



Basic Birding

By Volunteer John Felix

Groups of Birds

Waterbirds

- o Gull-like birds
- o Waterfowl
 - o Grebes
 - o Geese
 - o Ducks
 - o Dabblers
 - o Divers
 - o Perching
- o Wading Birds
 - o Herons
 - o Egrets
 - o Ibis
 - o Cranes
- o Marsh & Shore Birds
 - o Rails, Gallinules, Coots
 - o Killdeer
 - o Sandpipers

Landbirds

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Non-passerine<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Raptors<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Vultureso Kites, falcons, hawks, and eagleso Owlso Game birds<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Quail, pheasant, turkeyo Pigeon and Doveso Cuckooso Nightjarso Swiftso Hummingbirdso Kingfisherso Woodpeckers | <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Passerine
AKA song birds or perching birds (A large group of birds; groups shown on next slide) |
|--|---|

Passerine Groups

- Swallows: long, pointed wings; nest in colonies; forked or notched tails; sexes similar
- Sparrows, Finches, Grosbeaks: triangular bills; streaked vs. unstreaked breasts in sparrows
- Wrens: slender bills; cocked tails; solitary; sexes similar
- Warblers: long, narrow bill; most brightly colored (males); many with wing bars
- Flycatchers: broad, flat bills; gray or olive color; sit upright; tails long
- Vireos: slender bill; two groups: 1. eye stripes, no wing bars; 2. spectacles and wing bars
- Jays, Ravens, Crows: large; noisy; omnivores; heavy bills; sexes similar
- Titmice: small; long tails; flocks
- Tanagers: heavy bills; brilliant colors; male more vividly colored

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- Warblers: long, narrow bill; males can have bright colors; many with wing bars



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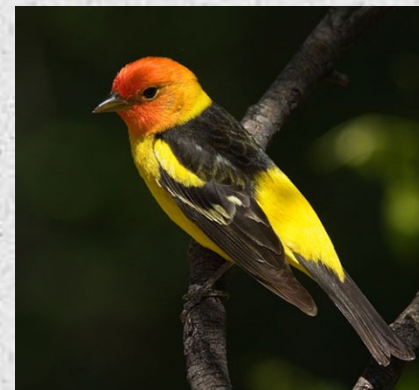
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Noteworthy Behaviors

- Flight patterns
- Signature movements
- Songs
- Calls

Behavior - Flight Patterns

o Soaring: Hawks and Eagles



o Straight and Fast: Mourning Doves



o Undulating: Woodpeckers



o Hovering: Kingfishers and Hummingbirds



o Dabbler Ducks: spring directly into flight



o Diving Ducks: need running takeoff



Behavior – Signature Moves

- o Flycatcher: dart from perch, snatch insect, return to perch
- o Woodpecker: jerk as they climb tree; use tail to brace themselves
- o Creepers: climb trees in spirals
- o Nuthatches: Climb down trees headfirst
- o Swifts and swallows: Great aerialists for catching insects
- o Hummers: Males have intricate courtship display
- o Doves: bob their heads while walking
- o Sapsuckers: drills evenly spaced holes in trees and then later eats insects caught in sap
- o Towhees: scratch with both feet in leaves on the ground
- o Waxwings: gorge themselves on abundant berries, then are unable to fly
- o Kinglets- crazy fast foraging – flittering here and there, hardly pausing in one place

Songs vs. Calls – What's the difference?

o Songs

- o Usually by males only to:
 - o Attract mate
 - o Claim a territory
- o Usually only during the breeding season
- o Usually numerous notes put together
- o Sometimes are described using a mnemonic

o Calls

- o Used by both sexes to maintain contact or express alarm
- o Any time of year
- o Usually one or a few notes put together
- o Common descriptors:
 - o Chirp, chuck, chip, chink
 - o Peek, pick,
 - o Whit
 - o Eek
 - o Tseet, tseep, zee, tsip, tsick

Song Mnemonics

Those that say their name:

- o Mountain Chickadee: “Chick-a-dee-dee-dee”
- o Killdeer: “Killdeer, killdeer, killdeer”
- o Poorwill: “Poor-will, poor-will, poor-will”

Those that say other things:

- o Quail: “Chi-ca-go”
- o Great Horned Owl: “Who’s awake? Me too.”
- o Robin: “Cheerily, cheer-up, cheerily”
- o Bell’s Vireo: “What about me? What about you!”
- o Yellow throat: “Witchety, witchety, witchety”
- o Olive-sided flycatcher: “ Quick! Three beers please.”
- o Rufous-sided Towhee: “ Drink your tea-e-a-a”
- o And many others....

