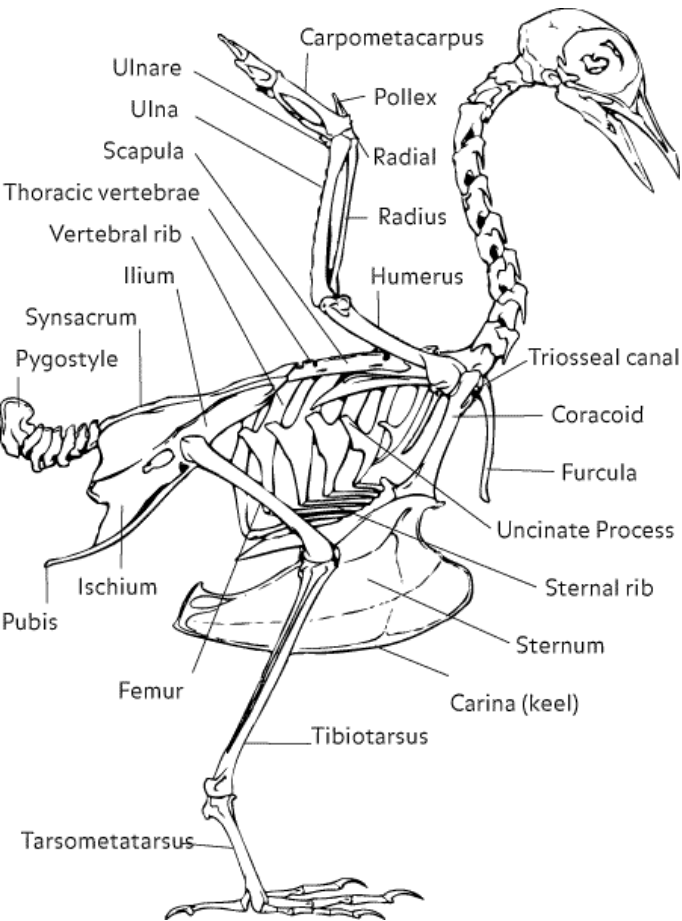
Parulidae

Geothlypis trichas

Remember, these are just the birds you need to know the full species name for. There's plenty more birds below.



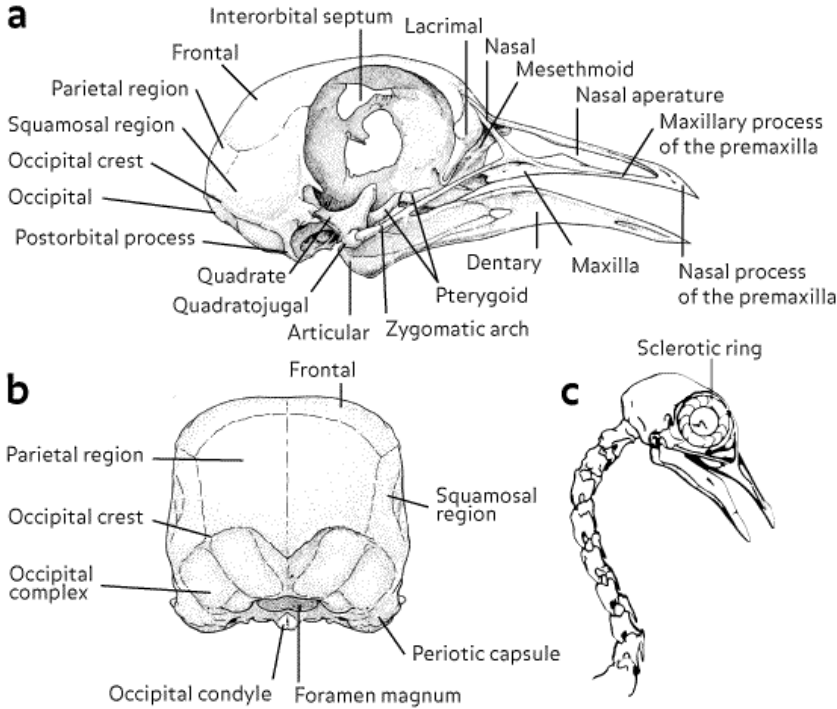
The Avian Skeleton



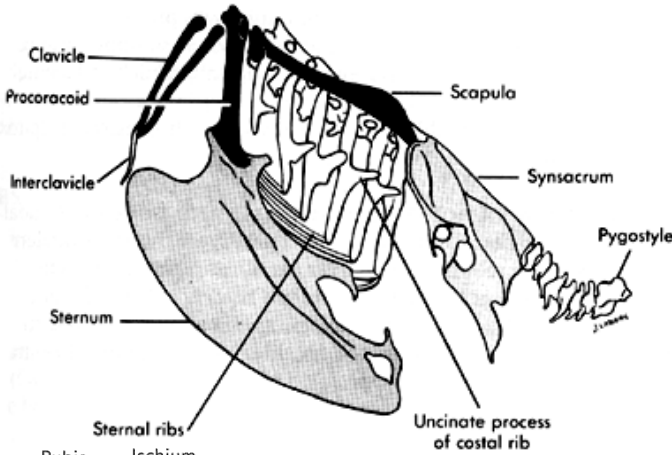
Axial Skeleton

Consists of **skull**, **vertebral column**, **ribs** and **sternum**

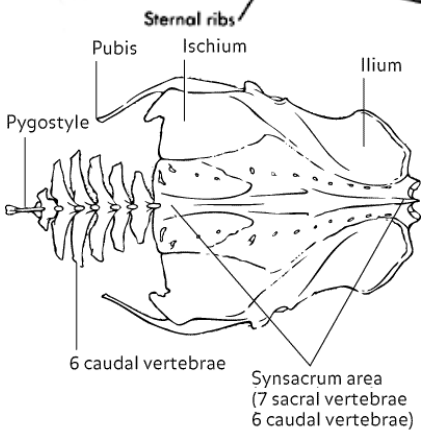
Skull



Ribs and Sternum



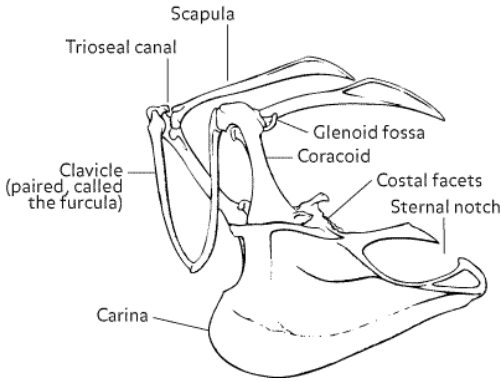
Pelvic Girdle



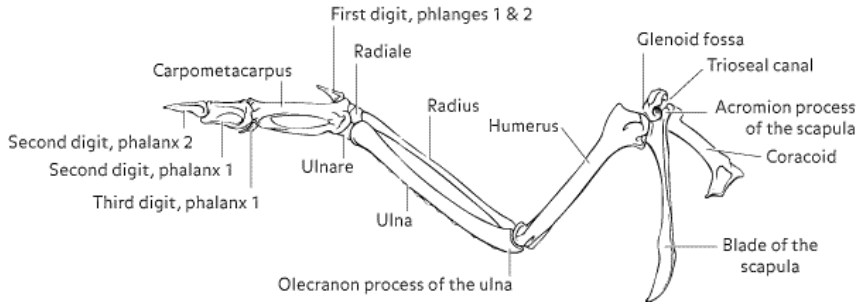
Appendicular Skeleton

Consists of **pectoral girdle**, **pelvic girdle**, and **limbs**

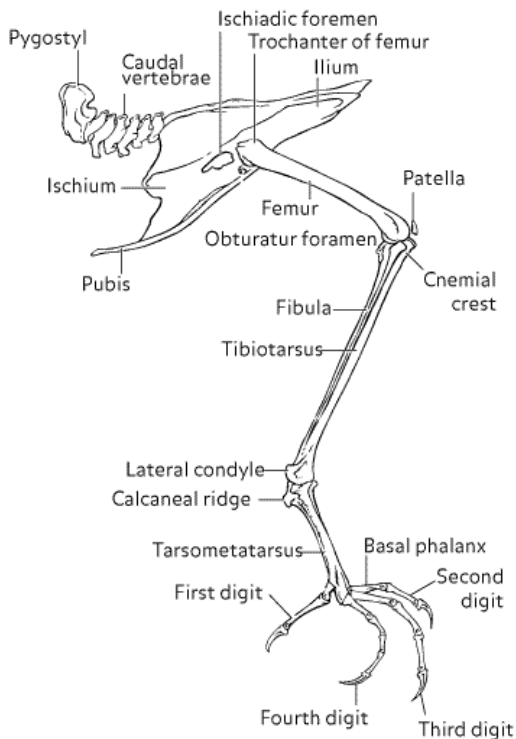
Pectoral Girdle



Forelimb



Hind Limb

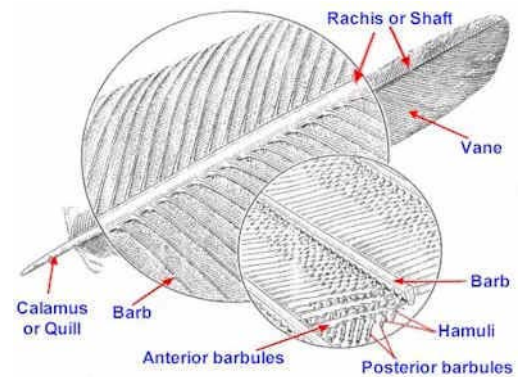
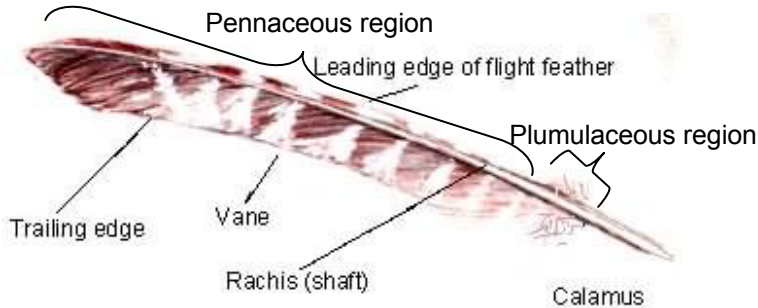


Feathers and Plumage

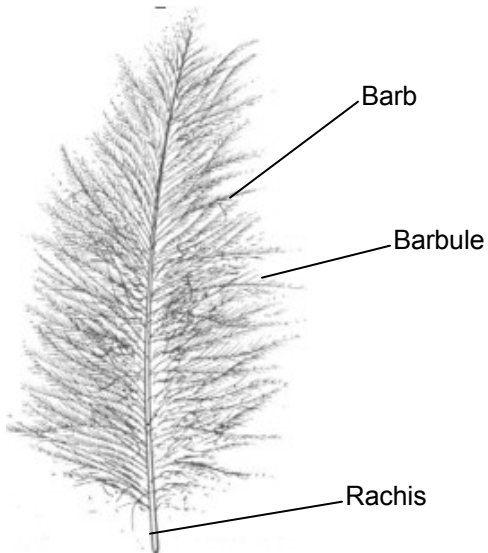
Five Types of Feathers:

- Contour
- Semiplume
- Filoplume
- Down
- Bristle

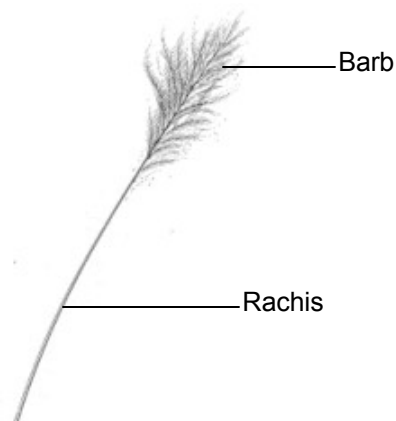
Contour Feathers



Semiplume Feathers

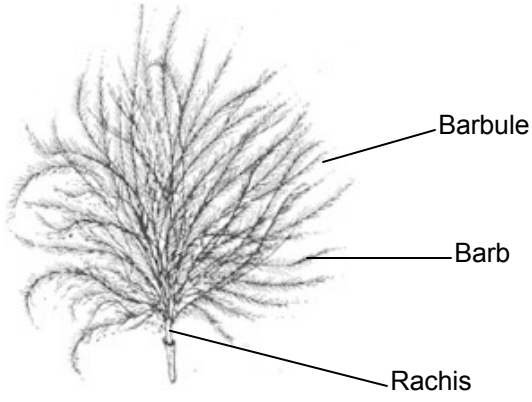


Filoplume Feathers

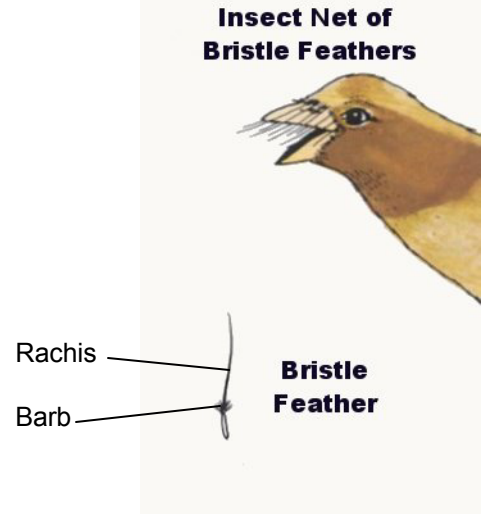


Feathers and Plumage

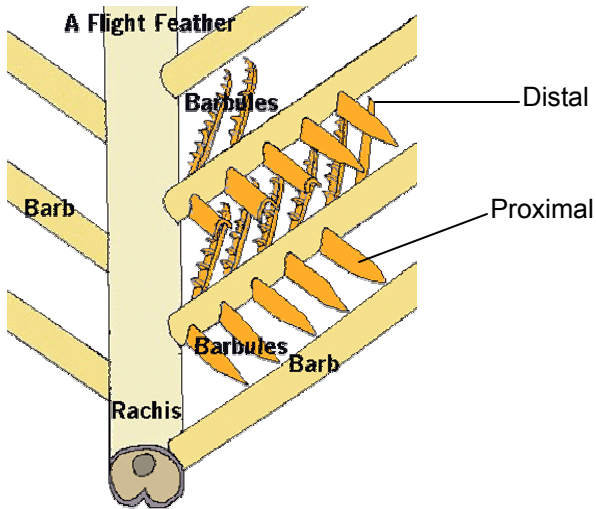
Down Feathers



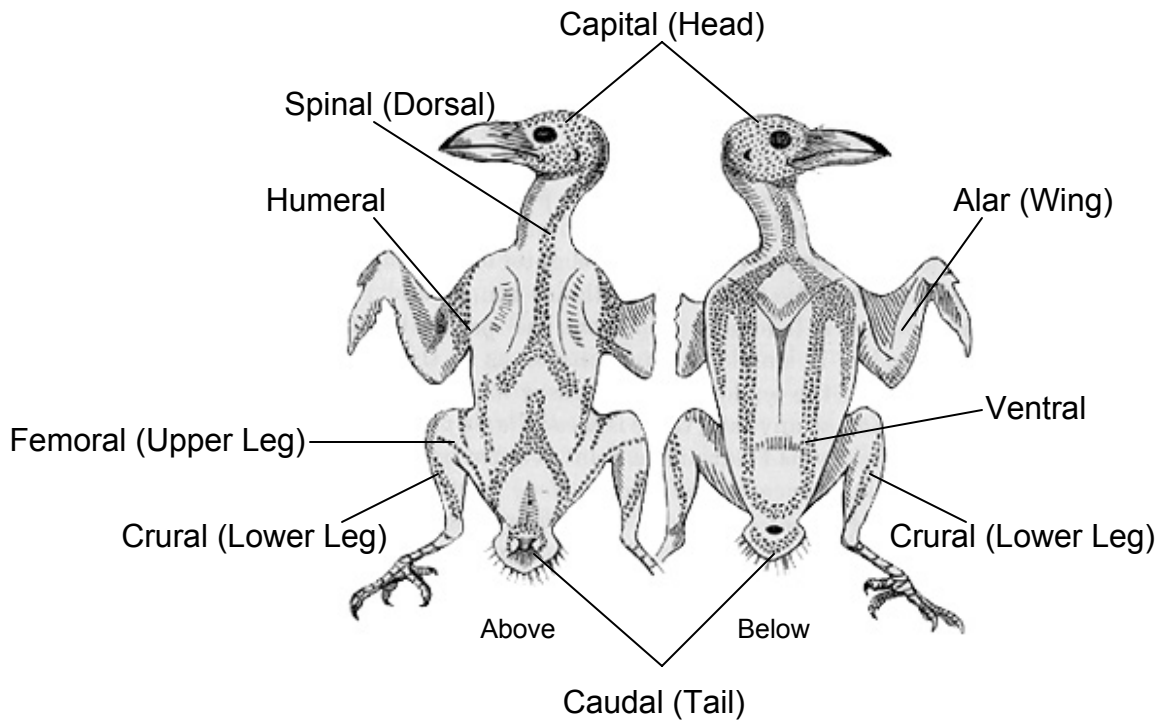
Bristle Feathers



Feather Microstructure



Eight Major Pterylae



Eight Pterylae:

1. **Capital (Head)**
2. **Spinal (Dorsal)**
3. **Caudal (Tail)**
4. **Crural (Lower Leg)**
5. **Femoral (Upper Leg)**
6. **Ventral**
7. **Humeral**
8. **Alar (Wing)**

Nests

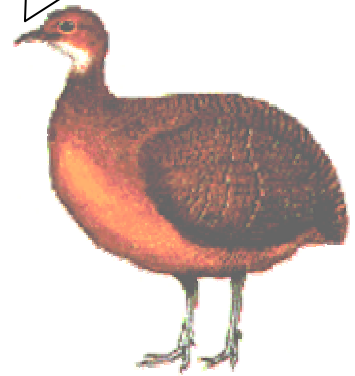
Three Primary Functions:

1. Provide microclimate for egg incubation and young brooding, as well as buffering to parents
2. Cradle for the developing young
3. Roosting sites for adults while attending eggs and young

Features of Eggs

1. *Egg Shape*- Important feature of nest placement. For instance, seabirds lay pyriform eggs to keep them from rolling off of ledges.
 - A. Elliptical
 - B. Subelliptical
 - C. Oval
 - D. Pyriform
2. *Size of eggs*- Variable among species, but smaller birds tend to lay eggs larger relative to body size.
 - A. Altricial- Nidicoles, smaller eggs
 - B. Precocial- Nidifuges, larger eggs
3. *Color of Eggs*- Related to nest type and probability of detection by predators.
 - A. Simple/No nest → Cryptic colors
 - B. Colorful eggs with nocturnal cryptically colored adults
 - C. Ability to ward off predators → Colorful eggs with large predator adults
 - D. Hidden or inaccessible eggs → Colorful eggs
 - E. Color is determined by unknown factors related to transmission

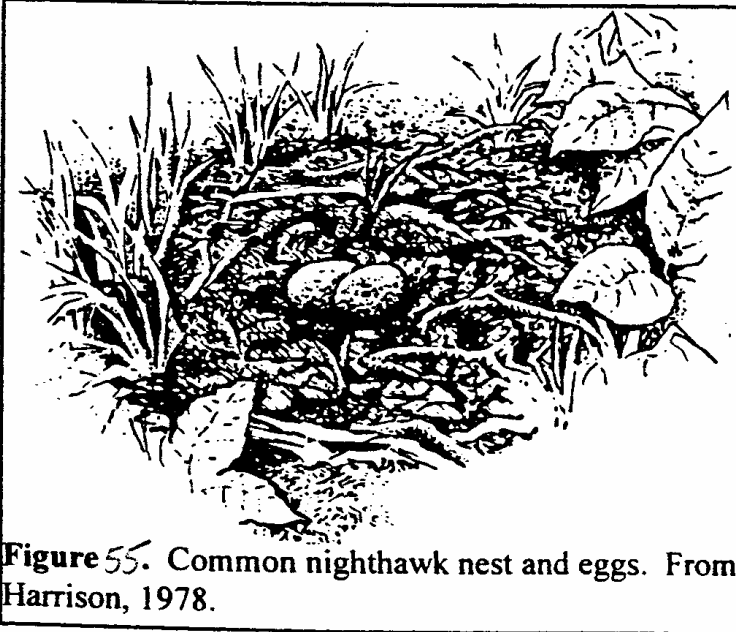
Some birds don't need to use nests, though.



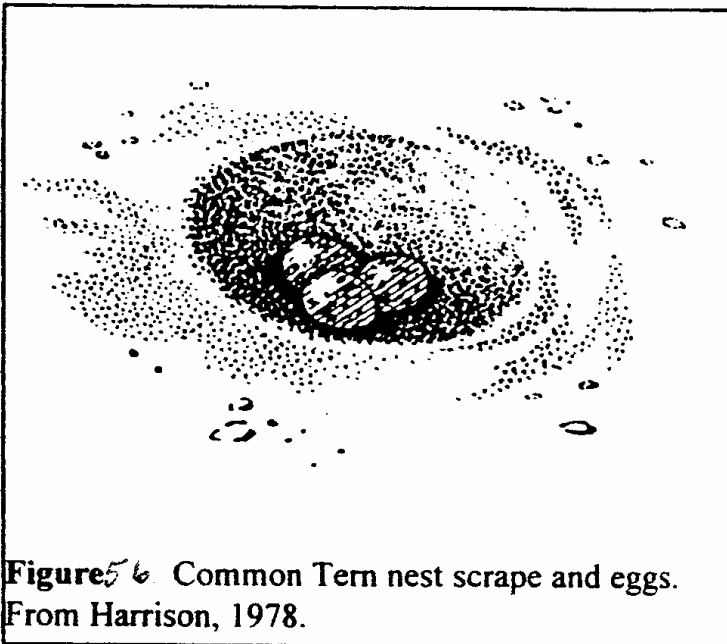
Nest Types

Nests with no or very little structure:

1. No nest at all



2. Scrapes



Nests with simple structure:

- 1. Simple cup on ground, floating on water or in aquatic vegetation



Figure 58. Nest and eggs of the Horned Grebe. From Harrison, 1978.



Figure 57. Nest and eggs of an Arctic Loon. From Harrison, 1978.

- 2. Platform in a tree or a ledge

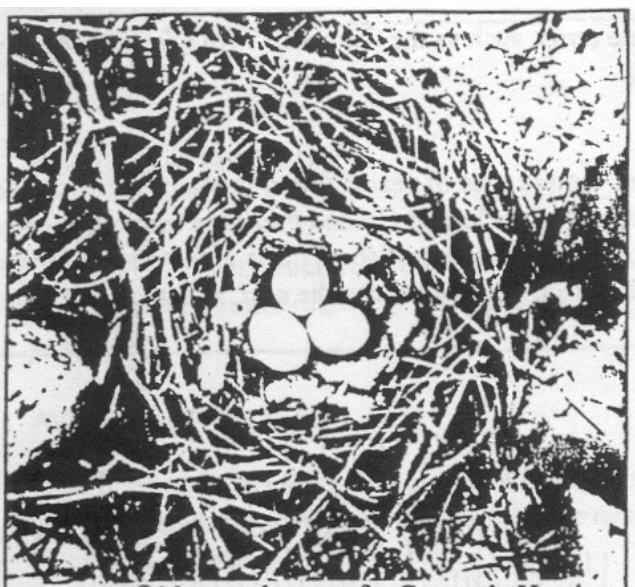


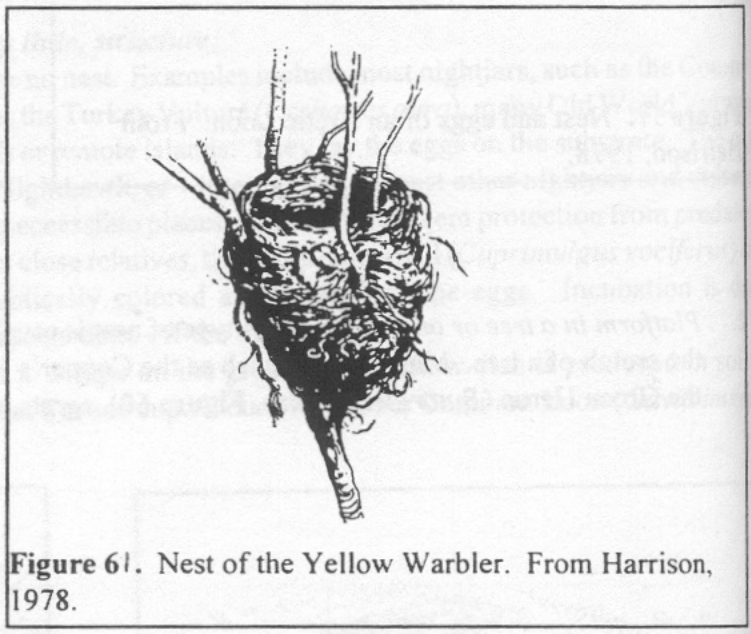
Figure 59 Nest and eggs of a Cooper's Hawk. From Welty and Baptista, 1988. Originally from a photo by G. R. Austing.



Figure 60. Nest and eggs of the Green Heron. From Harrison, 1978.

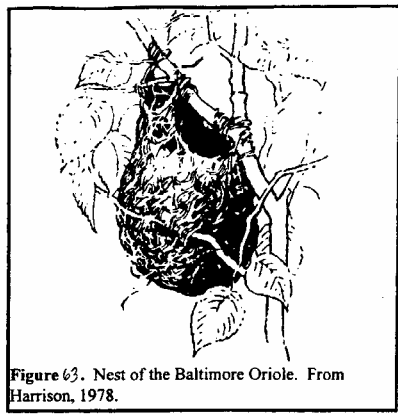
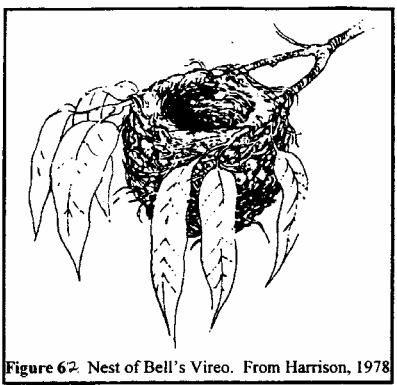
Nests with coarse out structure lined with finer material:

- 1. Cupped nest with coarse material on the outside and finer material in the lining

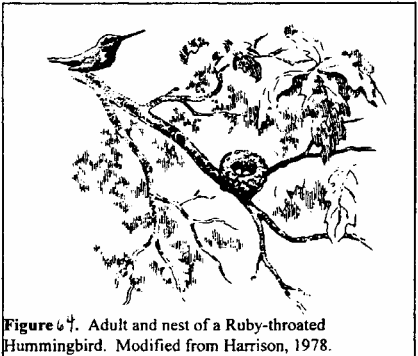


Nests with fine weaving:

- 1. Cupped nest made of fine woven material and supported from below or from the rim



Penhnt



Feather Terminology

Flight Feathers

Remiges- (Remix) Fancy term for the wing flight feathers

Primaries- Feathers found on the manus (hand), numbered from inside out

Secondaries- Feathers found on the ulna (forearm), numbered from the outside in

Tertiaries or **Scapulars-** Contour feathers between body and secondaries not considered regimes

Tegmen- Glossy, stiffened portion of inner vane next to the rachis from the feather base to about 2/3 of the feather

Retrices- (Retrix) Flight feathers on the tail

Coverts- Modified contour feathers that streamline the wings and tail

Feather Tracts

Pterylae- (Pteryla) Defined feather regions

Apteria- (Apterium) Bare regions between pterylae

Plumage Change

Psilopaedic- Sparse down plumage typical of nidicoles hatchlings

Ptilopaedic- Dense down plumage typical of nidifuges hatchlings

Avian Characters

Characters of the Bill

Long- Bill is longer than head

Short- Bill is shorter than head

Compressed- Bill is narrow laterally

Depressed- Bill is noticeably wider than high

Stout- Bill is high and wide

Terete- Bill is slender and circular in cross section

Hooked- Upper portion of the bill is longer than the bottom and is curved downward over the bottom.

