



BIRDS OF HERON'S HEAD PARK

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BIRDS OF HERON'S HEAD PARK

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

IDENTIFYING BIRDS

BEAKS AND FEET

3

4

BIRDS : PICTURED AND DESCRIBED

WATERFOWL

5 - 25

DIVERS

26 - 36

WADERS

37 - 47

RAPTORS

48 - 64

SHOREBIRDS

65 - 93

GULLS / TERNS

94 - 110

NON - PASSERINES

111 - 172

PASSERINES

173 - 187

BIRD GAMES

188

AUDUBON BIRDING DICTIONARY

189

PHOTO ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

190 - 191

IDENTIFYING BIRDS

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY WEBSITE

SIZE

EXACT SIZE IS USUALLY DIFFICULT TO GAUGE IN THE FIELD. TO GET AN IDEA OF HOW LARGE A BIRD IS, TRY COMPARING IT TO THE SIZE OF A BIRD YOU RECOGNIZE, SUCH AS A SPARROW, CROW, OR HERON.

SHAPE

LEARNING HOW TO EXAMINE BIRDS BY SHAPE HELPS MAKE IDENTIFYING EASY. TRY ASKING SOME SIMPLE QUESTIONS. IS THE NECK LONG OR SHORT? IS ITS TAIL SHORT, MEDIUM, OR LONG? IS THE BILL SHORT OR LONG? THICK OR THIN? WHEN THE BIRD FLIES, ARE ITS WINGS LONG AND POINTED OR SHORT AND ROUNDED?

BEHAVIOR

WHAT A BIRD DOES AND THE WAY IT MOVES CAN OFTEN TELL WHAT KIND OF SPECIES THE BIRD IS. TAKE NOTE OF THE WAY THE BIRD PERCHES, HOW IS IT FORAGING FOR FOOD, WHAT TYPE OF FOOD IS IT EATING, HOW IS IT FLYING, AND SO ON.

MARKINGS

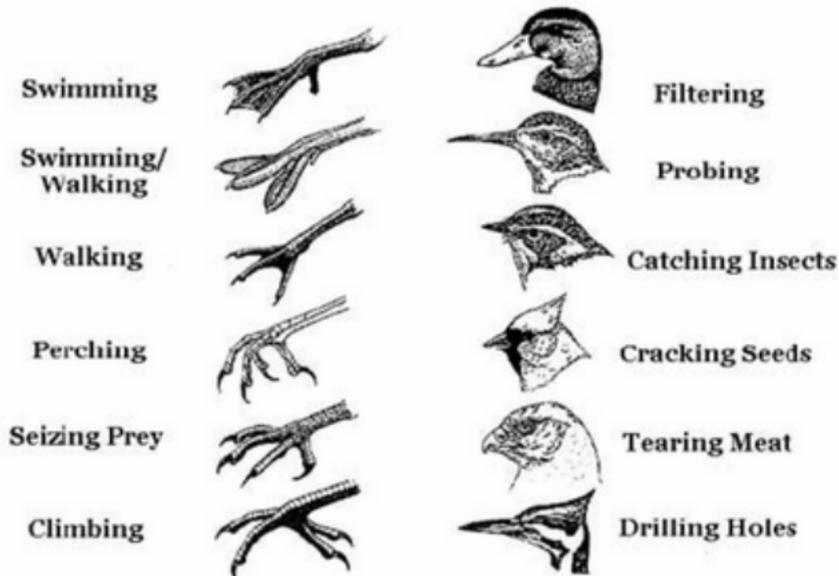
IMPORTANT MARKINGS CAN BE FOUND ON THE CROWN, FACE, THROAT, UNDER BELLY, WINGS, TAIL, AND UPPER BODY. TRY ASKING QUESTIONS SUCH AS, IS THE CROWN STRIPED, STREAKED, OR PLAIN? ARE THERE RINGS AROUND THE EYES, THROAT, OR BILL? IS THE UNDER BELLY STREAKED (LENGTHWISE), BARRED (CROSSWISE), SPOTTED, OR PLAIN?

CALLS

BIRDS MAKE TWO TYPES OF VOCALIZATIONS - SONGS AND CALLS. SONGS ARE USUALLY MORE COMPLEX AND ARE USED TO ESTABLISH AND DEFEND TERRITORY OR TO ATTRACT MATES. CALLS ARE USUALLY SIMPLE NOTES, SINGLE OR REPEATED AND ARE USED TO EXPRESS ALARM OR MAINTAIN CONTACT

IDENTIFYING BIRDS

Bird Beaks and Feet



UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON PHOTO - THE ADAPTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF BILL AND FOOT STRUCTURE OPTIMIZE A BIRD'S ABILITY TO THRIVE IN ITS ENVIRONMENT

A close-up photograph of a duck's head, showing its dark, textured feathers and a large, dark, slightly hooked beak. The duck's eye is visible, showing a brown iris. The background is blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting.

BIRDS: PICTURED AND DESCRIBED

WATERFOWL

THE WATERFOWL FAMILY OR ANATIDAE, INCLUDES GEESE, SWANS, "DABBLING" DUCKS, AND "DIVING" DUCKS. ALL OF THESE BIRDS SHARE THE COMMONALITY OF LIVING IN AN AQUATIC HABITAT AND HAVE WEBBED FEET. HISTORICALLY, WATERFOWL HAVE OFTEN BEEN USED AS A FOOD RESOURCE FOR HUMANS AND THIS TREND HAS PUT THE BIRD GROUP'S POPULATION IN DECLINE.

VOICE:



CANADA GOOSE

BRANTA CANADENSIS

ORDER: ANSERIFORMES

FAMILY: ANATIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 40-45 INCHES TALL, GEESE HAVE LONG BLACK NECKS, HEAD AND BILL: WHITE CHEEK PATCHES, LONG GRAYISH BODY: WHITE BLACK UNDER BLACK TAIL

BEST SEEN: FALL, WINTER, SPRING: LAKES, PONDS, GRASS FIELDS

HABITAT: WIDELY DISTRIBUTED ACROSS NORTH AMERICA. CANADA GEESE BREED AND NEST IN CANADA, ALASKA, AND ALL OF THE LOWER 48 STATES. THEY ARE FOUND AT A BROAD RANGE OF ELEVATIONS AND OCCUPY A BROAD RANGE OF HABITATS, AS LONG AS THERE IS WATER NEARBY.

BEHAVIOR: CANADA GEESE ARE OFTEN FOUND GRAZING IN PAIRS OR FLOCKS IN LARGE FIELDS AND LAWNS. THEY SOMETIMES FEED BY DABBLING IN SHALLOW WATERS AND ARE OFTEN SEEN IN FLYING IN PAIRS. WHEN FLYING IN A FLOCK, GEESE ASSUME A V FORMATION.

RANDOM FACTS: A MALE GOOSE IS CALLED "GANDER", A BABY IS CALLED A "GOSLING", A GROUP OF GEESE ARE CALLED A GAGGLE. THE FEMALE MOM IS RELATED TO AS MOTHER "GOOSE".





VOICE:



MALLARD

ANAS PLATYRHYNCHOS

ORDER: ANSERIFORMES
FAMILY: ANATIDAE

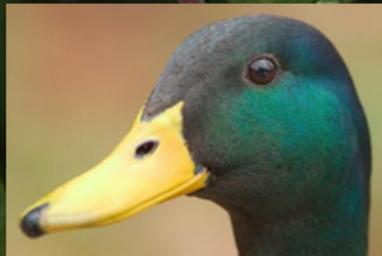
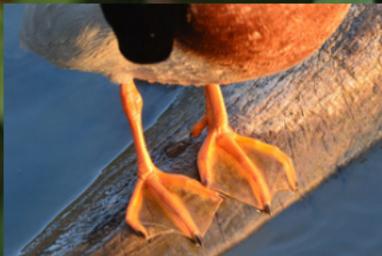
SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 23-27" INCHES IN LENGTH, MALLARD DUCKS UN-CRESTED, GLOSSY GREEN HEADS WITH WHITE NECK RINGS; CHESTNUT BREST, YELLOW BILL, BLUE SPECULUM, AND WHITE TAIL.

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: GRASSY AREAS, LAKES, VARIOUS BODIES OF WATER

HABITAT: LOOK FOR THEM ON LAKES, PONDS, MARSHES, RIVERS, AND COASTAL HABITATS, AS WELL AS CITY AND SUBURBAN PARKS AND RESIDENTIAL BACKYARDS.

BEHAVIOR: MALLARDS ARE "DABBLING DUCKS"—THEY FEED IN THE WATER BY TIPPING FORWARD AND GRAZING ON UNDERWATER PLANTS. THEY ALMOST NEVER DIVE.

RANDOM FACTS: THE MALLARD IS THE ANCESTOR OF NEARLY ALL DOMESTIC DUCK BREEDS (EVERYTHING EXCEPT THE MUSCOVY DUCK).





VOICE:



AMERICAN WIGEON

MARECA AMERICANA

ORDER: ANSERIFORMES

FAMILY: ANATIDAE

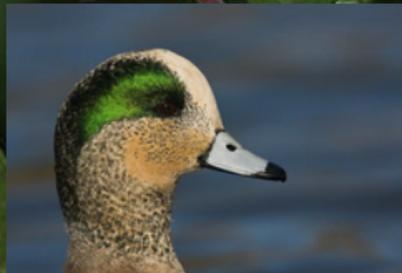
SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 20-23" INCHES IN LENGTH, AMERICAN WIGEONS HAVE A BROWN BODY: GRAYISH NECK WITH GREEN FACE PATCH AND WHITE CROWN: LARGE WHITE PATCH ON FOREWING.

BEST SEEN: FALL, WINTER, SPRING: WETLANDS, PONDS, NEARBY AGRICULTURAL FIELDS

HABITAT: AT ALL TIMES OF YEAR, AMERICAN WIGEONS CAN BE FOUND IN FRESHWATER WETLANDS, LAKES, SLOW-MOVING RIVERS, IMPOUNDMENTS, FLOODED FIELDS, ESTUARIES, BAYS, AND MARSHES.

BEHAVIOR: AMERICAN WIGEONS USUALLY CONGREGATE ON LAKES AND PLACES WHERE THERE IS AMPLE AQUATIC VEGETATION. THEY ALSO WADDLE THROUGH FIELDS PLUCKING AT PLANTS WITH THEIR SHORT BILL.

RANDOM FACTS: WHEN YOUNG ARE DISTURBED, FEMALE WIGEONS WILL FEIGN INJURY WHILE THE BABIES HIDE. AMERICAN WIGEONS USED TO BE CALLED "BALDPATE" BECAUSE THE WHITE HEAD STRIPE LOOKS LIKE A BALD MAN'S HEAD





VOICE:



LESSER SCAUP

AYTHYA AFFINIS

ORDER: ANSERIFORMES

FAMILY: ANATIDAE

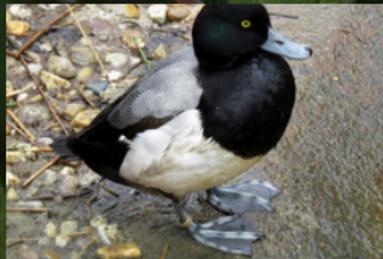
SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 11-13" INCHES IN LENGTH, LESSER SCAUPS HAVE GLOSSY PURPLE AND GREEN HEADS: PEAKED CROWN BEHIND THE EYE: WHITE STRIPES ON WINGS: WHITE UNDERPARTS

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: LAKES, PONDS, ESTUARIES, RESERVOIRS

HABITAT: LESSER SCAUPS, LIKE MOST WATERFOWL, CAN BE FOUND BY VARIOUS BODIES OF WATER. DURING THE BREEDING SEASON, THEY ARE MORE COMMONLY FOUND IN MARSHES OF NORTHERN NORTH AMERICA WHERE THEY NEST.

BEHAVIOR: DURING MIGRATION AND WINTER, LESSER SCAUP FORM LARGE FLOCKS ON LAKES, BAYS, RIVERS, AND LARGER WETLANDS. THEY TEND TO FORM TIGHT GROUPS AND MIX WITH OTHER DIVING DUCKS.

RANDOM FACTS: IT IS ONE OF THE MOST ABUNDANT AND WIDESPREAD OF THE DIVING DUCKS IN NORTH AMERICA. AN ADULT MAY PRETEND TO BE DEAD (IMMOBILE WITH HEAD EXTENDED, EYES OPEN, AND WINGS HELD CLOSE TO BODY) WHEN GRASPED BY A RED FOX.





VOICE:



BUFFLEHEAD

BUCEPHALA ALBEOLA

ORDER: ANSERIFORMES

FAMILY: ANATIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 11-13" INCHES IN LENGTH, BUFFLEHEADS ARE BLACK ABOVE AND WHITE BELOW: LARGE WHITE PATCH ON HEAD AGAINST PURPLE-GLOSSED FOREHEAD AND NAPE.