Identifying Field Marks

- o Silhouettes
- o Tail shapes
- o Tail patterns
- o Rump patches
- o Wing patterns
- o Head and facial features
- o Bill shape

Silhouettes



Flight Silhouettes

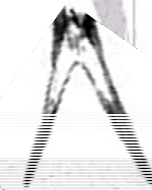


Birds of Prey Silhouettes



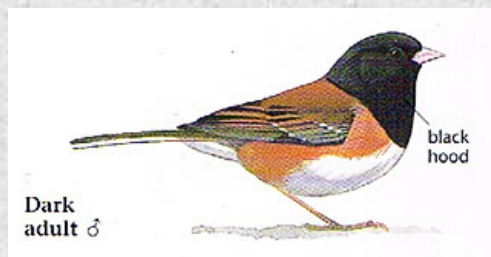
Tail Shapes

- o Rounded: Blue Jay
- o Square tipped: Cliff Swallow
- o Notched: Tree Swallow
- o Pointed: Mourning Dove
- o Deeply forked: Barn Swallow



Tail Patterns

- White band at tip- Kingbirds
- White patches on outer corners- Towhees
- White sides- Junco, sparrows



Rump Patches

- White- Northern Harrier, Northern Flicker
- Yellow- Yellow-rumped Warbler
- Chestnut- Lucy's Warbler



Wing Patterns

Wing bars: Flycatchers, Warblers, Sparrows



Wing patches: Northern Mockingbird, Phainopepla, Gila Woodpecker

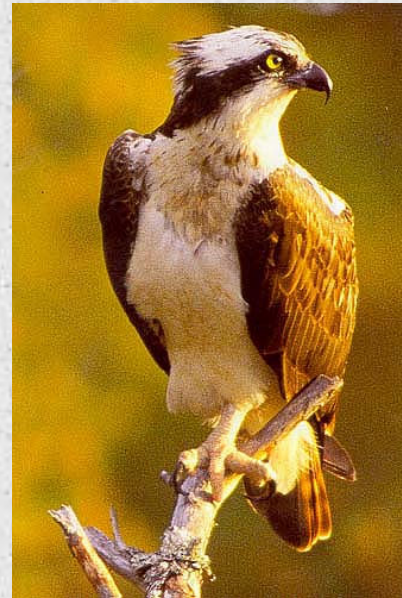


Wing stripes: Night Hawks



Head and Facial Features

◦ Eye stripe: through eye (Osprey)



Head and Facial Features

◦ Eyebrow: above eye (Warbling Vireo)



Head and Facial Features

- Spectacles: eye rings with line across beak (Plumbeous Vireo)



Head and Facial Features

◦ Eye ring: ring around eye (American Robin)



Head and Facial Features

◦ Cap: color on top of head (Gila Woodpecker)



Head and Facial Features

- Hood: color on head extends to nape
(Hooded Oriole)



Head and Facial Features

- Bib: color from throat to chest (Swainson's Hawk)



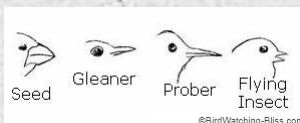
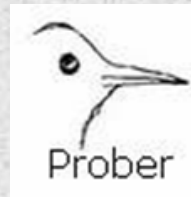
Head and Facial Features

- Mask: color around eyes (Cardinal, Abert's towhee)



Bill Shapes

Shape	Bird	Use
Small, fine	Warbler, Vireo, Kinglet	Insects
Short, stout	Sparrow	Seeds
Needle-like	Hummingbird	Nectar
Triangular	Grosbeak	Seeds
Hook- tipped	Birds of Prey	Tearing flesh
Heavy	Woodpeckers	Excavating nesting cavities



Common Birds of the Verde Valley

- Upper Sonoran desert scrub
- Semi-desert grassland
- Chaparral
- Pinyon-juniper woodlands
- Ponderosa Pine forest
- Mixed conifer forest
- Riparian