Crossed- Tips of the bill cross each other

Swollen- Sides of the bill are swollen as seen from above

Acute- Bill tapers to a sharp point, like forceps

Chisel-like- Tip is beveled on sides to form a sharp chisel

Toothed- Upper mandibular tomium has a “tooth-like” projection near the tip

Straight- Line along the commissure is straight

Recurved- Bill curves upward

Decurved- Bill curves downward

Bent- Bill is flexed downward in the middle

Conical- Bill is shaped like a cone from tip to base

Serrate- Tomia of the bill have saw-like projections

Gibbous- The upper bill has a pronounced hump in the middle, as seen from the side

Spatulate- Tip of the upper bill is greatly expanded and flattened

Notched- Bill has a small nick in the upper tomium near the tip. There may also be a notch in the lower mandible opposite the notch

Angulated Commissure- The line formed by the junction of the upper and lower bill, from the tip of the bill to the base of the mouth, is bent downward from the mid-bill to the rear of the mouth

Lamellate- The upper bill margins, viewed from underneath, have a series of transverse, comb-like ridges

Gular Sac- Membrane formed between the rami of the lower jaw and connected to the throat

Characters of the Nostrils

Perforate- Nostrils lack a medial septum and are confluent with each other

Imperforate- Nostrils with a medial septum and not confluent

Tubular- Nostrils formed from tubes on the bill which may be separate or joined

Obsolete- The nostrils may have openings but are non-functional

Nostril Shapes-

Linear

Oval

Circular

Tubercle- Bony structure in the nostril cavity

Bill Coverings

Cere- A soft, fleshy covering on the proximal end of the bill

Operculum- Thick, fleshy structure over-arching the nostrils at the proximal end of the bill

Avian Characters

Characters of the Wing

Rounded- Wings have a rounded profile at the tip caused by the middle primaries being the longest

Pointed- Wings have a pointed profile at the tip caused by the outermost primaries being the longest

Elliptical- Wings have an elliptical profile overall caused by the first primaries and first secondaries being longer than the others

Wing Shapes-

Narrow- Wing is much longer than wide

Wide- Secondaries longer than primaries

Flat

Concave

Characters of the Tail-Tip

Square- All feathers and retrices are about the same length

Forked- The tail is emarginate but forms a very deep “V”

Rounded- The central retrices are the longest with adjacent ones becoming progressively shorter

Graduated- The retrices become progressively shorter in a stair-step fashion, from the inside (longest) to outside (shortest)

Emarginate- The innermost retrices are shortest and successive retrices become progressively longer toward the outside to form a shallow “V” when viewed from above or below

Characters of the Tail-Overall

Flat- Whether spread or closed, the tail is dorso-ventrally flat

V-Shaped- The tail, in cross section and viewed from the rear, forms a “V”

Vaulted- The tail, in cross section and viewed from the rear, forms a “Λ”

Characters of the Legs

Scutellate- Scales on upper surface of lower leg are overlapping

Reticulate- Scales are small and irregular shaped over the entire tarsus

Serrate- The scales on the posterior margin of the tarsus have serrations

Spurred- Spur arises from the posterior of the tarsus

Scutellate-Reticulate- The upper surface of the tarsus and the lower surface is reticulate

Booted- Tarsus is covered with a smooth horny plate and is without scales

Scutellate-Booted- The scales are scutellate in front and booted behind

Characters of the Toes

Incumbent Hallux- Hallux is at the level of all other toes

Elevated Hallux- Hallux is above the level of all other toes

Avian Characters

Characters of the Nails

Acute Nails- Nails are curved and sharp pointed

Pectinate Nails- Nails with a serrated edge

Obtuse Nails- Nails are less curved and blunt-tipped

Lengthened- Nails are elongated and straight with sharp points

Flattened- Nails are flattened like human fingernails

Characters of the Tarsus

Cross section may be **rounded** both in front and behind

Cross section may be **rounded in front and sharply ridged behind**

The tarsus may be **sharp-ridged in front and behind and laterally compressed**

Characters of the Feet

Anisodactyl Feet- Three toes in front, one behind

Heterodactyl Feet- The 3rd and 4th toes are in front and the 1st and 2nd are back

Zygodactyl Feet- 2nd and 3rd toes in front, 1st (hallux) and 4th toes behind

Palmate Feet- Front toes are united by a full web

Pamprodactyl Feet- All four toes in front

Syndactyl Feet- Two toes (3rd and 4th) are united for most of their length

Raptorial- Large, powerful toes with strong, curved talons

Snow-Shoe- Heavily feathered feet and toes with expanded and flattened scales on the margins of the toes

Semipalmate- Front toes are united by a partial web at the base of the toes

Totipalmate- All four toes are united by a web

Lobate- toes with a series of lateral lobes

Water Birds

Order: Gaviiformes (Loons)

Family: Gaviidae (Loons)

Gavia immer (Common Loon)

Order: Podicipediformes (Grebes)

Family: Podicipedidae (Grebes)

Podiceps auritus (Horned Grebe)

(Pied-Billed Grebe)

(Red-Necked Grebe)

Order: Sphenisciformes (Penguins)

Family: Spheniscidae (Penguins)

Order: Procellariiformes (Tube-Nosed Seabirds)

Family: Diomedidae (Albatrosses)

Family: Procellariidae (Fulmars, Diving-Petrels, and Shearwaters)

Order: Pelecaniformes (Pelicans and allies)

Family: Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

Family: Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants)

Phalacrocorax auritus (Double-Crested Cormorant)

Family: Anhingidae (Anhingas)

Order: Anseriformes (Screamers, Swans, Geese, and Ducks)

Family: Anhimidae (Screamers)

Family: Anatidae (Swans, Geese, and Ducks)

Subfamily: Anserinae (Swans and Geese)

Tribe: Cygnini (Swans)

Cygnus columbianus (Tundra Swan)

Tribe: Anserini (Geese)

Chen caerulescens (Snow Goose)

Branta canadensis (Canada Goose)

Subfamily: Anatinae (Ducks)

Tribe: Anatini (Surface-Feeding Ducks)

Aix sponsa (Wood Duck)

Anas platyrhynchos (Mallard)

(American Black Duck)

(American Wigeon)

(Northern Shoveler)

Anas discors (Blue-Winged Teal)

Tribe: Aythyini (Pochards, Diving Ducks, and Mergansers)

Aythya valisineria (Canvasback)

(Redhead)

(Ring-Necked Duck)

(Greater Scaup)

(Lesser Scaup)

Bucephala clangula (Common Goldeneye)

(Bufflehead)

Water Birds

Mergus serrator (Red-Breasted Merganser)

Lophodytes cucullatus (Hooded Merganser)

Tribe: Oxyurini (Stiff-Tailed Ducks)

Oxyura jamaicensis (Ruddy Duck)

Order: Charadriiformes (Shorebirds, Gulls, and Auks)

Suborder: Scolopaci (Gulls, Terns, and Allies)

Family: Laridae (Gulls and Terns)

Subfamily: Larinae (Gulls)

Larus philadelphia (Bonaparte's Gull)

Larus delawarensis (Ring-Billed Gull)

(Herring Gull)

Subfamily: Sterninae (Terns)

Sterna caspia (Caspian Tern)

(Common Tern)

Chidonias niger (Black Tern)

Family: Alcidae (Auks, Murres, and Puffins)

(Horned Puffin)

Wading and Marsh Birds

Order: Phoenicopteriformes (Flamingos)

Family: Phoenicopteridae (Flamingos)

Order: Ciconiiformes (Herons, Storks, New World Vultures and allies)

Family: Ardeidae (Herons and Bitterns)

(Least Bittern)

Botaurus lentiginosus (American Bittern)

Nycticorax nycticorax (Black-crowned Night-heron)

Butorides virescens (Green-backed Heron)

(Snowy Egret)

(Great Blue Heron)

Family: Ciconiidae (Storks)

(Wood Stork)

Family: Threskiornithidae (Ibis and Spoonbills)

(White Ibis)

(Roseate Spoonbill)

Order: Gruiformes (Cranes, Rails, and Allies)

Family: Rallidae (Rails, Coots, and Moorhens)

Rallus limicola (Virginia Rail)

Porzana carolina (Sora)

(Common Moorhen)

Fulica americana (American Coot)

Family: Gruidae (Cranes)

Grus canadensis (Sandhill Crane)

Order: Charadriiformes

Suborder: Charadrii (Shorebirds)

Family: Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

Charadrius vociferus (Killdeer)

(American Golden-Plover)

Family: Jacanidae (Jacanas)

Family: Haematopodidae (Oystercatchers)

(American Oystercatcher)

Family: Recurvirostridae (Avocets and Stilts)

Recurvirostra americana (American Avocet)

Family: Scolopacidae (Woodcocks, Snipes, Sandpipers, and Allies)

Subfamily: Scolopacinae (Sandpipers)

Tribe: Tringini (Tringine Sandpipers)

(Greater Yellow-legs)

Actitis macularia (Spotted Sandpiper)

Tribe: Arenariini (Turnstones)

(Ruddy Turnstone)

Tribe: Calidridini (Calidridine Sandpipers)

Calidris alpina (Dunlin)

(Least Sandpiper)

Tribe: Gallinagini (Snipe)

Gallinago gallinago (Common Snipe)

Tribe: Scolopacini (Woodcocks)
Scolopax minor (American Woodcock)
Subfamily: Phalaropodinae (Phalaropes)
(Wilson's Phalarope)

Terrestrial Birds- The Non-Passerines

Order: Tinamiformes

Family: Tinamidae (Tinamous)

Order: Struthioniformes

Family: Struthionidae (Ostrich)

Order: Rheiformes

Family: Rheidae (Rheas)

Order: Ciconiiformes (Herons, Storks, and New World Vultures)

Family: Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

Cathartes aura (Turkey Vulture)

Order: Falconiformes

Suborder: Accipitres (Kites, Eagles, Hawks, and Allies)

Family: Accipitridae (Hawks, Kites, Eagles, and Allies)

Subfamily: Pandioninae

Pandion haliaetus (Osprey)

Subfamily: Accipitrinae (Kites, Eagles, and Hawks)

Circus cyaneus (Northern Harrier)

Haliaeetus leucocephalus (Bald Eagle)

Accipiter striatus (Sharp-shinned Hawk)

(Cooper's Hawk)

(Northern Goshawk)

Buteo platypterus (Broad-winged Hawk)

Buteo jamaicensis (Red-tailed Hawk)

Suborder: Falcones (Caracaras and Falcons)

Family: Falconidae (Caracaras and Falcons)

Subfamily: Falconinae

Tribe: Falconini

Falco sparverius (American Kestrel)

(Merlin)

Order: Galliformes

Family: Cracidae (Curassows, Guans, and Chachalacas)

(Plain Chachalaca)

Family: Phasianidae (Grouse, Turkey, and Pheasants)

Subfamily: Phasianinae (Pheasants)

Phasianus colchicus (Ring-necked Pheasant)

Subfamily: Meleagridinae (Turkeys)

Meleagris gallopavo (Wild Turkey)

Subfamily: Tetraoninae (Grouse)

Bonasa umbellus (Ruffed Grouse)

Family: Odontophoridae (New World Quails)

Colinus virginianus (Northern Bobwhite)

Order: Columbiformes

Family: Columbidae (Doves and Pigeons)

(Rock Dove)

Zenaida macroura (Mourning Dove)

Order: Psittaciformes (Parrots)

Order: Coliiformes (Mousebirds)

Family: Coliidae

Order: Musophagiformes (Turacos)

Family: Musophagidae

Order: Cuculiformes

Family: Cuculidae (Cuckoos, Anis, and Roadrunners!)

Coccyzus americanus (Yellow-billed Cuckoo)

(Black-billed Cuckoo)

(Groove-billed Ani)

Order: Strigiformes

Family: Tytonidae (Barn Owls)

Tyto alba (Barn Owl)

Family: Strigidae (Typical Owls)

Asio flammeus (Short-eared Owl)

(Long-Eared Owl)

Bubo virginianus (Great Horned Owl)

Strix varia (Barred Owl)

(Eastern Screech Owl)

Order: Caprimulgiformes (Nightjars and Allies)

Family: Caprimulgidae (Nighthawks and Nightjars)

Subfamily: Chordeilinae

Chordeiles minor (Common Nighthawk)

Subfamily: Caprimulginae

Caprimulgus vociferus (Whip-poor-will)

Order: Apodiformes

Family: Apodidae (Swifts)

Chaetura pelagica (Chimney Swift)

Family: Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

Archilochus colubris (Ruby-throated Hummingbird)

Order: Trogoniformes (Trogons)

Family: Trogonidae

Order: Coraciiformes

Suborder: Alcedines (Todies, Motmots, Kingfishers, and Allies)

Family: Alcedinidae

Subfamily: Alcedininae (True Kingfishers)

Ceryle alcyon (Belted Kingfisher)

Family: Meropidae (Bee-eaters)

Family: Bucerotidae (Hornbills)

Order: Piciformes

Suborder: Galbuli (Puffbirds and Jacamars)

Family: Galbulidae (Jacamars)

Suborder: Pici (Toucans, New World Barbets, Barbets, and Woodpeckers)

Family: Picidae

Subfamily: Picinae (Woodpeckers)

Melanerpes erythrocephalus (Red-headed Woodpecker)

Melanerpes carolinus (Red-bellied Woodpecker)

Colaptes auratus (Northern Flicker)

Picoides pubescens (Downy Woodpecker)

(Hairy Woodpecker)

Dryocopus pileatus (Pileated Woodpecker)

Family: Ramphastidae (Toucans)

Terrestrial Birds- The Passerines

Order: Passeriformes (Perching Birds)

Suborder: Tyranni (Suboscines passerines)

Family: Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

Subfamily: Fluvicolinae (Fluvicoline Flycatchers)

Contopus virens (Eastern Wood-Pewee)

Subfamily: Tyranninae (Tyrannine Flycatchers)

Myiarchus crinitus (Great Crested Flycatcher)

Tyrannus tyrannus (Eastern Kingbird)

Suborder: Passeres

Family: Laniidae (Shrikes)

Lanius excubitor (Northern Shrike)

Family: Vireonidae (Vireos)

(Yellow-throated Vireo)

(Blue-headed Vireo)

Vireo olivaceus (Red-eyed Vireo)

Family: Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

Cyanocitta cristata (Blue Jay)

Perisoreus canadensis (Gray Jay)

Corvus brachyrhynchos (American Crow)

(Common Raven)

Terrestrial Birds- The Passerines

Order: Passeriformes (Perching Birds)

Suborder: Passeres

Family: Alaudidae (Larks)

Eremophila alpestris (Horned Lark)

Family: Hirundinidae (Swallows and Martins)

Tachycineta bicolor (Tree Swallow)

Progne subis (Purple Martin)

(Bank Swallow)

(Barn Swallow)

Family: Paridae (Titmice)

Baeolophus bicolor (Tufted Titmouse)

Poecile atricapillus (Black-capped Chickadee)

Family: Certhiidae (Creepers)

Certhis americana (Brown Creeper)

Family: Sittidae (Nuthatches)

Sitta carolinensis (White-breasted Nuthatch)

(Red-breasted Nuthatch)

Family: Troglodytidae (Wrens)

Troglodytes aedon (House Wren)

(Carolina Wren)

(Marsh Wren)

Family: Cincilidae (Dippers)

(American Dipper)

Family: Regulidae (Kinglets)

Regulus satrapa (Golden-crowned Kinglet)*

(Ruby-crowned Kinglet)*

Family: Sylviidae (Old-World Warblers and Gnatcatchers)

Subfamily: Polioptilinae (Gnatcatchers)

Polioptila caerulea (Blue-grey Gnatcatcher)*

Family: Turdidae (Thrushes)

Sialia sialis (Eastern Bluebird)

Hylocichla mustelina (Wood Thrush)

Turdus migratorius (American Robin)

Family: Mimidae (Mimic Thrushes)

Dumetella carolinensis (Gray Catbird)

(Northern Mockingbird)

Toxostoma rufum (Brown Thrasher)

Family: Sturnidae (Starlings and Mynas)

Sturnus vulgaris (European Starling)

Family: Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)
(American Pipit)

Family: Nectariniidae (Sunbirds)

Family: Bombycillidae (Waxwings)
Bombycilla cedrorum (Cedar Waxwing)

Family: Parulidae (New World Warblers)
Vermivora chrysoptera (Golden-winged Warbler)
(Northern Parula)
(Chestnut-sided Warbler)*
(Magnolia Warbler)*
(Blackburnian Warbler)*
(Black-throated Green Warbler)*
Dendroica petechia (Yellow Warbler)*
(Black-and-white Warbler)*
Oporornis philadelphia (Mourning Warbler)*
Seiurus aurocapillus (Ovenbird)
Geothlypis trichas (Common Yellowthroat)*
Setophaga ruticilla (American Redstart)*

Family: Thraupidae (Tanagers, Honeycreepers, and Allies)
Piranga olivacea (Scarlet Tanager)

Family: Emberizidae (Buntings, Sparrows, and Towhees)
Pipilo erythrophthalmus (Eastern Towhee)*
Spizella passerina (Chipping Sparrow)
(Savannah Sparrow)
Melospiza melodia (Song Sparrow)
Zonotrichia albicollis (White-throated Sparrow)
(Dark-eyed Junco)

Family: Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Grosbeaks)
Pheucticus ludovicianus (Rose-breasted Grosbeak)*
Cardinalis cardinalis (Northern Cardinal)*
Passerina cyanea (Indigo Bunting)*

Family: Icteridae (New World Orioles, Blackbirds, and Allies)
Sturnella magna (Eastern Meadowlark)
Agelaius phoeniceus (Red-Winged Blackbird)*
(Common Grackle)
Molothrus ater (Brown-headed Cowbird)*
Icterus galbula (Baltimore Oriole)*

Family: Fringillidae (Fringilline and Cardueline Finches)
Carpodacus purpureus (Purple Finch)
(Red Crossbill)*
(Pine Grosbeak)
Carduelis tristis (American Goldfinch)*

Family: Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)
Passer domesticus (House Sparrow)

* Must be able to distinguish between male and female.

Common Loon

Order	Gaviiformes
Family	Gaviidae
Genus/Species	<i>Gavia immer</i>



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Wetlands Open Water	Migrates primarily within North America Holarctic	Fish Aquatic Invertebrates	Platform

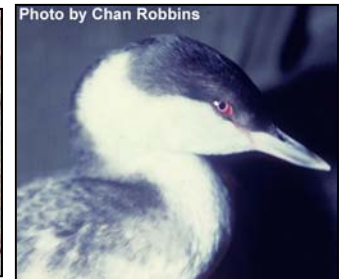
Horned Grebe

Order	Podicipediformes
Family	Podicipedidae
Genus/Species	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>



Sibley:

- ✓ Peak behind eye
- ✓ White Cheek basic/ Dark Breeding
- ✓ Whitish tip on Bill



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Marshes Lakes and Ponds Coastal Areas	Migrates primarily within North America	Fish Aquatic Invertebrates	Platform

Specimen:

- ✓ Brownish hornlike feathers on head
- ✓ Dark Burgundy Neck
- ✓ Straight dark bill

ID Tips:

- Small, stocky-bodied grebe with a short, thin bill
- Black bill, often with a pale tip
- Blocky head, with a peak at the rearmost portion of the head
- Feet set far back on body and trail awkwardly behind body in flight
- White secondaries visible in flight
- Head black with a golden stripe of feathers extending from eye to back of head
- Reddish neck and flanks
- Dark back
- White belly

Similar species:

Pied-billed Grebe has thick, horn-colored bill and brown plumage. Red-necked Grebe is much larger, has a longer bill that is yellow at the base and much less contrasty plumage. Eared Grebe is quite similar but always has a peak or topknot at the center of the crown and a thinner bill that is beveled upwards at the tip. In basic plumage it has a darker face with a contrasting white chin, in alternate plumage it is easily distinguished by the golden ray of feathers radiating from behind the eye, and the black neck. Birds in transition between basic and alternate plumage are best distinguished by structural features, as the plumage can be quite variable.

Pied-Billed Grebe

Order	Podicipediformes
Family	Podicipedidae



Sibley:

- ✓ Stout bill
- ✓ Black ring on breeding bill
- ✓ Brownish overall



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Lakes and Ponds Saltwater Bays	Migrates primarily within North America	Aquatic Invertebrates Fish Reptiles or Amphibians	Platform

Specimen:

- ✓ Brownish Neck
- ✓ Yellow Bill

Similar species:

All other grebes have thinner bills and quite different plumage.

ID Tips:

- Small, stocky-bodied grebe with a short, thick bill
- Brown plumage, darker on the crown and back
- White undertail coverts
- Feet set far back on body and trail awkwardly behind body in flight
- Black ring around horn-colored bill
- Whitish throat

Red-Necked Grebe

Order	Podicipediformes
Family	Podicipedidae



Photo by Marshall Iliff

Sibley:

- ✓ White Cheek
- ✓ Reddish Neck

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Lakes and Ponds Coastal Areas	Migrates primarily within North America	Aquatic Invertebrates Fish	Platform

Specimen:

- ✓ Neck 2/3 length of body
- ✓ Reddish-Brown neck
- ✓ Bill length of head

ID Tips:

- A large, long-necked grebe with a long bill
- Bill yellow at the base (most evident on breeding adults)
- White secondaries and leading edge of wing
- Feet set far back on body
- Black cap
- Reddish neck
- Pale gray face
- Blackish hindneck and back
- Whitish flanks and belly

Similar species:

Loons are much larger with longer bodies and larger, darker bills. Horned and Eared Grebes are smaller with much shorter bills that are never yellow at the base. The grayish face and neck of Red-necked Grebe is distinctive in winter, as is the small finger of white extending upwards at the rear of the head. Smaller than Western Grebe.

Penguins

Order	Sphenisciformes
Family	Spheniscidae

Distribution:

Southern Hemisphere, Mostly Antarctica

Habitat:

Tundra
Coastal Areas
Some Tropical Species

Feeding:

Feeds exclusively at sea
Eats Fish

Nests:

Pebble Nests
Breeds once a year

Social Behavior:

Colonial

Albatrosses

Order	Procellariiformes
Family	Diomedidae



Distribution:

Primarily South of the Equator

Habitat:

Lives Primarily at Sea
Nests on Islands

Feeding:

Catches squid at the surface
Known to follow fishing trawlers
Eats Invertebrates

Nests:

Nests on Islands
Only Comes to Land when Nesting
Northern lay eggs on earth
Southern build nests
Single large eggs

Social Behavior:

Large, scattered breeding colonies
Not popular with fishermen

Fulmars, Diving Petrels, and Shearwaters

Order	Procellariiformes
Family	Procellariidae



Fork-Tailed Storm-Petrel

Distribution:

Scattered
Migrates

Habitat:

Shallow Coastal Waters

Feeding:

Catches Food on or below surface
Eats Fish, Cephalopods, Zooplankton, and Offal

Nests:

One large egg
Flies around the colony

Social Behavior:

Colonial Breeders
Use offshore islands
Breeds only at night



Pink-Footed Shearwater

Specimens:

Fork-Tailed Petrel

- ✓ Tube on Nostril
- ✓ Grey body
- ✓ Black wing primaries

Cory's Shearwater

- ✓ Yellow-white Breast
- ✓ Greyish-Brown Head
- ✓ White chin
- ✓ Large Hooked beak

Pelicans

Order	Pelecaniformes
Family	Pelecanidae



American White Pelican

Distribution:

Temperate & Tropical Regions of the Old and New World
Northern populations migrate

Habitat:

Inland waters with fish
Brown Pelican is maritime

Feeding:

Eats almost exclusively Fish
Sometimes crustaceans
Pouch acts as Scoop for fish and water

Nests:

Large colonial nests

Social Behavior:

Colonial Breeders

Double-Crested Cormorant

Order	Pelecaniformes
Family	Phalacrocoracidae
Genus/Species	Phalacrocorax auritus



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Rivers & Lakes Coastal Areas	Migrates primarily within North America	Fish Aquatic Invertebrates	Platform

Anhingas

Order	Pelecaniformes
Family	Anhingidae

Distribution:

Tropical, Subtropical, Warm Temperate
Old & New World

Habitat:

Backwaters, Estuaries, Swamps, Marshes, Lakes
Needs smooth water to hunt

Feeding:

Eats almost exclusively Fish
Sometimes Aquatic Invertebrates, Reptiles and
Amphibians
Spears its Prey with Beak

Nests:

Nests in Trees with other tree-nesting water birds

Social Behavior:

Male claims a site and then advertises for female
Defends chicks



Anhinga

Specimen:

- ✓ In a large box
- ✓ Beak is Longer than Head
- ✓ Neck length = Body length
- ✓ Large fan tail that is black with light tips
- ✓ Sharp line on chest from black to brown

Screamers

Order	Anseriformes
Family	Anhimidae



Crested Screamer

Distribution:

Tropical

Habitat:

Backwaters, Estuaries
Eutrophic lakeshores and Lagoons in open or forested areas

Feeding:

Sedate vegetarian

Nests:

Large mass of vegetation floating & anchored or built up from the water

Social Behavior:

Solitary or in loose groups or pairs

Specimen:

- ✓ Two spurs on wing
- ✓ Feathers sticking out of back of head
- ✓ No webbing on feet
- ✓ Short Hallux

Tundra Swan

Order	Anseriformes
Family	Anatidae
Subfamily	Anserinae
Tribe	Cygnini
Genus/Species	<i>Cygnus columbianus</i>



Sibley:

- ✓ Shorter black bill usually with yellow spot on lores

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Tundra Lakes, Ponds, Marshes	Migrates primarily within North America	Aquatic Vegetation Seeds Aquatic Invertebrates	Platform

Specimen:

- ✓ Big
- ✓ White Body
- ✓ Black beak and feet
- ✓ Neck 2/3 length of body

Snow Goose

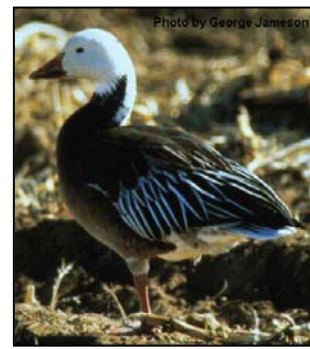
Order	Anseriformes
Family	Anatidae
Subfamily	Anserinae
Tribe	Anserini
Genus/Species	<i>Chen caerulescens</i>



White Morph

Sibley:

- ✓ Blocky Head
- ✓ Heavy Bill



Blue Morph

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Tundra Agricultural Fields Wetlands	Migrates primarily within North America	Vegetation Aquatic Invertebrates	Platform Grass & Down

Specimen:

- ✓ White Head & Neck
- ✓ Brownish Body

Canada Goose

Order	Anseriformes
Family	Anatidae
Subfamily	Anserinae
Tribe	Anserini
Genus/Species	<i>Branta canadensis</i>



Sibley:

- ✓ Brownish Body
- ✓ White Cheek
- ✓ Black Neck
- ✓ Pale Breast

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Lakes Marshes, Fields, Grasslands Residential Areas, Parks	Migrates primarily within North America	Vegetation Aquatic Invertebrates	Platform Grass & Down

Wood Duck

Order	Anseriformes
Family	Anatidae
Subfamily	Anatinae
Tribe	Anatini
Genus/Species	<i>Aix sponsa</i>



Sibley:

- ✓ Round Head with Drooping Crest
- ✓ Bright White “Bridle”
- ✓ Long Tail

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Marshes, Swamps Water with Trees	Migrates primarily within North America	Seeds Fruit and Nuts Vegetation Insects Aquatic Invertebrates	Cavity

Mallard

Order	Anseriformes
Family	Anatidae
Subfamily	Anatinae
Tribe	Anatini
Genus/Species	<i>Anas Platyrhynchos</i>



D.A. Rintoul

Sibley:

- ✓ Dark Head
- ✓ White Neck Ring
- ✓ Pale Body

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Ponds Lakes Parks Coastal Lagoons	Migrates primarily within North America	Seeds Vegetation Aquatic Invertebrates	Platform

American Black Duck

Order	Anseriformes
Family	Anatidae
Subfamily	Anatinae
Tribe	Anatini



Sibley:

- ✓ Greenish-yellow Bill
- ✓ Streaked greyish throat
- ✓ All dark blackish-brown

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Saltwater & Freshwater Marshes	Migrates primarily within North America	Seeds Fish Aquatic Invertebrates	Platform

Specimen:

- ✓ White tip on female bill
- ✓ Dark/Light patterned head
- ✓ Dark brown/white patterned body

ID Tips:

- Large dabbling duck
- Pale gray-brown face
- Dark brown cap and eye line
- Dark brown breast, belly, back and upper wing
- Purple speculum without white borders
- Bright silvery wing linings
- Immature similar to adult
- Greenish-yellow bill
- Legs frequently bright red

Similar species:

Female, immature and eclipse male Mallards are much paler, without contrast between head and body and with white borders to a blue speculum. Hybrid Mallard x Black Ducks are often seen and usually have traces of the mallard plumage, with bluer speculum usually bordered with white on one or both edges. Mottled Duck is similar, with broader brown edgings to upperparts and bluer speculum. Female Gadwalls have a steeper forehead, gray bill, white belly, and usually shows white in the wing.

American Wigeon

Order	Anseriformes
Family	Anatidae
Subfamily	Anatinae
Tribe	Anatini



Sibley:

- ✓ Greenish-yellow Bill
- ✓ Streaked greyish throat
- ✓ All dark blackish-brown

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Lakes Marshes	Migrates primarily within North America	Vegetation Seeds Aquatic Invertebrates	Platform

ID Tips:

- Large dabbling duck
- Blue bill with black nail
- White secondary coverts (grayer in females) and green speculum
- White axillars
- White belly
- Juvenile similar to adult female
- Alternate plumage worn from fall through early summer
- White crown
- Green post-ocular stripe
- Streaked gray lower face and neck
- Rusty breast and flanks
- Dark brown back
- White patch at rear portion of flanks
- Black undertail coverts

Similar species:

Adult in alternate plumage is unmistakable. All plumages distinguished from all other dabbling ducks (except Eurasian Wigeon) by pale gray or white secondary coverts in flight. At rest Wigeon have a distinctive steep forehead and gently sloped rear part of the head, as well as pale blue bills. The rare Eurasian Wigeon is very similar in female, immature and eclipse male plumages and is safely distinguished only in flight by its gray, not white, axillars, and sometimes by the lack of contrast between head and back plumage.

Northern Shoveler

Order	Anseriformes
Family	Anatidae
Subfamily	Anatinae
Tribe	Anatini



D.J. Rincon

Sibley:

- ✓ Rufous flanks and belly
- ✓ White Breast



Photo by George Jameson

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Marshes Ponds	Migrates primarily within North America	Vegetation Seeds Aquatic Invertebrates	Platform

Specimen:

- ✓ Brown Belly
- ✓ White Breast
- ✓ Black/Metallic Green Head
- ✓ Orange Feet

Similar species:

Large, spatulate bill makes the Northern Shoveler immediately recognizable in all plumages

ID Tips:

- Large dabbling duck
- Large spatulate bill
- Juvenile similar to adult female
- Alternate plumage worn from fall through early summer
- Black bill
- Eyes yellow
- Green head
- White lower neck, breast, and tail
- Rusty underbody with white band on hind flanks
- Dark back, with elongated white scapulars
- Pale blue upper secondary coverts
- Green speculum with white leading and trailing edges

Blue-Winged Teal

Order	Anseriformes
Family	Anatidae
Subfamily	Anatinae
Tribe	Anatini
Genus/Species	<i>Anas discors</i>



Sibley:

- ✓ White Hip-patch
- ✓ White Crescent
- ✓ Pale Blue wing

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Marshes Ponds Mudflats	Migrates primarily within North America	Seeds Vegetation Aquatic Invertebrates	Platform

ID Tips:

- Small dabbling duck
- Medium-sized bill without spatulate tip
- Pale blue upper secondary coverts
- Green speculum with white leading edge
- Dark bill
- Juvenile similar to adult female
- Alternate plumage worn from early winter through early summer
- Blue-gray head with darker cap
- White crescent on face in front of eye
- Buff breast and flanks with darker spotting
- White band at rear portion of flanks
- Black undertail coverts

Similar species:

Adult in alternate plumage is unmistakable. Female, immature and eclipse male similar to Green-winged and Cinnamon Teals. Note the small size and small bill of the Green-winged Teals as well as the green speculum. Cinnamon Teal is very difficult to distinguish in some (female) plumages, but note the smaller bill without a spatulate tip and the more distinct facial pattern (pale loreal spot and more distinct eye line) of the Blue-winged Teal.

Canvasback

Order	Anseriformes
Family	Anatidae
Subfamily	Anatinae
Tribe	Aythiini
Genus/Species	<i>Aythya valisineria</i>



Sibley:

- ✓ Black forehead and bill
- ✓ White body
- ✓ White tertials
- ✓ Limited black on chest

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Deep Lakes Bays	Migrates primarily within North America	Vegetation Seeds Aquatic Invertebrates	Cup Platform

ID Tips:

- Medium-sized diving duck
- Long sloping forehead and peaked crown produce distinctive profile
- Black bill
- Immature female similar to adult female, immature male is similar to female in autumn, but acquires alternate plumage during winter
- Alternate plumage worn from fall through early summer
- Red eye
- Reddish head and neck
- Black breast
- Pale gray back and flanks
- White belly
- Black tail, upper- and undertail coverts

Similar species:

Adult male Redhead is similar in alternate plumage to adult male Canvasback, but has yellow eye, blue bill with black tip, much grayer back and different profile. Female-plumage Redheads also have blue-gray bill with black tip, brownish body plumage without contrast between the head and body and a different profile.