BEST SEEN: FALL, WINTER, SPRING: LAKES, PONDS, ESTUARIES

HABITAT: BUFFLEHEAD MOVE SOUTH TO COASTS AND LARGE BODIES OF WATER, PARTICULARLY SHALLOW SALTWATER BAYS. THEY BREED NEAR LAKES IN NORTHERN FORESTS WHERE CONIFERS MIX WITH POPLARS OR ASPENS. BUFFLEHEAD NEST IN TREE CAVITIES, ESPECIALLY OLD NORTHERN FLICKER HOLES.

BEHAVIOR: OFTEN SEEN DIVING UNDERWATER TO CATCH AQUATIC INVERTEBRATES. WHEN COURTING FEMALES, MALE BUFFLEHEADS SWIM IN FRONT OF THEM, RAPIDLY BOBBING THEIR HEADS UP AND DOWN.

RANDOM FACTS: GENERALLY MONOGAMOUS, MEANING THEY TEND TO HAVE ONLY ONE MATE. BUFFLEHEAD FOSSILS DATE BACK TO 500,000 YEARS AGO!





VOICE:



COMMON GOLDENEYE

BUCEPHALA CLANGULA

ORDER: ANSERIFORMES

FAMILY: ANATIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 15-17" INCHES IN LENGTH, THE COMMON GOLDENEYE HAS A ROUND GLOSSY GREEN HEAD WITH WHITE PATCH NEAR BASE OF BILL: WHITE NECK, BREAST AND SIDES: BLACK BACK WITH WHITE STRIPES

BEST SEEN: FALL, WINTER, SPRING: LAKES AND PONDS

HABITAT: THEY NEST IN TREE CAVITIES IN THE BOREAL FOREST OF NORTHERN NORTH AMERICA. THEY SPEND WINTERS MAINLY IN PROTECTED COASTAL WATERS AS WELL AS ON LARGE INLAND LAKES AND RIVERS.

BEHAVIOR: THESE ARE DIVING DUCKS THAT OFTEN FORAGE IN FLOCKS AND DIVE SIMULTANEOUSLY. THEY TEND TO FORAGE IN FAIRLY SHALLOW WATERS. WHEN FEMALES ARE NEARBY, MALES DISPLAY BY STRETCHING THE HEAD BACKWARD AGAINST THEIR BACK AND THEN POPPING THEIR HEAD FORWARD.

RANDOM FACTS: KNOWN TO BENEFIT FROM LAKE ACIDIFICATION, A RESULT OF NATURAL OR HUMAN-CAUSED REASONS. FISH DO NOT SURVIVE WELL IN ACIDIC LAKES, WHICH RESULTS IN LESS COMPETITION OF THE ACID-TOLERANT INSECTS FOR THE GOLDENEYE.





VOICE:



AMERICAN COOT

FULICA AMERICANA

ORDER: GRUIFORMES

FAMILY: RALLIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 11-13" INCHES IN LENGTH, AMERICAN COOTS HAVE A BLACK HEAD AND NECK; WHITISH BILL, WHITE PATCH UNDER TAIL; LOBED FEET WITH LARGE TOES

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: LAKES AND PONDS

HABITAT: AMERICAN COOTS ARE LIKELY TO BE SEEN AT PONDS IN CITY PARKS, MARSHES, RESERVOIRS, LAKES, AND IN ROADSIDE DITCHES, SEWAGE TREATMENT PONDS, AND SALTWATER INLETS OR SALTMARSHES.

BEHAVIOR: WHEN SWIMMING THEY LOOK LIKE SMALL DUCKS (AND OFTEN DIVE), BUT ON LAND THEY LOOK MORE CHICKENLIKE, WALKING RATHER THAN WADDLING. AN AWKWARD AND OFTEN CLUMSY FLIER, THE AMERICAN COOT REQUIRES LONG RUNNING TAKEOFFS TO GET AIRBORNE.

RANDOM FACTS: THE OLDEST KNOWN AMERICAN COOT LIVED TO BE AT LEAST 22 YEARS 4 MONTHS OLD. AMERICAN COOTS BREED LOCALLY IN GOLDEN GATE PARK, LAKE MERCED, AND THE PRESIDIO. THEY ARE ALSO NOT A DUCK! THEY ARE ACTUALLY IN THE RAIL FAMILY





VOICE:



RUDDY DUCK

OXYURA JAMAICENSIS

ORDER: GRUIFORMES
FAMILY: RALLIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 14-16" INCHES IN LENGTH, RUDDY DUCKS HAVE A RUSTY-RED BODY: WHITE CHEEKS AND UNDERPARTS: BLACK CAP AND BRIGHT BLUE BILL, STIFF TAIL

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: MARSHES

HABITAT: THEY NEST IN MARSHES NEAR LAKES AND PONDS. IN MIGRATION, THEY FLOCK TO LARGE RIVERS, PONDS, LAKES, AND ESTUARIES.

BEHAVIOR: RUDDY DUCKS DIVE TO FEED ON AQUATIC INVERTEBRATES, ESPECIALLY MIDGE LARVAE. THEY FEED MOST ACTIVELY AT NIGH, SO YOU'LL OFTEN SEE RUDDY DUCKS SLEEPING DURING THE DAY, HEAD TUCKED UNDER A WING AND TAIL COCKED UP.

RANDOM FACTS: PLEISTOCENE FOSSILS OF RUDDY DUCKS, AT LEAST 11,000 YEARS OLD, HAVE BEEN UNEARTHED IN OREGON, CALIFORNIA, VIRGINIA, FLORIDA, AND ILLINOIS. RUDDY DUCKS GET HARASSED BY HORNED GREBES, PIED-BILLED GREBES, AND AMERICAN COOTS DURING BREEDING SEASON. THE GREBES SOMETIMES ATTACK RUDDY DUCKS FROM BELOW THE WATER, A BEHAVIOR KNOWN AS "SUBMARINING".





VOICE:



RED - BREASTED MERGANSER

MERGUS SERRATOR

ORDER: ANSERIFORMES

FAMILY: ANATIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 20-23" INCHES IN LENGTH, RED - BREASTED MERGANSERS HAVE GLOSSY GREEN HEADS WITH CREST: REDDISH BILL, WHITE NECK AND SIDES: STREAKED BREAST, BLACK BACK

BEST SEEN: FALL, WINTER, SPRING: LAKES AND PONDS

HABITAT: BREEDS ON FRESH, BRACKISH, AND SALTWATER WETLANDS, TYPICALLY CLOSE TO THE COAST. DURING MIGRATION AND ON THE WINTERING GROUNDS, USES MARINE WATERS, LAKES, AND RIVERS.

BEHAVIOR: RED-BREASTED MERGANSERS TEND TO SIT LOW IN THE WATER AND FLY AT AN ANGLE WITH THE HEAD HIGHER THAN THEIR FEET. THEY SWIM WITH THE HEAD PARTIALLY SUBMERGED, DIVING UNDERWATER TO CAPTURE SMALL FISH WITH THEIR SERRATED BILL.

RANDOM FACTS: RED-BREASTED MERGANSERS NEED TO EAT 15 TO 20 FISH PER DAY, WHICH RESEARCHERS SUGGEST MEANS THEY NEED TO DIVE UNDERWATER 250-300 TIMES PER DAY OR FORAGE FOR 4-5 HOURS TO MEET THEIR ENERGY NEEDS.





VOICE:



SURF SCOTER

MELANITTA PERSPICILLATA

ORDER: ANSERIFORMES

FAMILY: ANATIDAE

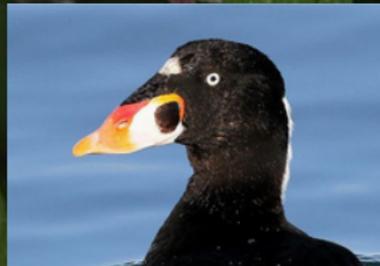
SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 18-21" INCHES IN LENGTH, THE SURF SCOTER HAS BLACK WITH WHITE PATCHES ON ITS' FOREHEAD AND NAPE: BLACK AND YELLOW AND ORANGE BILL ENLARGED AT THE BASE: WHITE EYES

BEST SEEN: FALL, WINTER, SPRING: NEAR THE OCEAN

HABITAT: THEY ARE MOST EASILY FOUND IN MIGRATION AND WINTER, WHEN THEY OCCUR ALONG OCEAN COASTS, BAYS, AND ESTUARIES.

BEHAVIOR: SURF SCOTERS REST ON THE WATER'S SURFACE AND DIVE FOR THEIR PREY. FLOCKS OF THOUSANDS CAN BE SEEN IN MIGRATION ALONG OCEAN COASTS. THEY BEGIN COURTSHIP DISPLAYS SOON AFTER SETTLING IN ON THEIR WINTERING GROUNDS, ESPECIALLY ON CALM DAYS.

RANDOM FACTS: SURF SCOTERS ARE "MOLT MIGRANTS," MEANING THAT ADULTS FLY TO AN AREA WHERE THEY CAN MOLT THEIR FLIGHT FEATHERS. THEY BRIEFLY BECOME FLIGHTLESS BEFORE CONTINUING TO THEIR WINTERING RANGE: MOLTING AREAS PROVIDE SOME PROTECTION FROM WEATHER AND PREDATORS. THESE SPOTS INCLUDE SOUTHEASTERN ALASKA TO WASHINGTON'S PUGET SOUND, AND QUEBEC AND NEW BRUNSWICK.





A brown pelican with a long, pointed beak is perched on a log. The bird is facing right, and its feathers are a mix of brown and dark blue. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a natural outdoor setting.

BIRDS: PICTURED AND DESCRIBED

DIVERS

DIVERS HAVE EARNED THEIR NAME BY THE WAY THEY HUNT. PELICANS, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE OFTEN SEEN PLUMMETING FROM THE SKY AND INTO WATER TO QUICKLY SCOOP UP FISH. THE GROUP INCLUDE LOONS, GREBES, CORMORANTS, AND PELICANS. DIVER BIRDS OFTEN HAVE LONG NECKS AND WEBBED FEET TO ENABLE THEM TO MOVE FROM FLOATING TO DIVING POSITION QUICKLY TO CATCH PREY.

VOICE:



COMMON LOON

GAVIA IMMER

ORDER: GAVIIFORMES

FAMILY: GAVIIDAE

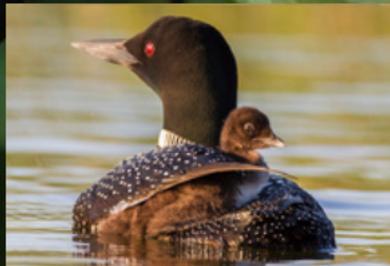
SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 24-26" INCHES IN LENGTH, COMMON LOONS HAVE A BLACK HEAD WITH DAGGER-LIKE BILL; LONG BODY, BROKEN WHITE NECKLACE, GRAY CHECKERED BACK, RED EYES

BEST SEEN: FALL, WINTER, SPRING; LAKES AND PONDS

HABITAT: BREED ON REMOTE FRESHWATER LAKES OF THE NORTHERN U.S. AND CANADA, AND THEY ARE SENSITIVE TO HUMAN DISTURBANCE. IN WINTER AND DURING MIGRATION, LOOK FOR THEM ON LAKES, RIVERS, ESTUARIES, AND COASTLINES.

BEHAVIOR: COMMON LOONS ARE STEALTHY DIVERS, SUBMERGING WITHOUT A SPLASH TO CATCH FISH. PAIRS AND GROUPS OFTEN CALL TO EACH OTHER AT NIGHT. IN FLIGHT, NOTICE THEIR SHALLOW WINGBEATS AND UNWAVERING, BEE-LINED FLIGHT PATH.

RANDOM FACTS: BIOLOGISTS ESTIMATE THAT LOON PARENTS AND THEIR 2 CHICKS CAN EAT ABOUT A HALF-TON OF FISH OVER A 15-WEEK PERIOD. THE OLDEST RECORDED COMMON LOON WAS A FEMALE, AND AT LEAST 29 YEARS AND 10 MONTHS OLD WHEN SHE WAS SPOTTED IN MICHIGAN IN 2016.





VOICE:



WESTERN GREBE

AECHMOPHORUS OCCIDENTALIS

ORDER: PODICIPEDIFORMES

FAMILY: PODICIPEDIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 23-27" INCHES IN LENGTH, THE WESTERN GREBE HAS A BLACK HEAD WITH DARK GRAY BACK; WHITE THROAT, LONG YELLOW BILL, WHITE BELOW, REDDISH EYES

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: LAKES AND PONDS

HABITAT: BREEDING BIRDS USE FRESHWATER LAKES; NONBREEDING BIRDS ARE FOUND IN BOTH FRESHWATER AND SALTWATER ENVIRONMENTS, THOUGH NEVER FAR FROM SHORE IN OCEANS.

BEHAVIOR: WESTERN GREBES ARE ALMOST ALWAYS IN THE WATER. THEY CAN DISAPPEAR FOR LONG PERIODS DURING DIVES. COURTING BIRDS HAVE A CAPTIVATING DISPLAY IN WHICH THE PAIR RACES SIDE BY SIDE ACROSS THE WATER, THEIR NECKS GRACEFULLY CURVED AND BILLS POINTED TO THE SKY.