Desert Scrub



Verdin

Desert Scrub



Cactus Wren

Desert Scrub



Crissal Thrasher

Desert Scrub



Sage Sparrow

Desert Scrub



Ladder-backed Woodpecker

Desert Scrub



Rufous-crowned Sparrow

Desert Scrub



White-crowned Sparrow

Desert Scrub



Northern Mockingbird

Desert Scrub



Northern Cardinal

Desert Scrub



Gambel's Quail

Desert Scrub



Ash-throated Flycatcher

Desert Scrub



Scott's Oriole

Semi-desert Grasslands



Roadrunner

Semi-desert Grasslands



Canyon Towhee

Semi-desert Grasslands



Lesser Nighthawk

Semi-desert Grasslands



Black-throated Sparrow

Semi-desert Grasslands



Loggerhead Shrike

Semi-desert Grasslands



Northern Mockingbird

Semi-desert Grasslands



Western Meadowlark

Semi-desert Grasslands



Northern Harrier

Semi-desert Grasslands



Prairie Falcon

Semi-desert Grasslands



Say's Phoebe

Semi-desert Grasslands



Red-tailed Hawk

Chaparral



Black-chinned Sparrow

Chaparral



Rufous-crowned Sparrow

Pinyon-juniper woodlands



Western Bluebird

Pinyon-juniper woodlands



Scrub Jay

Pinyon-juniper woodlands



Spotted Towhee

Pinyon-juniper woodlands



Gray Flycatcher

Pinyon-juniper woodlands



Juniper Titmouse

Pinyon-juniper woodlands



Black-throated Gray Warbler

Pinyon-juniper woodlands



Northern Flicker

Pinyon-juniper woodlands



Chipping Sparrow

Pinyon-juniper woodlands



Black-headed Grosbeak

Ponderosa Pine



Hairy Woodpecker

Ponderosa Pine



Steller's Jay

Ponderosa Pine



Western Tanager

Ponderosa Pine



White-breasted Nuthatch

Ponderosa Pine



Cedar Waxwing

Ponderosa Pine



Cordilleran Flycatcher

Ponderosa Pine



Flammulated Owl

Ponderosa Pine



Turkey

Ponderosa Pine



Western Wood Pewee

Ponderosa Pine



House Finch

Ponderosa Pine



Lark Sparrow

Mixed Conifer



Red-breasted Nuthatch

Mixed Conifer



Red-faced Warbler

Mixed Conifer

Clark's Nutcracker? (Your
notes say nuthatch)