Redhead

Order	Anseriformes
Family	Anatidae
Subfamily	Anatinae
Tribe	Aythiini



Sibley:

- ✓ Bright rufous forehead
- ✓ Blue Bill
- ✓ More Black on Neck
- ✓ Rounded Back, Grey body
- ✓ Dark tertials

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Lakes Bays Lagoons	Migrates primarily within North America	Vegetation Seeds Insects Aquatic Invertebrates	Cup Platform

Specimen:

- ✓ Bluish Bill
- ✓ Darker Neck
- ✓ More Black
- ✓ Darker back than Canvasback

ID Tips:

- Medium-sized diving duck
- Smoothly rounded head
- Dark wing with grayish secondaries
- Immature female similar to adult female, immature male is similar to female in autumn, but acquires alternate plumage during winter
- Alternate plumage worn from fall through early summer
- Eclipse-plumage male duller than in alternate plumage, especially about the breast and
- Blue bill with white ring before black tip
- Yellow eyes
- Reddish head and neck
- Black breast
- Grayish back and flanks
- Black tail, upper- and under-tail coverts
- Whitish belly

Similar species:

Adult male Redhead in alternate plumage easily is distinguished from Canvasback by yellow eye, blue bill with black tip, gray back and different profile. Females distinguished from female Canvasback by brown body plumage and blue bill with black tip. Females can be distinguished from female Ring-necked Duck by smoothly rounded crown, dark cap and darker brown plumage.

Ring-Necked Duck

Order	Anseriformes
Family	Anatidae
Subfamily	Anatinae
Tribe	Aythya



Sibley:

- ✓ White Outline on Bill
- ✓ White “spur” behind chest
- ✓ Black Back
- ✓ Grey Flanks

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Ponds Wooded Freshwater	Migrates primarily within North America	Vegetation Seeds	Platform

Specimen:

- ✓ No rings on neck!
- ✓ One wing
- ✓ Short tail
- ✓ Brown/Grey Underside
- ✓ In a case

Greater Scaup

Order	Anseriformes
Family	Anatidae
Subfamily	Anatinae
Tribe	Aythiini



Sibley:

- ✓ Head lower and more rounded than lesser
- ✓ Sloped head
- ✓ Blue bill
- ✓ Blackish Head and Breast
- ✓ Whitish Body

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Lakes Saltwater Bays*	Migrates primarily within North America	Vegetation Seeds Aquatic Invertebrates	Platform

Specimen:

- ✓ White just before bill
- ✓ Light grey body

ID Tips:

- Small, compact diving duck
- Rounded crown
- Yellow eyes (brown in immatures)
- Blue bill with black nail at tip
- Dark wing with dark-tipped white secondaries and inner primaries and pale gray outer primaries
- Immature female similar to adult female, immature male is similar to female in autumn, but acquires alternate plumage during winter
- Alternate plumage worn from fall through early summer
- Glossy greenish head
- Black breast
- Whitish or pale gray flanks, white belly
- Whitish back with fine black vermiculations
- Black tail, upper- and under-tail coverts

Similar species:

The Greater Scaup can be distinguished from the very similar Lesser Scaup by its larger size, wing stripe that extends well into the primaries, and glossy, greenish head as an adult male in alternate plumage. Adult male Ring-necked Duck similar in alternate plumage but has quite different bill pattern, black back, grayer flanks and vertical white finger just behind black breast. The Ring-necked Duck favors freshwater habitats while the Greater Scaup prefers brackish or saltwater habitats. Very rare Tufted Duck is similar but note the distinctive tuft at the rear of the head. When the tuft is not visible, adult males have black backs. Females are very similar but usually lack white band around base of bill and have more black at the tip of the bill. The female Redhead is very similar in shape and coloration to the female Greater Scaup but it lacks the white patch at the base of the bill and has a gray wing stripe.

* Greater Scaup prefers this habitat

Lesser Scaup

Order	Anseriformes
Family	Anatidae
Subfamily	Anatinae
Tribe	Aythiini



Sibley:

- ✓ Head taller with more obvious corner at rear
- ✓ Flat head
- ✓ Blue bill
- ✓ Averages heavier, coarser barring than Greater

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Freshwater Lakes* Saltwater Bays	Migrates primarily within North America	Vegetation Seeds Aquatic Invertebrates	Platform

Specimen:

- ✓ White stripe on bill
- ✓ Black Head
- ✓ White Belly, no gradient

ID Tips:

- Small, compact diving duck
- Peaked crown
- Yellow eyes
- Blue bill with small black nail at tip
- Dark wing with dark tipped white secondaries and pale gray primaries
- Immature female similar to adult female, immature male is similar to female in autumn, but acquires alternate plumage during winter
- Alternate plumage worn from fall through early summer
- Glossy purplish head
- Black breast
- Whitish or pale gray flanks, white belly
- Whitish back with fine black vermiculations
- Black tail, upper- and under-tail coverts

Similar species:

Adult male Ring-necked Duck similar in alternate plumage but has quite different bill pattern, black back, grayer flanks and vertical white finger just behind black breast. Greater Scaup is very similar but has a more rounded head, larger bill, dark-tipped white primaries and secondaries, and glossy, greenish head as an adult male in alternate plumage. Female Greater Scaup has more rounded head, a broader bill, and more white flight feathers, and frequently has a distinct pale spot behind eye on side of head.

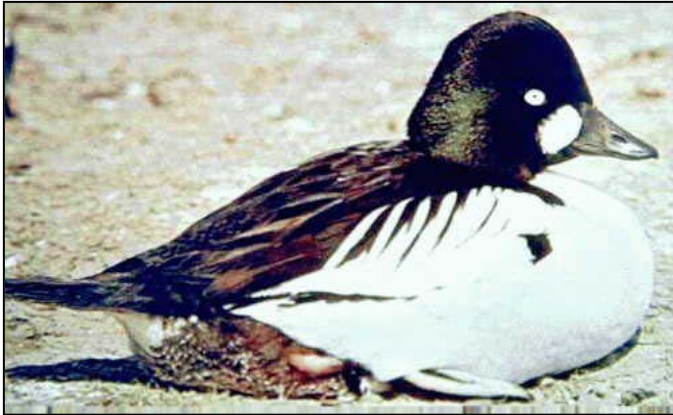
* Lesser Scaup prefers this habitat

Common Goldeneye

Order	Anseriformes
Family	Anatidae
Subfamily	Anatinae
Tribe	Aythiini
Genus/Species	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>



Photo by Mike Haramis



Sibley:

- ✓ Tall, peaked crown
- ✓ Round, white cheek patch
- ✓ Mostly white wings

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Lakes Rivers Bays	Migrates primarily within North America	Aquatic Invertebrates Vegetation Seeds Fish	Cavity

ID Tips:

- Medium-sized diving duck
- Yellow eye
- Gently sloped forehead
- Black bill is small, but larger than in Barrow's Goldeneye
- White patches on the secondaries and secondary coverts visible in flight
- Immature female is similar to the adult female, immature male is like adult female but has a white breast, a darker head and a trace of the male's white patch before the eye
- Alternate plumage worn from fall through early summer
- Glossy greenish head
- White circular patch below eye on face
- White lower neck, breast, belly and flanks
- Dark back
- White scapulars with black striping

Bufflehead

Order	Anseriformes
Family	Anatidae
Subfamily	Anatinae
Tribe	Aythiini



Sibley:

- ✓ Relatively large, round head
- ✓ White back of head
- ✓ Very white overall

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Lakes Harbors Bays	Migrates primarily within North America	Aquatic Invertebrates Vegetation Seeds Fish	Cavity

Specimen:

- ✓ Shorter, stouter bill
- ✓ White color extends to end of crest
- ✓ Black → Green gradient along chin

Similar species:

Female Bufflehead distinguished from female Harlequin Duck by white secondaries and single white patch behind the eye.

ID Tips:

- Very small compact diving duck
- Very small dark gray bill
- Immature female similar to adult female, but immature male has a larger white cheek patch
- Alternate plumage worn from fall through early summer
- Dark glossy head
- Large white patch on the head from behind the eye
- White breast, belly and flanks
- Dark back
- Inner wing white and outer wing dark, visible in flight

Hooded Merganser

Order	Anseriformes
Family	Anatidae
Subfamily	Anatinae
Tribe	Aythiini
Genus/Species	<i>Lophodytes cucullatus</i>



Sibley:

- ✓ Two Black “Spurs on chest
- ✓ White inside black crest



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Wooded Ponds	Migrates primarily within North America	Fish Aquatic Invertebrates	Cavity

ID Tips:

- Long, pointed bill with serrated edges
- Erectile, fan-like crest extends from back of head
- Dark bill and wings
- Often cocks its tail like a Ruddy Duck
- Immature similar to adult female
- Yellow eye
- Black head and back
- Large white patch in the center of the crest
- White breast and belly
- Black and white stripes at forward portion of reddish flanks
- Dark tail
- Inner half of upperwings whitish, bordered by 2 dark bars
- Alternate plumage worn from fall through early summer
- Male in basic eclipse plumage similar to adult female

Similar species:

Adult male in alternate plumage is unmistakable. Female vaguely similar to other mergansers but much smaller with cold brown head, with reddish fan-like crest, and dark bill.

Specimen:

- ✓ Black edge on crest
- ✓ Longer, hooked beak

Red-Breasted Merganser

Order	Anseriformes
Family	Anatidae
Subfamily	Anatinae
Tribe	Aythiini
Genus/Species	<i>Mergus serrater</i>



Sibley:

- ✓ Dark, golden chest

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Saltwater Lagoons and Bays	Migrates primarily within North America	Fish Aquatic Invertebrates	Platform

ID Tips:

- Large, sleek diving duck
- Long, pointed bill with serrated edges
- Thin, red bill seems evenly tapered throughout length
- Shaggy crest obvious in both sexes
- Red eye
- White secondaries
- Immature similar to adult female
- Greenish-black head
- White neck
- Reddish breast with dark streaks, bordered on sides by black-and-white patch
- Gray flanks, tail, rump and uppertail coverts
- Black back
- White belly
- White secondary coverts
- Alternate plumage worn from fall through early summer
- Male in basic eclipse plumage like adult female

Similar species:

Adult male in alternate plumage is similar to male Common Merganser but has reddish breast and gray flanks. Female, immature and eclipse male distinguished from similarly-plumaged Common Mergansers by lack of sharply-defined chin and lack of sharp contrast between reddish head and white breast, and by darker gray plumage, spikier crest, and slimmer bill. In winter, Red-breasted Mergansers are more likely to be found in saltwater habitats than are Common Mergansers.

Specimen:

- ✓ All black head
- ✓ One wing

Ruddy Duck

Order	Anseriformes
Family	Anatidae
Subfamily	Anatinae
Tribe	Oxyurini
Genus/Species	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>



Sibley:

- ✓ Rufous body
- ✓ Blue Bill
- ✓ Long spiky tail
- ✓ Dark cap
- ✓ Pale Cheeks

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Ponds Lakes Sheltered Bays	Migrates primarily within North America	Vegetation Seeds Aquatic Invertebrates	Platform

ID Tips:

- Small, chunky diving duck
- Long stiff-tail is often held vertically
- Dark wings
- Immature similar to adult female
- Alternate plumage worn in Spring and Summer
- Brilliant blue bill
- Black crown and nape
- Rust-red lower neck, breast, back and body
- White face
- Black tail

Similar species:

Most other diving ducks do not have the long, stiff tail of the Ruddy Duck. Hooded Mergansers can sometimes hold their tails erect like Ruddy Ducks, but have crests and long thin bills. The rare Masked Duck of South Florida and South Texas has a similar shape but adult male in alternate plumage has dark face, and the female, and immature and eclipse-plumaged males have a buff head with a dark cap, dark eyeline and dark line below eye.

Bonaparte's Gull

Order	Charadriiformes
Suborder	Scolopaci
Family	Laridae
Subfamily	Larinae
Genus/Species	<i>Larus philadelphia</i>



Sibley:

- ✓ Dark in Primary Coverts
- ✓ Dark wingtips
- ✓ All white under primaries
- ✓ Black Hood
- ✓ Thin Black Bill

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Lakes Rivers Ocean	Migrates primarily within North America	Aquatic Invertebrates Fish	Platform

ID Tips:

- Black head
- Very narrow white crescents above and below eye
- White neck, breast, belly, and tail
- Pale gray back and upperwings
- Pale scapular crescent and tertial crescent
- White wedge on outer primaries
- Black tips to primaries creates black trailing edge to primaries and black wingtips at rest
- Pale underwing and underside of primaries

Similar species:

Adult Little Gulls have no black on the uppersurface of the wings and have wholly dark underwings. First-year Little Gulls are easily distinguished by the pale trailing edge to the wing, but also have wider, bolder carpal bars. Black-headed Gulls are superficially similar but have pale bills in all plumages and dark undersurfaces to the primaries. Laughing and Franklin's Gulls both have much darker gray backs, never show similar wing patterns and have much thicker, more robust bills

Ring-Billed Gull

Order	Charadriiformes
Suborder	Scolopaci
Family	Laridae
Subfamily	Larinae
Genus/Species	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>



Sibley:

- ✓ Pale grey back
- ✓ Limited streaking on back of neck
- ✓ Pale Iris
- ✓ Yellow Bill with Distinct Ring
- ✓ Yellow Legs

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Lakes Coastal Areas Dumps Fast-Food joints	Migrates primarily within North America	Aquatic Invertebrates Fish	Platform

Specimen:

- ✓ Grey speckles on neck
- ✓ Less Black on Wingtips

ID Tips:

- Bright yellow bill with complete black ring at gonys
- Bright yellow legs
- Yellow eye
- White head, neck, breast and belly
- Pale gray back and upperwings
- White tertial crescent
- Black primaries with white tips and two white mirrors on outer primaries
- White tail

Similar species:

Adult Herring Gulls are similar to Ring-billed Gulls but are much larger, have pinkish legs, and a much thicker yellow bill with more pronounced gonys. First-winter Herring Gulls are much browner, but second and third-winter birds can be confusing since soft part colors are variable and third-year Herring Gull often show a ring around the bill. Such birds are most easily distinguished by the larger size and larger bill of Herring Gull. California Gulls are more similar in size and shape but are still larger and bigger-billed. Adults are darker-backed than Ring-billeds, with a brown eye, heavier head streaking, and a different bill pattern. Immatures are browner overall and show less contrast between the upperwing coverts and the secondaries. Adult Mew Gulls have unmarked bills, a darker gray back and are smaller. Juvenile Mew Gulls are much darker. First and second-winter Mew Gulls have a darker gray back and a daintier appearance. Common Black-headed and Bonaparte's Gulls are somewhat smaller in winter but have dark auriculars and very different wing markings in flight. Winter adult Black-legged Kittiwake has a plain yellow bill and entirely black wingtips.

Herring Gull

Order	Charadriiformes
Suborder	Scolopaci
Family	Laridae
Subfamily	Larinae



Sibley:

- ✓ Orange-yellow Orbital Ring
- ✓ Yellow gape

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Coastal Areas	Migrates primarily within North America	Fish Aquatic Invertebrates Scavenger	Platform

ID Tips:

- Bright yellow bill with red spot at gonyx
- Pink legs
- Yellow iris
- White head, neck, breast, and belly
- Gray back and upperwings
- White tertial crescent
- Black primaries with white tips and two white mirrors on outer primaries
- White tail

Similar species:

Adult Herring Gulls are similar to California Gulls but are larger, have pinkish legs, a yellow iris, paler backs, and a slightly thicker yellow bill with more pronounced gonyx. First-winter Herring Gulls are extremely similar to young California Gulls but usually have entirely black bills and only show contrasting secondaries in flight, and lack contrasting greater secondary coverts. Immature birds can be distinguished by back color when it is acquired but are otherwise probably best separated by the subtleties of size, shape, and bill shape. Adult Herring Gulls are similar to adult Ring-billed Gulls but are much larger with larger bills and a more pronounced gonydeal angle. Ring-billed Gulls have yellow legs and a complete black ring on the bill. Immatures Herring Gulls are browner overall than immature Ring-billed Gulls and show less contrast between the upperwing coverts and the secondaries. Adult Lesser Black-backed Gulls are much darker-backed and have yellow legs, while first-year birds are very similar but have whiter rumps, darker wing coverts, entirely black bills through their first summer, and paler heads and underparts that are spotted with brown. Western Gull is quite similar in subadult plumages but has a white rump that contrasts with back in first-year plumages, a larger bill, and shows the distinctive dark back color by the second winter. Immature Glaucous-winged Gulls lack the contrast between the upperwing coverts and primaries shown by all Herring Gulls. Thayer' Gull differs from Herring Gull primarily by morphological features. Glaucous-winged x Western Gull hybrids are typically larger-billed than Herring Gulls, and show paler primaries as immatures and a single white mirror on primaries as adults.

Caspian Tern

Order	Charadriiformes
Suborder	Scolopaci
Family	Laridae
Subfamily	Sterninae
Genus/Species	<i>Sterna caspia</i>



Sibley:

- ✓ Black Forehead
- ✓ Very Heavy Red Bill

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Coastal Areas Rivers Lakes	Long-Distance Migrant	Fish Aquatic Invertebrates	Platform Scrape

ID Tips:

- Deep red bill, often with indistinct black ring at tip
- Black legs
- Black cap with very slight crested appearance
- White face, neck, breast, and belly
- Pale gray back and upperwings
- Pale underwings with dusky gray on outer 5-6 primaries
- White tail
- Large, barrel-chested tern with long, thick, reddish bill
- Short, notched tail
- Hints of a crest at the rear of the head
- Pale underwings with dark patch in primaries

Similar species:

When trying to identify terns, it is safest to use a combination of field marks instead of relying on a single field mark. The Royal and Elegant terns are the only other large, orange-billed terns and are quite similar. Elegant Terns are very small compared to Caspians, are very slim-winged, have slimmer orange bills, have much more forked tails and less black on the undersurface of the primaries. The Caspian can be separated from the Royal by its thicker, reddish bill, dark wedge on the outer portion of the underwing, more shallowly-forked tail, broader wings and its tendency to have an almost complete cap in basic and immature plumages. The smaller *Sterna* terns have slimmer, black or black-tipped bills, slimmer bodies and wings and a much more deeply-forked tail.

Common Tern

Order	Charadriiformes
Suborder	Scolopaci
Family	Laridae
Subfamily	Sterninae



Sibley:

- ✓ Red Bill with Black Tip
- ✓ Grey Underparts
- ✓ Tail as Long as Wingtips
- ✓ Grey primaries

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Coastal Areas Lakes	Migrates primarily within North America	Fish Aquatic Invertebrates	Scrape

ID Tips:

- Medium-sized tern with slender, pointed bill
- Long, deeply forked tail
- Smoothly rounded head without crest
- Pale underwing with broad, blurry, dark trailing edge
- Gray upperwing with dark outer primaries (variable according to state of condition of plumage)
- Window of translucent primaries shows through wings on inner primaries and outer secondaries
- Alaskan birds can have all dark bills and brown legs
- Red legs
- Orange-red bill with black tip
- Black cap
- White face
- Medium gray foreneck, breast, and belly
- Gray back and upperwings
- Dark wedge in outer primaries
- Primary pattern darkens with wear through season so that outer 5 primaries are entirely dark by late summer
- White rump and tail, with dark edges to outer retrices
- Tail extends only to tip of primaries at rest

Similar species:

When identifying terns, it is safest to rely upon a combination of field marks. The Common Tern is most similar to the Roseate, Arctic, and Forster's Terns. The Forster's tern has a distinctive black eye patch except in the breeding season. The Common Tern has a black eye patch that continues across the nape. During the breeding season, the Forster's Tern has paler upper surfaces to the primaries that contrast with the rest of the wing while the Common Tern has a dark wedge in the primaries; its tail has white outer edges and dark inner edges, the opposite of the Common Tern; its underparts are white not gray like the Common Tern. The Arctic Tern is quite similar in all plumages but has a shorter, stubbier bill, shorter legs, and a longer tail. In the breeding season, it has darker gray underparts, an all red bill, more translucence in the primaries, crisp black trailing edge to the primaries, and lacks the dark wedge in the upper surface of the primaries. By late summer, Common Terns can have all red bills and the underparts turn whiter. At this time of year the most useful identification feature is that the Common Terns begin molting flight feathers before migrating to the wintering grounds while the Arctic Terns do not molt until arriving on the wintering grounds. Therefore, terns with missing flight feathers, and dark, worn outer primaries contrasting with fresh inner primaries will be Commons. Juvenile Common Terns have bicolored bills, brown-washed upperparts, and dark gray secondaries while juvenile Arctic Terns have black bills, grayer upperparts, and paler secondaries. Basic and immature plumaged birds are best separated by structural differences and wing patterns. The Roseate Tern can be told from the Common Tern by its longer all white tail, darker bill (except in late summer), paler underparts and upperparts, and lack of a dark trailing edge to the undersurface of the primaries. In juvenile plumage, Roseates have dark foreheads, dark legs, and scaly backs while the Common Terns have white foreheads, pale legs, and brown-washed backs. The larger Sterna terns (Royal, Elegant, Caspian) have entirely orange or red bills, much larger bodies, broader wings, shorter tails and black legs. In Alaska, Aleutian Tern has a white forehead.

Black Tern

Order	Charadriiformes
Suborder	Scolopaci
Family	Laridae
Subfamily	Sterninae
Genus/Species	<i>Chidonias niger</i>



Sibley:

- ✓ Black Head and Underparts

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Marshes Ponds Coastal Areas	Long-Distance Migrant	Insects Fish Aquatic Invertebrates	Scrape

ID Tips:

- Small tern with relatively short, black bill
- Very short, dark legs
- Short, notched tail
- Smoothly rounded head without crest
- Dark legs
- Black head, neck, breast, and belly
- White undertail coverts
- Dark gray back; and upperwings with no apparent contrast
- Gray rump and tail
- Pale underwing coverts

Similar species:

Small tern, significantly larger than Least but smaller than Common. Swallow-like flight and feeding habits distinctive. Easily separable from all other regular species by black breast and belly and dark gray upperwings in alternate plumage. More similar in basic and immature plumages but size, irregular dark cap, short bill, and evenly gray upperwing distinctive. The White-winged Tern, accidental in United States, is similar but has whitish upperwings, white rump and tail and black axillaries in alternate plumage. In basic and immature plumages it is very difficult to separate but has black ear spot more separated from crown, whiter rump and tail, shorter bill and lacks shoulder bar.

Horned Puffin

Order	Charadriiformes
Suborder	Scolopaci
Family	Laridae
Subfamily	Alcidae



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Open Water?	Long-Distance Migrant Mixed	Fish Aquatic Invertebrates Vegetation	Scrape Burrow Platform

ID Tips:

- Very large bill
- Black crown, nape, throat, and upperparts
- White breast, belly and undertail coverts
- Red legs and feet
- Pelagic bird only coming ashore to breed
- Inhabits open ocean habitats and coasts from Alaska south (rarely) to California
- Extremely colorful bill-yellow at base and red at tip
- White, triangular face patch
- Hornlike projection from top of eye
- Thin, dark line from eye to nape

Similar species:

The Horned Puffin is most similar to the Tufted Puffin. In alternate plumage, the Horned Puffin lacks yellow tufts on the face and has white, not black, underparts. In winter, the gray face and white underparts of the Horned Puffin can separate them. Atlantic Puffin does not overlap in range and has a different bill pattern.

Flamingos

Order	Phoenicopteriformes
Family	Phoenicopteridae

Distribution:

Accidental

Habitat:

Coastal Areas

Feeding:

Vegetation

Vertebrates

Invertebrates

Blue-Green Algae

Nests:

Platform

Mud mounds

Social Behavior:



Specimen:

- ✓ Scutellate Legs
- ✓ Flakey beak with sharp curve at midpoint
- ✓ Pink back with Black wing tips
- ✓ White underside

Least Bittern

Order	Ciconiiformes
Family	Ardeidae

Sibley:

✓

Specimen:

- ✓ Smaller than American
- ✓ Dark Feathers under wing near shoulder
- ✓ Red shoulders
- ✓ Black crest (crown)
- ✓ Reddish eye stripes

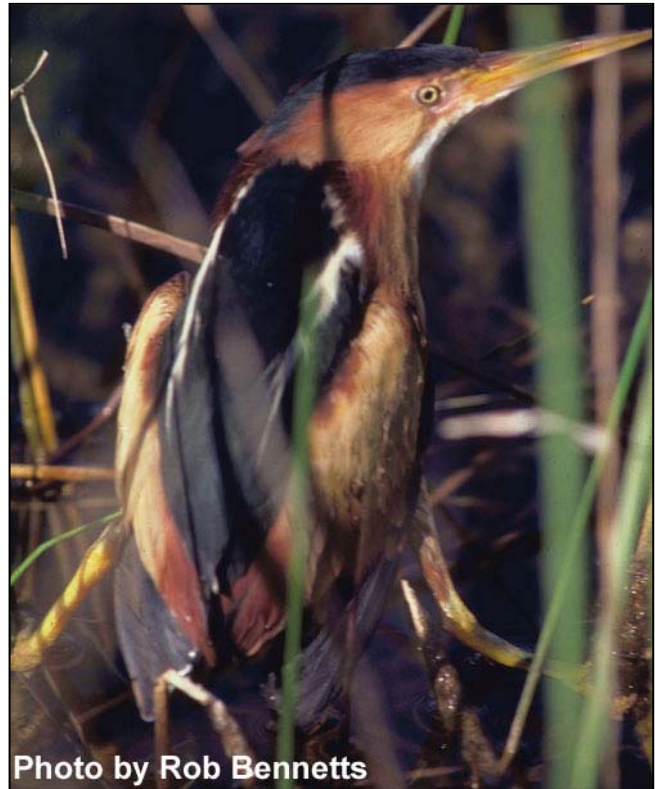


Photo by Rob Bennetts

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Marshes, Fields, and/or Grasslands, Swamps, Tundra	Mixed	Vertebrates Invertebrates	Platform

Similar species:

Green Heron lacks buff color to head and wings.
All other herons are much larger.

ID Tips:

- Very small wading bird
- Buff face and sides to the neck
- White chin, throat, foreneck and belly
- Buff wing coverts visible in flight and at rest
- Black cap
- Black back
- Fairly faint brown streaks on fore-neck

American Bittern

Order	Ciconiiformes
Family	Ardeidae
Genus/Species	<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>

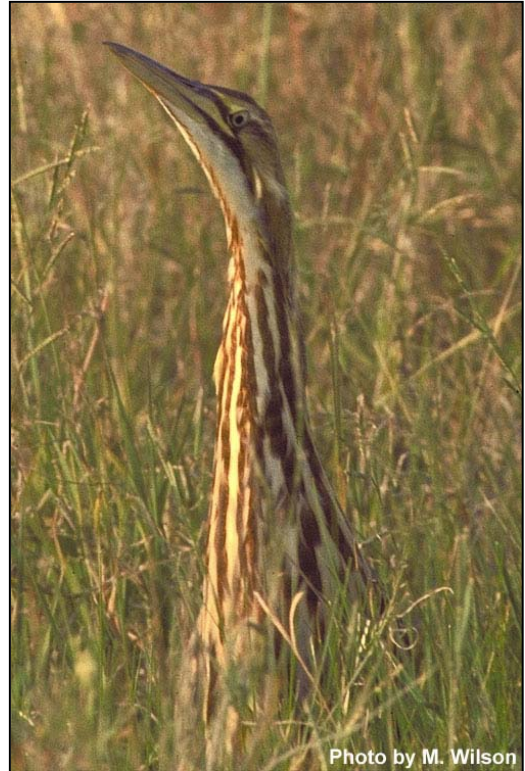


Photo by M. Wilson

Sibley:

✓

Specimen:

- ✓ Stick up ass
- ✓ More pronounced reddish-brown stripes on neck
- ✓ Black in front of shoulders
- ✓ Brown Striping

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Marshes	Mixed	Vertebrates Invertebrates	Platform

ID Tips:

- Medium-sized wading bird
- Dark brown upperparts
- Underparts streaked brown and white
- Black malar streak
- Yellow bill with dark culmen
- Black primaries and secondaries
- Sometimes "freezes" with neck held upwards
- Immatures similar to adults but lack the malar streak

Similar species:

Least Bittern is much smaller with buff wing coverts. Immature Night-Herons have white spotting or streaking on the upperparts, lack the black malar streak, have thicker bills, and lack the black primaries and secondaries (a useful field mark in flight).

Black-crowned Night-heron

Order	Ciconiiformes
Family	Ardeidae
Genus/Species	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>



Sibley:

✓

Specimen:

- ✓ ♂- All white belly
- ✓ Black crown
- ✓ ♀- Greyish streaks on neck

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Marshes, Fields, Ponds, Lakes	Mixed Strategy	Vertebrates Invertebrates	Platform

ID Tips:

- Fairly small, stocky, short-legged and short-necked heron
- Bill medium-sized and pointed
- Tucks neck in close to body in flight and at rest, rarely extending it
- Red eyes, legs yellow
- Black bill
- Black crown and back
- White face, throat, foreneck, chest and belly
- Blue-gray wings
- Two long, white, filamentous plumes extending from back of head in alternate plumage

Similar species:

Adults are unmistakable. Immatures can be separated from American Bittern by pale spotting on the upperwing, lack of black neck spot, different shape, stouter bills and more even upperwing coloration in flight. Juvenile Yellow-crowned Night-Heron has smaller spots on greater secondary coverts, smaller spots on head and neck, thicker bill, and longer legs. Immature Black Crowns can show a variety of plumage characters so are best separated from immature Yellow-crowns by their smaller, thinner bill and shorter legs.