RANDOM FACTS: WESTERN GREBES, ALONG WITH OTHER GREBE SPECIES, OFTEN SWALLOW THEIR OWN FEATHERS AS THEY PREEN. THESE FEATHERS WIND UP LINING THE STOMACH, WHERE THEY MAY HELP PROTECT AGAINST PUNCTURES BY SHARP FISH BONES.





VOICE:



EARED GREBE

PODICEPS NIGRICOLLIS

ORDER: PODICIPEDIFORMES

FAMILY: PODICIPEDIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 11-13" INCHES IN LENGTH, EARED GREBES HAVE A SLENDER BLACK NECK AND FACE: SHORT SLIGHTLY UPTURNED BILL, PEAKED CROWN: GOLDEN EAR PLUMES BEHIND RED EYES: BROWN FLANKS, SHORT TAIL

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: LAKES AND PONDS

HABITAT: BREEDS IN SHALLOW LAKES AND PONDS. DURING MIGRATION AND IN WINTER PREFERS SALTWATER. OCCURS IN GREAT NUMBERS IN SUPER SALTY WATERS WITH AN ABUNDANT SUPPLY OF BRINE SHRIMP AND FLIES.

BEHAVIOR: THIS SOCIAL BIRD BREEDS IN COLONIES AND GATHERS IN FLOCKS FROM THE HUNDREDS TO THE THOUSANDS ON LAKES AND PONDS DURING MIGRATION AND WINTER. THEY JUMP UP SLIGHTLY BEFORE DIVING UNDERWATER FOR AQUATIC INVERTEBRATES.

RANDOM FACTS: THE EARED GREBE MIGRATES ONLY AT NIGHT. BECAUSE OF THE LENGTH OF ITS STAY AT FALL STAGING AREAS, ITS SOUTHWARD FALL MIGRATION IS THE LATEST OF ANY BIRD SPECIES IN NORTH AMERICA.





VOICE:



BROWN PELICAN

PELECANUS OCCIDENTALIS

ORDER: PELECANIFORMES

FAMILY: PELECANIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 44-46" INCHES IN LENGTH: BROWN WITH A WHITE HEAD: HUGE DARK BILL WITH LARGE THROAT POUCH: LONG CURVED NECK

BEST SEEN: SUMMER, FALL, WINTER: OCEANS

HABITAT: BROWN PELICANS LIVE ALONG SOUTHERN AND WESTERN SEA COASTS AND ARE RARELY SEEN INLAND.

BEHAVIOR: BROWN PELICANS PLUNGE INTO THE WATER TO FEED, STUNNING FISH WITH THEIR IMPACT AND SCOOPING THEM UP IN THEIR THROAT POUCHES. IN FLIGHT, LINES OF PELICANS GLIDE ON THEIR BROAD WINGS, OFTEN SURFING UPDRAFTS ALONG WAVE FACES.

RANDOM FACTS: PELICANS INCUBATE THEIR EGGS WITH THE SKIN OF THEIR FEET, ESSENTIALLY STANDING ON THE EGGS TO KEEP THEM WARM. THE PESTICIDE DDT CAUSED PELICANS TO LAY THINNER EGGS THAT CRACKED UNDER THE WEIGHT OF INCUBATING PARENTS. AFTER NEARLY DISAPPEARING IN THE 1960S AND 1970S, BROWN PELICANS MADE A FULL COMEBACK THANKS TO PESTICIDE REGULATIONS. THE OLDEST BROWN PELICAN ON RECORD WAS 43 YEARS OF AGE.





VOICE:



DOUBLE - CRESTED CORMORANT

NANNOPTERUM AURITUM

ORDER: SULIFORMES

FAMILY: PHALACROCORACIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 30-32" INCHES IN LENGTH: CORMORANTS HAVE DARK BODIES, LONG NECK, CREST SELDOM EVIDENT: STRAIGHT BILL WITH HOOKED TIP: ORANGE THROAT POUCH, LONG TAIL

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: LAKES AND PONDS

HABITAT: DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS ARE THE MOST WIDESPREAD CORMORANT IN NORTH AMERICA, AND THE ONE MOST FREQUENTLY SEEN IN FRESHWATER. THEY BREED ON THE COAST AND ON LARGE INLAND LAKES. THEY FORM COLONIES OF STICK NESTS BUILT HIGH IN TREES ON ISLANDS.

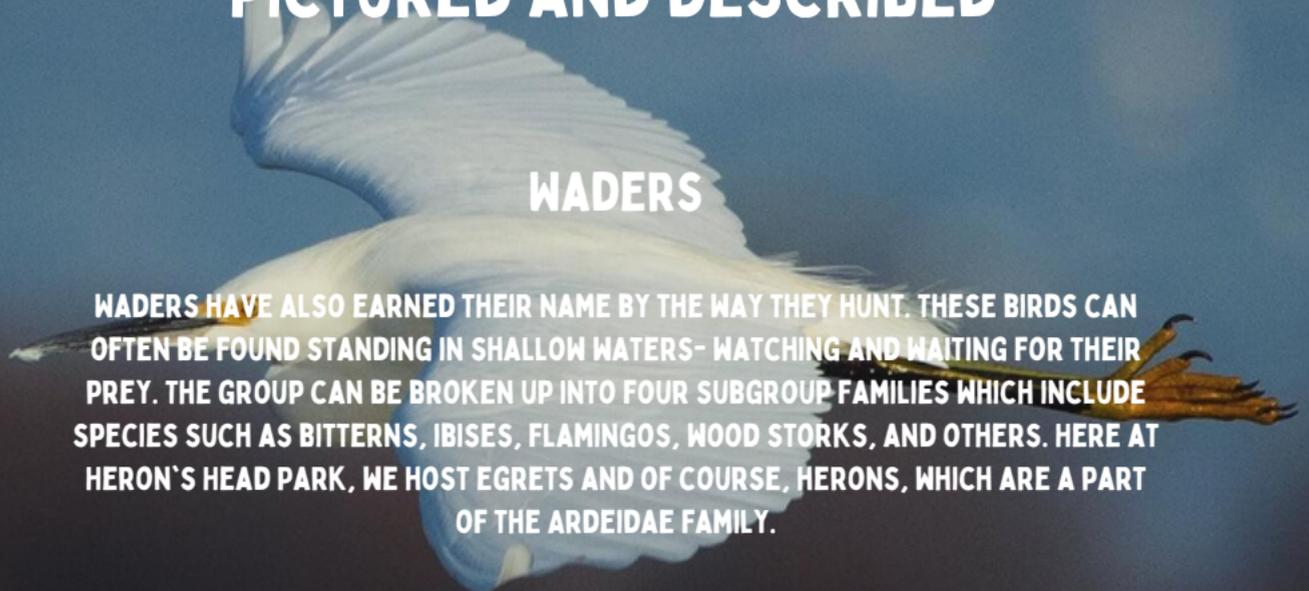
BEHAVIOR: FLOAT LOW ON THE SURFACE OF WATER AND DIVE TO CATCH SMALL FISH. AFTER FISHING, THEY STAND ON DOCKS, ROCKS, AND TREE LIMBS WITH WINGS SPREAD OPEN TO DRY.

RANDOM FACTS: IN BREEDING COLONIES WHERE THE NESTS ARE PLACED ON THE GROUND, YOUNG CORMORANTS LEAVE THEIR NESTS AND CONGREGATE INTO GROUPS WITH OTHER YOUNGSTERS (CRECHES). THEY RETURN TO THEIR OWN NESTS TO BE FED.





BIRDS: PICTURED AND DESCRIBED

A white egret is shown in flight against a clear blue sky. The bird's wings are fully extended, showing the intricate structure of the feathers. Its long neck is tucked back, and its long, thin legs are trailing behind it. The bird is positioned centrally in the upper half of the frame.

WADERS

WADERS HAVE ALSO EARNED THEIR NAME BY THE WAY THEY HUNT. THESE BIRDS CAN OFTEN BE FOUND STANDING IN SHALLOW WATERS- WATCHING AND WAITING FOR THEIR PREY. THE GROUP CAN BE BROKEN UP INTO FOUR SUBGROUP FAMILIES WHICH INCLUDE SPECIES SUCH AS BITTERNs, IBISes, FLAMINGOs, WOOD STORKS, AND OTHERS. HERE AT HERON'S HEAD PARK, WE HOST EGRETS AND OF COURSE, HERONS, WHICH ARE A PART OF THE ARDEIDAE FAMILY.

VOICE:



GREAT BLUE HERON

ARDEA HERODIAS

ORDER: PELECANIFORMES

FAMILY: ARDEIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 38-53" INCHES IN LENGTH: TALL, SLATE-BLUE BODY: WHITE HEAD WITH BLACK STRIPE: LONG NECK, WHITE UNDERPARTS, POINTED BILL, LONG LEGS

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: MARSHES

HABITAT: SALT AND FRESH WATER HABITATS, FROM OPEN COASTS, MARSHES, SLOUGHS, RIVERBANKS, AND LAKES TO BACKYARD GOLDFISH PONDS. BREEDING BIRDS GATHER IN COLONIES OR "HERONRIES" TO BUILD STICK NESTS HIGH OFF THE GROUND.

BEHAVIOR: HUNTING HERONS WADE SLOWLY OR STAND STATUE-LIKE, STALKING PREY IN SHALLOW WATER OR OPEN FIELDS. THEIR VERY SLOW WINGBEATS, TUCKED-IN NECK AND TRAILING LEGS CREATE AN UNMISTAKABLE IMAGE IN FLIGHT.

RANDOM FACTS: DESPITE THEIR IMPRESSIVE SIZE, GREAT BLUE HERONS WEIGH ONLY 5 TO 6 POUNDS THANKS IN PART TO THEIR HOLLOW BONES—A FEATURE ALL BIRDS SHARE.





VOICE:



SNOWY EGRET

EGRETTA THULA

ORDER: PELECANIFORMES

FAMILY: ARDEIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 22-24" INCHES IN LENGTH: SNOW WHITE HEAD WITH PLUMES ON NECK: SLENDER BLACK BILL, YELLOW EYES, BLACK LEGS WITH BRIGHT YELLOW FEET

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: MARSHES

HABITAT: MOST COMMON ALONG THE COAST, THOUGH THEY DO BREED IN INLAND WETLANDS. SNOWY EGRETS NEST COLONIALY. THEY CONCENTRATE ON MUDFLATS, BEACHES, AND WETLANDS, BUT ALSO FORAGE IN WET AGRICULTURAL FIELDS AND ALONG THE EDGES OF RIVERS AND LAKES.

BEHAVIOR: MADE IN SHALLOW WATER TO SPEAR FISH AND OTHER SMALL AQUATIC ANIMALS. WHILE THEY OFTEN SIT AND WAIT TO CAPTURE THEIR FOOD, SOMETIMES THEY ARE MUCH MORE ANIMATED, RUNNING BACK AND FORTH THROUGH THE WATER WITH THEIR WINGS SPREAD, CHASING THEIR PREY.

RANDOM FACTS: SNOWY EGRETS SOMETIMES MATE WITH OTHER HERON SPECIES AND PRODUCE HYBRID OFFSPRING. THEY HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO HYBRIDIZE WITH TRICOLORED HERONS, LITTLE BLUE HERONS, AND CATTLE EGRETS.





VOICE:



GREAT EGRET

ARDEA ALBA

ORDER: PELECANIFORMES

FAMILY: ARDEIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 37-39" INCHES IN LENGTH; SLENDER SNOW-WHITE BODY WITH PLUMES ON LONG SLIM NECK; POINTED YELLOW BILL, BLACK LEGS AND FEET

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: MARSHES

HABITAT: YOU'LL FIND GREAT EGRETS IN BOTH FRESHWATER AND SALTWATER HABITATS. THEY ARE COLONIAL NESTERS, TYPICALLY PLACING STICK NESTS HIGH IN TREES, OFTEN ON ISLANDS THAT ARE ISOLATED FROM MAMMALIAN PREDATORS SUCH AS RACCOONS.

BEHAVIOR: MADE IN SHALLOW WATER (BOTH FRESH AND SALT) TO HUNT FISH, FROGS, AND OTHER SMALL AQUATIC ANIMALS. THEY TYPICALLY STAND STILL AND WATCH FOR UNSUSPECTING PREY TO PASS BY. THEN, WITH STARTLING SPEED, THE EGRETS STRIKE WITH A JAB OF THEIR LONG NECK AND BILL..

RANDOM FACTS: THE GREAT EGRET IS THE SYMBOL OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY, ONE OF THE OLDEST ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN NORTH AMERICA. AUDUBON WAS FOUNDED TO PROTECT BIRDS FROM BEING KILLED FOR THEIR FEATHERS.