Clark's Nuthatch

Mixed Conifer



Olive-sided Flycatcher

Mixed Conifer



Mountain Chickadee

Mixed Conifer



Red-breasted Nuthatch

Mixed Conifer



Hermit Thrush

Mixed Conifer



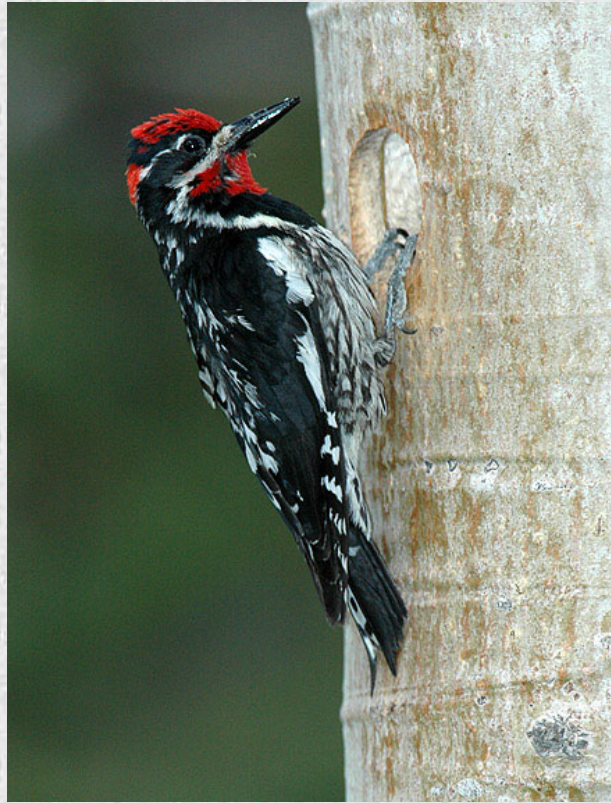
Sharp-shinned Hawk

Mixed Conifer



Brown Creeper

Mixed Conifer



Red-naped Sapsucker

Mixed Conifer



Downy Woodpecker

Mixed Conifer



Olive-sided Flycatcher

Mixed Conifer



Mexican Spotted Owl

Low Elevation Riparian



Lucy's Warbler

Low Elevation Riparian



Yellow Warbler

Low Elevation Riparian



Summer Tanager

Low Elevation Riparian



Bell's Vireo

Low Elevation Riparian



Abert's Towhee

Low Elevation Riparian



Northern Cardinal

Low Elevation Riparian



Vermilion Flycatcher

Low Elevation Riparian



Great Blue Heron

Low Elevation Riparian



Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Low Elevation Riparian



Cassin's Kingbird

Low Elevation Riparian



Common Blackhawk

Low Elevation Riparian



Zone-tailed Hawk

Low Elevation Riparian



Black Phoebe

Low Elevation Riparian



Bewick's Wren

Low Elevation Riparian



Mourning Dove

Low Elevation Riparian



Gila Woodpecker

Low Elevation Riparian



Brown-headed Cowbird

Low Elevation Riparian



Northern Rough-winged Swallow

Low Elevation Riparian



Bullock's Oriole

Low Elevation Riparian



Western Kingbird

Low Elevation Riparian



Black-chinned Hummingbird

Low Elevation Riparian



Song Sparrow

Low Elevation Riparian



Blue Grosbeak

Low Elevation Riparian



Ladder-backed Woodpecker

High Elevation Riparian



Bridled Titmouse

High Elevation Riparian



Black-throated Gray Warbler

High Elevation Riparian



Red-faced Warbler

High Elevation Riparian



Olive Warbler

High Elevation Riparian



Grace's Warbler

High Elevation Riparian



Virginia's Warbler

High Elevation Riparian



Peregrine Falcon

High Elevation Riparian



Summer Tanager

High Elevation Riparian



Painted Redstart

High Elevation Riparian



American Dipper

High Elevation Riparian



House Wren

High Elevation Riparian



Broad-tailed Hummingbird

High Elevation Riparian



Band-tailed Pigeon

High Elevation Riparian



Townsend's Solitaire

High Elevation Riparian



Zone-tailed Hawk

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Scrub Jay

High Elevation Riparian



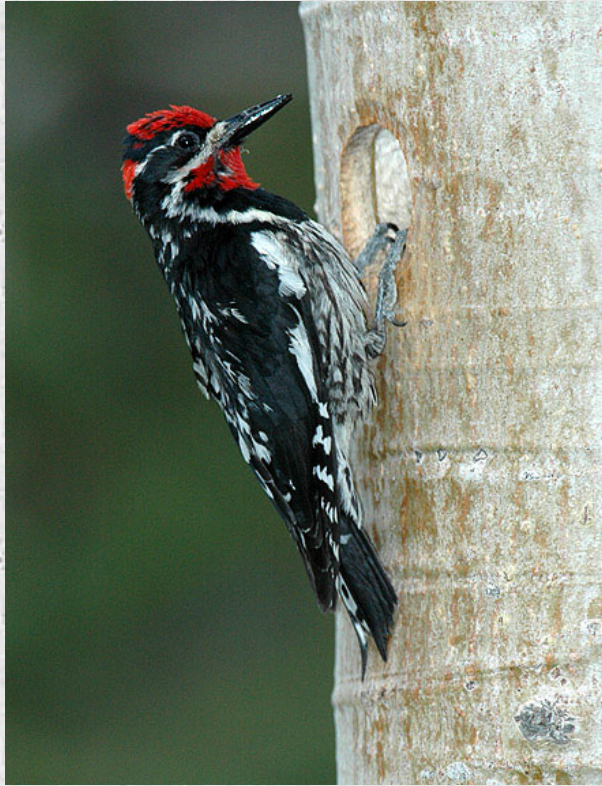
Steller's Jay

High Elevation Riparian



Hooded Oriole

High Elevation Riparian



Red-naped Sapsucker

Image Sources

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