Green Backed Heron

Order	Ciconiiformes
Family	Ardeidae
Genus/Species	<i>Butorides virescens</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Marshes, Swamps, Ponds, Lakes, Streams	Mixed	Vertebrates Invertebrates	Platform

ID Tips:

Similar species:

Specimen:

- ✓ Mounted on polished wood
- ✓ Black Crest
- ✓ Yellow Beak with Black Tip on top
- ✓ Burgundy neck- sides and back
- ✓ Green/Blue back
- ✓ Tiny serrations on bill

Snowy Egret

Order	Ciconiiformes
Family	Ardeidae



Sibley:

✓



Specimen:

- ✓ Black legs with brownish/reddish feet
- ✓ Straight Black Bill > Head
- ✓ Neck 2/3 Body length
- ✓ All White
- ✓ White Plume

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Marshes, Fields, Ponds, Lakes, Coastal Areas	Year Round Accidental	Vertebrates Invertebrates	Platform

ID Tips:

- Medium-sized long-legged wading bird
- Usually holds necks in "S" curve in flight
- Entirely white plumage
- Thin black bill and yellow facial skin
- Black legs with yellow feet
- Shaggy plumes on head, neck, and back in alternate plumage

Similar species:

Great Egret and "Great White" Heron larger with thicker, yellow bills. Cattle Egret smaller, with shorter, yellow or orange bill and pale legs. The Reddish Egret can be similar as white morph immatures, but has a much larger bill, blue-gray legs and gray lores. Immature Little Blue Heron has a variably gray- or yellow-based bill with black tip and can be similar to immature Snowies that have pale bases to the bills, but always has gray facial skin, green legs and blue-gray primary tips (best seen in flight from below and not always visible at rest). Little Egret, which occurs only rarely in North America, is very similar but has gray facial skin and two long head plumes in alternate plumage.

Great Blue Heron

Order	Ciconiiformes
Family	Ardeidae
Genus/Species	<i>Ardea alba</i>



Sibley:

✓

Specimen:

- ✓ Black Plumes on Head down neck
- ✓ White Crown
- ✓ Brown Neck
- ✓ Grey wings and body
- ✓ Black and white belly

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Marshes, Swamps, Ponds, Lakes, Streams	Mixed	Vertebrates Invertebrates	Platform

ID Tips:

- Huge long-legged long-necked wader
- Usually holds neck in an "S" curve at rest and in flight
- Long, thick, yellow bill
- White crown and face
- Black plume extending from above and behind eye to beyond back of head
- Brownish-buff neck with black-bordered white stripe down center of foreneck
- Blue-gray back, wings and belly
- Black shoulder
- Shaggy neck and back plumes in alternate plumage

Similar species:

Tricolored Heron has white belly. Reddish Egret and Little Blue Heron are smaller, and lack white on head and yellow in bill. "Great White Heron" could be confused with Great Egret but is larger, with yellow legs and the single head plume coming from behind the eye.



Wood Stork

Order	Ciconiiformes
Family	Ciconiidae

Sibley:

✓

Specimen:

- ✓ Brownish Head
- ✓ Big, Long, Yellow Beak
- ✓ “Please Do Not Touch” sign
- ✓ Mounted with legs over bill
- ✓ White wings with black undersides



Photo by H. R. Spindelov Jr.

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Marshes, Swamps, Ponds, Lakes, Coastal Areas	Year-Round Accidental	Vertebrates Invertebrates	Platform

ID Tips:

- Large, long-legged wader with a long neck
- Large bill, thick and slightly decurved
- Head and neck unfeathered and black
- White body plumage
- Black primaries and secondaries
- Holds neck extended in flight
- Dark bill

Similar species:

Most other large white birds lack black flight feathers. White Pelican much different in shape, tucks its neck in while flying, has short legs and a long, orange bill. Whooping Crane has white secondaries and a white, feathered head and neck. White Ibis is much smaller with white head and neck, reddish bill and white secondaries.

White Ibis

Order	Ciconiiformes
Family	Threskiornithidae



Sibley:

✓

Specimen:

✓



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest

ID Tips:

- Medium-sized long-legged long-necked wading bird
- Long, decurved bill
- Holds neck extended in flight
- White body plumage with black tips to outer primaries
- Bill and facial skin pinkish-red
- Red legs

Similar species:

Roseate Spoonbill

Order	Ciconiiformes
Family	Threskiornithidae



Photo by J.A. Spendelow

What a crummy picture!

Sibley:

✓

Specimen:

- ✓ Pink Body
- ✓ Spoon-Shaped Bill
- ✓ White Neck
- ✓ Dark Feet



Juvenile

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Coastal Areas	Mixed	Vertebrates Invertebrates	Platform

ID Tips:

- Large, long-legged wader with a long neck
- Long, spatulate bill
- Holds neck extended in flight
- Red eyes
- Bill grayish with dark mottling
- Head greenish and unfeathered with black nape band
- White neck and back
- Pink back and wings
- Legs red, feet dark

Similar species:

No other bird has a similar bill. Flamingos are also long-legged pink wading birds but have short, thick, hooked bills and black in the flight feathers.

Virginia Rail

Order	Gruiformes
Family	Rallidae
Genus/Species	<i>Rallus limicola</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Marshes, Fields, Grasslands, Swamps	Mixed	Invertebrates Seeds	Platform

ID Tips:

- Fairly small, chunky, short-tailed, round-winged, ground-dwelling marsh bird
- Long, slightly decurved bill
- Most often seen walking, rarely flies
- Often flicks and cocks short tail while walking, exposing white undertail coverts
- Sexes similar
- Reddish bill
- Legs brown or orange
- Supraloral stripe and throat whitish
- Blue-gray cheeks
- Rust-colored breast and belly
- Dark crown and back, edged tawny brown
- Black and white barred flanks
- Chestnut wing

Similar species:

Downy young Virginia Rails can be mistaken for Black Rails but have dark (not red) eyes, and lack spots on the back and barring on the flanks. King and Clapper Rails are much larger and have duller bills and less contrast between the cheek and underparts. Other rails have much shorter bills.

Specimen:

- ✓ In tube
- ✓ Dark back with few brownish streaks
- ✓ Grey cheeks
- ✓ Chestnut wings
- ✓ Long bill

Sora

Photo by Luther Goldman



Order	Gruiformes
Family	Rallidae
Genus/Species	<i>Porzana carolina</i>

Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Marshes, Fields, Grasslands	Mixed	Invertebrates Seeds	Platform

ID Tips:

- Fairly small, chunky, short-tailed, round-winged, ground-dwelling marsh bird
- Short, thick bill
- Most often seen walking, rarely flies
- Often flicks and cocks short tail while walking, exposing white undertail coverts
- Sexes similar
- Yellow bill
- Black lores and throat (paler in basic plumage)
- Blue-gray face, sides of neck, and breast
- Brownish cap, nape, hindneck, back and upperwings
- Whitish belly
- Dark brown and white barring on flanks

Similar species:

Adult Sora is distinctive with its short, thick yellowish bill, black face and dark gray and brown plumage. Immature is similar to the Yellow Rail but is larger, and has white undertail coverts and darker upperparts that are spotted with white rather than streaked with buff and black. In flight, the Yellow Rail shows white secondaries.

Specimen:

- ✓ Yellow chicken-like bill
- ✓ Black crown
- ✓ Brown back with black splotches with white sides
- ✓ Light grey eye stripes

Common Moorhen

Order	Gruiformes
Family	Rallidae



Photo by Marcus Martin

Sibley:

✓

Specimen:

- ✓ Feet not as lobate as coot
- ✓ Less white on belly
- ✓ red bill with yellow tip
- ✓ Reddish tint to primaries
- ✓ Bald spot

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Marshes, Swamps, Ponds, Lakes, Streams	Mixed	Invertebrates Seeds	Platform

ID Tips:

- Fairly large, duck-like waterbird with short wings and a short tail
- Very short, thick bill
- Frequently seen both swimming and walking
- Often flicks and cocks short tail while walking, exposing white outer undertail coverts which are also easily visible while swimming
- Sexes similar
- Red frontal shield above bill
- Red bill with a yellow tip
- Slate gray head, neck, breast and belly
- Brownish back and upperwings
- White stripe along upper flanks
- Tarsus and feet greenish yellow, tibia red

Similar species:

In poor light, adult can be confused with Purple Gallinule, but can be distinguished by red forehead shield and white flank stripe. American Coot has a whitish bill, lacks the flank stripe and has a slate gray back. Immature Purple Gallinules are much paler and lack the white flank stripe.



Photo by J. A. Spendelow

American Coot

Order	Gruiformes
Family	Rallidae
Genus/Species	<i>Fulica americana</i>



Photo by Fred Fallon

Sibley:

✓

Specimen:

- ✓ Very lobate feet
- ✓ Black head gradient → dark body
- ✓ Black and lighter body
- ✓ Slit in chest
- ✓ Sharp toenails

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Ponds, Lakes, Streams	Mixed	Invertebrates Vegetation Vertebrates	Platform

ID Tips:

- Fairly large, duck-like waterbird with short wings and a short tail
- Very short, thick bill
- Frequently seen both swimming and walking
- Often flicks and cocks short tail while walking, exposing white outer undertail coverts
- Sexes similar
- Toes have lobed webbing, unlike gallinules
- White bill with dark reddish ring just before tip
- White frontal shield with reddish oval near tip
- Slate gray head, neck, back, upperwings, breast and belly

Similar species:

Common Moorhen is of similar size and shape but has a reddish bill with a yellowish tip, a white stripe along the flanks, and a brownish back.



Photo by Peter S. Weber

Sandhill Crane

Order	Gruiformes
Family	Gruidae
Genus/Species	<i>Grus canadensis</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Marshes, Swamps	Mixed	Vertebrates Invertebrates	Platform

ID Tips:

- Large, long-legged, long-necked bird
 - Long, pointed bill
 - Holds neck straight both at rest and in flight, not tucking it in like herons do
 - Dark gray legs extended in flight
 - Long, fluffy tertials droop down over tail and primaries
- Dark bill
- Unfeathered red crown and lores
 - Entirely gray plumage, that often becomes stained with rust or brown, especially about the back and wings
 - Whitish cheeks and chin

Similar species:

All herons tuck their necks in an "S" curve while flying and lack the long, fluffy tertials and red crown. The very rare Whooping Crane is white overall with black primaries and a different head pattern.

Specimen:

- ✓ Reddish plume on head
- ✓ Long grey neck
- ✓ Brownish-grey back
- ✓ Long reddish bill
- ✓ Long legs
- ✓ Grey chest
- ✓ Elevated hind toe
- ✓ Big, wrapped up

Killdeer



Order	Charadriiformes
Suborder	Charadrii
Family	Charadriidae
Genus/Species	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>

Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Marshes, Fields, Coastal Areas	Mixed	Invertebrates	Scrape

ID Tips:

- Medium-sized, long-winged shorebird
- Short, fairly thick dark bill
- Legs flesh-colored
- Red eye ring
- White forehead and white stripe behind eye
- Brown face; black lores and upper borders to the white forehead and collar
- White collar
- Brown cap, back and wings
- White breast and belly
- Two black breast bands
- White wing stripe at the bases of the flight feathers is visible in flight
- Rust-red rump
- Brown tail with black subterminal band, white terminal band and barred, white outer tail feathers
- Tail extends beyond wing tips at rest
- Sexes similar

Similar species:

All other plovers lack the two black breastbands. Very young Killdeer have a single breastband and could be confused with Piping, Wilson's, Snowy or Semipalmated Plovers, but are usually still downy, have black bills (any Piping or Semipalmated Plover having a breastband will also have an orange bill with a black tip), and are colored above like the adult (eliminating the paler Piping and Snowy).

Specimen:

- ✓ In plastic tube
- ✓ 2 black bands on chest
- ✓ Brown crest



American Golden-Plover

Order	Charadriiformes
Suborder	Charadrii
Family	Charadriidae



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Tundra, Fields	Mixed	Invertebrates	Scrape

ID Tips:

- Medium-sized, long-winged shorebird
- No wing stripe
- Underwing coverts and axillars gray
- Wingtips extend beyond tail
- Dark rump
- Short, fairly thin, dark bill
- Legs black

Adult alternate

- Black face, throat, and underparts
- White border to black face and throat
- Gold and black spangled crown, nape, back, and wings

Adult basic

- Gray-brown upperparts with paler edging
- Pale gray breast
- White supercilium
- Whitish underparts

Similar species:

The Black-bellied Plover is quite similar to the American Golden-Plover but has black axillaries, white wing stripe, thicker bill, and white rump in all plumages and white undertail coverts in breeding plumage. In most plumages the Black-bellied is distinctly grayer without any gold coloration. Pacific Golden-Plover is very similar but has white flanks and undertail coverts in breeding plumage. In basic plumage, Pacific has yellowish head, supercilium and neck. Rare European Golden-Plover has white flanks and undertail coverts in alternate plumage and a less distinct supercilium in basic plumage. In all plumages, European has shorter wingtips that barely reach the end of the tail.

Specimen:

- ✓ Black decurved bill
- ✓ Brown-black-white pattern on head and back
- ✓ Some orangeish dots
- ✓ > Sandpiper

Jacanas

Order	Charadriiformes
Suborder	Charadrii
Family	Jacanidae

Distribution:

Tropical, South America

Habitat:

Marshes, Swamps, Fields, Grasslands, Ponds, Lakes, Streams

Feeding:

Invertebrates

Nests:

Platform

Social Behavior:



Juvenile Northern Jacana

Photo by Marcus Martin

ID Tips:

- Large shorebird
- Fairly short, yellow bill and frontal shield
- Long toes
- Pale green flight feathers
- Rare in south Texas

•Adult

- Dark plumage, darkest on head

American Oystercatcher

Order	Charadriiformes
Suborder	Charadrii
Family	Haematopodidae



Photo by Fred Fallon

Sibley:

✓



Photo by Marshall Iiff

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Coastal Areas	Mixed	Invertebrates	Scrape

ID Tips:

- Length: 16 inches
- Large shorebird
- Bright orange, long, thick bill
- Head and breast black
- Dark gray back and wings
- White belly
- Large white patch on inner wing
- White uppertail coverts and dark tail
- Pink legs

Adult

- Yellow eye
- Orange orbital ring

Similar species:

The striking black and white plumage, large size, and bright orange bill make this bird quite unlike any other.

Specimen:

- ✓ Orange → Yellow (tip) long bill
- ✓ Black Head
- ✓ Black chest ends abruptly at white chest

American Avocet

Order	Charadriiformes
Suborder	Charadrii
Family	Recurvirostridae
Genus/Species	<i>Recurvirostra americana</i>



Photo by A. Wilson

Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Ponds, Lakes, Streams	Mixed	Invertebrates	Scrape

ID Tips:

- Length: 15 inches
- Large, very long-legged shorebird
- Long, very thin, upturned black bill
- Blue-gray legs
- White rump and tail
- Sexes similar, but bill is more strongly recurved in female than in male

Adult alternate:

- Rust red head, neck and chest
- White lores and eyering
- White upper back, breast, belly and tail
- White back is bordered by two long, black stripes on the scapulars
- Black outer wing and white inner wing, with a black bar through middle of inner wing

Adult basic:

- Similar to adult alternate, but head, neck, and chest are grayish

Similar species:

Black-necked Stilt also has long thin bill and legs, but is smaller, and has pink legs, and all black wings and back.

Specimen:

- ✓ Light Brown/ Peach Head
- ✓ Gradient along chest to white belly
- ✓ Long, black recurved bill
- ✓ Black and white lengthwise striped wings
- ✓ Cigarette burn on head

Greater Yellow-legs

Order	Charadriiformes
Suborder	Charadrii
Family	Scolopacidae
Subfamily	Scolopacinae
Tribe	Tringini



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Fields, Grasslands, Marshes	Year-round in North America	Invertebrates	Scrape

ID Tips:

- Length: 11 inches
- Medium-sized long-legged shorebird
- Long, thin bill is slightly upturned
- Dark bill often has a slightly paler base
- Bill length is approximately 1.5 times the length of the head
- Bright yellow legs
- White tail is crossed with thin black bars
- Sexes similar
- Juvenile similar to basic-plumaged adult

Adult alternate:

- Head, neck, and chest are extensively streaked with black
- Pale flanks are barred with black
- Whitish belly with sparse dark bars and chevrons
- Back and upperwings are dark brown, dappled with black and white
- White notches on wing feathers appear as white spots on back
- Whitish supercilium and eyering, dusky lores

Adult basic:

- Head and neck pale, streaked sparsely with brown
- Breast, and to a lesser extent, flanks, streaked and spotted with gray-brown
- Dark brown back, with pale flecks and feather edges
- Buff notches on wing feathers appear as white spots on back

Similar species:

Solitary Sandpiper is smaller, shorter-billed and has a bolder eye ring, a dark rump, and green legs. The Lesser Yellowlegs is very similar but is smaller, with a straighter and proportionately shorter bill that is uniformly dark. In alternate plumage Lesser Yellowlegs has short, indistinct bars on flanks. The safest way to distinguish the two is the call: a harsh series of three or more notes in Greater Yellowlegs versus a softer, mellower single or double note of the Lesser Yellowlegs.

Specimen:

- ✓ Right wing attached in box
- ✓ Gonads cut
- ✓ Not very yellow legs
- ✓ Long, thin beak
- ✓ Greyish back, long neck

Spotted Sandpiper

Order	Charadriiformes
Suborder	Charadrii
Family	Scolopacidae
Subfamily	Scolopacinae
Tribe	Tringini
Genus/Species	<i>Actitis macularia</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Coastal Areas	Mixed	Invertebrates	Scrape

ID Tips:

- Length: 6.25 inches
- Fairly small, short-legged shorebird
- Yellowish or pinkish legs
- White wingstripe visible in flight
- Teeters tail when feeding and walking
- Distinctive, stiff winged, fluttery flight on bowed wings
- Sexes similar
- Juvenile similar to basic-plumaged adult

Adult alternate:

- Orange bill with a black tip
- Pale supercilium and dark eyeline
- Brown head, hindneck, back, and upperwings with small black bars
- White throat, breast and belly with bold black spots

Adult basic:

- Variably dark bill with pale base
- Pale brown head with dark eyeline and pale supercilium
- Plain dark back, upperwings with dark and buff bars
- Sides of breast brown, with finger of white extending up in front of leading edge of wing when at rest
- Throat, breast, and belly white, without dark spots

Similar species:

Solitary Sandpiper is larger and has a bold eyering, no wing stripe, white-spotted upperparts and a different flight style. The Eurasian Common Sandpiper, a rare migrant, is very similar to basic and juvenile-plumaged Spotted Sandpipers. The Spotted Sandpiper has a shorter tail, shorter white wing stripe, more barred wing coverts and, as a juvenile, tertials that are marked with buff only at the tip.

Specimen:

- ✓ Male- Brown spots on chest and neck (under)
- ✓ Solid brownish black back
- ✓ Spotted Belly

Ruddy Turnstone

Order	Charadriiformes
Suborder	Charadrii
Family	Scolopacidae
Subfamily	Scolopacinae
Tribe	Arenariini



Photo by Marcus Martin

Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Coastal Areas	Migrates within North America	Invertebrates	Scrape

ID Tips:

- Length: 7 inches
- Small, short-legged shorebird
- Short, dark bill is fairly thick with a slight upturn to the lower mandible
- Legs are yellow to red
- Wing pattern visible in flight is produced by a white wing stripe, a white lower back and white at the base of the leading edge of the wing
- White tail with black terminal band
- Sexes similar
- Juvenile is similar to basic-plumaged adults

Adult alternate:

- Striking black and white head pattern
- Rufous and black back and wings
- Black breast with enclosed white patch
- White belly

Adult basic:

- Gray-brown head and upperparts
- White throat
- Black breast with enclosed white to gray patch
- White belly
- Juvenile has pale edges to back and wing coverts

Similar species:

Black Turnstone is similar but darker in basic plumage, has an all dark chest, duller legs, and lacks any trace of rust-red back feathers. Surfbird has yellowish legs and a more uniform body plumage; white wingstripe and white tail with dark terminal band produce a less striking pattern in flight than in turnstones.

Specimen:

- ✓ Black malars
- ✓ White head with blackish speckles
- ✓ 2 Mounted next to each other on dirt
- ✓ Stout, dark bill
- ✓ Unique black chest

Dunlin

Order	Charadriiformes
Suborder	Charadrii
Family	Scolopacidae
Subfamily	Scolopacinae
Tribe	Calidridini
Genus/Species	<i>Calidris alpina</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Coastal Areas	Migrates within North America	Invertebrates	Scrape

ID Tips:

- Length: 7 inches
- Medium-sized shorebird
- Medium-sized, thin, dark bill with droop at tip
- Black legs
- Black patch on rump extending onto tail
- White wing stripe
- Sexes similar

Adult alternate:

- White head and breast with faint black streaks and spots
- Black belly
- Rusty mantle with black spots
- White undertail coverts and flanks

Similar species:

In alternate plumage, the black belly is also found in the Rock Sandpiper. The Rock Sandpiper has less extensive black on the belly and yellow legs. In basic and juvenile plumages, the Dunlin is similar to several other species. It is a darker gray than Western Sandpiper and Sanderling. The Dunlin lacks the white rump of White-rumped and Curlew Sandpiper. Purple Sandpiper is darker gray above and has yellow legs. In flight, the Dunlin has a more substantial wing stripe than peep.

Specimen:

- ✓ Long, black beak
- ✓ Orangeish brown head and back with grey neck
- ✓ Black Belly
- ✓ Slightly shorter than my hand

Least Sandpiper

Order	Charadriiformes
Suborder	Charadrii
Family	Scolopacidae
Subfamily	Scolopacinae
Tribe	Calidridini



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Tundra, Marshes	Migrates in NA	Invertebrates Seeds	Scrape

ID Tips:

- Length: 4.75 inches
- Very small shorebird
- Short, thin, dark bill slightly decurved
- Yellow legs
- Thin, white wing stripe
- Black line on rump extends onto tail
- Sexes similar

Adult alternate:

- Brown head
- Black back feathers and wing coverts with brown edges
- Brown breast with black spotting
- White underparts
- Indistinct white supercilium with darker crown and eyeline

Adult basic:

- Similar to adult alternate but plumage gray-brown
- Gray-brown breast band
- White underparts
- Indistinct white supercilium with darker crown and eyeline

Similar species:

The Least Sandpiper is one of a group of very similar small shorebirds called "peeps" but the only common one with yellow legs, a brown plumage, and a thin, slightly decurved bill. The rare Long-toed Stint is very similar (see Jonsson & Grant, 1984). The Pectoral Sandpiper is also brown with yellow legs but is larger with a crisp, squared-off division between the brown breast and white belly.

Specimen:

- ✓ Looks like a butterfly
- ✓ In box with both wings spread
- ✓ Grey Belly
- ✓ Brown-black patterned back
- ✓ White sides on upper tail feathers

Common Snipe

Order	Charadriiformes
Suborder	Charadrii
Family	Scolopacidae
Subfamily	Scolopacinae
Tribe	Gallinagini
Genus/Species	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>



Photo by Chan Robbins



Photo by George Jameson

Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Marsh, Field, Grassland, Swamp, Tundra	Mixed	Invertebrates	Scrape

ID Tips:

- Length: 9 inches
- Stocky, short-legged, pointed-winged shorebird
- Explosive takeoff when flushed, rapid zigzag flight
- Very long, straight bill
- Legs olive
- Head patterned with alternating dark and pale stripes
- Pale breast with darker spots and bars
- Strongly patterned back with several buffy, longitudinal stripes
- Rusty brown rump and tail visible in flight
- White belly, dark bars on flanks
- Upperwings dark, secondaries with white tips
- Found primarily in marshes and wet fields
- Sexes similar
- Juvenile similar to adult

Similar species:

American Woodcock has a plain, buffy breast, rounded wings and a distinctive head pattern. Dowitchers are similar in size and shape but lack prominent crown and back stripes, and have a white rump and barred tail.

Specimen:

- ✓ One wing in box
- ✓ Black/ Brown streaks on back
- ✓ Long, straight bill

American Woodcock

Order	Charadriiformes
Suborder	Charadrii
Family	Scolopacidae
Subfamily	Scolopacinae
Tribe	Scolopacini
Genus/Species	<i>Scolopax minor</i>



Photo by J.A.Spendelov



Photo by Chan Robbins

Sibley:

✓

Specimen:

- ✓ In Vegetation box
- ✓ Grey back with dark splotches

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Deciduous Forest	Mixed	Invertebrates	Scrape

ID Tips:

- Length: 8.25 inches
- Dumpy, short-legged, short-tailed, rounded-winged shorebird
- Explosive takeoff when flushed, wings make twittering sound in flight
- Very long bill
- Very large, dark eye set high in head
- Buff-brown head, breast and belly buff to pale cinnamon
- Black nape crossed by pale lines
- Dark eyeline and auricular stripe
- Gray-brown back, with black and chestnut feathering interspersed between two pale Vs
- Upperwings reddish-brown; underwings brown, with rusty wing linings
- Rusty rump; dark rectrices tipped gray/white
- Found in woodlands and shrubby fields
- Sexes similar
- Juvenile similar to adult

Similar species:

Common Snipe is more slender and browner, without the crossbars on nape. In flight, the Common Snipe has much more pointed wings.



Photo by Deanna Dawson

Wilson's Phalarope

Order	Charadriiformes
Suborder	Charadrii
Family	Scolopacidae
Subfamily	Phalaropodinae



Adult Basic



Reverse sexual dimorphism!

Sibley:

✓

Specimen:

✓ Light grey head crest

✓ Oops, I forgot to distinguish between male and female!

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Marshes, Swamps, Ponds, Lakes	Long-Distance Migrant	Invertebrates	Scrape

ID Tips:

- Length: 7.5 inches
- Fairly small, long-legged shorebird
- Often swims, spinning about and picking at the water
- Thin, straight, black bill much longer than head
- White rump, pale gray tail
- Wings dark, unstriped
- Adult female alternate:**
 - Black legs
 - Pale gray crown and nape, hindneck whiter
 - Thick, dark eyeline extends down neck, becoming chestnut, and turns onto back, forming V
 - White throat and supercilium
 - Rich rusty foreneck
 - White breast and belly
 - Gray back and upperwings
 - Rusty stripe at base of wings
- Adult male alternate:**
 - Plumage duller than in female alternate

- Black legs
- Dark brown crown and eyeline, extending down neck and onto back
- Back and upperwings gray-brown
- White throat, supercilium, and hindneck
- Pale rusty foreneck
- White breast and belly
- Adult basic:**
 - Yellowish legs
 - Gray crown, hindneck, and back
 - Pale face with variable black stripe through eye
 - White throat, breast and belly

Similar species:

Yellowlegs have longer, brighter yellow legs, spotted upperparts, streaks and bars about head and have a barred tail. Red-necked and Red Phalaropes both have wing stripes and dark rumps and tails, as well as shorter bills. Basic-plumaged Stilt Sandpiper and Wilson's Phalarope are similar, but Stilt Sandpiper has longer legs and dusky streaks on chest and flanks.

Tinamous

Order	Tinamiformes
Family	Tinamidae

Distribution:

Neotropics

Habitat:

Forested

Feeding:

Vegetation
Seeds

Nests:

Cup
Cavity
Platform

Social Behavior:

ID Tips:

•Tips

Sibley:

✓



Specimen:

- ✓ Stout Body
- ✓ Brown with fancy black patterns
- ✓ In a big case

Similar species:

Info



Terry the Tinamou

Ostrich

Order	Struthioniformes
Family	Struthionidae

Distribution:

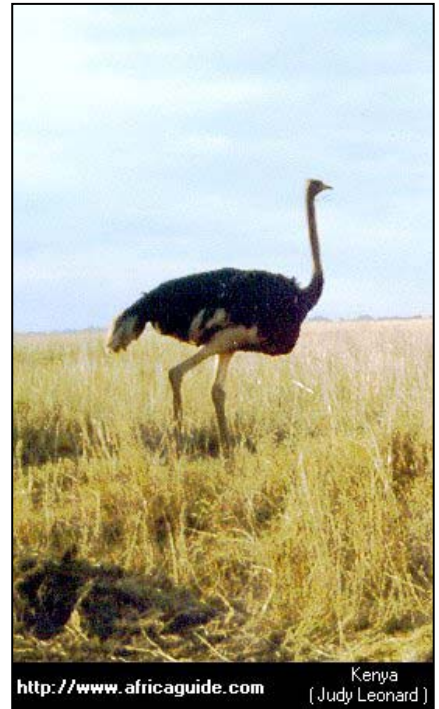
Africa

Habitat:

Grasslands

Feeding:

Vegetation
Invertebrates
Vertebrates
Seeds



Specimen:

✓ It's an ostrich!

Nests:

Scrape

Social Behavior:

Similar species:

Info

ID Tips:

•Tips

Sibley:

✓

Rheas

Order	Tinamiformes
Family	Tinamidae

Distribution:

South America

Habitat:

Grasslands

Feeding:

Vegetation

Nests:

Scrape

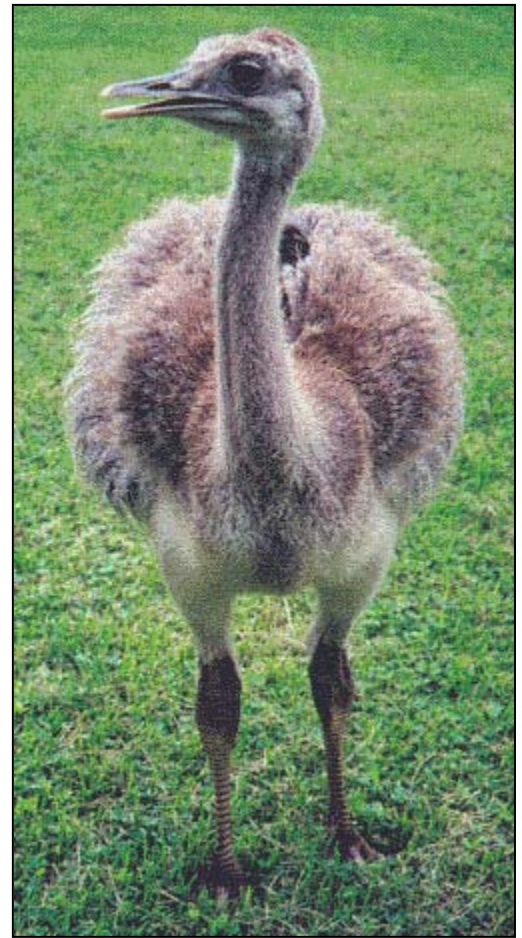
Social Behavior:

ID Tips:

- Tips

Sibley:

✓



Specimen:

✓

Similar species:

Info

Turkey Vulture

Order	Ciconiiformes
Family	Cathartidae
Genus/Species	<i>Cathartes aura</i>



Photo by A. Wilson

Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Fields, Grassland, Deciduous Forest, Coniferous Forest	Mixed	Carrion	Scrape Platform

ID Tips:

- Length: 25 inches Wingspan: 72 inches
- Sexes similar
- Very large, broad-winged, soaring bird
- Long and rounded tail
- Longish, hooked bill
- Rather short, thick legs
- Holds wings in a dihedral angle while soaring and gliding
- Spends most time soaring, infrequent flaps are slow and laborious
- Small, unfeathered head
- Plumage dark brown except for paler flight feathers, appearing black and gray
- Immature like adult
- Adult:**
- Red head
- Yellowish bill
- Reddish legs
- Immature:**
- Gray head
- Gray bill
- Gray legs

Similar species:

The Black Vulture is also dark with an unfeathered head, but has a much different shape in flight. It is short-winged, short-tailed, and intersperses glides on flat wings with quick, snappy wingbeats. Turkey Vultures lack the white patch at the wingtips and show contrast between paler flight feathers and darker coverts. Bald and Golden eagles are both superficially similar, but fly on flat wings, have feathered heads, and do not have contrastingly gray flight feathers. The Zone-tailed Hawk in the Southwest has a similar shape and flight style, but has a feathered head and white bands on a black tail.