VOICE:



BLACK - CROWNED NIGHT HERON

NYCTICORAX NYCTICORAX

ORDER: PELECANIFORMES

FAMILY: ARDEIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 24-28" INCHES IN LENGTH: WHITE FACE AND UNDERPARTS: BLACKISH CROWN AND BACK: SHORT THICK NECK, GRAY WINGS WITH SHORT TAIL

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: MARSHES

HABITAT: THESE ARE SOCIAL BIRDS THAT TEND TO ROOST AND NEST IN GROUPS, ALTHOUGH THEY TYPICALLY FORAGE ON THEIR OWN. LOOK FOR THEM IN MOST WETLAND HABITATS ACROSS NORTH AMERICA, INCLUDING ESTUARIES, MARSHES, STREAMS, LAKES, AND RESERVOIRS.

BEHAVIOR: SPEND DAYS PERCHED ON TREE LIMBS OR CONCEALED AMONG FOLIAGE AND BRANCHES. THEY FORAGE IN THE EVENING AND AT NIGHT, IN WATER, ON MUDFLATS, AND ON LAND. IN FLIGHT THEY FOLD THEIR HEAD BACK AGAINST THEIR SHOULDERS, ALMOST MAKING THE NECK DISAPPEAR.

RANDOM FACTS: SCIENTISTS FIND IT EASY, IF A BIT SMELLY AND MESSY, TO STUDY THE DIET OF YOUNG BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERONS—THE NESTLINGS OFTEN DISGORGE THEIR STOMACH CONTENTS WHEN APPROACHED.





VOICE:



GREEN HERON

BUTORIDES VIRESCENS

ORDER: PELECANIFORMES

FAMILY: ARDEIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 19-22" INCHES IN LENGTH: DARK GREENISH BODY; CRESTED HEAD, BLUE-GREEN BACK, RUSTY-RED NECK, SHORT GREENISH-YELLOW LEGS

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: MARSHES

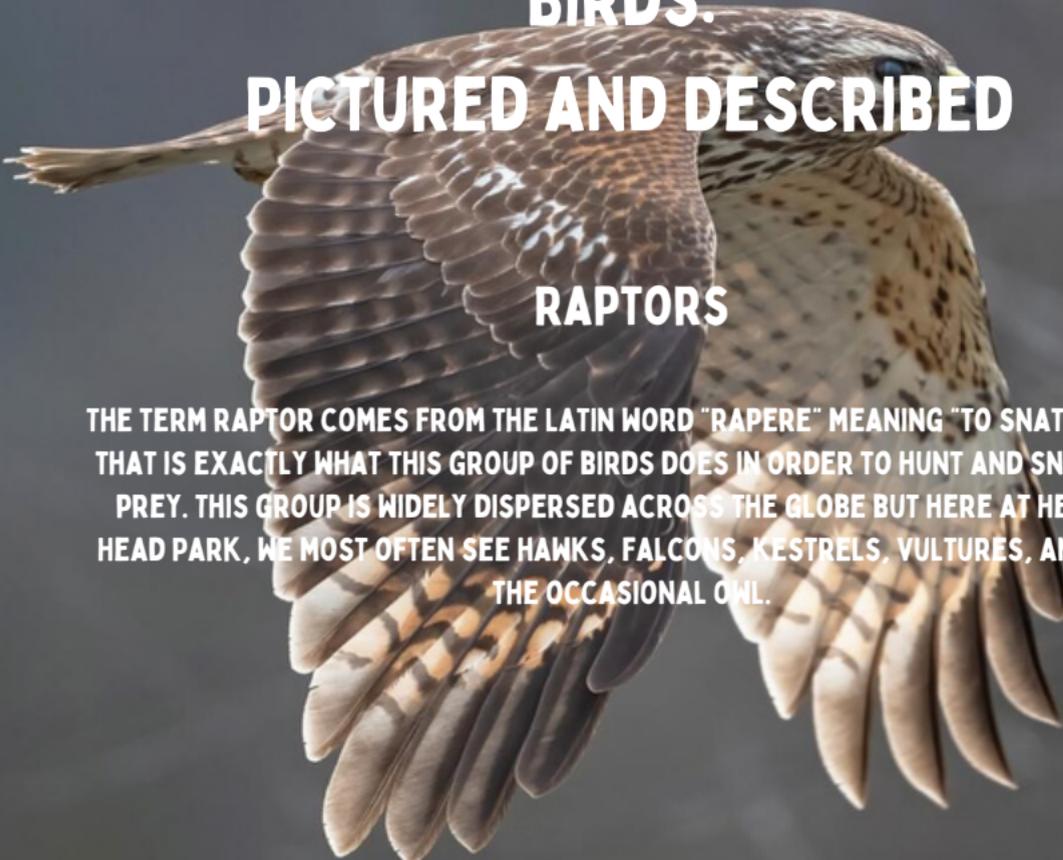
HABITAT: GREEN HERONS LIVE AROUND WOODED PONDS, MARSHES, RIVERS, RESERVOIRS, AND ESTUARIES.

BEHAVIOR: STAND MOTIONLESS AT THE WATER'S EDGE AS THEY HUNT FOR FISH AND AMPHIBIANS. THEY TYPICALLY STAND ON VEGETATION OR SOLID GROUND, AND THEY DON'T WADE AS OFTEN AS LARGER HERONS. IN FLIGHT THESE COMPACT HERONS CAN LOOK UNGAINLY, OFTEN PARTIALLY UNCROOKING THEIR NECKS TO GIVE A FRONT-HEAVY APPEARANCE.

RANDOM FACTS: THE GREEN HERON IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S FEW TOOL-USING BIRD SPECIES. IT OFTEN CREATES FISHING LURES WITH BREAD CRUSTS, INSECTS, AND FEATHERS, DROPPING THEM ON THE SURFACE OF THE WATER TO ENTICE SMALL FISH.







BIRDS: PICTURED AND DESCRIBED

RAPTORS

THE TERM RAPTOR COMES FROM THE LATIN WORD "RAPERE" MEANING "TO SNATCH", AND THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT THIS GROUP OF BIRDS DOES IN ORDER TO HUNT AND SNATCH UP PREY. THIS GROUP IS WIDELY DISPERSED ACROSS THE GLOBE BUT HERE AT HERON'S HEAD PARK, WE MOST OFTEN SEE HAWKS, FALCONS, KESTRELS, VULTURES, AND EVEN THE OCCASIONAL OWL.

VOICE:



RED -TAILED HAWK

BUTEO JAMAICENSIS

ORDER: ACCIPITRIFORMES

FAMILY: ACCIPITRIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 22-25" INCHES IN LENGTH; DARK BROWN, WHITISH NECK AND UNDERPARTS; BROAD WINGED, WIDE RED TAIL WITH BARRED EDGES

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: FORESTS

HABITAT: THE RED-TAILED HAWK IS A BIRD OF OPEN COUNTRY. LOOK FOR IT ALONG FIELDS AND PERCHED ON TELEPHONE POLES, FENCEPOSTS, OR TREES STANDING ALONE OR ALONG EDGES OF FIELDS.

BEHAVIOR: YOU'LL MOST LIKELY SEE RED-TAILED HAWKS SOARING IN WIDE CIRCLES HIGH OVER A FIELD. IN HIGH WINDS THEY MAY FACE INTO THE WIND AND HOVER WITHOUT FLAPPING, EYES FIXED ON THE GROUND. THEY ATTACK IN A SLOW, CONTROLLED DIVE WITH LEGS OUTSTRETCHED.

RANDOM FACTS: COURTING HAWKS SOAR IN CIRCLES AT GREAT HEIGHTS. THE MALE DIVES, THEN SHOOTS UP AGAIN. SOMETIMES, THE PAIR GRAB ONTO ONE OTHER, CLASP TALONS, AND PLUMMET IN SPIRALS TOWARD THE GROUND BEFORE PULLING AWAY.





VOICE:



COOPER'S HAWK

ACCIPITER COOPERII

ORDER: ACCIPITRIFORMES

FAMILY: ACCIPITRIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 15-16" INCHES IN LENGTH: DARK CAP, RED EYES, DARK BROWN ABOVE: RUSTY BARRED CHEST, ROUNDED TAIL WITH WIDE WHITE BANDS AND WHITE TIP

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: FORESTS

HABITAT: WOODED HABITATS FROM DEEP FORESTS TO LEAFY SUBDIVISIONS AND BACKYARDS.

BEHAVIOR: FLY WITH A FLAP-FLAP-GLIDE PATTERN TYPICAL OF ACCIPITERS. ANOTHER ATTACK MANEUVER IS TO FLY FAST AND LOW TO THE GROUND, THEN UP AND OVER AN OBSTRUCTION TO SURPRISE PREY ON THE OTHER SIDE.

RANDOM FACTS: LIFE IS TRICKY FOR MALE COOPER'S HAWKS. AS IN MOST HAWKS, MALES ARE SIGNIFICANTLY SMALLER THAN THEIR MATES. THE DANGER IS THAT FEMALE COOPER'S HAWKS SPECIALIZE IN EATING MEDIUM-SIZED BIRDS. MALES TEND TO BE SUBMISSIVE TO FEMALES AND TO LISTEN OUT FOR REASSURING CALL NOTES THE FEMALES MAKE WHEN THEY'RE WILLING TO BE APPROACHED.





VOICE:



RED - SHOULDERED HAWK

BUTEO LINEATUS

ORDER: ACCIPITRIFORMES

FAMILY: ACCIPITRIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 18-24" INCHES IN LENGTH; BROWN ABOVE, DARK CHECKERED WINGS WITH RUFOUS SHOULDERS; REDDISH-BROWN BELOW; LONG DARK TAIL WITH NARROW WHITE BANDS

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: FORESTS

HABITAT: LOOK IN DECIDUOUS WOODLANDS, OFTEN NEAR RIVERS AND SWAMPS. THEY BUILD STICK NESTS IN A MAIN CROTCH OF A LARGE TREE. DURING MIGRATION, RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS OFTEN MOVE HIGH OVERHEAD ALONG RIDGES OR ALONG THE COAST.

BEHAVIOR: RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS SOAR OVER FORESTS OR PERCH ON TREE BRANCHES OR UTILITY WIRES. ITS RISING, WHISTLED KEE-RAH IS A DISTINCTIVE SOUND OF THE FOREST. THEY HUNT SMALL MAMMALS, AMPHIBIANS, AND REPTILES EITHER FROM PERCHES OR WHILE FLYING.

RANDOM FACTS: RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS RETURN TO THE SAME NESTING TERRITORY YEAR AFTER YEAR. ONE RED-SHOULDERED HAWK OCCUPIED A TERRITORY IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FOR 16 CONSECUTIVE YEARS.





VOICE:



AMERICAN KESTREL

FALCO SPARVERIUS

ORDER: FALCONIFORMES

FAMILY: FALCONIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 10-11" INCHES IN LENGTH: BLACK AND WHITE FACE WITH TWO DARK SLASHES: RUSSET-BROWN BACK AND TAIL: BLUE-GRAY WINGS

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: GRASSLANDS

HABITAT: RANGING FROM DESERTS AND GRASSLANDS TO ALPINE MEADOWS. YOU'RE MOST LIKELY TO SEE THEM PERCHING ON TELEPHONE WIRES ALONG ROADSIDES, IN OPEN COUNTRY WITH SHORT VEGETATION AND FEW TREES.

BEHAVIOR: USUALLY SNATCH PREY FROM THE GROUND, THOUGH SOME CATCH QUARRY ON THE WING. THEY ARE GRACEFULLY BUOYANT IN FLIGHT, AND ARE SMALL ENOUGH TO GET TOSSED AROUND IN THE WIND. WHEN PERCHED, KESTRELS OFTEN PUMP THEIR TAILS AS IF THEY ARE TRYING TO BALANCE.

RANDOM FACTS: BIRDS CAN SEE ULTRAVIOLET LIGHT. THIS ENABLES KESTRELS TO MAKE OUT THE TRAILS OF URINE THAT VOLES, A COMMON PREY MAMMAL, LEAVE AS THEY RUN ALONG THE GROUND. LIKE NEON DINER SIGNS, THESE BRIGHT PATHS HIGHLIGHT THE WAY TO A MEAL.





VOICE:



MERLIN FALCON

FALCO COLUMBARIUS

ORDER: FALCONIFORMES

FAMILY: FALCONIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 9-12" INCHES IN LENGTH: GRAY TO DARK-GRAY, STREAKED CHEST AND DARK UNDERWINGS: DARK TAIL WITH NARROW WHITE BANDS: NO MALAR OR "MUSTACHE" STRIPE

BEST SEEN: FALL, WINTER: FORESTS

HABITAT: MERLINS NEST IN FORESTED AREAS AND ALONG RIVERS ACROSS NORTHERN NORTH AMERICA. DURING MIGRATION AND WINTER, BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR MERLINS IN OPEN FORESTS, GRASSLANDS, AND ESPECIALLY COASTAL AREAS WITH FLOCKS OF SMALL SONGBIRDS OR SHOREBIRDS.