Specimen:

✓

Osprey

Order	Falconiformes
Suborder	Accipitres
Family	Accipitridae
Subfamily	Pandioninae
Genus/Species	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Ponds, Lakes, Streams, Coastal Areas	Mixed	Vertebrates	Platform

ID Tips:

- Length: 22 inches Wingspan: 54 inches
- Large, narrow-winged hawk
- Flies on flat wings with distinct kink at elbow
- Wings taper to a rounded tip
- Short hooked beak
- White cap
- Dark brown eyeline broadening behind eye
- Dark brown nape, back and upperwings
- Wings from below: flight feathers white barred with black, undersecondary coverts white and underprimary coverts black producing rectangular black mark at wrist
- White chin, throat, breast and belly
- Brown tail has a number of white bands
- Hovers and then plunges into water after fish
- Adult male:**
- Underparts entirely white
- Adult female:**
- Dark necklace of streaks on throat
- Immature:**
- White tips to dark back feathers

Similar species:

Unmarked white belly, wing shape, and flight style make the Osprey instantly recognizable even at a distance.

Specimen:

- ✓ White Head
- ✓ Dark Stripe
- ✓ Dark Bill
- ✓ White Belly

Northern Harrier

Order	Falconiformes
Suborder	Accipitres
Family	Accipitridae
Subfamily	Accipitrinae
Genus/Species	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>



Photo by George Jameson

Sibley:

✓



Photo by J.A. Scott

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Field, Grasslands	Mixed	Vertebrates	Platform

ID Tips:

- Length: 16.5 inches Wingspan: 42 inches
- Medium-sized, long-winged, long-tailed hawk
- Rounded wings, can appear pointed while gliding
- White rump
- Short, dark, hooked beak
- Often courses low over marshes and fields on wings held in a strong dihedral
- Flat face with owl-like facial disk

Adult male:

- Pale gray body plumage, paler on underparts
- Darker gray head
- Black tips to flight feathers, especially noticeable on the outer primaries
- Narrow dark bars on tail

Similar species:

In typical habitat, the harrier is easily recognized by the low, coursing flight, white rump, and wings held at an angle. Rough-legged Hawks occupy similar habitat but have broader wings and a black subterminal tail band. When migrating, harriers can fly at great heights where many of their features become less obvious. The white rump cannot be seen, the wings may not appear held at an angle and the tail may be fanned. The pale underwings with black primary tips of the male make it distinctive. The dark inner wings of females and immatures are a helpful clue. Harriers appear thinner-winged and longer-tailed than buteos and longer-winged than accipiters.

Specimen:

- ✓ In Large Box
- ✓ One wing (right)
- ✓ Heavy reddish brown vertical striping on chest
- ✓ White rump
- ✓ Pointed wingtips

Bald Eagle

Order	Falconiformes
Suborder	Accipitres
Family	Accipitridae
Subfamily	Accipitrinae
Genus/Species	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Coastal Areas	Mixed	Vertebrates	Platform

ID Tips:

- Length: 32 inches Wingspan: 80 inches
- Sexes similar
- Very large, broad-winged, broad-tailed hawk
- Rounded wings
- Thick, hooked bill
- Plucks fish from water with talons

Adult:

- White head and upper neck
- White tail
- Dark brown body plumage
- Yellow bill

Similar species:

Turkey Vulture has a tiny, unfeathered head, holds its wings in a dihedral, and has contrastingly paler flight feathers. Golden Eagle can be quite similar to immature Balds, or to adults at a distance but is all dark as an adult and as an immature has white restricted to the bases of the flight feathers and the bases of the tail feathers. The white is confined to crisp patches on the wing and tail, and is not blotchily scattered about underwings coverts as in immature Bald Eagles. Immature Golden Eagles have yellow ceres while immature Balds have dark ceres.

Specimen:

✓

Sharp-shinned Hawk

Order	Falconiformes
Suborder	Accipitres
Family	Accipitridae
Subfamily	Accipitrinae
Genus/Species	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>



Photo by Fred Fallon

Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Deciduous and Coniferous Forest	Mixed	Vertebrates Carrion	Platform

ID Tips:

- Length: 10.5 inches Wingspan: 21 inches
- Sexes similar, but females much larger
- Small, broad-winged, long-tailed hawk
- Short, dark, hooked beak
- Long, narrow tarsi
- Short, rounded wings
- Long tail is squared-off at tip with prominent corners
- Typically flies with several quick snappy wingbeats and a short glide, but also soars
- Small rounded head does not project far beyond wings when soaring
- Adult:**
- Red eye
- Black cap
- Blue-gray back and upperwings
- White breast, belly and underwing coverts marked by fine, thin, reddish bars
- White undertail coverts
- Tail, blue gray above and pale below, barred with black bands
- Flight feathers, blue-gray above and pale below, with dark bars

Similar species:

The Sharp-shinned Hawk is most similar to the Cooper's Hawk. In all plumages, the Sharp-shinned Hawk has a shorter, less rounded tail with a thinner white tip, slimmer tarsi, a more rounded head that does not project much beyond the wings when soaring and a less snappy wingbeat. Male Sharp-shinned Hawks are obviously smaller than all Cooper's Hawks. Adult Sharp-shinned Hawks have a less well-defined cap while immatures have thicker, more extensive streaking on the breast and belly. Immature Northern Goshawks are quite similar to immature Sharp-shinneds but are much larger, more comparable in size to a buteo. American Kestrel is similar in size but has pointed wingtips and quite different patterns.

Specimen:

- ✓ Littler
- ✓ Horizontal reddish stripes on chest
- ✓ Short, banded square tail
- ✓ Bands inside wings
- ✓ Really dark back
- ✓ Dark tip on beak

Cooper's Hawk

Order	Falconiformes
Suborder	Accipitres
Family	Accipitridae
Subfamily	Accipitrinae



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Deciduous and Coniferous Forest	Mixed	Vertebrates	Platform

ID Tips:

- Length: 15.5 inches Wingspan: 28 inches
- Sexes similar, but females much larger
- Medium-sized, broad-winged, long-tailed hawk
- Short, dark, hooked beak
- Long, thick tarsi appear short at rest because they are usually covered by belly feathers
- Short, rounded wings
- Very long tail is rounded at tip
- Often flies with several quick wingbeats and a short glide, but also soars
- Large angular head projects far beyond wings when soaring

Adult:

- Red eye
- Black cap
- Blue-gray back and upperwings
- White breast, belly and underwing coverts marked by fine, thin, reddish bars
- White undertail coverts
- Tail, blue gray above and pale below, barred with black bands
- Flight feathers, blue-gray above and pale below, with dark bars

Similar species:

Immature Northern Goshawks are similar in shape and patterning to immature Cooper's Hawks, but are larger, with proportionately shorter tails, bulkier bodies and thicker black streaking extending all the way to the undertail coverts. Sharp-shinned Hawks are typically smaller, with shorter, squared-off tails and shorter heads that do not project as far when flying. Immature Sharp-shinneds have thicker, denser streaking that extends farther down the belly and a thinner terminal band of white. Adults have less well-defined caps. Immature Red-shouldered Hawks have pale crescents in the wing and shorter tails.

Specimen:

- ✓ Pointed Wings
- ✓ Longer fan-shaped tail, banded
- ✓ Vertical reddish brown stripes on chest

Northern Goshawk

Order	Falconiformes
Suborder	Accipitres
Family	Accipitridae
Subfamily	Accipitrinae



Photo by J. A. Spindelow

Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Deciduous and Coniferous Forest	Mixed	Vertebrates	Platform

ID Tips:

- Length: 19 inches Wingspan: 42 inches
- Sexes similar, but females much larger
- Medium-sized, broad-winged, long-tailed hawk
- Short, dark, hooked beak
- Rounded wings
- Long tail rounded at tip
- Flies with several flaps and short glide, also soars frequently
- Short, dark, hooked beak
- Long, very thick tarsi appear short at rest

Adult:

- Red eye
- Blackish head and face with bold white supercilium
- Gray back and upperwings
- Pale gray chin, throat, breast, underwing coverts and belly finely vermiculate
- White undertail coverts
- Tail dark blue-gray above and pale below, barred with dark bands
- Flight feathers dark blue-gray above and pale below, barred with black

Similar species:

Adults unmistakable when seen well; at a distance, Goshawks distinctively combine the large size of a buteo and the broad-winged, long-tailed shape and quick wingbeats of accipiters. Immature Northern Goshawks are similar in shape and patterning to immature Cooper's, but are much larger, with proportionately shorter tails, bulkier bodies and thicker black streaking extending all the way to the undertail coverts. Sharp-shinned Hawks are typically much smaller, with shorter, squared-off tails and shorter heads that do not project as far when flying. Immature Red-shouldered Hawk has pale crescents in the wing and a shorter tail.

Specimen:

- ✓ Greyish brownish mottled belly with black rachis
- ✓ In big plastic case
- ✓ Yellow cere
- ✓ White eyebrow

Broad-winged Hawk

Order	Falconiformes
Suborder	Accipitres
Family	Accipitridae
Subfamily	Accipitrinae
Genus/Species	<i>Buteo platypterus</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Deciduous and Coniferous Forest	Mixed	Vertebrates	Platform

ID Tips:

- Length: 13 inches Wingspan: 33 inches
- Sexes similar
- Short, dark, hooked beak
- Medium-sized, broad-winged, broad-tailed hawk
- Short, broad wings somewhat pointed at the tip

Light morph adult:

- Dark brown head, nape, upperwing, and back
- Pale breast with thick, reddish bars to belly
- Pale underwing with thick black margin to trailing edge
- Thick black and white bands on tail of even width

Dark morph adult:

- Rare breeder in Alberta and rare migrant in West and Midwest
- Dark chocolate brown head, back, breast, upperwings, belly, and underwing coverts
- Black and white bands on tail of even width
- Pale silvery flight feathers below are barred with black
- Broad, black trailing edge to wings

Similar species:

Red-shouldered Hawk is similar in adult plumage but has reddish shoulders, a pale crescent in the wings, lacks the distinct black border to the trailing edge of the wing, and the white bands on the tail are much narrower than the black bands.

Immatures can be distinguished by shape and crescent-shaped pale window in outer primaries. Dark morph Swainson's Hawk has pale undertail coverts. Other dark buteos are much larger with much broader wings (Red-tailed, Rough-legged, and Ferruginous). Immature dark morph Short-tailed Hawk has darker secondaries that contrast with the pale primaries and does not overlap with the range of the dark morph Broad-winged Hawk.

Specimen:

- ✓ In large case on perch
- ✓ Yellow cere and legs
- ✓ Dense reddish brown horizontal striping on chest becoming sparser near belly
- ✓ Fan shaped tail with white bands

Red-tailed Hawk

Order	Falconiformes
Suborder	Accipitres
Family	Accipitridae
Subfamily	Accipitrinae
Genus/Species	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>

Juvenile

Photo by George Jameson



Adult



Photo by Jim Zingo

Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Fields, Grassland, Deciduous and Coniferous Forest	Mixed	Vertebrates	Platform

ID Tips:

- Length: 18 inches Wingspan: 48 inches
- Sexes similar
- Short, dark, hooked beak
- Large, broad-winged, broad-tailed hawk
- Immatures have notably narrower wings and tail, and appear slimmer
- Dark patagial mark on underwing, present on all ages and races, is unique
- Blocky translucent area in outer primaries
- Flies with a dihedral
- Extraordinary geographic variation
- Light morph adult:**
- Brown head, nape, back, and upperwings
- White chin, throat, breast, and belly
- Dark belly band formed by vertical streaks in band across belly
- White underwings have dark carpal bar on leading edge, dark outer primary tips and a dark trailing edge and are otherwise pale with dark bars on the flight feathers on all but the outermost primaries
- Tail appears brick red above and pink below
- Breast and back pattern vary with geography, with some birds being intermediate between light and dark morphs
- Dark morph adult:**
- Wholly dark chocolate underparts, upperparts and underwing coverts with no apparent patagial mark
- Pale underside to primaries and secondaries like light morph birds being pale with dark tips and dark bars on the flight feathers
- Tail appears brick red above and pink below (like light morph adult)
- Breast and back pattern vary with geography, with some birds being intermediate between light and dark morphs

Similar species:

Red tail, patagial mark and belly band diagnostic when present. Due to its extreme variability though, the Red-tailed Hawk can be very difficult to identify. Most other light morph buteos are separable by shape and plumage, with Ferruginous Hawk being the most similar. The adult Ferruginous can be identified by its lack of a belly band, rufous leggings, paler flight feathers, lack of a patagial mark, and extensive reddish coloration on the upperwing coverts. The immature Ferruginous is similar to the immature Red-tailed but lacks the dark patagial mark. Dark morph Swainson's has dark flight feathers and white undertail coverts. Rough-legged has unmarked flight feathers and a white comma in the outermost underwing coverts. Other dark morph buteos (Broad-winged, Short-tailed) are smaller with different flight profiles. Immature White-tailed Hawk has a white diamond on its central breast.

Specimen:

- ✓ Brown Splotches on belly
- ✓ Dark bill near head
- ✓ Red, fan-shaped tail with white tip
- ✓ Reddish tail with dark stripes

American Kestrel

Order	Falconiformes
Suborder	Falcones
Family	Falconidae
Subfamily	Falconinae
Tribe	Falconini
Genus/Species	<i>Falco sparverius</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Wetlands, Grasslands	Mixed	Vertebrates Invertebrates	Cavity

ID Tips:

- Length: 8.5 inches Wingspan: 21 inches
- Short, dark, hooked beak
- Small, long-tailed hawk
- Long, narrow, pointed wings
- Gray crown
- White cheeks
- Two black mustache marks
- Black spot at rear of crown on both sides
- Seen from below, flight feathers are pale with dark barring
- Juveniles and immature females like adult female

Adult male:

- Rust patch on crown
- Rust nape, breast, back and tail
- Rust tail has a broad black subterminal band and a narrow white terminal band
- Pale belly
- Blue-gray wing coverts
- Dark flight feathers with pale subterminal spots creating a "string of pearls"
- Black spots on scapulars, wing coverts and flanks

Similar species:

Sharp-shinned Hawk is of similar size, but has rounded wings and much different patterning. Merlin is larger with broader-based wings, lacks rust tones to back and wing coverts, has a single mustache mark and strongly checkered underwings.

Specimen:

- ✓ Juvenile and Adult
- ✓ Red Back
- ✓ Grey wings, dark pointed tips
- ✓ Black dots on white chest
- ✓ Bill width of my thumb with dark tip
- ✓ Red crown
- ✓ Tail Red → |Black → |White tip
- ✓ Whitish yellow legs
- ✓ Double black stripes on white face

Merlin

Order	Falconiformes
Suborder	Falcones
Family	Falconidae
Subfamily	Falconinae
Tribe	Falconini



Photo by George Jameson



Photo by J. A. Spindelov

Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Wetlands, Grasslands	Mixed	Vertebrates Invertebrates	Cavity Platform None

ID Tips:

- Length: 12 inches Wingspan: 23 inches
- Short, dark, hooked beak
- Small, long-tailed hawk
- Long, pointed wings, broad at the base
- Thin, pale black mustache mark
- Underwings checkered with black and white
- Juveniles and immature females like adult female
- Three distinct races occur in North America

Taiga Merlin (F. c. columbarius)

- Breeds in northern Canadian boreal forests from Newfoundland to Alaska and winters in the southern United States; migrants occur frequently along both coasts but are rare inland
- Flight feathers dark above
- Faint dark mustache mark

Adult male:

- Dark blue-gray back, paler than suckleyi but darker than richardsoni
- Dark tail has wide, complete, blue-gray bands

Similar species:

American Kestrel is similar in size and shape, but has two mustache marks, reddish-brown about head, narrower wings and lacks checkerboard pattern of underwings. Peregrine is much larger with a much bolder mustache mark and not so strongly checkered underwings. Prairie Falcon has a bolder mustache mark, white between the eye and the mustache mark and black axillars.

Specimen:

- ✓ In large display with wings spread
- ✓ White dots on inner wings
- ✓ Dark head with mottled neck
- ✓ Yellow cere and legs
- ✓ Narrow white bands on tail which is white tipped
- ✓ Vertical brown striping on chest

Plain Chachalaca

Order	Galliformes
Family	Cracidae

Sibley:

✓



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Tropical Forests	South Texas	Berries Invertebrates	Platform

ID Tips:

- Length: 18 inches Wingspan: 26 inches
- Sexes similar
- Large, small-headed, round-winged, long-tailed, ground-dwelling bird
- Plain brown plumage, darker on upperparts
- Long dark tail with white tip
- Reddish throat not always visible
- Range restricted to south Texas

Similar species:

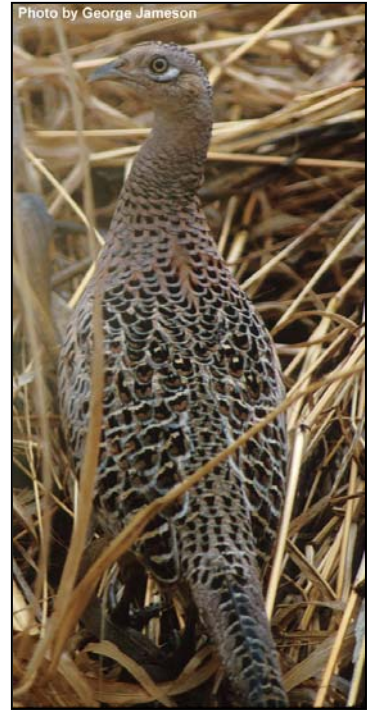
None

Specimen:

- ✓ Tough orange ovals on chin
- ✓ Orange eyering
- ✓ Pointed grey feathers behind head
- ✓ Long dark green tail tipped white

Ring-necked Pheasant

Order	Galliformes
Family	Phasianidae
Subfamily	Phasianinae
Genus/Species	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Farmland Wooded Edges	Year Round in NA	Seeds Invertebrates	Platform

ID Tips:

- Length: 27 inches
- Chunky, long-tailed, round-winged, ground-dwelling bird
- Small head and thin neck
- Immatures similar to adult female
- Some subspecies have green body or white wings, but are very locally introduced

Adult male:

- Green head
- Pale bill
- Unfeathered red facial skin around eye
- White ring around neck
- Golden plumage with bluish and greenish iridescence and black spots scattered throughout
- Long, pointed, golden tail feathers with black barring
- Spurred legs

Adult female:

- Buffy brown head and underparts
- Dark brown back with paler edgings and centers
- Black spots and bars scattered about head, neck and flanks
- Long, buff-brown, pointed tail
- Lacks spurs

Similar species:

Adult male unmistakable. Female similar to a number of species of female grouse but has a much longer, pointed tail and bare legs. Female Sharp-tailed Grouse also has a pointed tail but is shorter-necked, has a slight crest, has white outer tail feathers, a shorter tail and feathered legs. Female Sage Grouse has a dark belly patch and feathered legs.

Specimen:

♂

- ✓ White ring on neck
- ✓ Metallic green-blue head
- ✓ Long, ornate tail

♀

- ✓ Plain brown with black
- ✓ Tail not as long as male

Wild Turkey

Order	Galliformes
Family	Phasianidae
Subfamily	Meleagridinae
Genus/Species	<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>

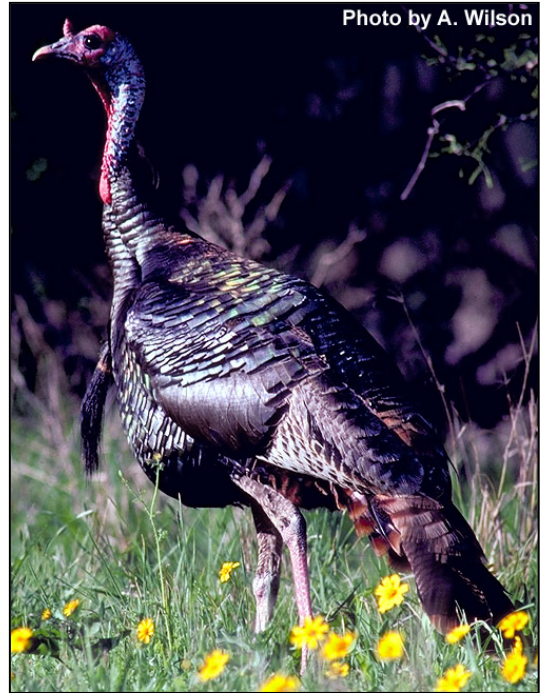


Photo by A. Wilson

Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Open Forests, Edges	Year Round in NA	Seeds	Scrape Platform

ID Tips:

- Length: 34 inches
- Very large, small-headed, round-winged, long-tailed, ground-dwelling bird
- Unfeathered bluish head and reddish throat
- Dark breast, belly and upper back
- Iridescent bronze and green wings
- Barred primaries
- Dark, fan-shaped tail with brown or buff band at tip
- Adult male:**
 - Larger head with wattle at throat, caruncled forehead, and projection behind the bill
 - More iridescent plumage

Similar species:

Too large to be confused with any other bird.

Specimen:

- ✓ Giant, flat
- ✓ Bald Head
- ✓ Metallic feathers with black tips on chest

Ruffed Grouse

Order	Galliformes
Suborder	Suborder
Family	Phasianidae
Subfamily	Tetraoninae
Tribe	Tribe
Genus/Species	<i>Bonasa umbellus</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Deciduous Forests	Year Round in NA	Seeds Berries	Platform

ID Tips:

- Length: 14 inches
- Sexes similar
- Medium-sized, stocky, round-winged, chicken-like bird
- Crest at top of head
- Blackish ruffs on sides of neck
- Head, neck, and back brown or gray
- Breast whitish with brown and black bars and chevrons
- Long, squarish tail
- Tail brown or gray with narrow black and pale bars and broad blackish subterminal band

Similar species:

Sharp-tailed Grouse is more white and tan than brown or gray and has a long, pointed tail with white outer tail feathers. Spruce and Blue Grouse are darker and lack the black subterminal tail band.

Specimen:

- ✓ Mottled shades of brown
- ✓ Dark band at tip of tail
- ✓ Incomplete
- ✓ Stick up ass

Northern Bobwhite

Order	Galliformes
Family	Odontophoridae
Genus/Species	<i>Colinus virginianus</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Farmlands, Fields, Open Woods	Year Round in NA	Seeds Vegetation Invertebrates	Scrape Platform

ID Tips:

- Length: 8 inches
- Small, chunky, short-tailed, round-winged, ground-dwelling bird
- Slight crest at top of head

Adult male:

- White chin and supercilium
- Black cap, eyeline, nape and throat
- Reddish-brown body stippled with white and black spots
- Pale belly

Adult female:

- Buff throat and supercilium
- Dark cap, eyeline, nape and throat
- Reddish-brown body with darker back
- Black and white streaks and chevrons about underparts and back
- Pale belly

Similar species:

Female Montezuma Quail may resemble Northern Bobwhite, but has a head that appears helmeted rather than crested. Montezuma Quail also lacks the strongly contrasting supercilium and throat of Northern Bobwhite and has a darker belly.

Specimen:

- ✓ Smaller than grouse
- ♂
- ✓ White throat and eye stripe
- ✓ All black beak
- ♀
- ✓ Buffy (Brown/Orange) throat & eye stripe
- ✓ Brown on bottom
- ✓ Steel clip on right wing

Rock Dove

Order	Columbiformes
Family	Columbidae



Sibley:

✓



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Cities, Parks, etc.	Mixed	Seeds Grain	Platform

ID Tips:

- Length: 11 inches
- The familiar "pigeon" of cities and parks
- Sexes similar
- Adult similar to juvenile
- Large, chunky dove
- Medium length tail is squared off at tip
- Highly variable plumage (some can be entirely chestnut, white, black or anything in between)

Typical color morph:

- Dark bill
- Dark gray head, neck and upper breast
- Green and purple iridescence on hindneck
- Pale gray back, wings and belly
- Two dark bars on wings (formed from dark tips to secondaries and greater secondary coverts)
- Dark gray primaries
- White rump
- Pale gray tail with black terminal band

Similar species:

Other pigeons are wholly dark with different head patterns. All other species lack double dark bar on wing and have darker wings and backs.

Specimen:

- ✓ Looks like a pigeon...oh, it is a pigeon
- ✓ Purple/Green Metallic at shoulders
- ✓ Grey belly

Mourning Dove

Order	Columbiformes
Family	Columbidae
Genus/Species	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>

Photo by A. Wilson



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Any	Mixed	Seeds	Platform

ID Tips:

- Length: 10.5 inches
- Sexes similar
- Medium-sized, somewhat slender dove with very thin neck
- Black bill

Adult:

- Pale buff-brown head, neck, breast, and belly
- Purple and green iridescence on neck
- Small black mark on lower neck
- Medium brown back and upperwings, with large black spots on coverts
- Long tail is pointed at tip
- Dark brown tail with white tips to outer four tail feathers

Similar species:

Long pointed tail is distinctive for adults, while black spotting on coverts and pale color help distinguish it from White-winged and White-tipped Doves. Juvenile is easily confused with Common Ground-Dove and Inca Dove, but is longer necked, shows a pointed tail with more white at edges and lacks cinnamon in primaries.

Specimen:

- ✓ Peach Belly
- ✓ Long Tail
- ✓ Metallic Shoulders

Parrots

Order	Psittaciformes
--------------	----------------

Distribution:

Tropics

Habitat:

Coastal Areas

Feeding:

Fruits

Seeds

**Nests:****Specimen:**

✓ It's a parrot alright

Social Behavior:**Similar species:**

Info

ID Tips:

•Tips

Sibley:

✓

Mousebirds

Order	Coliiformes
Family	Coliidae

Distribution:

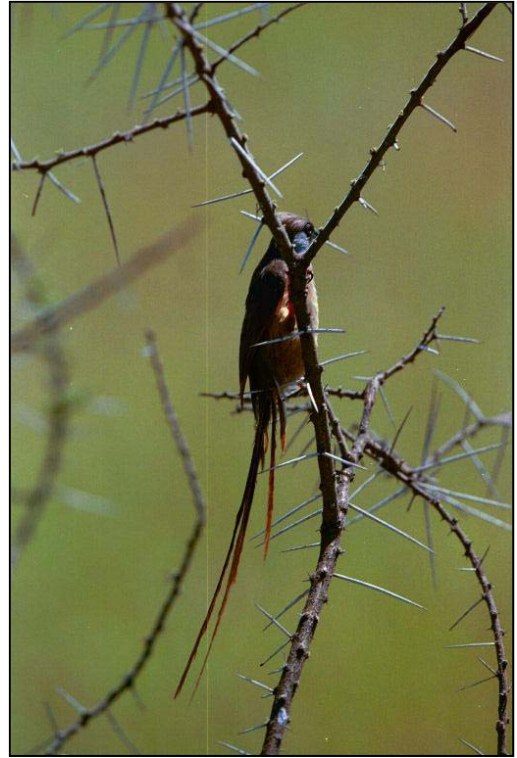
Africa

Habitat:

Feeding:

Nests:

Social Behavior:



Specimen:

✓ Long, long, long forked tail

Similar species:

Info

ID Tips:

•Tips

Sibley:

✓

Turacos

Order	Musophagiformes
Family	Musophagidae



Distribution:

Africa

Habitat:

Woodland

Feeding:

Fruit

Nests:

Social Behavior:

Specimen:

- ✓ Long dark tail
- ✓ Green Breast

Similar species:

Info

ID Tips:

- Tips

Sibley:

✓

Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Order	Cuculiformes
Family	Cuculidae
Genus/Species	<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>



Photo by J. A. Spendelow

Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodland	Neotropical Migrant	Invertebrates	Cup?

ID Tips:

- Length: 11 inches
- Sexes similar
- Slender, long-tailed bird
- Yellow orbital ring
- Cinnamon inner webs to primaries, often visible at rest
- Brown head, nape, back, and upperwings
- White chin, breast, and belly
- Brown uppertail has black outer tail feathers with white tips

Adult:

- Black bill with yellow basal half of lower mandible
- Tail feathers with extensive pale tips below

Similar species:

Adult Black-billed Cuckoo has red orbital ring, black bill, smaller tail spots, and lacks cinnamon primaries. Juvenile Black-billed Cuckoo can be similar to juvenile Yellow-billed Cuckoo but never shares the cinnamon primaries of the Yellow-billed. Mangrove Cuckoo has black mask, buff breast, larger white tail spots below and lacks cinnamon primaries.

Specimen:

- ✓ In box with right wing
- ✓ Grey belly
- ✓ Dark tail feathers with white tips

Black-billed Cuckoo

Order	Cuculiformes
Family	Cuculidae



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodland	Neotropical Migrant	Invertebrates	Cup?

ID Tips:

- Length: 11 inches
- Sexes similar
- Slender, long-tailed bird
- Black bill

Adult:

- Red orbital ring
- Cold brown head, nape, back, upperwings, and uppertail
- White chin, foreneck, breast and belly
- Tail is gray below with very narrow white tips to tail feathers

Similar species:

Adult Yellow-billed Cuckoo has yellow-based bill and cinnamon primaries in all plumages, and larger white tail spots below. Juvenile Yellow-billed Cuckoos can be black-billed and can have small tail spots and are best identified by primary pattern. Mangrove Cuckoo has yellow-based bill, black mask, buff breast and larger white tail spots below.

Specimen:

- ✓ Light Body
- ✓ Dark Brown back
- ✓ Long black bill

Groove-billed Ani

Order	Cuculiformes
Family	Cuculidae



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Grassland Successional Forest Scrub	Short Distance Migrant	Invertebrates Vertebrates Fruit	Platform

ID Tips:

- Length: 14 inches
- Entirely black plumage
- Large, heavy bill with smoothly-curved culmen
- Bill is grooved
- Long tail
- Sexes similar
- Often found in small groups
- Inhabits grassy, scrubby areas

Similar species:

The Groove-billed Ani is similar to the Smooth-billed Ani but has a smaller bill with a smooth curvature to the culmen and grooves (often difficult to see). They are best told apart by voice. Grackles have much thinner bills.