BEHAVIOR: MERLINS ARE FIERCE, ENERGETIC PREDATORS THAT PATROL SHORELINES AND OPEN AREAS LOOKING FOR THEIR PREY OF SMALL BIRDS (AND SOMETIMES DRAGONFLIES). THEY ALSO SPEND LONG PERIODS PERCHED IN OPEN AREAS, SCANNING FOR PREY.

RANDOM FACTS: MERLINS DON'T BUILD THEIR OWN NESTS. INSTEAD, THEY TAKE OVER THE OLD NESTS OF OTHER RAPTORS OR CROWS. THEY ALSO USE MAGPIE NESTS, SOMETIMES LAYING EGGS RIGHT ON TOP OF THE NEST'S DOME RATHER THAN INSIDE THE CAVITY.





VOICE:



PEREGRINE FALCON

FALCO PEREGRINUS

ORDER: FALCONIFORMES

FAMILY: FALCONIDAE

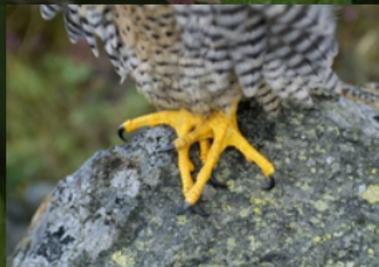
SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 17-22" INCHES IN LENGTH: DARK-GRAY ABOVE: BLACK CAP AND MUSTACHE: WHITE UNSTREAKED THROAT WITH BARRING ON BREAST AND TAIL

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: SHORELINES

HABITAT: LOOK FOR PEREGRINE FALCONS PERCHING OR NESTING ON SKYSCRAPERS, WATER TOWERS, CLIFFS, AND OTHER TALL STRUCTURES. IF A MUDFLAT FULL OF SHOREBIRDS AND DUCKS SUDDENLY ERUPTS FROM THE GROUND, SCAN THE SKIES. A PEREGRINE IS PROBABLY IN THE AREA. .

BEHAVIOR: CATCH MEDIUM-SIZED BIRDS IN THE AIR WITH SWIFT, SPECTACULAR DIVES, CALLED STOOPS. IN CITIES THEY ARE MASTERFUL AT CATCHING PIGEONS. ELSEWHERE THEY FEED ESPECIALLY ON SHOREBIRDS AND DUCKS.

RANDOM FACTS: THE PEREGRINE FALCON IS A VERY FAST FLIER. DURING ITS SPECTACULAR HUNTING STOOP FROM HEIGHTS OF OVER 1 KM (0.62 MI), THE PEREGRINE MAY REACH SPEEDS OF 320 KM/H (200 MPH) AS IT DROPS TOWARD ITS PREY.





VOICE:



BARN OWL

TYTO ALBA

ORDER: STRIGIFORMES

FAMILY: TYTONIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 16-20" INCHES IN LENGTH: WHITE, HEART-SHAPED FACE WITH DARK-BROWN EYES: GOLDEN-BROWN ABOVE, WHITISH BELOW

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: GRASSLANDS

HABITAT: BARN OWLS REQUIRE LARGE AREAS OF OPEN LAND OVER WHICH TO HUNT. THIS CAN EITHER BE MARSH, GRASSLANDS, OR MIXED AGRICULTURAL FIELDS. FOR NESTING AND ROOSTING, THEY PREFER QUIET CAVITIES, EITHER IN TREES OR MAN-MADE STRUCTURES SUCH AS BARN OR SILOS.

BEHAVIOR: BARN OWLS NEST AND ROOST IN CAVITIES, ABANDONED BARN AND OTHER BUILDINGS, AND DENSE TREES. AT NIGHT, BARN OWLS HUNT BY FLYING LOW, BACK AND FORTH OVER OPEN HABITATS, SEARCHING FOR SMALL RODENTS PRIMARILY BY SOUND.

RANDOM FACTS: BARN OWLS SWALLOW THEIR PREY WHOLE—SKIN, BONES, AND ALL. ABOUT TWICE A DAY, THEY COUGH UP PELLETS INSTEAD OF PASSING ALL THAT MATERIAL THROUGH THEIR DIGESTIVE TRACTS.





VOICE:



TURKEY VULTURE

CATHARTES AURA

ORDER: CATHARTIFORMES

FAMILY: CATHARTIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 26-32" INCHES IN LENGTH: SMALL UNFEATHERED, PINKISH-RED HEAD: BROWN-BLACK OVERALL: WHITISH UNDERWINGS

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: OPEN WOODLANDS

HABITAT: COMMON AROUND OPEN AREAS SUCH AS ROADSIDES, SUBURBS, FARM FIELDS, COUNTRYSIDE, AND FOOD SOURCES SUCH AS LANDFILLS, TRASH HEAPS, AND CONSTRUCTION SITES.

BEHAVIOR: TURKEY VULTURES ARE MAJESTIC BUT UNSTEADY SOARERS. THEIR TEETERING FLIGHT WITH VERY FEW WINGBEATS IS CHARACTERISTIC. LOOK FOR THEM GLIDING RELATIVELY LOW TO THE GROUND, SNIFFING FOR CARRION, OR ELSE RIDING THERMALS UP TO HIGHER VANTAGE POINTS.

RANDOM FACTS: TURKEY VULTURES ARE THE ONLY SCAVENGER BIRDS THAT CAN'T KILL THEIR PREY. A CLOSE INSPECTION OF THEIR FEET REMINDS ONE OF A CHICKEN INSTEAD OF A HAWK OR AN EAGLE. THEIR FEET ARE USELESS FOR RIPPING INTO PREY, BUT THE VULTURES HAVE POWERFUL BEAKS THAT CAN TEAR THROUGH EVEN THE TOUGHEST COW HIDE.





A photograph of a shorebird, possibly a sandpiper or similar species, captured in mid-flight over a body of water. The bird is shown from a side profile, with its wings spread and its long legs trailing behind. The water below is calm, creating a clear reflection of the bird. The background is a soft, light blue sky. The text is overlaid on the image in white, bold, sans-serif font.

BIRDS: PICTURED AND DESCRIBED

SHOREBIRDS

CHARADRIFORMES OR "SHOREBIRDS", INCLUDE THE WORLD'S 214 SPECIES OF SHOREBIRDS SUCH AS GULLS, TERNS, AND PUFFINS. IN SAN FRANCISCO ALONE, WE SEE UP TO 38 SPECIES AND ROUGHLY 18 OF THOSE 38 SPECIES CAN BE SEEN FREQUENTLY ALONG THE COAST. MOST OF THESE BIRDS EXHIBIT INCREDIBLE CHANGES IN PLUMAGE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR AS THEY TRANSITION FROM JUVENILES TO MATURE ADULTS ENTERING MATING SEASON.

VOICE:



SPOTTED SANDPIPER

ACTITIS MACULARIUS

ORDER: CHARADRIIFORMES

FAMILY: SCOLOPACIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 7-8" INCHES IN LENGTH: BOLD DARK SPOTS ON WHITE BREAST: ORANGE BILL: DARK BROWN BACK. IN WINTER BREAST IS PLAIN WHITE, BACK IS GRAYISH BROWN AND THE BILL IS PALE YELLOW.

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: SHORELINES

HABITAT: NEARLY ANYWHERE NEAR WATER—ALONG STREAMBANKS, RIVERS, PONDS, LAKES, AND BEACHES, PARTICULARLY ON ROCKY SHORES. THIS SPECIES IS ONE OF THE MOST WIDESPREAD BREEDING SHOREBIRDS IN THE UNITED STATES AND IS COMMONLY SEEN NEAR FRESHWATER, EVEN IN OTHERWISE ARID OR FORESTED REGIONS.

BEHAVIOR: OFTEN SOLITARY AND WALK WITH A DISTINCTIVE TEETER, BOBBING THEIR TAILS UP AND DOWN CONSTANTLY.

RANDOM FACTS: THE MALE TAKES THE PRIMARY ROLE IN PARENTAL CARE, INCUBATING THE EGGS AND TAKING CARE OF THE YOUNG. ONE FEMALE MAY LAY EGGS FOR UP TO FOUR DIFFERENT MALES AT A TIME.





VOICE:



WILLET

TRINGA SEMIPALMATA

ORDER: CHARADRIIFORMES

FAMILY: SCOLOPACIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 15-17" INCHES IN LENGTH: BROWN-GRAY ABOVE, WHITISH BELOW; STRIKING BLACK AND WHITE WING MARKINGS IN FLIGHT; STRAIGHT BLACK BILL.

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: SHORELINES

HABITAT: IN WINTER, WILLETS FEED ON BEACHES AND ROCKY COASTS, AS WELL AS MUDFLATS AND MARSHES. DURING BREEDING SEASON THE WESTERN POPULATION MOVES FAR INLAND TO NEST IN GRASSLANDS AND PRAIRIES NEAR FRESHWATER.

BEHAVIOR: OFTEN SEEN ALONE. PROBE FOR CRABS, WORMS AND OTHER PREY IN SAND AND MUDFLATS, OR TO PICK AT INSECTS AND MOLLUSKS. WHEN STARTLED, THEY REACT WITH A PIERCING CALL, OFTEN OPENING THEIR WINGS AND RUNNING RATHER THAN TAKING FLIGHT.

RANDOM FACTS: BECAUSE THEY FIND PREY USING THE SENSITIVE TIPS OF THEIR BILLS, AND NOT JUST EYESIGHT, WILLETS CAN FEED BOTH DURING THE DAY AND AT NIGHT.





VOICE:



GREATER YELLOWLEGS

TRINGA MELANOLEUCA

ORDER: CHARADRIIFORMES

FAMILY: SCOLOPACIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 12-14" INCHES IN LENGTH: MOTTLED BLACK AND WHITE ABOVE: LONG BILL, WHITE BELOW, WHITE RUMP, LONG BRIGHT YELLOW LEGS

BEST SEEN: FALL, WINTER, SPRING: MARSHES

HABITAT: OCCURS IN A WIDE VARIETY OF WETLAND HABITATS FROM TIDAL FLATS TO SEWAGE PONDS TO FLOODED FIELDS. THEY ARE ABLE TO USE WETLANDS WITH TALLER VEGETATION OWING TO THEIR LARGER SIZE.

BEHAVIOR: DISTINCTIVE HIGH-STEPPING GAIT, OCCASIONALLY BREAKING INTO A RUN TO CHASE AQUATIC PREY. FLIGHT IS STRONG AND SWIFT, WITH LEGS EXTENDING WELL BEYOND THE TAIL, OFTEN ACCOMPANIED BY ITS STRIDENT CHIRPY CALL.

RANDOM FACTS: COLLOQUIAL NAMES FOR THIS SPECIES INCLUDE TELLTALE, TATTLER, AND YELPER, ALL OF WHICH REFER TO ITS STRIDENT ALARM CALLS.





VOICE:



LONG - BILLED CURLEW

NUMENIUS AMERICANUS

ORDER: CHARADRIIFORMES

FAMILY: SCOLOPACIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 18-21" INCHES IN LENGTH: CINNAMON-BROWN ABOVE: UNSTREAKED CROWN: VERY LONG DOWNCURVED BILL

BEST SEEN: FALL, WINTER, SPRING: GRASSLANDS

HABITAT: BREEDS IN AREAS WITH SPARSE, SHORT GRASSES, INCLUDING SHORTGRASS AND MIXED-GRASS PRAIRIES AS WELL AS AGRICULTURAL FIELDS. OUTSIDE OF THE BREEDING SEASON, FOUND IN WETLANDS, TIDAL ESTUARIES, MUDFLATS, FLOODED FIELDS LESS THAN 6 INCHES DEEP, AND BEACHES.

BEHAVIOR: FORAGES FOR EARTHWORMS AND OTHER DEEP-BURROWING PREY SUCH AS SHRIMP AND CRABS IN SOFT MUDDY SUBSTRATES USING ITS LONG, CURVED BILL. ON DRIER GRASSLAND HABITATS, PECKS AT INSECTS. WALKS WITH A STRUT, PUSHING ITS HEAD FORWARD WITH JERKY STEPS.

RANDOM FACTS: THE LONG-BILLED CURLEW'S GENUS NAME, NUMENIUS, MEANS "OF THE NEW MOON," AND DESCRIBES THE SLENDER, CURVED SHAPE OF THE BIRD'S BILL.





VOICE:



WHIMBREL

NUMENIUS PHAEOPUS

ORDER: CHARADRIIFORMES
FAMILY: SCOLOPACIDAE

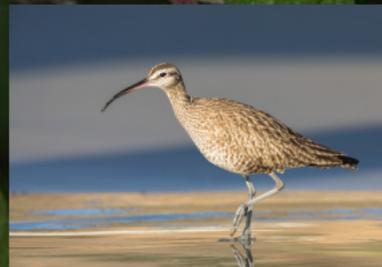
SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 15-17" INCHES IN LENGTH: WHITE STRIPES ACROSS FACE: GRAYISH-BROWN ABOVE, WHITE BELOW: LONG DOWNCURVED DARK-BILL, GRAY LEGS

BEST SEEN: FALL, WINTER: SHORELINES

HABITAT: ARCTIC TUNDRA DURING THE NESTING SEASON: SALTMARSHES, MUDFLATS, BEACHES, SMALL ISLANDS DURING MIGRATION AND WINTER. THEY ARE SOMETIMES FOUND INLAND AFTER BEING GROUNDED BY STORMS.

BEHAVIOR: PROBE WITH THEIR LONG BILLS INTO MUDFLATS OR WET SAND FOR INVERTEBRATES SUCH AS CRABS, WALKING SLOWLY THROUGH AREAS WHERE WATER IS VERY SHALLOW.

RANDOM FACTS: SOME MIGRATING WHIMBRELS MAKE A NONSTOP OVERWATER FLIGHT OF 4,000 KM (2,500 MILES) FROM SOUTHERN CANADA OR NEW ENGLAND TO SOUTH AMERICA.





VOICE:



MARbled GODWIT

LIMOSA FEDOA

ORDER: CHARADRIIFORMES

FAMILY: SCOLOPACIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 16-18" INCHES IN LENGTH: MARbled ABOVE: CINNAMON WING LININGS, SLIGHTLY UPTURNED BILL, RINGED TAIL, LONG BLACK LEGS WITH BLuish FEET

BEST SEEN: FALL, WINTER, SPRING: MARSHES

HABITAT: BREDS IN SHORTGRASS PRAIRIES NEAR WETLANDS. DURING MIGRATION AND ON THE WINTERING GROUNDS, FOUND ON MUDFLATS, SALT PONDS, BEACHES, ESTUARIES, AND WETLANDS.

BEHAVIOR: PROBES INTO SAND OR MUD WITH ITS LONG BILL FOR AQUATIC INVERTEBRATES. SOMETIMES WALKS WHILE PROBING OR TAKES A FEW STEPS BEFORE BURYING ITS BILL INTO THE MUD.

RANDOM FACTS: UNLIKE MOST SHOREBIRDS THAT EAT AQUATIC INVERTEBRATES YEAR-ROUND, MARbled GODWITS FORAGE ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON PLANT TUBERS DURING MIGRATION, USING THEIR UPTURNED BILL TO CLIP TUBERS.





VOICE:



DUNLIN

CALIDRS ALPINA

ORDER: CHARADRIIFORMES
FAMILY: SCOLOPACIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 8-9" INCHES IN LENGTH: DARK ABOVE, WHITE BELOW: SLIGHTLY DOWNCURVED BILL, BLACK LEGS AND BLACK FEET

BEST SEEN: FALL, WINTER, SPRING: SHORELINES

HABITAT: BREEDS IN WET TUNDRA, OFTEN IN AREAS WITH MANY SMALL PONDS. WINTERS IN COASTAL ESTUARIES AND LAGOONS. MIGRANTS TURN UP IN MANY WETLAND ENVIRONMENTS WITH MUDDY EDGES AS WELL AS SOD FARMS, WET AGRICULTURAL FIELDS, AND SEWAGE PONDS.

BEHAVIOR: FORAGES BY PICKING AND PROBING IN MUD, WALKING SLOWLY, USUALLY IN LARGE FLOCKS. BREEDING MALES DISPLAY OVER TERRITORIES WITH FLUTTERING, GLIDING FLIGHTS AND GIVE UNUSUAL TRILLING SONGS.

RANDOM FACTS: THE NAME DUNLIN COMES FROM DUNLING, THE EARLIEST KNOWN ENGLISH NAME OF THE SPECIES, WHICH DATES BACK AT LEAST AS FAR AS 1531. DUNLING IS A COMPOUND OF THE ENGLISH WORD DUN (MEANING GRAY-BROWN) AND THE DIMINUTIVE -LING. SO THE NAME DUNLIN ESSENTIALLY MEANS "LITTLE BROWN JOB."





VOICE:



SHORT - BILLED DOWITCHER

LIMNODROMUS GRISEUS

ORDER: CHARADRIIFORMES

FAMILY: SCOLOPACIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 9-12" INCHES IN LENGTH: BROWN, BLACK, AND GOLD ABOVE: PALE ORANGE WITH DARKER SPECKLING BELOW

BEST SEEN: FALL, WINTER, SPRING: MARSHES

HABITAT: BREEDS IN BOREAL WETLANDS NEAR TREELINE. WINTERS LARGELY IN SALTWATER ESTUARIES AND LAGOONS. MIGRATING BIRDS UTILIZE ALMOST ANY FRESHWATER OR SALTWATER WETLAND WITH SHALLOW WATER, AS WELL AS FLOODED AGRICULTURAL FIELDS AND SEWAGE PONDS.

BEHAVIOR: FEED MOST HEAVILY DURING FALLING AND RISING TIDES, RAPIDLY PROBING MUDFLATS WITH THEIR LONG BILLS IN A SEWING-MACHINELIKE MOTION. DURING HIGHEST AND LOWEST TIDES, THEY REST AND PREEN IN FLOCKS.

RANDOM FACTS: DESPITE THE ABUNDANCE OF DOWITCHERS OVER MUCH OF THE CONTINENT, IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE 1930S THAT SCIENTISTS BEGAN TO UNDERSTAND THAT THERE WERE TWO SPECIES OF DOWITCHERS IN NORTH AMERICA.





VOICE:



KILLDEER

CHARADRIUS VOCIFERUS

ORDER: CHARADRIIFORMES
FAMILY: CHARADRIIDAE

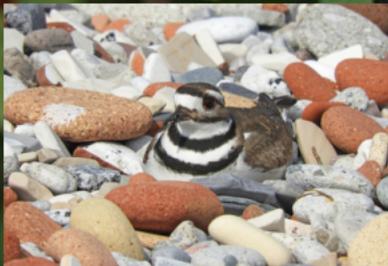
SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 10-11" INCHES IN LENGTH: GRAY-BROWN ABOVE, RUFOUS LOWER BACK AND TAIL BASE: TWO BROAD BLACK BANDS ACROSS CHEST: WHITE WING STRIPE

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: GRASSLANDS

HABITAT: LOOK FOR KILLDEER ON OPEN GROUND WITH LOW VEGETATION AS WELL AS PASTURES, FIELDS, SANDBARS AND MUDFLATS. THIS SPECIES IS ONE OF THE LEAST WATER-ASSOCIATED OF ALL SHOREBIRDS.

BEHAVIOR: SPEND TIME WALKING ALONG THE GROUND OR RUNNING AHEAD A FEW STEPS, STOPPING TO LOOK AROUND, AND RUNNING ON AGAIN.

RANDOM FACTS: MATED PAIRS PICK OUT A NESTING SITE THROUGH A RITUAL KNOWN AS A SCRAPE CEREMONY. THE MALE LOWERS HIS BREAST TO THE GROUND AND SCRAPES A SHALLOW DEPRESSION WITH HIS FEET. THE FEMALE THEN APPROACHES, HEAD LOWERED, AND TAKES HIS PLACE. THE MALE THEN STANDS WITH BODY TILTED SLIGHTLY FORWARD, TAIL RAISED AND SPREAD, CALLING RAPIDLY. MATING OFTEN FOLLOWS.





VOICE:



SEMIPALMATED PLOVER

CHARADRIUS SEMIPALMATUS

ORDER: CHARADRIIFORMES

FAMILY: CHARADRIIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 6-8" INCHES IN LENGTH: BROWN ABOVE, WHITE BELOW, ONE BLACK BAND ON THE BREAST: BLACK AROUND EYE, WITH WHITE MARKS ABOVE EYE AND BILL AND A WHITE BAND ABOVE THE BLACK COLLAR: THE SHORT ORANGE BILL HAS A BLACK TIP.

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: SHORELINES

HABITAT: NESTS IN ARCTIC TUNDRA. FORAGES IN MUDFLATS, AGRICULTURAL FIELDS, RIVER MARGINS, SEWAGE PONDS, AND LAKESHORES. ROOSTS IN MARSHES OR ON BEACHES.

BEHAVIOR: VISUAL HUNTERS. THEY RUN A FEW STEPS, PAUSE, AND THEN LUNGE AT PREY ON THE GROUND, GRABBING SMALLER PREY OR PULLING AT WORMS MUCH AS ROBINS DO.

RANDOM FACTS: GIVEN THEIR REMOTE ARCTIC BREEDING RANGE, IT'S SURPRISING THAT SEMIPALMATED PLOVERS SOMETIMES NEST IN BUSY, BUILT-UP AREAS. THEY ALSO NEST AT TIMES ON ACTIVE GRAVEL RUNWAYS.





VOICE:



BLACK TURNSTONE

ARENARIA MELANOCEPHALA

ORDER: CHARADRIIFORMES

FAMILY: SCOLOPACIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 8-9" INCHES IN LENGTH: BLACK HEAD, BREAST AND BACK: WHITE EYEBROW AND WHITE BELOW: REDDISH BROWN LEGS

BEST SEEN: FALL, WINTER, SPRING: SHORELINES

HABITAT: NESTS IN COASTAL SEDGE MEADOWS IN THE ARCTIC, OFTEN ON LITTLE ISLANDS IN PONDS OR RIVERS NEAR THE COAST. OUTSIDE BREEDING SEASON, FORAGES ALONG ROCKY PACIFIC COASTLINES (INCLUDING JETTIES AND BREAKWATERS) AND ADJACENT BEACHES OR FLATS.

BEHAVIOR: FLIPS OVER SMALL OBJECTS ON ROCKS AND BEACHES TO FIND SMALL PREY. SOMETIMES FORAGES ON BEACHES RACING AWAY FROM INCOMING WAVES, THEN RUNNING BACK TO EXTRACT PREY FROM WET SAND AS WATER RECEDES.

RANDOM FACTS: TO INCREASE LEVERAGE WHEN OVERTURNING HEAVY OBJECTS LIKE KELP OR DRIFTWOOD, BLACK TURNSTONES CROUCH DOWN ON THEIR LOWER LEGS TO THRUST THE OBJECT UPWARD WITH MORE FORCE. THEY SOMETIMES USE THE ENTIRE BODY TO "SNOWPLOW" HEADLONG INTO A HEAVY MASS OF KELP, EXPOSING BRINE FLIES, FISH EGGS, AND OTHER FOOD.





VOICE:



AMERICAN AVOCET

RECURVIROSTRA AMERICANA

ORDER: CHARADRIIFORMES

FAMILY: RECURVIROSTRIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 16-18" INCHES IN LENGTH: BLACK AND WHITE PATTERN ON BACK AND WINGS: WHITE BELOW, LONG SLENDER UPCURVED BILL, LONG BLUISH LEGS, WEBBED FEET

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: MARSHES

HABITAT: FOUND IN WETLANDS INCLUDING SHALLOW FRESH AND SALTWATER WETLANDS, SALT PONDS. FORAGES IN OPEN WATER LESS THAN 8 INCHES DEEP. DURING WINTER USES INTERTIDAL MUDFLATS, TIDAL LAGOONS, BRACKISH IMPOUNDMENTS, SEWAGE PONDS, AND FLOODED PASTURES.

BEHAVIOR: WADES THROUGH SHALLOW WATER SWEEPING ITS BILL SIDE TO SIDE FOR AQUATIC INVERTEBRATES. OFTEN SHAKES ITS FOOT WITH EACH STEP TO REMOVE MUD FROM ITS FOOT.

RANDOM FACTS: AMERICAN AVOCET CHICKS LEAVE THE NEST WITHIN 24 HOURS OF HATCHING. DAY-OLD AVOCETS CAN WALK, SWIM, AND EVEN DIVE TO ESCAPE PREDATORS.





VOICE:



BLACK - NECKED STILT

HIMANTOPUS MEXICANUS

ORDER: CHARADRIIFORMES

FAMILY: RECURVIROSTRIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 14-16" INCHES IN LENGTH: BLACK ABOVE, WHITE BELOW: SLENDER BODY, LONG PINKISH LEGS: LONG STRAIGHT NEEDLE-POINTED BILL

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: MARSHES

HABITAT: BLACK-NECKED STILTS ARE ALMOST ALWAYS SEEN NEAR SHALLOW WATER, INCLUDING BOTH SALT AND FRESH WATER, ESPECIALLY MUDFLATS, SALT PANS, SALTMARSHES, AND MANY HUMAN-MODIFIED HABITATS SUCH AS SEWAGE PONDS, EVAPORATION POOLS, AND FLOODED FIELDS.

BEHAVIOR: BLACK-NECKED STILTS WADE INTO SHALLOW BODIES OF WATER, SELDOM SWIMMING, IN PURSUIT OF TINY AQUATIC INVERTEBRATES. ADULTS DEFENDING NESTS OR CHICKS FLY AROUND AND CALL LOUDLY, SOMETIMES PERFORMING A DISTRACTION DISPLAY BY FEIGNING INJURY.

RANDOM FACTS: FIVE SPECIES OF RATHER SIMILAR-LOOKING STILTS ARE RECOGNIZED IN THE GENUS HIMANTOPUS. THEY HAVE THE SECOND-LONGEST LEGS IN PROPORTION TO THEIR BODIES OF ANY BIRD, EXCEEDED ONLY BY FLAMINGOS.