Specimen:

- ✓ Light Body
- ✓ Dark Brown back
- ✓ Long black bill

Barn Owl

Order	Strigiformes
Family	Tytonidae
Genus/Species	<i>Tyto alba</i>

Sibley:

✓



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Barns Fields	Year Round	Vertebrates	Cavity

ID Tips:

- Length: 14 inches Wingspan: 44 inches
- Large, nocturnal, predatory bird
- Large, rounded head
- Pale facial disks with dark frame
- Tawny and gray upperparts with small black and white spots
- White underparts with scattered dark spots
- Sexes similar
- Sometimes found in barns and silos

Similar species:

The Barn Owl is easily distinguished from other owls by its face pattern. In flight, it lacks dark wrist marks found in Long-eared and Short-eared Owls.

Specimen:

- ✓ Cute
- ✓ White Underbody
- ✓ Heart-shaped face
- ✓ Orangeish mottled back

Short-eared Owl

Order	Strigiformes
Family	Strigidae
Genus/Species	<i>Asio flammeus</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Fields Wetlands	Mixed	Vertebrates	Platform

ID Tips:

- Length: 13 inches Wingspan: 41 inches
- Sexes similar
- Medium-sized owl
- Perhaps the most aerial owl, the Short-eared courses low over fields and marshes at dawn and dusk with floppy, moth-like wingbeats
- Yellow eyes and dark bill
- Upperparts mottled brown and white, with darker bars on flight feathers
- Breast tawny with darker streaks fading to a white belly with diffuse darker streaking
- Face relatively dark and unpatterned
- In flight, pale underwings with prominent black wrist marks are obvious

Similar species:

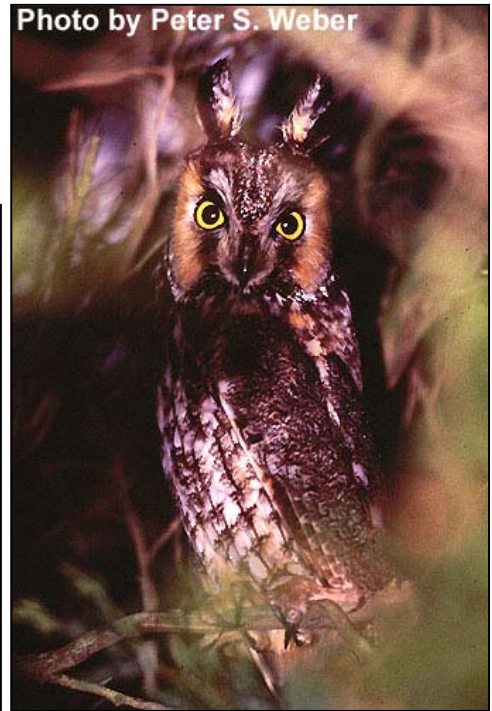
Often easily identified by behavior alone, the Short-eared is most readily confused with the Long-eared Owl. In flight, both species share similar underwing coloration, and often a good view of a sitting bird is needed to discern the many obvious differences such as the Long-eared Owl's ear tufts, red facial disks, barred underparts, and lack of tawny coloration. Potentially confused with the Barred Owl, but easily distinguished by eye and bill color, face and underpart patterning. Barn Owl occupies similar habitat but is much paler and lacks streaking on the underparts.

Specimen:

- ✓ Ears hardly visible
- ✓ Orange breast streaked with brown
- ✓ Larger brown streaks on underside
- ✓ More streaky on back

Long-eared Owl

Order	Strigiformes
Family	Strigidae



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Fields Wetlands	Mixed	Vertebrates	Cavity Platform

ID Tips:

- Length: 13 inches Wingspan: 39 inches
- Large, nocturnal, predatory bird
- Large, rounded head with long ear tufts
- Yellow eyes
- Rusty facial disks
- Gray-brown upperparts with small black and white markings
- White underparts with black cross-shaped markings
- Sexes similar
- Often roosts in dense conifers

Similar species:

The Long-eared Owl is similar to the Great Horned Owl but has cross-shaped, not barred, markings on the underparts and is smaller. Other species of similarly-sized owls lack large ear tufts.

Specimen:

- ✓ Mottled back
- ✓ Long Ears
- ✓ Barred and Streaked Breast

Great Horned Owl

Order	Strigiformes
Family	Strigidae
Genus/Species	<i>Bubo virginianus</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woods → Suburbs	Mixed / Year Round	Whatever it wants	Takes over others

ID Tips:

- Length: 20 inches Wingspan: 55 inches
- Sexes similar
- Very large owl with prominent ear tufts
- Yellow eyes and dark bill
- Upperparts mottled brown, gray, and black
- Pale underparts with fine brown bars
- Reddish-brown facial disks bordered by black with a lower border of white
- White throat patch
- Pale gray form inhabits northern Canada

Similar species:

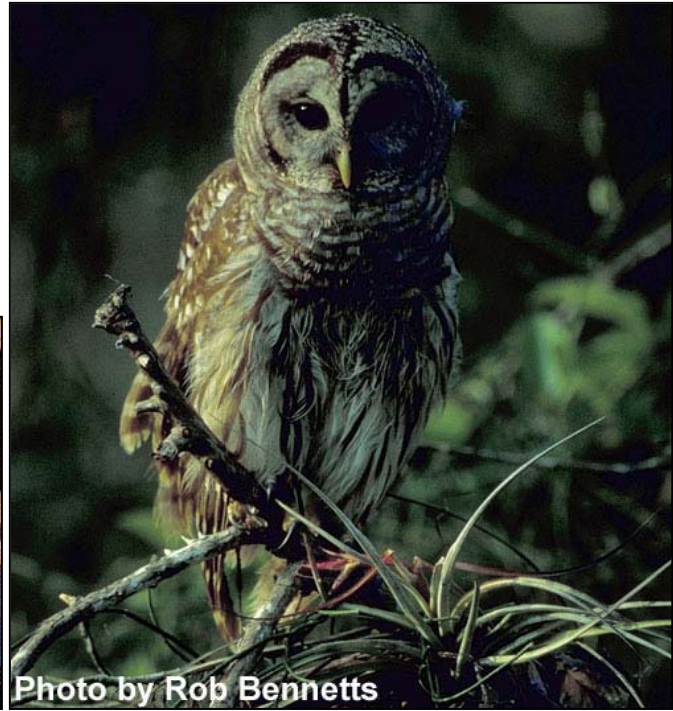
Only the Long-eared Owl shares the red facial disks and prominent ear tufts, but is much smaller and slenderer, is barred and streaked on the belly, lacks the white throat, and has its ear tufts set closer together.

Specimen:

- ✓ Fuzzy feet
- ✓ Flattened black horns
- ✓ White throat
- ✓ Huge (sharp) talons
- ✓ Tail longer than feet
- ✓ Indistinct white/dark pattern on back

Barred Owl

Order	Strigiformes
Family	Strigidae
Genus/Species	<i>Strix varia</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Forests	Year Round	Vertebrates	Cavity

ID Tips:

- Length: 17 inches Wingspan: 44 inches
- Sexes similar
- Rather large owl
- Dark eyes and yellow bill
- Back brown, mottled with pale spots and dark bars
- Underparts pale with long, brown streaks
- Chest pale with brown barring
- Face pale with dark concentric rings surrounding eye

Similar species:

The Spotted Owl is most similar, but can be separated with attention to its barred, not streaked, underpart coloration. Short-eared Owl is similar in size, but is not barred on the chest nor is as heavily streaked below, does not share the concentric rings in the facial disks, has yellow eyes and a dark bill, and is found in quite different habitat. Great Gray Owl is superficially similar, but much larger, gray rather than brown below, and has differently patterned underparts.

Specimen:

- ✓ White bars on brown back
- ✓ In box with right wing
- ✓ White & brown bars on underwing
- ✓ Dark barring on upper breast

Eastern Screech Owl

Order	Strigiformes
Family	Strigidae



Photo by C.S. Robbins

Grey Morph

Red Morph



Photo by J.A. Spendelow



Photo by Peter S. Weber

Sibley:

✓



Photo by C.W. Johnson



Photo by C. W. Johnson

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Forests	Year Round	Vertebrates Invertebrates	Cavity

ID Tips:

- Length: 8? inches Wingspan: 22? inches
- Small, nocturnal, predatory bird
- Large, rounded head with ear tufts
- Yellow eyes
- Dense streaking on underparts with finer barring
- Some birds have rusty plumage, others dark gray
- Sexes similar

Similar species:

The Eastern Screech-Owl is very similar in plumage to Western and Whiskered Screech-Owls and is best separated by voice. Other small owls lack prominent ear tufts.

Specimen:

- ✓ White bars on brown back
- ✓ In box with right wing
- ✓ White & brown bars on underwing
- ✓ Dark barring on upper breast

Common Nighthawk

Order	Caprimulgiformes
Family	Caprimulgidae
Subfamily	Chordeilinae
Genus/Species	<i>Chordeiles minor</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Forests Grasslands	Long-Distance Migrant	Invertebrates	Scrape

ID Tips:

- Length: 9 inches Wingspan: 23 inches
- Very short bill
- Blackish upperparts with gray and white patterning
- Brown and white patterning on head and chest
- Underparts with heavy dark bars
- Dark wings with conspicuous pale patch midway out from bend in wing
- Dark tail with thin white bars

Adult male:

- White throat

Adult female:

- Buff throat

Similar species:

Separated from all nightjars except nighthawks by the pale patch in the wing. Lesser Nighthawk is similar but tends to have its white patch farther out (2/3 of the way from the bend of the wing) its wing. Antillean nighthawk is somewhat buffier, but is probably not safely identified by sight in the field All three species are easily identified by call.

Specimen:

- ✓ Brown & White stripes on belly
- ✓ White chin with dark head light brown with dark splotches
- ✓ White stripe on tail feathers top and bottom

Whip-poor-will

Order	Caprimulgiformes
Family	Caprimulgidae
Subfamily	Chordeilinae
Genus/Species	<i>Caprimulgus vociferus</i>



Photo by J. A. Spendelow

Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Forested and Brush	Long-Distance Migrant	Invertebrates	Scrape

ID Tips:

- Length: 9 inches
- Very short bill
- Medium length tail
- Upperparts mottled heavily with gray, black, and brown
- Underparts pale with gray and black mottling
- Black throat

•Adult male:

- White patch borders lower margin of black throat
- White tips to the outer tail feathers

•Adult female:

- Buff patch borders lower margin of throat
- Buff tips to the outer tail feathers

Similar species:

Separated from nighthawks by the lack of a pale patch in the wing. Common Poorwill is smaller and its wings extend to the tail at rest. Chuck-will's-widow is significantly larger and longer tailed, is overall a rich brown rather than gray, and has a buff (rather than black) throat. All nightjars are easily identified by their distinctive songs.

Specimen:

- ✓ In box with right wing
- ✓ Darker bands
- ✓ Large tail with white tip on bottom
- ✓ Bands on wings
- ✓ Dark back

Chimney Swift

Order	Apodiformes
Family	Apodidae
Genus/Species	<i>Chaetura pelagica</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Urban	Neotropical Migrant	Insects	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 5 inches Wingspan: 12.5 inches
- Sexes similar
- Juvenile similar to adult
- Small aerial bird with cigar-shaped body and crescent-shaped wings
- Short tail bluntly squared off
- Plumage sooty gray above with slightly paler rump
- Buff throat darkening to sooty gray on belly
- Underwings pale gray

Similar species:

All swallows have longer tails, usually with a notch or fork, and broader wings. Black Swift and White-throated Swift have forked tails and different patterning below. Vaux's Swift is extremely similar but is somewhat smaller, with shorter wings, a paler rump and throat, and a different call.

Specimen:

- ✓ Long flight feathers
- ✓ Spine-like tips on tail feathers
- ✓ Coloured like soot and ash

Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Order	Apodiformes
Family	Trochilidae
Genus/Species	<i>Archilochus colubris</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodlands	Neotropical Migrant	Nectar Invertebrates	

ID Tips:

- Length: 3 inches
- Long, straight, thin bill
- Small hummingbird
- Bright green back and crown
- White underparts with greenish flanks

Adult male:

- Iridescent scarlet gorget
- Black face and chin
- Entirely dark forked tail

Specimen:

- ✓ Needle Bill
- ✓ Iridescent Red throat path on male
- ✓ In tube
- ✓ Size of my thumb

Similar species:

No other hummingbirds occur regularly over much of its range, but there is some overlap in the southeast and Texas. The Broad-tailed Hummingbird is similar to the male Ruby-throated, but has a rosy-red throat rather than a scarlet or ruby throat patch. Male Ruby-throated Hummingbirds can also be identified by their black face and chin, and their distinctive call notes, and the lack of a wing whistle produced by their wings in flight. Females are similar to a number of other female hummingbirds, and are best told from the Calliope Hummingbird and species in the genus *Selasphorus* by their lack of rufous on the flanks and in the tail. Anna's Hummingbirds are larger and have grayer chests, while Costa's Hummingbirds differ only in subtleties of facial pattern and tail pattern. Black-chinned Hummingbird females are essentially identical, and are not safely separable from female Ruby-throateds except in the hand. Best told from all species except Black-chinned Hummingbird by call.

Elegant Trogon

Order	Trogoniformes
Family	Trogonidae

Distribution:

Tropics of Old and New World

Habitat:

Forests

Feeding:

Fruit

Nests:

Cavity

Social Behavior:

Sibley:

✓



Specimen:

- ✓ Reddish chest
- ✓ Square tail with white sides

Similar species:

The Elegant Trogon is similar to the rarer Eared Trogon but has a white breast band and a barred undersurface to the tail. Eared Trogon lacks the breast band and has a mostly white undersurface to the tail.

ID Tips:

- Length: 10 inches
- Short, yellow bill
- Black mask and pale eye ring
- Dark green breast, head and upperparts
- White breast band
- Red belly and undertail coverts
- Long tail, barred underneath and squared at tip
- Female duller than male with less red underneath
- United States range restricted to southeastern Arizona

Belted Kingfisher

Order	Coraciiformes
Suborder	Alcedines
Family	Alcedinidae
Subfamily	Alcedininae
Genus/Species	<i>Ceryle alcyon</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Water Wetland	Mixed	Vertebrates	Burrow Cavity

ID Tips:

- Length: 12 inches
- Large, short-legged, big-headed, big-billed bird
- Hovers over water and dives headfirst into water in pursuit of fish
- Slate blue head, with white spot near lores
- White chin, throat and neck
- Slate blue breastband
- Slate blue back and upperwing coverts with small white spots
- Slate blue tail with numerous dark and light bands

Adult male:

- Entirely white belly

Adult female:

- White underparts with reddish belly band extending down flanks

Similar species:

In the United States, only the Ringed Kingfisher of south Texas is similar. It is superficially similar but is larger and has an entirely reddish belly band.

Specimen:

- ✓ ♀- Rusty Belly
- ✓ Long straight bill
- ✓ Short legs
- ✓ Grey chest
- ✓ Square tail grey with white stripes

Bee-eaters

Order	Coraciiformes
Suborder	Alcedines
Family	Meropidae

Distribution:

Long Distance Migrant

Habitat:

Woodland

Feeding:

Invertebrates

Nests:

Scrape/Burrow

Social Behavior:

ID Tips:

•Tips

Sibley:

✓



Specimen:

- ✓ Greenish Chest
- ✓ Yellow Chin
- ✓ 2 Feathers short
- ✓ Crossed point on tail
- ✓ Stick up ass

Similar species:

Info

Hornbills

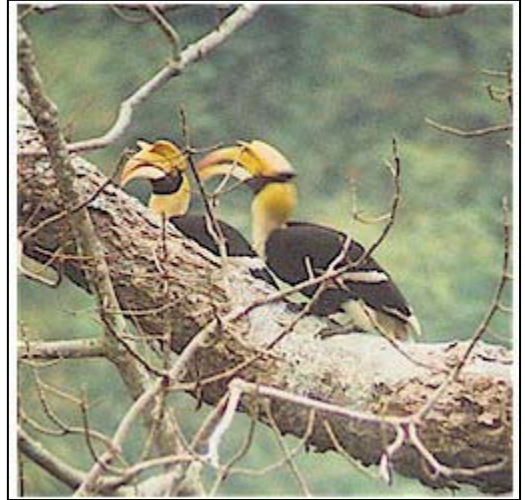
Order	Coraciiformes
Suborder	Alcedines
Family	Bucerotidae

Distribution:

Old World Tropics

Habitat:

Deciduous Forest → Grassland



Feeding:

Fruit

Vertebrates

Nests:

Cavity

Social Behavior:

Specimen:

- ✓ Big
- ✓ Long white tail
- ✓ Big red (painted) bill with large crest

Similar species:

Info

ID Tips:

- Tips

Sibley:

✓

Jacamars

Order	Piciformes
Suborder	Galbuli
Family	Galbulidae

Distribution:

Central and South America

Habitat:

Tropical Forest

Feeding:

Invertebrates

Nests:

Cavity/Burrow

Social Behavior:

ID Tips:

- Tips

Sibley:

✓



Specimen:

- ✓ Iridescent green body
- ✓ Long dark bill

Similar species:

Info

Red-headed Woodpecker

Order	Piciformes
Suborder	Pici
Family	Picidae
Subfamily	Picinae
Genus/Species	<i>Melanerpes erythrocephalus</i>



Photo by J. A. Spendelow

Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
	Short-Distance Migrant	Seeds and Nuts Invertebrates	Cavity

ID Tips:

- Length: 7.5 inches
- Sexes similar
- Fairly large, strikingly black and white woodpecker

Adult:

- Bright red head and neck
- White breast, belly, rump, and vent
- Black back and wings with prominent white secondaries visible in flight and at rest
- Black tail

Juvenile:

- Mottled brown head and neck
- White breast, belly, and rump variably marked with brown streaking
- Dark brown back and upperwings with paler edgings
- White secondaries broken by brown lateral bars
- Dark brown tail

Similar species:

Entirely red head of adult should easily separate it from all but Red-breasted Sapsucker (which does not overlap in range, and has patterned back, yellow belly, and a different wing pattern). Note the Red-headed Woodpecker's different position of the white wing patch (especially in flight), white belly, and larger size. It may be confused with the largely dissimilar Red-bellied Woodpecker at times, but attention to the gray face and throat, and barred back and wings of the Red-bellied should eliminate any confusion.

Specimen:

- ✓ Adult- Stark Red head and chest
- ✓ White Belly
- ✓ Black back with white ½ wings
- ✓ Juvenile- Brownish head and body

Red-bellied Woodpecker

Order	Piciformes
Suborder	Pici
Family	Picidae
Subfamily	Picinae
Genus/Species	<i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodland	Year Round	Fruit Nuts	Cavity

ID Tips:

- Length: 8.5 inches
- Medium-sized woodpecker
- Pale gray face, throat, breast, and belly
- Back strongly barred with black and white
- Black wings barred and spotted with white
- White bases to the primaries appear as white crescent in the hand in flight
- White rump and uppertail coverts with sparse dark markings
- Dark tail with black and white barring on the central retrices
- Adult male:**
- Red cap extending from bill to nape
- Adult female:**
- Red nape patch, gray crown, and red spot above bill

Similar species:

Gila Woodpecker is darker brown about the head and belly, lacks the red nape and spot above bill. Golden-fronted Woodpecker overlaps in Texas where hybrids are known so identifications should be made with caution and attention to all details of plumage. Note the Red-bellied's red nape and barred central retrices in all plumages.

Specimen:

- ✓ Black and White barred back
- ✓ Small reddish patch on belly
- ✓ Cracked beak near head

Northern Flicker

Order	Piciformes
Suborder	Pici
Family	Picidae
Subfamily	Picinae
Genus/Species	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>

Red Shafted

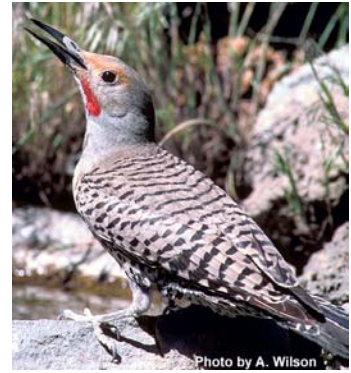


Photo by A. Wilson

Yellow Shafted



Photo by Kenny Albee



Photo by Deb Fickett



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
	Short Distance	Invertebrates Fruit	Cavity

ID Tips:

- Length: 10.5-11 inches
- Large woodpecker
- Brown back and wings barred with black
- Black crescent on upper breast
- Beige breast and belly spotted heavily with black
- White rump (obvious in flight)
- Tail dark above
- Two color forms, formerly separate species

"Yellow-shafted"

- [Breeds in eastern United States and Canada](#)
- Tail and underwings are entirely yellow below, and retrices and primaries have yellow shafts
- Red crescent on nape
- Gray cap and nape
- Tan face, chin, and throat
- Adult male has black whisker

"Red-shafted"

- [Breeds in western United States and Canada](#)
- Tail and underwings are entirely red below, and retrices and primaries have red shafts
- Brown crown
- Gray face
- Adult male has red whisker

Similar species:

The Gilded Flicker can be told from the "Red-shafted Flicker" by its yellow underwings and from the "Yellow-shafted Flicker" by its lack of red at the rear of the head, pale brown cap and pale gray face, a paler brown back, and the male sports a red rather than black whisker.

Specimen:

- ✓ YS Male- Black Moustache
- ✓ YS Female- No Moustache
- ✓ RS Male- Orange tail Underside
- ✓ Red moustache

Downy Woodpecker

Order	Piciformes
Suborder	Pici
Family	Picidae
Subfamily	Picinae
Genus/Species	<i>Picoides pubescens</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodland	Permanent	Invertebrates Fruit	Cavity

ID Tips:

- Length: 5.75 inches
- Very small black and white woodpecker
- Very short bill
- Mostly black head set off by broad white supercilium and lower border to auriculars
- Black nape
- White back
- Black wings with white spotting on coverts and flight feathers
- White underparts
- Black rump
- Black tail with white outer tail feathers barred with black

Adult male:

- Red spot at rear of head

Similar species:

Other small black and white woodpeckers such as Ladder-backed, Strickland's, Red-cockaded and Nuttall's have longer bills, barred backs, and patterning on the chests. Black-backed woodpecker is easily distinguished by the darker face, black back, and barred flanks. Three-toed Woodpecker is best distinguished by the darker face and barred flanks, since some races can have white backs. Juvenile Hairy Woodpeckers on the Queen Charlotte Islands have barred outer tail feathers and such birds should be carefully separated from Downy Woodpeckers by their larger size and larger bills. Hairy Woodpecker is most similar, but is larger, with a longer bill, entirely white outer tail feathers, and a different call.

Specimen:

- ✓ Male- Red patch on back of head
- ✓ Female- No patch
- ✓ Both in boxes with both wings
- ✓ Male- Black stripes on grey tail underside

Hairy Woodpecker

Order	Piciformes
Suborder	Pici
Family	Picidae
Subfamily	Picinae



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodland	Permanent	Invertebrates Fruit	Cavity

ID Tips:

- Length: 7.5 inches
- Medium-sized black and white woodpecker
- Fairly long bill
- Mostly black head set off by broad white supercilium and lower border to auriculars
- Black nape
- White back
- Black wings with white spotting on coverts and flight feathers
- White underparts
- Black rump
- Black tail with white outer tail feathers
- Significant racial variation can result in juveniles with barred outer tail feathers (Queen Charlotte Islands), juveniles with barred backs and flanks (Maritime provinces) and birds with brown feathering replacing the black (Pacific Northwest).

Adult male:

- Red spot at rear of head

Similar species:

Other black and white woodpeckers such as Ladder-backed, Strickland's, Red-cockaded and Nuttall's have shorter bills, barred backs, and patterning on the chests. Black-backed woodpecker is easily distinguished by the darker face, black back, and barred flanks. Three-toed Woodpecker is best distinguished by the darker face and barred flanks, since some races can have white backs. In the Maritimes juvenile Hairy Woodpeckers can more closely resemble Three-toed Woodpeckers and it is best to concentrate on differences in facial pattern and bill size when identifying birds in this area. Similarly, juvenile Hairy Woodpeckers on the Queen Charlotte Islands can have barred outer tail feathers and such birds should be carefully separated from Downy Woodpeckers by their larger size and larger bills. Downy Woodpecker is most similar, and differs only in its smaller size, proportionally smaller bill, barred outer tail feathers, and different call.

Specimen:

- ✓ Larger than Downy
- ✓ In tube

Pileated Woodpecker

Order	Piciformes
Suborder	Pici
Family	Picidae
Subfamily	Picinae
Genus/Species	<i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodland	Permanent	Invertebrates Fruit	Cavity

ID Tips:

- Length: 15 inches
- Very large (crow-sized) black and white woodpecker
- Prominent red crest at rear of head
- White throat
- Entirely black body plumage at rest except a white line that extends from bill down sides of neck to upper flanks
- In flight shows pale bases to primaries on upperwing and entirely white underwing covert

Adult male:

- Red forehead
- Red malar area

Adult female:

- Black forehead
- Black malar stripe

Similar species:

No other living woodpecker could be confused with the Pileated.

Specimen:

- ✓ Big
- ✓ Bright Red head and crest
- ✓ White shoulder stripes

Toucans

Order	Piciformes
Suborder	Pici
Family	Ramphastidae

Distribution:

Neotropics

Habitat:

Woodland

Savanna

Feeding:

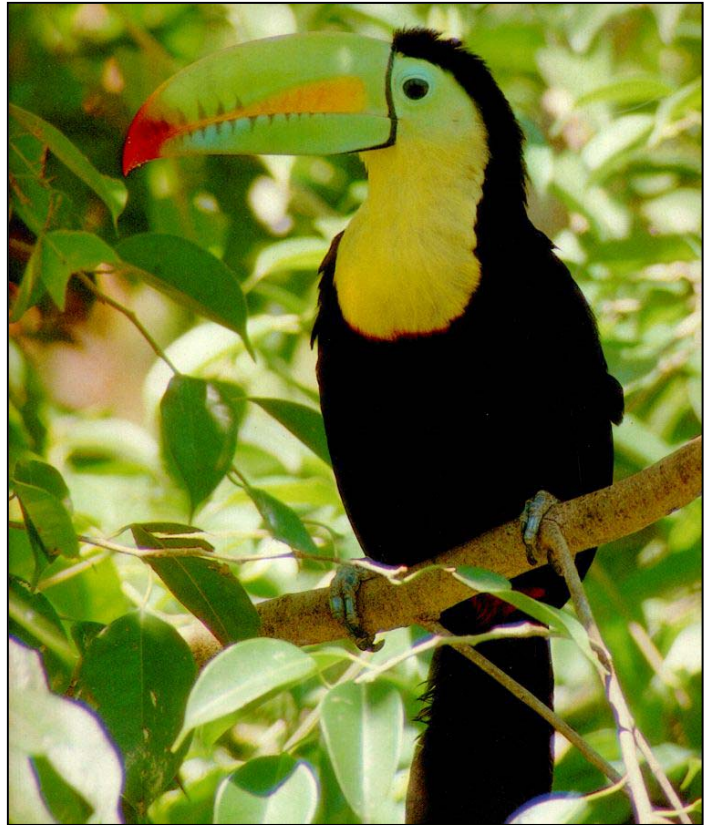
Fruit

Invertebrates

Nests:

Cavity

Social Behavior:



Specimen:

- ✓ Yellow Chin
- ✓ Black Body
- ✓ Green and Red Painted Bill

Similar species:

Info

ID Tips:

- Tips

Sibley:

✓

Eastern Wood-Pewee

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Tyranni
Family	Tyrannidae
Subfamily	Fluvicolinae
Genus/Species	<i>Contopus virens</i>

Photo by J.A. Spendelov



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodland	Neotropical Migrant	Invertebrates	Open-cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 5.25 inches
- Triangular head
- Grayish-olive upperparts
- Dark bill is yellow at base of lower mandible
- Breast has olive wash
- Whitish throat, belly and undertail coverts
- Wing bars
- Commonly feeds high in the canopy by flying out to catch insects and returning to same perch

Similar species:

The relatively nondescript Eastern Wood-Pewee is almost identical to the Western Wood-Pewee and is best separated by differences in range and songs. The larger Greater Pewee has a different range and an entirely yellow lower mandible. Olive-sided Flycatcher is quite similar but is larger, with more obvious dark sides, larger bill, and sometimes has white patches visible above the wing. Empidonax flycatchers are very similar but appear smaller, have more obvious eye rings (most species), and different vocalizations. Juvenile Eastern Phoebe is similar but has a darker head and wags its tail.

Specimen:

- ✓ White wing bars
- ✓ Whitish grey mixed belly
- ✓ Square tail
- ✓ In box, wings projected up and back

Great Crested Flycatcher

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Tyranni
Family	Tyrannidae
Subfamily	Tyranninae
Genus/Species	<i>Myiarchus crinitus</i>

Leggo!



Photo by D. K. Dawson

Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodland	Neotropical Migrant	Invertebrates	Cavity

ID Tips:

- Length: 7 inches
- Gray throat and breast
- Yellow underparts
- Brownish-olive upperparts
- Pale wing bars and tertial edges
- Brown tail with rust edges
- Pale base to lower mandible
- Inhabits forests where it is most often heard before being seen

Similar species:

The Great Crested Flycatcher is most similar to the other flycatchers in the genus *Myiarchus*: Brown-crested, Ash-throated and Dusky-capped. It has a darker gray throat and breast than the other species and has a pale base to its lower mandible. Ash-throated and Dusky-capped are smaller. Ash-throated has paler yellow underparts. Brown-crested and Dusky-capped have browner tails. The calls of these very similar species are an excellent way to distinguish them. Some species of kingbirds are similar but have paler heads and lack rusty in the tail.

Specimen:

- ✓ Yellow belly and leg feathers
- ✓ Olive above
- ✓ White wing bars parallel to primaries
- ✓ In a box with both wings
- ✓ Fan tail

Eastern Kingbird

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Tyranni
Family	Tyrannidae
Subfamily	Tyranninae
Genus/Species	<i>Tyrannus tyrannus</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodland	Neotropical Migrant	Invertebrates	Cavity

ID Tips:

- Length: 6.75 inches
- Large head
- Often feeds by flying out to catch insects and then returning to the same perch
- Often perches in an exposed location, for example, the very top of a tree or on a fence
- Frequents open habitats: agricultural areas and streams

Adult:

- Black tail with white terminal band
- Blackish upperparts
- Whitish underparts
- Red crown patch rarely visible

Juvenile:

- Upperparts browner than adult

Similar species:

The Eastern Kingbird is easily told from other similar kingbirds by its white terminal tail band and black and white plumage. Waxwings have yellow terminal tail bands.

Specimen:

- ✓ White tip on tail
- ✓ Slightly shorter than hand
- ✓ Dark head and back
- ✓ Grey shoulders

Northern Shrike

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Laniidae
Genus/Species	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Grassland	Regional Migrant	Invertebrates Vertebrates	

ID Tips:

- Length: 8 inches
- Heavy, hooked bill with a pale base to lower mandible
- Black cheeks
- Pale gray head and back
- White underparts with faint gray barring
- Black wings with white wing patches
- Black tail with white outer tail feathers
- Juveniles and immatures are browner and duller

Similar species:

The Northern Shrike is very similar to the Loggerhead Shrike but is larger with a black mask that does not extend across the top of the bill, pale base to the lower mandible, a paler gray overall color and faintly barred underparts. Immatures are browner than immature Loggerheads. Northern Mockingbirds are similarly-sized and colored but have slimmer bills and lack a black mask.

Specimen:

- ✓ Hooked Bill
- ✓ Black mask
- ✓ Black tail on top, white underneath
- ✓ Grey hood and back
- ✓ Patterned grey belly
- ✓ White → Black → Brown wing with all white tips

Yellow-throated Vireo

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Vireonidae



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodland	Neotropical Migrant	Invertebrates Fruit	Open-cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 5 inches
- Thick bill with hooked upper mandible
- Dark eye
- Bold yellow spectacles
- Bright yellow throat and upper breast
- Olive head and back
- White belly and undertail coverts
- Gray rump
- Wings and tail dark
- Blue-gray legs
- Two bold white wing bars
- Sexes similar
- Juvenile similar to adult

Similar species:

No other vireo combines white wing bars, yellow throat and yellow spectacles. Juvenile White-eyed Vireo is similar but does not have a yellow throat. Pine Warbler has similar plumage, but lacks spectacles, and has a thinner bill, faintly streaked sides, and white tail spots.

Specimen:

- ✓ Yellow neck and chest
- ✓ White belly
- ✓ Length of my middle finger minus the tail
- ✓ Olive hood and back

Blue-headed Vireo

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Vireonidae
Genus/Species	<i>Vireo solitarius</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodland	Neotropical Migrant	Invertebrates Fruit	Open-cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 4.75? inches
- White spectacles
- Dark eye
- White wing bars
- Gray head contrasting with olive back
- White throat, breast, and undertail coverts
- Yellowish flanks
- Thick bill with hooked upper mandible
- Sexes similar
- Juveniles similar to adults
- Formerly conspecific with Cassin's and Plumbeous Vireos

Similar species:

The bold white spectacles of the Blue-headed Vireo are a good field mark. Black-capped Vireo also has white spectacles but it has a black, not gray, head. Yellow-throated and White-eyed Vireos have yellow spectacles. Plumbeous and Cassin's Vireos are duller without bright yellow flanks and have less contrast between the head and back. The Gray Vireo lacks spectacles and has faint wing bars.

Specimen:

- ✓ Bluish Head
- ✓ In tube with grey Styrofoam bottom
- ✓ Grey chest
- ✓ Grey/olive back
- ✓ Black tail with yellow parallel stripes
- ✓ Grey underside

Red-eyed Vireo

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Vireonidae
Genus/Species	<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodland	Neotropical Migrant	Invertebrates Fruit	Open-cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 5 inches
- Thick bill with hooked upper mandible
- Sexes similar
- Red eye
- White supercilium bordered above by a dark line and below by a dark eye line
- Gray crown contrasts with olive-green back and upper wings
- No wing bars
- White underparts
- Yellowish cast to flanks and undertail coverts in fresh plumage
- Blue-gray legs
- Juvenile has brown eye and yellower underparts than adult

Similar species:

Warbling Vireo has a grayer back, no black borders to the white supercilium, and a dark eye. Philadelphia Vireo has yellower underparts, a less distinct supercilium and a dark eye. In Florida the Black-whiskered Vireo can be distinguished from the Red-eyed by its black malar streak. In South Texas the rare Yellow-green Vireo is much yellower below and has much paler black borders to the supercilium than the Red-eyed. All other vireos have wing bars.

Specimen:

- ✓ White eyebrow
- ✓ White underside
- ✓ Stick up ass
- ✓ Dark bluish greyish olivish back

Blue Jay

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Corvidae
Genus/Species	<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Urban	Short Distance Migrant	Seeds Fruit Invertebrates	Open-cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 10 inches
- Black sturdy bill
- Blue crest and upperparts
- Black eyeline and breastband
- Grayish-white throat and underparts
- Bright blue wings with black bars and white patches
- Long blue tail with black bars and white corners
- Dark legs
- Migrates during the day in small flocks

Similar species:

Because of its large size, blue coloration and crest the Blue Jay is quite distinctive. Steller's Jay has dark underparts. Other jays lack a crest and have different markings.

Specimen:

- ✓ Blue crest

Gray Jay

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Corvidae
Genus/Species	<i>Perisoreus canadensis</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodland	Permanent Resident	Invertebrates Fruit Carrion	Open-cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 10 inches
- Short, sturdy, dark bill
- White forehead, face and underparts
- Dark cap and nape (variable amounts of dark depending on range)
- Gray upperparts
- Juveniles very dark

Similar species:

None

Specimen:

- ✓ White collar and forehead
- ✓ Small bill
- ✓ No crest
- ✓ Dark mullet
- ✓ Long tail like Blue Jay

American Crow

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Corvidae
Genus/Species	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Urban Woodland	Short Distance Migrant	Seeds	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 17 inches
- Entirely black plumage
- Squared-off tail
- Very common in urban and agricultural areas

Similar species:

Fish Crow very similar but has different call. Northwestern Crow also very similar but has different range. Ravens are similar but larger with wedge-shaped tails and different calls.

Specimen:

- ✓ All black
- ✓ Smaller than Raven

Common Raven

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Corvidae
Genus/Species	<i>Corvus corax</i>



Sibley:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Forests Deserts	Permanent Resident	Carrion	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 21 inches
- Entirely black plumage
- Larger than crows
- Wedge-shaped tail
- Relatively short legs

Similar species:

Crows are smaller, have squared-off tails and different calls. Chihuahuan Raven similar but smaller with somewhat different calls and occupies more arid habitats.

Specimen:

- ✓ All black
- ✓ Larger than crow

Horned Lark

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Alaudidae
Genus/Species	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Wetlands Grasslands	Mixed	Invertebrates Seeds	Saucer

ID Tips:

- Length: 6.5 inches
- Thin bill
- Black mask, horns and breastband
- White or yellow supercilium
- White or yellow throat
- Gray-brown upperparts
- Pale underparts
- Black tail with white outer tail feathers
- Dark legs
- Juvenile is duller, lacks horns
- Inhabits open areas with short or sparse vegetation
- Often found in large flocks

Similar species:

The face pattern of the Horned Lark is quite different from other field-loving species.

Specimen:

- ✓ No left wing
- ✓ Yellowish Chin
- ✓ Black Breast
- ✓ Mixed White belly
- ✓ Black mask and head tufts

Tree Swallow

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Hirundinidae
Genus/Species	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Wetlands Grasslands Deciduous Forest Water	Mixed	Invertebrates Fruit or Nuts	Cavity

ID Tips:

- Length: 5 inches
- Tiny bill
- Iridescent blue-green upperparts
- White underparts
- Forked tail
- Female duller than male
- Juvenile dull brown above and may have hint of a gray breast band
- Most often seen flying
- Nests in cavities near water
- Often found in large flocks

Specimen:

- ✓ Iridescent Blue back
- ✓ In box with both wings
- ✓ Small A at end of tail

Similar species:

The Tree Swallow is most similar to the Violet-green Swallow. The Violet-green Swallow has white patches that extend further onto the sides of the rump, a white area that extends behind and over the eye and greener upperparts. Bank and Northern Rough-winged Swallows look similar, especially in Fall. Bank Swallow is smaller, this feature is especially noticeable as mixed flocks of swallows often sit on telephone wires. Bank has a dark breast band that is lacking or indistinct in the Tree. From above, Bank Swallow has a paler rump that contrasts with the darker back and tail where the Tree Swallow is uniformly-colored. Northern Rough-winged Swallow has a dusky throat and warmer brown upperparts than the Tree Swallow. Swallows often call in flight and these calls are excellent clues to identification.

Purple Martin

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Hirundinidae
Genus/Species	<i>Progne subis</i>



Photo by Marshall Iliff

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Parks Deciduous Forest Water	Long Distance	Invertebrates	Cavity

ID Tips:

- Length: 7 inches
- Tiny bill
- Largest swallow
- Most often seen flying
- Will nest communally at martin houses in residential and agricultural areas
- Adult male:**
 - Dark purple plumage, usually appears black
 - Forked tail
- Immature males similar to female but may be splotted with dark purple
- Adult female:**
 - Dark gray upperparts with some purple coloration
 - Whitish underparts with gray breast band and throat with some speckling on sides and belly
 - Forked tail
 - Immature plumages similar to female

Similar species:

The male Purple Martin is easily told from other swallows by its entirely dark plumage. It is vaguely similar to the starling but has a smaller bill, longer wings and a darker plumage. Female Purple Martins are similar to Bank and Northern Rough-winged Swallows but are larger, and flap more slowly. At close range, the darker upperparts of the martin are evident.

Specimen:

- ✓ Traces of iridescent purple
- ✓ Roughly same size as sparrow

Bank Swallow

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Hirundinidae



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Grasslands Wetlands Water	Long Distance	Invertebrates	Burrow

ID Tips:

- Length: 4.75 inches
- Tiny bill
- Smallest swallow
- Dark brown upperparts
- White underparts with dark breast band
- Rump paler than back and tail
- Forked tail
- Most often seen flying
- Nests in cavities near water

Similar species:

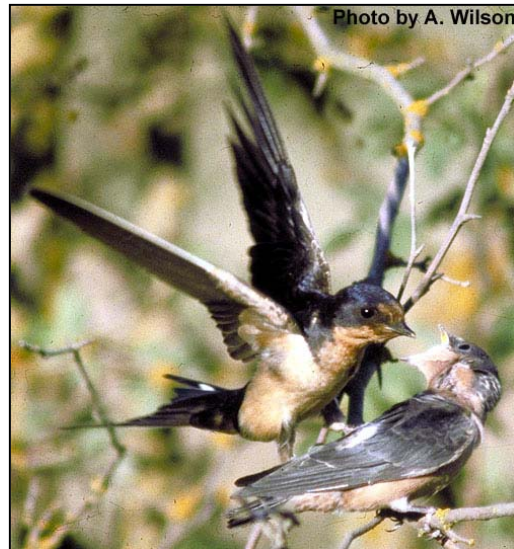
The Bank Swallow is most similar to Northern Rough-winged and immature Tree Swallow. When perched, as mixed flocks of swallows often do on telephone wires, the Bank Swallow is obviously smaller than the other species. In flight, the Bank Swallow has a dark breast band from below and a paler rump, contrasting with darker back and tail, from above.

Specimen:

- ✓ Small
- ✓ Really little bill
- ✓ Reddish chin
- ✓ Brown breast

Barn Swallow

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Hirundinidae



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Parks Grasslands Wetlands Water	Mixed	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 6 inches
- Tiny bill
- Dark orange forehead and throat
- Pale orange underparts
- Dark, iridescent upperparts
- Long, deeply forked tail
- Juvenile similar to adult but paler underneath with a shorter tail
- Most often seen flying
- Will nest communally in mud nests under bridges, in barns and caves, etc

Similar species:

The Barn Swallow can be told from all swallows by its deeply forked tail.

Specimen:

- ✓ Burgundy underside
- ✓ Long forked tail
- ✓ Black in Back

Black in back!
I hit the sack!
I've been too long, I'm glad to be back...



Tufted Titmouse

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Paridae
Genus/Species	<i>Baeolophus bicolor</i>



Photo by Luther Goldman

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Parks Brush Woodlands	Permanent Resident	Invertebrates Fruit or Nuts Seeds	Cavity

ID Tips:

- Length: 4.5-5.5 inches
- Short bill
- Gray crest
- Dark forehead
- Pale gray upperparts
- White underparts
- Rusty flanks
- Birds from central and southern Texas (formerly a separate species, Black-crested Titmouse) have black crests and pale foreheads- [map of breeding range](#)
- Sexes similar
- Often found in small flocks

Similar species:

The Tufted Titmouse is similar to the Plain Titmouse but has rusty flanks and a black forehead (or crest).

Specimen:

- ✓ 2 red spots on white belly
- ✓ Bluish grey back
- ✓ Long square tail
- ✓ Stout black beak with black tuft

Black-capped Chickadee

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Paridae
Genus/Species	<i>Poecile atricapillus</i>



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Parks Brush Woodlands	Permanent Resident	Invertebrates Fruit or Nuts Seeds	Cavity

ID Tips:

- Length: 4.5 inches
- Short bill
- Black crown and throat
- White face
- Pale gray upperparts
- White edges to wing coverts
- Grayish-white underparts
- Rusty flanks
- Sexes similar
- Often found in small flocks

Similar species:

The Black-capped Chickadee is very similar to the Carolina Chickadee and where their ranges overlap they can be difficult to separate. In fact, they have trouble telling themselves apart and hybrids occur. The most obvious difference between them is their songs. Black-capped sings a two note song while Carolina sings a four note song. Hybrids sing a three note song. Outside of the breeding season, when chickadees don't sing much, the Black-capped is slightly larger, has more white edging in the wing and has slower, lower-pitched calls. Boreal and Chestnut-backed Chickadees have more brown in their plumages than the Black-capped.

Specimen:

✓ I truly think I've seen enough of these to recognize it.

Brown Creeper

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Certhiidae
Genus/Species	<i>Certhis americana</i>



Photo by Deanna Dawson



Photo by J.A. Spindelof

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Coniferous Forest	Mixed	Invertebrates Fruit or Nuts	Cup Cavity (Rare)

ID Tips:

- Length: 4.75 inches
- Small size
- Thin, decurved bill
- Bold white supercilium
- Brown upperparts with white spots
- Rusty rump
- White underparts
- Fairly long tail
- Sexes similar
- Feeds by creeping along tree trunks and branches

Similar species:

The Brown Creeper is the only small brown bird that forages in such a unique manner-it creeps along trunks and branches like a woodpecker. It blends in quite well and can be difficult to see. *A lot of bloody help this is with DEAD specimens!*

Specimen:

- ✓ Little Bird
- ✓ In tube, picked up by TV Operator
- ✓ Long tail with pointed feathers
- ✓ Thin decurved beak
- ✓ White breast, mottled brown back

White-breasted Nuthatch

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Sittidae
Genus/Species	<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>



Photo by Jim Stasz

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodlands	Mixed	Invertebrates	Cavity

ID Tips:

- Length: 5 inches
- Straight gray bill
- Black crown and nape
- White face and underparts
- Blue-gray upperparts
- Rusty undertail coverts
- Short tail
- Sexes similar but female duller
- Feeds by hopping along tree trunks and branches often hanging upside down

Similar species:

Because of its unique feeding strategy, the White-breasted Nuthatch is most likely to be confused with other nuthatches. Red-breasted Nuthatch has a black eyeline and reddish underparts. Brown-headed and Pygmy Nuthatches have brown caps and a white patch on the nape. Red-breasted, Pygmy and Brown-headed Nuthatches are mostly found in pines while the White-breasted prefers deciduous trees.

Specimen:

- ✓ Grey/blue back with a dark cap
- ✓ White breast (Really?)
- ✓ Short, pointed beak
- ✓ aka ass-up

House Wren

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Troglodytidae
Genus/Species	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>



Photo by Marcus Martin

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Parks Brush Deciduous Forest	Mixed	Invertebrates	Cavity

ID Tips:

- Length: 4.25 inches
- Short, thin bill
- Indistinct supercilium
- Eye ring
- Gray-brown upperparts (brownier in eastern United States birds)
- Pale gray underparts with dark barring on belly and undertail coverts
- Wings and tail barred with black
- Tail frequently held upright
- Pink legs
- Sexes similar

Similar species:

Other wrens with indistinct superciliums are Winter, Sedge and Rock Wrens. Winter Wren is more reddish-brown above, darker below and has a shorter tail. Sedge Wren is buffier on the breast and is streaked with white on the crown and back. Rock Wren is larger with a contrast between the gray back and brown rump and has buffy tips to the tail.

Specimen:

- ✓ Tiny wittle bird
- ✓ White belly → Mottled Black (I can't read the word after this in my notes)

Marsh Wren

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Troglodytidae



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Wetlands Grasslands	Mixed	Invertebrates	Enclosed

ID Tips:

- Length: 4 inches
- Short, thin bill
- Bold white supercilium
- Brown upperparts
- Unstreaked crown
- Black back with white streaks
- White throat and breast
- Buffy belly and flanks
- Wings and tail barred with black
- Tail frequently held upright
- Sexes similar
- Found in marshes with tall, grassy vegetation

Similar species:

Bewick's Wren is similar but has unstreaked back. Sedge Wren has less distinct supercilium and streaked crown.

Specimen:

- ✓ Tiny
- ✓ Dark Cap
- ✓ White Eyebrows
- ✓ In a box

American Dipper

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Cincilidae



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Water	Resident	Invertebrates Vertebrates	Enclosed

ID Tips:

- Length: 5.75 inches
- Slender bill
- Slate-gray body with browner head
- Frequently bobs very short tail
- Pale legs
- Sexes similar
- Juvenile paler
- Found along streams in mountains-often feeds under water

Similar species:

The American Dipper is unlikely to be confused with any other species.

Specimen:

- ✓ Grey
- ✓ In case with Styrofoam

Golden-Crowned Kinglet

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Regulidae
Genus/Species	<i>Regulus satrapa</i>



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodlands	Mixed	Invertebrates Vertebrates	Pendant

ID Tips:

- Length: 3.5 inches
- Very small, active bird that often flicks its wings
- Thin bill
- Yellow crown surrounded by black
- White supercilium
- Black eyeline and whisker
- Grayish-olive upperparts
- Whitish underparts
- White wing bars
- Yellow edges to flight feathers and tail
- Male has orange patch in center of yellow crown

Similar species:

The Golden-crowned Kinglet is similar in size to the Ruby-crowned Kinglet but has a white supercilium and yellow crown. Warblers are larger and lack the distinctive face pattern.

Specimen:

♂

- ✓ Deeper Λ in tail
- ✓ Smaller beak than female
- ✓ More gold on crown, darker, deeper colour

♀

- ✓ Black tufts on back at bottom of wings

Ruby-crowned Kinglet

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Regulidae



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodlands	Mixed	Invertebrates Vertebrates	Pendant

ID Tips:

- Length: 3.75 inches
- Very small, active bird that often flicks its wings
- Thin bill
- Broken eye ring
- Olive upperparts
- Pale olive underparts
- White wing bars
- Yellow edges to flight feathers and tail
- Male has red patch in center of crown (not always visible)

Similar species:

The Hutton's Vireo is very similar in plumage but has a thicker bill. The Golden-crowned Kinglet is similar in size to the Ruby-crowned Kinglet but has a white supercilium and yellow crown. Warblers are larger, don't flick their wings and lack the broken eye ring.

Specimen:

♂

- ✓ Darker splotches at base of feathers on belly

♀

- ✓ More light patterns on backs of wings

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Sylviidae
Subfamily	Poliophtilinae
Genus/Species	<i>Poliophtila caerulea</i>



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Anywhere but Water	Mixed	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 4 inches
- Very small, active bird
- Thin bill
- White eye ring
- Blue-gray upperparts
- White underparts
- Long, black tail with white outer tail feathers-mostly white when viewed from below
- Male has black supercilium in breeding season

Specimen:

♂

✓ Black tail with white edges on both top and bottom

♀

✓ Black tail with white edges on top and all white on bottom

✓ Darker armpits

Similar species:

The Blue-gray Gnatcatcher is so small but long-tailed that it is only likely to be confused with other gnatcatchers. Male Black-tailed, California, and Black-capped Gnatcatchers have variable amounts of black (depending on season and age) in the crown while Blue-gray Gnatcatchers lack any black in the crown. Female gnatcatchers, other than the Blue-gray, have their upperparts tinged with brown. Black-tailed and California Gnatcatchers have blacker tails when viewed from below and typically have grayer underparts.

Eastern Bluebird

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Turdidae
Genus/Species	<i>Sialia sialis</i>



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Anywhere but Water and Coniferous Forests	Mixed	Invertebrates Fruit or Nuts	Cavity

ID Tips:

- Length: 5.5 inches
- Thin bill
- Most often seen in open habitats: agricultural areas, wood edges, et al
- Southwestern United States birds are paler

•Adult male:

- Bright blue upperparts
- Orange-red throat, breast and sides
- White belly and undertail coverts

•Female:

- Blue wings and tail-duller than male
- Gray crown and back
- White eye ring
- Brownish throat, breast and sides
- White belly and undertail coverts

•Juvenile:

- Blue wings and tail-duller than male
- Gray crown and back
- White eye ring
- Spotted underparts

Similar species:

The Eastern Bluebird is most likely to be confused with other bluebirds. Male Western Bluebirds have blue throats while male Easterns have orange-red ones. Male Mountain Bluebirds lack any reddish coloration on their underparts. Females are more difficult to separate. Both Western and Mountain Bluebirds have gray throats and gray bellies while the Eastern Bluebird has a brownish throat and white belly.

Specimen:

- ✓ Burgundy chest and belly with white portion of abdomen
- ✓ Very blue back

Wood Thrush

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Turdidae
Genus/Species	<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Parks Grasslands Woodlands	Long Distance	Invertebrates Fruit or Nuts	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 7 inches
- Rusty crown, nape and upper back
- White eye ring and streaked cheeks
- White underparts with black spots throughout
- Brown upperparts
- Pink legs
- Sexes similar
- Juvenile has pale spots on upperparts
- Often forages on forest floor
- Distinctive beautiful song

Similar species:

The Wood Thrush resides in forests in the eastern United States where it is more often heard than seen. It is similar to other thrushes but has larger spots that extend onto the belly and contrast between the rusty head and duller brown back. Brown Thrasher is somewhat similar but has a much longer tail.

Specimen:

- ✓ No left wing
- ✓ Shorter tail than thrasher
- ✓ Small Λ at end of tail

American Robin

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Turdidae
Genus/Species	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Parks Grasslands Woodlands	Mixed	Invertebrates Fruit or Nuts	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 8.5 inches
- Black to dark gray head
- Broken eye ring
- Dull red breast and belly
- White undertail coverts
- Gray upperparts
- Streaked throat
- Thin yellow bill
- Sexes similar-female somewhat paler
- Winter plumage is somewhat paler than Summer plumage
- Juveniles have spotted, whiter breasts
- Common in residential areas where it often forages on lawns
- Often sings very early in morning
- Often found in large flocks outside of breeding season

Similar species:

The American Robin is a common occupant of residential areas during the breeding season. In Fall and Winter, it can be found in large, somewhat nomadic flocks in areas with lots of fruiting trees. The very rare Rufous-backed Robin (southwestern United States) has a rufous, not gray, back. The Varied Thrush has a dark band across its breast and orange wing bars.

Specimen:

- ✓ Yep, definitely a robin

Grey Catbird

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Mimidae
Genus/Species	<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Parks Brush Grasslands Deciduous Forests	Mixed	Invertebrates Fruit or Nuts	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 7.75 inches
- Slender bill
- Dark gray plumage
- Dark eye
- Chestnut undertail coverts
- Crown and tail black
- Black legs
- Sexes similar
- Often found in dense vegetation
- Distinctive call like cat's meow

Similar species:

The plumage and call of the catbird are quite distinctive.

Specimen:

- ✓ Grey
- ✓ Is it a cat or a bird?
- ✓ Stout black bill
- ✓ Long dark square tail
- ✓ Light grey underside

Northern Mockingbird

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Mimidae



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Parks Brush Grasslands Deciduous Forests	Mixed	Invertebrates Vertebrates Fruit or Nuts	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 9 inches
- Slender bill
- Gray head and upperparts
- Yellow eye
- White underparts
- Long black tail with white outer tail feathers
- White wing bars
- White patch in wing, especially visible in flight
- Black legs
- Sexes similar
- Juvenile has spotted breast
- Most often found in scrubby habitats and in urban areas

Similar species:

Shrikes are similar but have black masks and thicker bills. Sage Thrasher is similar to juvenile mockingbird but lacks white wing patches and has darker, more extensive spotting below. Rare Bahama Mockingbird (stray to Florida) has streaked flanks and lacks wing patches.

Specimen:

- ✓ Large, dark fan-shaped tail with white edges
- ✓ Fairly large bird
- ✓ Whiskers
- ✓ Looks angry

Brown Thrasher

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Mimidae
Genus/Species	<i>Toxostoma rufum</i>



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Parks Brush	Mixed	Invertebrates Fruit or Nuts	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 10 inches
- Slender bill with base of lower mandible yellow
- Rufous crown, nape and upperparts
- Gray face
- Yellow eye
- White underparts with heavy black streaking
- White wing bars
- Long rufous tail
- Yellow legs
- Sexes similar
- Most often found in dense vegetation in hedgerows, old fields, and wood edges where it often forages on the ground

Similar species:

With its rufous upperparts and long tail the Brown Thrasher might be confused with the local Long-billed Thrasher (South Texas) but it has a shorter, less decurved bill and a browner face. Thrushes are similar but are spotted below and have shorter tails.

Specimen:

- ✓ Looks a lot like the Wood Thrush
- ✓ Long light brown square tail
- ✓ Dark splotches on chest
- ✓ Light burgundy back
- ✓ Chipped, decurved beak (Dark top, light bottom)

European Starling

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Sturnidae
Genus/Species	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Parks Brush Grasslands Deciduous Forest	Mixed	Invertebrates Fruit or Nuts Seeds	Cavity

ID Tips:

- Length: 6 inches
- Pointed bill-yellow for most of year, dark in fall
- Black plumage with green and purple iridescence
- White spots scattered about head and body-largest in fall
- Dark wings and tail
- Pointed wings
- Short tail
- Juvenile gray-brown with faint streaking below
- Very common-frequently seen in large flocks

Similar species:

The European Starling is somewhat similar to blackbirds, cowbirds and grackles but has a shorter tail, chunkier body, white spots on the head and body (most evident in fall), and a yellow bill (not evident in the fall).

Specimen:

- ✓ Yellow Bill
- ✓ Iridescent Purple on body
- ✓ Iridescent Green on head
- ✓ Light brown tips on feathers on back

American Pipit

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Motacillidae



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Grasslands Wetlands	Short Distance	Invertebrates Seeds	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 5.5 inches
- Slender bill
- White eye ring and supercilium
- White throat with dark malar streak
- Brownish-olive upperparts with fine black streaks on back
- Wings blackish with broad buffy edges
- Buffy underparts with dark streaking across breast and onto flanks
- Black tail with white outer tail feathers
- Dark legs
- In Spring and Summer, less heavily streaked below and upperparts grayer
- Sexes similar
- Wags its tail
- Often found in flocks on the ground in sparsely vegetated areas (plowed fields, shores, tundra)

Similar species:

The American Pipit is similar to the Sprague's Pipit but the Sprague's Pipit has much less streaking on the underparts, more streaking on the back, a paler face, and pink legs. The rare Red-throated Pipit (breeds in Alaska and rare migrant in California) has a different call and pink legs. Sparrows and longspurs can be found in similar habitats but have thick, conical bills.

Specimen:

- ✓ Light brownish belly
- ✓ Darker splotches on chest
- ✓ Small dark decurved bill
- ✓ Slight crest

Sunbird

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Nectariniidae



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Forest Scrub Mangroves	Old World	Invertebrates Nectar	Pendant

Specimen:

- ✓ Black Chin and Breast
- ✓ Golden Armpits and Belly
- ✓ Relatively Long, Decurved Bill

Cedar Waxwing

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Bombycillidae
Genus/Species	<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Parks Brush Woodlands	Mixed	Invertebrates Fruit or Nuts	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 5.75 inches
- Short, thin bill
- Pale brown crest
- Black eye patch and chin
- Pale brown head fading into pale yellow belly
- White undertail coverts
- Dark brown back
- Dark wings with thin, red bar
- Black tail with yellow tip
- Juveniles have much duller, grayer head and body with blurry streaks on underparts
- Frequently found in large flocks feeding on fruit

Similar species:

The Bohemian Waxwing is similar to the Cedar Waxwing but has dark undertail coverts, gray belly and white and yellow markings in the wing.

Specimen:

- ✓ Dark tail with bright yellow tips
- ✓ Dark chin → Brown Breast → Yellow Belly
- ✓ Orange tips on secondary wing feathers

Golden-Winged Warbler

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Parulidae
Genus/Species	<i>Vermivora chrysoptera</i>



Specimen:

- ✓ Gold Crown
- ✓ Gold in Wings
- ✓ Weird white stripes on tail
- ✓ Black chin and mask separated by white

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Deciduous Forests	Long Distance	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 4.25 inches
- Small, active, insect-eating bird
- Thin, very pointed bill
- Yellow forehead
- Black mask and throat
- White supercilium and malar streak
- Grayish-white underparts
- Yellow patch on wing
- Gray upperparts
- Dark legs
- Considerable amounts of white in outer tail feathers
- Females and immatures have less distinct head patterns than males

Similar species:

The gray and white plumage and black throat of the Golden-winged warbler is somewhat reminiscent of a chickadee but note the yellow forehead and wing patch of the warbler. The Blue-winged Warbler occasionally hybridizes with the Golden-winged Warbler to produce offspring with characteristics of both parents. Some have mostly white underparts but the face pattern of the Blue-winged Warbler (Brewster's Warbler), while some have the yellow plumage of the Blue-winged but the face pattern of the Golden-winged (Lawrence's Warbler). These hybrids sometimes backcross with Blue-winged or Golden-winged to produce offspring more similar to Blue-winged or Golden-winged.

Northern Parula

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Parulidae



Photo by C.S.Rebbins



Photo by Deanna Dawson

Specimen:

- ✓ Little
- ✓ Bluish Back with Yellowish Stripes Across Middle Back
- ✓ Golden Chin and Breast with Blue Shoulders

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Deciduous Forests	Mixed	Invertebrates	Pendant

ID Tips:

- Length: 3.75 inches
- Small, active, insect-eating bird
- Thin, pointed bill
- Smaller than most warblers
- Gray head, sides of breast, rump and tail
- White broken eye ring
- White wing bars
- Yellow throat and breast
- White belly and undertail coverts
- Olive back
- Yellow legs
- Adult male:**
 - Black and orange patch across breast
 - Black lores and eyeline
- Female and immature:**
 - Lacks breast patch of male
 - Lacks black in face of male
 - White supercilium
 - Plumage duller than male

Similar species:

The Northern Parula is rather small, even for a warbler. The male Northern Parula is distinctive with its breast patch. No other warbler has this feature. Females have a yellow throat and breast, wing bars, small size, and broken eye ring to identify them. Yellowthroats and Mourning Warblers are most similar in face and underpart pattern but lack wing bars. The very local (South Texas) Tropical Parula is similar in size but the male lacks the dark portion of the breast patch and has more black on the face while the other plumages lack the broken eye ring and have more yellow on the underparts.