VOICE:



BLACK OYSTERCATCHER

HAEMATOPUS BACHMANI

ORDER: CHARADRIIFORMES

FAMILY: HAEMATOPODIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: 16-19" INCHES IN LENGTH: BLACKISH BODY: ORANGE-RED BILL AND YELLOW EYE RINGED WITH RED: WINGS, TAIL, AND BACK ARE DARK BROWN: JUVENILES ARE BROWNISH OVERALL

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: SHORELINE

HABITAT: NESTS ON ISLANDS, HEADLANDS, AND BEACHES. FORAGES IN ADJACENT ROCKY SHORELINES AND TIDEPOOLS, SOMETIMES ON OPEN TIDAL FLATS, RARELY IN GRASSY AREAS.

BEHAVIOR: FORAGES ON SHELLFISH USING ITS HEAVY BILL. RESTS AND PREENS, OFTEN IN ROOSTS OF A DOZEN OR MORE, DURING HIGH TIDE. QUITE VOCAL YEAR-ROUND BUT ESPECIALLY WHEN BREEDING, WHEN DUETTING ADULTS PERFORM DISPLAY FLIGHTS IN TANDEM.

RANDOM FACTS: JOHN JAMES AUDUBON WROTE THE FIRST SCIENTIFIC DESCRIPTION OF BLACK OYSTERCATCHER. THE GENUS NAME HAEMATOPUS DERIVES FROM THE GREEK FOR "BLOOD-FOOTED," A REFERENCE TO ITS PINKISH FEET.

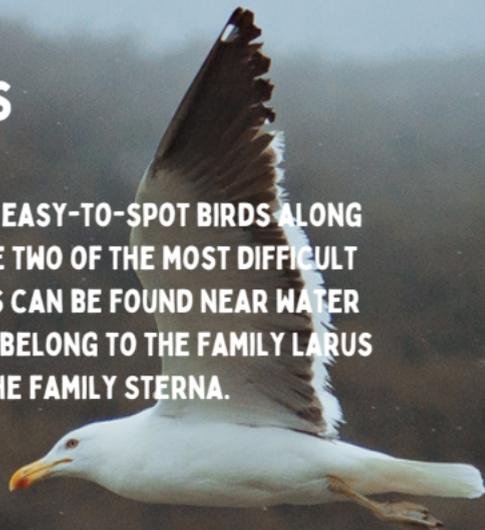




BIRDS: PICTURED AND DESCRIBED

GULLS AND TERNS

GULLS AND TERNS ARE SOME OF THE MOST COMMON AND EASY-TO-SPOT BIRDS ALONG THE BAY SHORELINE HOWEVER, THESE ARGUABLY MAY BE TWO OF THE MOST DIFFICULT FAMILIES TO DISTINGUISH SPECIES. ALL GULLS AND TERNS CAN BE FOUND NEAR WATER AND HAVE WEBBED FEET. ALL THE GULLS IN THE BAY AREA BELONG TO THE FAMILY LARUS WHILE ALL OUR BAY AREA TERNS BELONG TO THE FAMILY STERNA.



VOICE:



WESTERN GULL

LARUS OCCIDENTALIS

ORDER: CHARADRIIFORMES

FAMILY: LARIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 24-25 INCHES TALL, WHITE HEAD, DARK GRAY BACK WITH WHITE WING TIPS; YELLOW BILL WITH RED SPOT ON LOWER MANDIBLE; PINKISH LEGS

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: OCEANS

HABITAT: BREEDS ON ISLANDS, HEADLANDS, ABANDONED PIERS, AND EVEN OUR LOCAL SAN FRANCISCO BAY. FORAGES ALONG SANDY AND ROCKY BEACHES, IN KELP BEDS, AT SEA, AND OCCASIONALLY AT LANDFILLS.

BEHAVIOR: EATS BIRDS, EGGS, NESTLINGS, FISH, INVERTEBRATES, CARRION, AND TRASH. THIS VERSATILE FORAGER CAPTURES PREY WHILE SWIMMING, IN MID-FLIGHT, OR WHILE SEARCHING ON FOOT ON THE BEACH. SCAVENGES AROUND FISHING BOATS AND OCCASIONALLY AT LANDFILLS.

RANDOM FACTS: IN COLONIES WITH MORE FEMALES THAN MALES PRESENT, TWO FEMALES MAY ESTABLISH A PAIR BOND. EACH LAYS EGGS, AND THEN TAKES CARE OF THE DOUBLE-SIZED BROOD. THE FEMALE-BIASED SEX RATIO OF SOME WESTERN GULL COLONIES MAY HAVE BEEN THE RESULT OF POLLUTION BY PESTICIDES THAT ACTED LIKE ESTROGEN AND MADE SOME MALE EMBRYOS DEVELOP AS FEMALES.





VOICE:



CALIFORNIA GULL

LARUS CALIFORNICUS

ORDER: CHARADRIIFORMES

FAMILY: LARIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 18-22 INCHES TALL, WHITE HEAD, GRAY BACK, YELLOW LEGS, AND A DARK EYE: YELLOW BILL WITH SMALL BLACK RING AND A RED SPOT ON THE LOWER MANDIBLE—BRIGHTER ON BREEDING GULLS

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: LAKES AND PONDS

HABITAT: CALIFORNIA GULLS BREED ON SPARSELY VEGETATED ISLANDS AND LEVEES IN INLAND LAKES AND RIVERS. THEY FORAGE IN ANY OPEN AREA WHERE THEY CAN FIND FOOD INCLUDING GARBAGE DUMPS, SCRUBLANDS, PASTURES, ORCHARDS, MEADOWS, AND FARMS.

BEHAVIOR: CALIFORNIA GULLS ARE STRONG, NIMBLE FLIERS AND OPPORTUNISTIC FORAGERS: THEY FORAGE ON FOOT, FROM THE AIR, AND FROM THE WATER. THESE SOCIAL GULLS BREED IN COLONIES AND MIX WITH OTHER GULL SPECIES ALONG THE COAST IN WINTER.

RANDOM FACTS: IN 1848, A PLAGUE OF KATYDIDS (ALSO KNOWN AS MORMON CRICKETS) BEGAN DEVOURING THE CROPS OF MORMON SETTLERS IN UTAH. WHEN CALIFORNIA GULLS RETURNED TO BREED, THEY STARTED FEASTING ON THE KATYDIDS, SAVING THE CROPS FROM COMPLETE DESTRUCTION. A GOLDEN STATUE IN SALT LAKE CITY COMMEMORATES THE EVENT, AND IN RECOGNITION THE CALIFORNIA GULL WAS MADE THE STATE BIRD OF UTAH.





VOICE:



HEERMANN'S GULL

LARUS HEERMANNI

ORDER: CHARADRIIFORMES

FAMILY: LARIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 18-21 INCHES TALL, DARK GRAY ABOVE, GRAY BELOW, WITH A WHITE HEAD, BLACK LEGS, AND A RED BILL WITH BLACK TIP

BEST SEEN: SUMMER, FALL: SHORELINES

HABITAT: NESTS ON ROCKY ISLANDS, MOSTLY IN THE GULF OF CALIFORNIA. FORAGES IN OCEAN WATERS, USUALLY WITHIN SIGHT OF LAND, OFTEN WITH TERNS, PELICANS, CORMORANTS, BOOBIES, AND SEA LIONS. ALSO FORAGES ALONG BEACHES AND IN SHELTERED HARBORS AND ESTUARIES.

BEHAVIOR: SEIZES SMALL FISH EITHER IN FLIGHT OR WHILE SITTING ON THE WATER. ALSO PICKS AT MARINE ANIMALS AND SOMETIMES CARRION AT LOWER TIDES. OFTEN CHASES OTHER SEABIRDS TO STEAL THEIR FISH, AND GROUPS OFTEN HARASS BROWN PELICANS FOR FISH STILL IN THEIR POUCHES.

RANDOM FACTS: HEERMANN'S GULLS HAVE AN UNUSUAL "BACKWARDS" MIGRATION: THEY BREED MOSTLY SOUTH OF THE UNITED STATES AND THEN MOVE NORTH FOR THE NONBREEDING SEASON. AFTER BREEDING IS OVER IN JULY, THE GULLS QUICKLY COME NORTH ALL THE WAY TO SOUTHERN CANADA. THEY HAVE EVEN BEEN SEEN BREEDING LOCALLY IN THE MONTEREY, CA AREA.





VOICE:



HERRING GULL

LARUS ARGENTATUS

ORDER: CHARADRIIFORMES

FAMILY: LARIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 22-26 INCHES TALL, LIGHT-GRAY BACKS, BLACK WINGTIPS, AND WHITE HEADS AND UNDERPARTS, DULL PINK LEGS

BEST SEEN: WINTER: SHORELINES

HABITAT: IN WINTER ALONG COASTS AND NEAR LARGE RESERVOIRS, LAKES, AND MAJOR RIVERS. THEY FEED IN HABITATS AS DIVERSE AS OPEN WATER, MUDFLATS, PLOWED FIELDS, AND GARBAGE DUMPS, AND GATHER IN ALMOST ANY OPEN SPACE NEAR FOOD.

BEHAVIOR: PATROL SHORELINES AND OPEN OCEAN, PICKING SCRAPS OFF THE SURFACE. RALLYING AROUND FISHING BOATS OR REFUSE DUMPS, THEY ARE LOUD AND COMPETITIVE SCAVENGERS, HAPPY TO SNATCH ANOTHER BIRD'S MEAL. THEY SPEND MUCH OF THEIR TIME PERCHED NEAR FOOD SOURCES, OFTEN IN CONGREGATIONS OF GULLS.

RANDOM FACTS: AN ADULT HERRING GULL WAS SPOTTED BAIT-FISHING. IT FLOATED BITS OF BREAD ON THE SURFACE OF A PARIS POND AND ATTACKED GOLDFISH FEEDING ON THE BREAD. IT ATE NONE OF THE BREAD ITSELF, INDICATING DELIBERATE TOOL USE.





VOICE:



RING - BILLED GULL

LARUS DELAWARENSIS

ORDER: CHARADRIIFORMES

FAMILY: LARIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 16-22 INCHES TALL, GRAY ABOVE, WHITE HEAD, BODY AND TAIL: BLACK WINGTIPS ARE SPOTTED WITH WHITE: YELLOW LEGS AND YELLOW BILL WITH BLACK BAND AROUND IT

BEST SEEN: WINTER: LAKES AND PONDS

HABITAT: OFTEN CONGREGATE AROUND HUMANS, AT GARBAGE DUMPS, PARKING LOTS, AND FRESHLY PLOWED FIELDS. WHILE THE SPECIES IS COMMON ON COASTAL BEACHES, PARTICULARLY DURING WINTER, MANY RING-BILLED GULLS LEAD INLAND LIVES, NEVER SETTING EYES ON THE SEA.

BEHAVIOR: THESE SOCIABLE GULLS OFTEN FLY OVERHEAD BY THE HUNDREDS OR FEED TOGETHER AT A GOLF COURSE, BEACH, OR FIELD. STRONG, NIMBLE FLYERS AND OPPORTUNISTIC FEEDERS, RING-BILLED GULLS CIRCLE AND HOVER ACROBATICALLY LOOKING FOR FOOD: THEY ALSO FORAGE AFLOAT AND ON FOOT.

RANDOM FACTS: SOME RING-BILLED GULL NESTS AT STUDY SITES IN CALIFORNIA AND OREGON CONTAINED PEBBLES THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF GULL EGGS. THE PARENTS APPARENTLY PULLED THE PEBBLES INTO THEIR NESTS FROM THE SURROUNDING GROUND, MISTAKING THEM FOR EGGS GONE ASTRAY.





VOICE:



ELEGANT TERN

THALASSEUS ELEGANS

ORDER: CHARADRIIFORMES

FAMILY: LARIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 15-17 INCHES TALL, PALE GRAY ABOVE, WHITE WITH PINK BLOOM BELOW (OFTEN HARD TO SEE); SHAGGY BLACK CREST, ORANGE BILL, DARK GRAY OUTER PRIMARIES, AND DARK LEGS

BEST SEEN: FALL, WINTER: SHORELINES

HABITAT: NESTS ON BEACHES AND SANDY ISLANDS. FORAGES CLOSE TO THE SHORE OVER OCEAN WATERS, WHERE CURRENTS AND UPWELLING CONCENTRATE PREY (NORTHERN ANCHOVY IN PARTICULAR). USUALLY FORAGES WITHIN 10 MILES OF LAND, AND OFTEN WITHIN SIGHT OF LAND.

BEHAVIOR: FLIES ABOVE THE WATER AND DIVES INTO THE SEA, CAPTURING SMALL FISH IN THE BILL. OFTEN FORAGES IN LARGE FLOCKS, MIXED WITH OTHER SEABIRD SPECIES. BREEDS IN VERY DENSE COLONIES ON ISLANDS AND BEACHES.