Chestnut-Sided Warbler

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Parulidae



Specimen:

✓ Chestnut Sides

♂

✓ Brighter Golden Crown

✓ Less distinct Gold on Back

♀

✓ More Black on Belly

✓ Tail more Fan-shaped

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Deciduous Forests	Long Distance	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 4.25 inches
- Small, active, insect-eating bird
- Yellow wing bars
- Thin, pointed bill
- Black legs
- Adult male alternate:**
- Yellow crown
- White patch on side of neck surrounded by thick black eyeline and black malar streak
- Black malar streak connects with thick rusty stripe on side
- White underparts
- Black back with white streaks
- Female in alternate plumage similar to male but duller with reduced rust on sides

•Basic and immature:

- Green crown, nape and back
- Gray face and sides of breast
- White eye ring
- White belly and undertail coverts
- Some rust may be present on sides

Similar species:

In alternate plumage, the only other warbler with rusty sides is the Bay-breasted Warbler but it has a brown, not yellow, crown and has a dark throat. In basic (fall) and immature plumages the yellow wing bars can also be found in the Golden-winged Warbler but this species has a dark throat and cheek patch. The white eye ring, unstreaked underparts, and gray face are also good field marks.

Magnolia Warbler

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Parulidae



Specimen:

- ✓ Small with lots of gold
- ♂
- ✓ More distinct stripe of gold on back near ass

♀

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Coniferous Forests	Long Distance	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 4.25 inches
- Small, active, insect-eating bird
- Bright yellow rump
- Thin, pointed bill
- Broken white band in tail
- Adult male alternate:**
- Black mask
- White supercilium and broken eye ring
- Pale gray crown
- Black back
- Golden yellow underparts
- Heavy black streaks across breast and onto flanks
- Gray wings with thick white edging
- Females in alternate plumage similar but duller
- Basic and immature:**
- Indistinct white eye ring and supercilium
- Head grayish
- Back grayish-olive with variable amounts of black streaking (heaviest in adult males)
- Grayish band across breast
- Yellow to yellow-gray throat
- Fine to thick black streaking on flanks
- White wing bars

Similar species:

The breeding-plumage Magnolia Warbler is quite distinctive with its bright yellow underparts with thick black streaks and black mask. Basic and immature plumaged birds are more difficult to identify. The yellow underparts with streaking confined to the flanks is also found in Prairie, Kirtland's, Black-throated Green, and Blackburnian Warblers. All these species lack a gray breast band and white tail band. Blackburnian has a bold yellow supercilium. Black-throated Green has a yellow face. Prairie wags its tail and has a different face pattern. Kirtland's Warbler has darker gray upperparts.

Blackburnian Warbler

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Parulidae



Specimen:

✓ Black and White Patterning? I don't think that's a word...

♂

✓ Much Brighter and more distinct gold around throat and black around eyes

♀

✓



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Deciduous Forests	Long Distance	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 4.25 inches
- Small, active, insect-eating bird
- Mostly forages very high in the canopy
- Thin, pointed bill
- Dark legs
- Adult male alternate:**
- Black crown and cheeks
- Fiery orange forehead, supercilium, side of neck, throat, and breast
- Black nape, back and wings
- White patch on wing
- White streaks on back
- Lower breast faintly tinged with orange becoming white on undertail coverts
- Fine black streaks on sides of breast to flanks
- Female, basic and immature:**
- Pale orange to yellow face and breast
- Crown, cheek, and upperparts brownish-olive
- Pale streaks on darker back
- Two white wing bars
- White belly and undertail coverts
- Faint, dark streaks on sides

Similar species:

In alternate plumage, the bright orange throat and face pattern of the male are diagnostic. Often, the face pattern cannot be seen as the bird forages high in the canopy. However, the orange breast and black streaks on the sides are distinctive. Female and immature plumages are duller but can be distinguished by the broad yellow supercilium contrasting with the brownish crown and cheek. In fall, Black-throated Green Warbler is similar but has a greenish cheek and crown that don't contrast much with the yellow supercilium. Townsend's Warbler also has a broad yellow supercilium but has a darker cheek and crown making the face pattern appear much more striking. Both Townsend's and Black-throated Green Warblers lack the pale streaks on the back of the Blackburnian.

Black-throated Green Warbler

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Parulidae



Specimen:

✓ Olive Green Backs

♂

✓ Much blacker and more distinct throat and chin

♀

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodlands	Short Distance	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 4.25 inches
- Small, active, insect-eating bird
- Thin, pointed bill
- Yellow face
- Olive crown and back
- Indistinct greenish cheeks
- Underparts pale with yellowish tinge and black streaks on sides
- White wing bars
- Dark legs
- Adult male:**
- Black throat and upper breast
- In fall, throat and upper breast feathers are edged with yellow
- Female and immature:**
- Plumage similar to male
- Throat pale, sometimes with black spots
- Breast smudged with black

Similar species:

The male Black-throated Green Warbler is distinctive with its black throat, yellow face, and olive crown. Within most of its eastern United States range, it is unlikely to be confused with any other species. Males of other western species are somewhat similar: Hermit Warbler has a yellow crown, Golden-cheeked Warbler has a black crown and eyeline, Townsend's Warbler has black cheeks. In fall, the yellow face of the Black-throated Green barely contrasts with the greener crown and cheeks. Blackburnian Warbler has a darker crown and cheeks and white streaks on the back. Townsend's Warbler also has darker cheeks. Hermit Warbler has a more uniformly yellow head and less streaking on the sides.

Yellow Warbler

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Parulidae
Genus/Species	<i>Dendroica petechia</i>



Specimen:

- ♂
- ✓ More Olive
- ✓ Larger than Female



♀

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodlands	Short Distance	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 4 inches
- Small, active, insect-eating bird
- Thin, pointed bill
- Mostly yellow plumage
- Upperparts greenish-yellow
- Greenish-yellow wings and tail with yellow feather edges
- Plain yellow face with yellow eye ring surrounding dark eye
- Yellowish legs

•Adult male:

- Plumage golden yellow
- Rusty streaks on breast and flanks

•Female and immature:

- Plain yellow plumage
- Streaks on breast absent or barely noticeable
- Some birds have pale gray wash to plumage (southwestern United States)

Similar species:

The male Yellow Warbler is easily recognized by its golden yellow plumage and rusty streaks on the breast. Females and immatures are similar to other mostly yellow warblers. Prothonotary Warblers have blue-gray, not yellowish wings and white undertail coverts. Wilson's and Hooded Warblers have a yellow supercilium and a more capped appearance. Blue-winged and Orange-crowned Warblers have dark eyelines.

Black-and-white Warbler

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Parulidae



Specimen:

✓ Small Black and White (!) Birds

♂

✓ Whiter Belly

✓ Longer Bill

♀

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodlands	Long Distance	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 4.5 inches
- Small, active, insect-eating bird
- Long thin bill
- Creeps along tree trunks and branches like a nuthatch
- White supercilium, malar streak and central crown stripe
- Black back with white streaks
- Black wings with white wing bars
- Streaked breast and flanks
- Spotted undertail coverts
- Black legs
- Male:**
- Black crown, cheek, and throat (throat white in Fall and Winter)
- White flanks with black streaks
- Immature male has grayish cheeks and white throat
- Female:**
- White throat, grayish cheeks
- Buffy flanks with black streaks

Similar species:

The Black-and-white Warbler is perhaps the easiest warbler to identify with its distinctive nuthatch-like feeding strategy and contrasting black and white plumage. The male Blackpoll Warbler is also black and white but lacks the white supercilium and doesn't creep along trunks and branches



Mourning Warbler

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Parulidae
Genus/Species	<i>Oporornis philadelphia</i>



Specimen:

- ✓ Gold Belly
- ✓ Dark Olive Backs
- ♂
- ✓ Distinct Black Head and Breast
- ♀
- ✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Deciduous Forests	Long Distance	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 4.5 inches
- Small, insect-eating bird
- Thin, pointed bill
- Yellow underparts
- Olive upperparts
- Pink legs
- Male:**
- Complete gray hood
- Black lores and breast patch
- Breast patch less evident in Fall
- Basic, female and immature:**
- Gray-brown wash to head
- Broken white eye ring
- Yellowish wash to throat
- Breast can have brownish-olive cast

Similar species:

The MacGillivray's Warbler is the western counterpart to the eastern Mourning Warbler. Fortunately, the breeding ranges of the two species do not overlap. Male MacGillivray's typically have broken eye rings while they are absent in male Mourning Warblers. Females and immatures of the two species are extremely difficult to tell apart and are usually separated by range. Connecticut Warblers are similar to Mourning Warblers but have complete eye rings and are larger. Female and immature Common Yellowthroats are also quite similar but lack a gray or brownish wash across the breast (although this can be indistinct in some immatures) and have white, not yellow, bellies.

Ovenbird

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Parulidae
Genus/Species	<i>Seiurus aurocapillus</i>



Specimen:

- ✓ No Gold
- ✓ Rounded (I can't read the next word)
- ✓ Cool looking reddish crown with white stripes

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Deciduous Forests	Short Distance	Invertebrates	Enclosed

ID Tips:

- Length: 5 inches
- Small, ground-dwelling, insect-eating bird
- Thin, pointed bill
- White eye ring
- Orange central crown stripe with black border
- White underparts with dense black streaking
- Olive upperparts
- Pink legs

Similar species:

The Ovenbird is most often seen as it walks along the forest floor. It might be confused with a sparrow but the bill is too narrow and the upperparts lack streaking and spotting. Other ground-dwelling warblers with streaked underparts are the water thrushes but they constantly wag their tails and have white or yellow superciliums and lack eye rings.

Common Yellowthroat

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Parulidae
Genus/Species	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>



Photo by C.S. Robbins

Specimen:

✓ Small birds with more brown

♂

✓ More Gold on Throat

✓ Black mask

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodlands	Short Distance	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 4.25 inches
- Small, insect-eating bird
- Thin, pointed bill
- Yellow throat and breast
- Brownish flanks
- Whitish belly
- Olive upperparts
- Pink legs
- Considerable plumage variation across its range

•Adult male:

- Black mask with white upper border
- Bright yellow throat

•Female and immature:

- Brownish-olive head
- Broken white eye ring
- Throat and breast not as bright yellow as adult males
- Immature males begin to acquire the black mask in the fall

Similar species:

The adult male Common Yellowthroat is instantly recognizable with its black mask. Immature males often have a semblance of the mask. Females and immatures are similar to female and immature Mourning and MacGillivray's Warblers but yellowthroats have whiter bellies and lack a gray hood or olive breast band.

American Redstart

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Parulidae
Genus/Species	<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>



Specimen:

✓ Cool looking, with dark and light patches

♂

✓ Darker back with more distinct light patterns on back

✓ Hint of gold on tail

✓ Black breast and head



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodlands	Short Distance	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 4.5 inches
- Small, insect-eating bird
- Thin, pointed bill
- Feeds very actively (even for a warbler)
- Often fans tail exposing red or yellow patches
- Adult male:**
 - Orange-red sides of breast, wing and tail patches
 - Belly and undertail coverts white
 - Remainder of plumage black
- Female and immature:**
 - Yellow sides of breast, wing and tail patches
 - White underparts
 - Olive upperparts with grayer head
 - Immature males begin to acquire adult male pattern in second year

Similar species:

The adult male American Redstart is instantly recognizable with its black and red plumage. Females and immatures can be identified by the yellow patches at the base of the tail. Yellow patches at side of breast and in wing can be quite reduced in immatures.

Scarlet Tanager

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Thraupidae
Genus/Species	<i>Piranga olivacea</i>



Specimen:

✓ It doesn't look much like the live ones I've seen

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodlands		Invertebrates	Saucer

ID Tips:

- Length: 6.25 inches
- Pointed, but fairly stout bill
- Inhabits treetops
- Adult male alternate:**
 - Brilliant scarlet red plumage
 - Shiny black wings and tail
 - Plumage held in Spring and Summer
- Adult female:**
 - Yellow underparts
 - Olive back
 - Gray wings and tail with greenish feather edges
 - Basic and immature plumages similar to female but males often have blacker wings and tails

Similar species:

The male Scarlet Tanager is striking and easily identified. Male Hepatic and Summer Tanagers are entirely red. Female plumages can be told from similar female Summer Tanager by plain yellow, not orange-yellow, underparts. Female Western Tanager has wing bars. Female Hepatic Tanager has more orange underparts and a darker cheek.

Eastern Towhee

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Emberizidae
Genus/Species	<i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i>



Specimen:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Brush Deciduous Forest	Mixed	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 7.25? inches
- Conical bill
- Red eye (white in southeastern birds)
- Rusty sides
- White belly
- Buffy undertail coverts
- White primary bases and tertial edges
- Long tail with white outer tail feathers
- Male has black head, back, wings and tail-brown in female
- Juvenile (Summer) heavily streaked, brown above and buffy below
- Frequently feeds on the ground where it noisily scratches for food
- Formerly conspecific with Spotted Towhee

Similar species:

The Eastern Towhee is similar to the Spotted Towhee but lacks wing bars and white spots on the back.

Chipping Sparrow

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Emberizidae
Genus/Species	<i>Spizella passerina</i>



Photo by J. R. Sauer

Specimen:

- ✓ Red Crown
- ✓ Black Eye Stripes with White stripes above

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodlands	Mixed	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 4.75 inches
- Dark, conical bill
- Rusty crown
- White supercilium and black eyeline
- Gray face and underparts
- Tan back with dark streaks
- Brown wings with wing bars
- Gray rump
- Slim, forked tail
- Sexes similar
- Fall and Winter plumage has different head pattern: brown crown with fine dark streaks and pale median crown stripe, buff supercilium, pale bill with dark tip and brownish cheeks
- Juvenile plumage (Summer and Fall) similar to Winter but duller with streaked underparts

Similar species:

Chipping Sparrows are similar to other sparrows with rusty crowns but have a white supercilium and black eye line in Spring and Summer. Field Sparrow has a pink bill and white eye ring. Swamp Sparrow has rusty wings and a dingy breast. American Tree Sparrow has a dark breast spot. In Fall and Winter, Chipping Sparrows are quite similar to Clay-colored and Brewer's Sparrows. Often, they retain some rust in the crown and can be identified by that field mark. Clay-colored and Brewer's Sparrows have pale lores and brown rumps. Clay-colored Sparrow has more distinct whisker and a buffier breast. Brewer's Sparrow has an indistinct supercilium and an eye ring.

Savannah Sparrow

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Emberizidae



Specimen:

- ✓ More Yellowish Belly
- ✓ Narrower



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodlands	Mixed	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 4.75 inches
- Conical bill
- Short, forked tail
- Yellow to whitish supercilium
- Thin, white central crown stripe
- Brown upperparts (varies from dark brown to gray-brown) with dark streaks
- White underparts with dark streaks
- Sexes similar
- Juvenile plumage (Summer) somewhat darker
- Found in open fields with fairly short vegetation
- Forages on the ground
- Variation in plumage and size across its range

Similar species:

In its open country habitat, the Savannah Sparrow is most similar to Vesper and Song Sparrows. It can be told from both by its yellowish supercilium, white central crown stripe and short tail. Baird's and juvenile Grasshopper Sparrow are larger-headed and billed. When flushed, the Savannah Sparrow tends to fly fairly high to its next perch whereas Song Sparrows fly low and pump their tails, Vesper Sparrows often show considerable white in the tail and Grasshopper Sparrows fly very low.

Song Sparrow

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Emberizidae
Genus/Species	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>



Photo by Jim Stasz



Photo by Jim Stasz

Specimen:

- ✓ Darker grey chest than Savannah
- ✓ Wings have very shallow V

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Deciduous Forest	Mixed	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 5.5 inches
- Conical bill
- Brown crown
- Grayish face and supercilium
- Brown streak extends behind eye
- Thick malar streak
- Brown back with darker streaks
- Brown wings with some rust
- Underparts white with heavy dark streaks and central breast spot
- Long, brown, rounded tail
- Sexes similar
- Juvenile (Summer) similar to adult but buffier
- Considerable variation in plumage across its range from dark to rusty upperparts and in bill size and shape

Similar species:

The Song Sparrow can be told from the Lincoln's Sparrow by its larger bill, heavier streaking on the breast and flanks, lack of buffy color on the breast and face, brown back, larger size and longer tail. Juvenile Song Sparrows are very similar to juvenile Swamp and Lincoln's Sparrows. Savannah Sparrow is similar but smaller-billed and shorter-tailed with a yellowish supercilium. Fox Sparrow is much larger.

White-throated Sparrow

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Emberizidae
Genus/Species	<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>



Photo by Pat Lynch

Specimen:

- ✓ Chunkier
- ✓ Yellow Eyebrows
- ✓ White Throat

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodlands	Mixed	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 5.75 inches
- Large sparrow
- Dark conical bill
- Long slightly forked tail
- Pink legs
- Alternate:**
- Bold black and white (or tan) head stripes
- Yellow lores
- White throat contrasting with gray breast and cheeks
- Brown back with dark streaks
- Brown wings with two white wing bars
- Whitish belly
- Basic and Juvenile:**
- Similar to alternate but duller
- Blurry streaks on breast and flanks
- Stripes on head tan and brown
- Indistinct yellow lores

Similar species:

In spring, the bold head stripes and yellow lores are diagnostic. In fall, these features may be less noticeable. The contrasting white throat and dark bill separate it from the White-crowned Sparrow. Swamp Sparrow has rusty wings and is smaller.

Dark-eyed Junco

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Emberizidae



Specimen:

- ✓ Dark grey head and back
- ✓ White stripes at edges of tail

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodlands	Mixed	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 5.25-6 inches
- Pink, conical bill
- White outer tail feathers
- Considerable geographic variation in plumage
- Various forms were formerly considered separate species
- "White-winged junco"**:
- Medium gray head, breast and upperparts
- White belly
- White wing bars
- Female and immatures somewhat browner than male
- [Breeds from Montana to Nebraska](#)
- "Oregon junco"**:
- Dark gray head and breast
- Brown back and wings
- Buffy flanks
- White belly
- Female and immatures somewhat duller than male
- [Breeds from Alaska to California](#)
- "Slate-colored junco"**:
- Dark gray head, breast and upperparts
- White belly
- Female and immatures somewhat browner than adult male and may have buffy flanks
- [Breeds in eastern United States and Canada](#)
- "Pink-sided junco"**:
- Medium gray head and breast
- Dark lores
- Brown back and wings
- Pinkish flanks
- White belly
- Female and immatures somewhat browner than male
- Breeds from Alberta to Idaho
- "Gray-headed junco"**:
- Medium gray plumage, palest on belly
- Rusty back
- Dark lores
- Sometimes has dark upper mandible
- [Breeds in Rocky Mountains](#)

Similar species:

The Dark-eyed Junco is similar to the local (southeast Arizona) Yellow-eyed Junco but has dark eyes. Black-chinned sparrow has streaked back, brown wings and lacks white in the tail.

Rose-Breasted Grosbeak

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Cardinalidae
Genus/Species	<i>Pheucticus ludovicianus</i>

Photo by J. A. Spendelow



Specimen:

- ✓ Black back and head with white splotches
- ✓ Rose breast
- ✓ White belly
- ♀
- ✓ Lacks Red

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Brush	Short Distance	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 7.25 inches
- Large, conical, pale bill
- Adult male:**
 - Rosy-red, triangular breast patch
 - Black head and upperparts
 - White underparts
 - White patches in wing
 - White spots in black tail
 - Rosy-red wing linings
 - Male in Fall and Winter is duller, browner
 - Immature male similar to adult male in Fall and Winter but duller
- Adult female:**
 - Black and white crown stripes
 - White underparts with extensive streaking
 - Dark gray upperparts
 - Yellow to yellowish-orange wing linings
 - Immature female similar to adult female
 - Juvenile has buffy breast

Similar species:

Female-plumaged Black-headed Grosbeak is very similar to female-plumaged Rose-breasted Grosbeak but has buffier breast and has streaking confined to the sides.

Northern Cardinal

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Cardinalidae
Genus/Species	<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>



Specimen:

✓ Where am I?



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Brush	Resident	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 7.75 inches
- Large, conical bill
- Crest
- Long tail
- Adult male:**
- Bright red plumage, dullest on back and wings
- Black around base of bill
- Red bill
- Adult female:**
- Reddish crest, wings and tail
- Brownish-gray upperparts
- Buffy underparts
- Red bill
- Juvenile like adult female but has dark bill and crest

Similar species:

The male Northern Cardinal is unmistakable. Females and juveniles are similar to Pyrrhuloxia but Pyrrhuloxia has a yellow bill with a curved culmen and is grayer, less brown.

Indigo Bunting

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Cardinalidae
Genus/Species	<i>Passerina cyanea</i>



Specimen:

- ♂
- ✓ Very Blue Body
- ♀
- ✓ White with blackish vertical stripe



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodlands	Short Distance	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 4.5 inches
- Small, conical bill
- Adult male alternate:**
- Deep blue plumage (in poor light appears black)
- Blackish wings and tail with blue edges
- Basic-plumaged male (Fall and Winter) similar to adult female but often has some blue feathers
- Adult female:**
- Dark brown upperparts
- Warm brown underparts with faint dark streaks
- Indistinct wing bars
- Immature plumages similar to adult female-
immature male can have blue patches

Similar species:

The Blue Grosbeak is very similar to the Indigo Bunting but is larger with brown wing bars. Female Indigo Buntings are similar to other female buntings. Female Lazuli Bunting has white wing bars. Female Varied Bunting very similar but has more curved culmen and lacks streaking below. Female Painted Bunting greener. Sparrows have more patterned faces and streaked backs.

Eastern Meadowlark

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Icteridae
Genus/Species	<i>Passerina cyanea</i>



Specimen:

✓

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest

ID Tips:

- Length: 8.5 inches
- Sharply-pointed bill
- Buff and black head stripes
- Yellow underparts with black "v" on breast
- White flanks with black streaks
- Brown upperparts with black streaks
- Brown tail with white outer tail feathers
- Juvenile and winter plumages somewhat duller
- Frequents open habitats

Similar species:

The Eastern Meadowlark is very similar to the Western Meadowlark. Where their ranges overlap, they are best separated by voice. Western Meadowlark has yellow throat extending slightly farther into face than Eastern. Male Dickcissel is much smaller with a conical bill and lacks white in the tail.

Red-winged Blackbird

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Icteridae
Genus/Species	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>



Specimen:

✓ You studied this bird for an entire season, you should be able to identify it by now.



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Wetlands	Mixed	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 7.25 inches
- Sharply-pointed bill
- Frequents marshy habitats in summer, open habitats at other times of year
- Often flocks with other species of blackbirds
- Adult male:**
- Bright red patch on wings bordered by yellow (border missing in some races)
- Black plumage
- Immature male similar to adult male but has pale supercilium and brown edges to black feathers
- Adult female:**
- Pale supercilium
- Heavily streaked underparts
- Upperparts brown and white
- Sometimes has yellow tinge to face and throat
- Females very dark in some races
- Juveniles similar to adult females

Similar species:

The male Red-winged Blackbird can be told from the male Tricolored Blackbird by its yellowish, not white, border to the red shoulder patch. Females are quite similar but Tricoloreds typically have darker bellies. Tricolored Blackbirds are only found in Oregon and California. Other species of blackbirds lack the red shoulder patch of the male and the streaked underparts of the female.

Common Grackle

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Icteridae



Specimen:

- ✓ Iridescent
- ✓ Blue, Green, and Yellow

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Several	Mixed	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 10-12 inches
- Very long tail
- Long bill
- Frequently gathers in large flocks

•Adult:

- Entirely black plumage
- Entirely purple or purple and greenish iridescence to plumage
- Pale eye

•Juvenile:

- Dark eye
- Dark brown plumage

Similar species:

The Common Grackle is similar to blackbirds but is larger with a much longer tail. Male Great-tailed and Boat-tailed Grackles are similar but larger with longer tails.

Brown-headed Cowbird

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Icteridae
Genus/Species	<i>Molothrus ater</i>

Specimen:

✓ Very dark

♂
✓ Slightly lighter brown head

♀
✓ All Brown
✓ Stuffing hanging out



Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodlands	Mixed	Invertebrates	Brood Parasite

ID Tips:

- Length: 6.5 inches
- Short, conical bill
- Dark eyes
- Frequents open habitats
- When feeding on ground often cocks its tail
- Often found in large flocks in migration and winter
- Adult male:**
 - Brown head
 - Black body, wings and tail
- Adult female:**
 - Grayish-brown plumage-darker on upperparts
 - Underparts faintly streaked
 - Throat pale
 - Juvenile browner and streakier than adult female with pale edging on wings

Similar species:

The Brown-headed Cowbird is smaller and shorter-tailed than blackbirds and grackles and has a more conical bill. Bronzed Cowbird is similar to female Brown-headed Cowbird but has red eyes and is slightly larger with a longer bill.

Baltimore Oriole

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Icteridae
Genus/Species	<i>Icterus galbula</i>



Photo by Chan Robbins

Specimen:

✓ Pretty

♂

✓ Bright

♀

✓ Less Bright



Photo by Jim Stasz

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Parks	Short Distance	Invertebrates	Pendant

ID Tips:

- Length: 6.5 inches
- Sharply-pointed bill

•Male:

- Black head, back, wings and tail
- Orange underparts, shoulder, and rump
- Orange tips to outer tail feathers
- White wing bar and edges
- Immature male similar to female but brighter orange with variable amounts of black on head

•Female:

- Brownish-gray upperparts
- Dull yellowish-orange breast and undertail coverts
- Gray belly
- Two wing bars

Similar species:

Male Baltimore Oriole can be told from other black and orange orioles by its completely black head. Female is similar to other female orioles but can be told from Bullock's by its more orange breast and less gray upperparts. Hooded and Orchard orioles have more extensively yellow underparts.

Purple Finch

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Fringillidae
Genus/Species	<i>Carpodacus purpureus</i>



Specimen:

- ✓ More pink than purple. According to Sally, it's not really purple at all. I remain undecided.
- ✓ Orange beak

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Several	Mixed	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 5.5 inches
- Large, conical bill
- Short, forked tail
- Distinctive call note often given in flight

•Male:

- Purplish-red head, breast, back and rump
- Streaked back
- White undertail coverts
- Brown wings and tail
- Immature male resembles female

•Female:

- Brown crown and cheek patch contrasting with pale supercilium and malar streak
- Heavily streaked underparts
- Brown upperparts

Similar species:

The male Purple Finch is similar to the House Finch but lacks brown streaks on the breast and belly, has a more purple head, shorter forked tail and different call notes. Female House Finch lacks the distinctive face pattern of the female Purple Finch. Cassin's Finch is very similar in all plumages but has streaked undertail coverts and a larger bill. Male Cassin's has a brighter red crown. Female Cassin's has finer streaking on the breast and a less noticeable face pattern. Pine Siskin is similar to female but smaller and lacks face pattern. Sparrows are slimmer with longer tails and different markings.

Red Crossbill

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Fringillidae



Specimen:

✓ Crossed Bill

♂

✓ Red Breast

♀

✓ Olive Breast

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodlands	Resident	Seeds	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 5.5 inches
- Large bill with crossed tips
- Short, forked tail
- Distinctive call note often given in flight
- Most often found in pine trees
- Often found in flocks

•Male:

- Dull red head and body
- Blackish wings and tail

•Female:

- Dull gray plumage
- Dull yellow crown, breast and rump
- Juveniles resemble females but more heavily streaked

Similar species:

The Red Crossbill is similar to the White-winged Crossbill but lacks wing bars and has a larger bill.

Pine Grosbeak

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Fringillidae



Specimen:

- ✓ Bigger
- ✓ Rusty around head and shoulders

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodlands	Mixed	Invertebrates	

ID Tips:

- Length: 7.75 inches
- Large, conical bill
- Long, forked tail
- Distinctive call note often given in flight
- Frequently gathers in flocks

•Male:

- Pinkish-red head, breast, back and rump
- Streaked back
- White undertail coverts
- Black wings and tail
- White wing bars and tertial edges

•Female:

- Yellowish-olive head and rump
- Gray underparts and back
- Black wings and tail
- White wing bars and tertial edges

Similar species:

The Pine Grosbeak is separable from similar species (finches, crossbills) by its larger size, longer tail and distinctive call notes.

American Goldfinch

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Fringillidae
Genus/Species	<i>Carduelis tristis</i>



Specimen:

- ✓ Gold body with Black Cap

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Woodlands	Resident	Seeds	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 4.25 inches
- Small, seed-eating bird
- Short, conical bill
- Short, forked tail
- Male alternate:**
- Plumage held in Spring and Summer
- Black forehead
- Yellow head, back, breast and belly
- Black wings and tail
- White wing bars and tertial edges
- White rump and undertail coverts
- Pale bill and legs
- Female alternate:**
- Greenish upperparts
- Yellow underparts
- Pale bill and legs
- Basic:**
- Plumage held in Fall and Winter
- Yellow face
- Brownish-olive upperparts
- Whitish underparts
- Blackish wings with pale wing bars

Similar species:

The male American Goldfinch in alternate plumage is quite distinctive. Female Lesser Goldfinch is similar to female and immature American Goldfinch but is greener above and has a white patch in the wing.

House Sparrow

Order	Passeriformes
Suborder	Passeres
Family	Passeridae
Genus/Species	<i>Passer domesticus</i>



Specimen:

✓ Grey Crown

♂
✓ Black stripe down chin → Chest

♀
✓ Lacks Black stripe

Habitat	Distribution	Food	Nest
Houses	Resident	Invertebrates	Cup

ID Tips:

- Length: 4.25 inches
- Small, seed-eating bird
- Thick, conical bill
- Pink legs
- Extremely common in urban and agricultural areas
- Adult male:**
- Gray crown
- Black throat, upper breast, and small mask; less black on throat in winter
- Grayish side of neck and underparts
- Rusty-brown nape and upperparts
- Black streaks on back
- White patch in wing
- Gray rump
- Black bill in summer; yellowish in winter
- Female and immature:**
- Gray-brown crown
- Buffy line extends rearward from eye bordered below by gray-brown line
- Grayish-white underparts
- Black and tawny streaks on back
- Black wing feathers with wide tawny edges
- White patch on wing
- Yellow bill
- Immature males lack full throat patch of adults

Similar species:

The adult male House Sparrow is quite distinctive but might be confused with the very local Eurasian Tree Sparrow (St. Louis, Missouri). The Eurasian Tree Sparrow has a black spot on the ear coverts and an entirely brown crown. The female House Sparrow looks somewhat similar to a number of species of sparrows but has unstreaked underparts, tawny streaks on the back, and a large yellowish bill. The female Dickcissel also has a large bill but it is gray, not yellow, and usually has some yellow in the face and a rusty patch in the wing.