RANDOM FACTS: MORE THAN 90% OF ALL ELEGANT TERNS NEST IN A SINGLE COLONY ON ISLA RASA IN THE GULF OF CALIFORNIA (SEA OF CORTEZ), MEXICO.





VOICE:



FORSTER'S TERN

STERNA FORSTERI

ORDER: CHARADRIIFORMES

FAMILY: LARIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 14-16 INCHES TALL, WHITE WITH LONG SILVERY WINGS: BLACK CAP, BLACK WING TIPS: ORANGE BILL WITH BLACK TIP, FORKED TAIL WITH WHITE EDGES

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: MARSHES

HABITAT: BREEDS IN MARSHES, INCLUDING FRESHWATER AND SALTWATER, USUALLY IN AREAS WITH EXTENSIVE OPEN WATER, SOMETIMES WITH SMALL ISLANDS OR PATCHES OF FLOATING VEGETATION. WINTERS MOSTLY IN OCEANS, BAYS, AND ESTUARIES, USUALLY CLOSE TO THE COAST. SOME WINTER INLAND NEAR THE GULF OF MEXICO AND IN NORTHERN MEXICO.

BEHAVIOR: FORAGES BY FLYING SLOWLY OVER THE WATER TO SCAN FOR FISH, THEN DIVES TO CAPTURE PREY IN THE BILL. BREEDING ADULTS PERFORM SPIRALING COURTSHIP FLIGHTS AND ALSO PARADE THROUGH THE COLONY IN TANDEM WITH RAISED BILLS.

RANDOM FACTS: THE ONLY TERN THAT STAYS IN NORTH AMERICA FOR THE ENTIRE YEAR





VOICE:



CASPIAN TERN

HYDROPROGNE CASPIA

ORDER: CHARADRIIFORMES

FAMILY: LARIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 19-21 INCHES TALL, DARK FOREHEAD, HEAVY BLACK CAP WITH SLIGHT WHITE CREST: THICK SPEAR-SHAPED RED-ORANGE BILL: SLIGHTLY FORKED TAIL

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: SHORELINES

HABITAT: BREEDS IN OPEN FLAT AREAS ALONG COASTLINES, BEACHES, OR ON ISLANDS, VERY NEAR FRESHWATER OR SALTWATER. MIGRATES THROUGH INTERIOR OF CONTINENT AND ALONG COASTLINES, USING RIVERS, RESERVOIRS, LAGOONS, ESTUARIES, AND OCEAN WATERS. WINTERS MOSTLY IN COASTAL ZONES NEAR SALTWATER, LESS OFTEN ON INTERIOR LAKES OR RIVERS.

BEHAVIOR: FLIES SLOWLY ABOVE THE WATER, THEN DIVES SWIFTLY ON PREY (MOSTLY FISH). RESTS AND ROOSTS IN FLOCKS, OFTEN AMONG OTHER TERNS AND GULLS. NESTS IN LARGE COLONIES OR SOLITARILY, ALWAYS NEAR WATER.

RANDOM FACTS: THE CASPIAN TERN GOT ITS NAME BECAUSE EARLY ORNITHOLOGISTS ASSOCIATED IT WITH THE CASPIAN SEA, WHERE THE SPECIES IS STILL FAIRLY COMMON.





BIRDS: PICTURED AND DESCRIBED

PASSERINES

PASSERINES OR "PERCHING BIRDS", COMPRISE 60% OF ALL BIRD SPECIES. ALL PASSERINES SHARE THE COMMONALITY OF HAVING THREE TOES POINTING FORWARD AND ONE POINTING BACK WHICH ALLOWS THEM TO EASILY PERCH ONTO BRANCHES AND WIRES. ALL PASSERINES ARE HATCHED "NAKED", WITHOUT FEATHERS, AND ARE REARED IN THE NEST UNTIL THEY ARE ABLE TO FLY AND HUNT ON THEIR OWN. PASSERINES HAVE OFTEN BEEN NOTED AS THE MOST HIGHLY EVOLVED ORDER OF BIRDS AND INCLUDE FLYCATCHERS, CROWS, JAYS, SWALLOWS, THRUSHES, MIMIDS, STARLINGS, WARBLERS, BLACKBIRDS, FINCHES, AND SPARROWS.



VOICE:



BLACK PHOEBE

SAYORNIS NIGRICANS

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: TYRANNIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 6-7 INCHES TALL, BLACK ABOVE WITH DARK EYES: WHITE ON BELLY AND WING EDGES

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: OPEN WOODLANDS

HABITAT: THEY LIVE ALONG STREAMS, RIVERS, LAKES, AND THE PACIFIC OCEAN—EVEN AROUND CATTLE TANKS. AS LONG AS THERE IS WATER PRESENT AND SOME KIND OF LEDGE OR OVERHANG ON WHICH TO ANCHOR A MUD NEST, BLACK PHOEBES COULD BE AROUND.

BEHAVIOR: SIT UPRIGHT ON LOW PERCHES NEAR WATER AND MAKE SHORT FLIGHTS TO CATCH INSECTS. THEY PUMP THEIR TAILS UP AND DOWN INCESSANTLY WHEN PERCHED. THEY OFTEN KEEP UP A STRING OF SHARP CHIP CALLS.

RANDOM FACTS: THE MALE BLACK PHOEBE GIVES THE FEMALE A TOUR OF POTENTIAL NEST SITES, HOVERING IN FRONT OF EACH LIKELY SPOT FOR 5 TO 10 SECONDS. BUT IT'S THE FEMALE WHO MAKES THE FINAL DECISION AND DOES ALL THE NEST CONSTRUCTION.





VOICE:



SAY'S PHOEBE

SAYORNIS SAYA

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: TYRANNIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 6-7 INCHES TALL, PALE BROWNISH GRAY ABOVE: CINNAMON BELLY, BLACKISH TAIL, GRAY BREAST: MALE AND FEMALE ARE SIMILAR: IMMATURE IS SIMILAR TO THE ADULT, BUT BROWNER AND MAY HAVE A BUFFY WINGBAR.

BEST SEEN: WINTER: GRASSLANDS

HABITAT: SAY'S PHOEBES LIVE IN OPEN COUNTRY, SAGEBRUSH, BADLANDS, DRY BARREN FOOTHILLS, CANYONS, AND BORDERS OF DESERTS: THEY AVOID FORESTS. THEY OFTEN GRAVITATE TO BUILDINGS AND AREN'T CLOSELY TIED TO WATERCOURSES LIKE OTHER PHOEBES.

BEHAVIOR: LIKE OTHER PHOEBES, THE SAY'S PHOEBE OFTEN WAGS OR PUMPS ITS TAIL WHEN PERCHED. WHEN FORAGING, SAY'S OFTEN PERCH AROUND EYE LEVEL ON EXPOSED TWIGS, JUMPING UP TO SNATCH A FLYING INSECT AND RETURNING TO THE SAME OR A NEARBY PERCH.

RANDOM FACTS: SAY'S PHOEBES HAVE BEEN IN THE U.S. FOR A LONG TIME. PALEONTOLOGISTS DISCOVERED SAY'S PHOEBE FOSSILS IN ARIZONA, CALIFORNIA, NEW MEXICO, AND TEXAS DATING BACK TO ABOUT 400,000 YEARS AGO (THE LATE PLEISTOCENE).





VOICE:



CALIFORNIA SCRUB JAY

APHELOCOMA CALIFORNICA

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: CORVIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 11-13 INCHES TALL, CRESTLESS BLUE HEAD WITH WHITE THROAT: BLUE WINGS AND TAIL: OLIVE-GRAY BACK, LIGHT GRAY UNDERPARTS

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: SCRUB

HABITAT: LOOK FOR CALIFORNIA SCRUB-JAYS IN OPEN HABITATS, OAK WOODLANDS, AND CHAPARRAL ALONG THE WEST COAST, AS WELL AS IN BACKYARDS, PASTURES, AND ORCHARDS. TYPICALLY, THOUGH NOT ALWAYS, IN LOWER AND DRIER HABITATS THAN STELLER'S JAY.

BEHAVIOR: ASSERTIVE, VOCAL, AND INQUISITIVE. YOU'LL OFTEN NOTICE SCRUB-JAYS SILHOUETTED HIGH IN TREES, ON WIRES, OR ON POSTS WHERE THEY ACT AS LOOKOUTS. IN FLIGHT SEEMS UNDERPOWERED AND SLOW, WITH BOUTS OF FLUTTERING ALTERNATING WITH GLIDES.

RANDOM FACTS: CALIFORNIA SCRUB-JAYS—LIKE MANY MEMBERS OF THE CROW AND JAY FAMILY—HAVE A MISCHIEVOUS STREAK. THEY'VE BEEN CAUGHT STEALING ACORNS FROM ACORN WOODPECKER CACHES, AND SOME EVEN STEAL ACORNS THEY'VE WATCHED OTHER JAYS HIDE. WHEN THESE BIRDS GO TO HIDE THEIR OWN ACORNS, THEY CHECK FIRST THAT NO OTHER JAYS ARE WATCHING.





CROWS & RAVENS: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?



BY VOICE

WHILE CROWS CAW AND PURR, RAVENS CROAK AND SCREAM BLOODY MURDER. USE THE QR CODES ON THE NEXT 2 PAGES TO LISTEN AND COMPARE THE AMERICAN CROW TO THE COMMON RAVEN

ON THE GROUND

A RAVEN'S STRUT IS OFTEN PUNCTUATED BY A FEW TWO-FOOTED HOPS.

IN FLIGHT

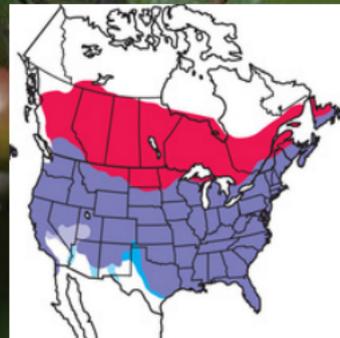
RAVENS RIDE THE THERMALS AND SOAR, WHEREAS CROWS DO MORE FLAPPING. ALSO, THE RAVEN'S TAIL RESEMBLES A WEDGE, COMPARED TO THE ROUNDED FAN-LIKE SHAPE OF THE CROW'S.

UP CLOSE

RAVENS HAVE BIGGER, CURVIER BEAKS RELATIVE TO CROWS. WHILE BOTH SPECIES HAVE BRISTLES AT THE BASE OF THE BEAK, THE RAVEN'S ARE NOTICEABLY LONGER. ITS THROAT FEATHERS ARE ALSO QUITE SHAGGY.

LOCATION-WISE

COMMON RAVENS ARE MUCH LESS COMMON THAN AMERICAN CROWS IN THE EASTERN UNITED STATES. OUT WEST, IT'S A TOSS UP. LOOK FOR RAVENS FORAGING IN PAIRS: CROWS ARE HIGHLY SOCIABLE AND WILL HANG OUT IN MURDERS AND COMMUNAL ROOSTS.



From top: North American ranges of the Common Raven and American Crow. Purple means common in all seasons; light purple means uncommon in all seasons; red means common when breeding; blue means common in winter, light blue means uncommon in winter. Maps: Kenn Kaufman

VOICE:



AMERICAN CROW

CORVUS BRACHYRHYNCHOS

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: CORVIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 15-21 INCHES TALL, ALL BLACK, EVEN THE LEGS AND BILL

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: OPEN WOODLANDS

HABITAT: AMERICAN CROWS ARE COMMON BIRDS OF FIELDS, OPEN WOODLANDS, AND FORESTS. THEY THRIVE AROUND PEOPLE, AND YOU'LL OFTEN FIND THEM IN AGRICULTURAL FIELDS, LAWNS, PARKING LOTS, ATHLETIC FIELDS, ROADSIDES, TOWNS, AND CITY GARBAGE DUMPS.

BEHAVIOR: VERY SOCIAL, SOMETIMES FORMING FLOCKS IN THE THOUSANDS. INQUISITIVE AND SOMETIMES MISCHIEVOUS, CROWS ARE GOOD LEARNERS AND PROBLEM-SOLVERS, OFTEN RAIDING GARBAGE CANS AND PICKING OVER DISCARDED FOOD CONTAINERS. THEY'RE ALSO AGGRESSIVE AND OFTEN CHASE AWAY LARGER BIRDS INCLUDING HAWKS, OWLS AND HERONS.

RANDOM FACTS: YOUNG AMERICAN CROWS DO NOT BREED UNTIL THEY ARE AT LEAST TWO YEARS OLD, AND MOST DO NOT BREED UNTIL THEY ARE FOUR OR MORE. IN MOST POPULATIONS THE YOUNG HELP THEIR PARENTS RAISE YOUNG FOR A FEW YEARS. FAMILIES MAY INCLUDE UP TO 15 INDIVIDUALS AND CONTAIN YOUNG FROM FIVE DIFFERENT YEARS.





VOICE:



COMMON RAVEN

CORVUS CORAX

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: CORVIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 22-28 INCHES TALL, ALL BLACK, LEGS, EYES AND BILL

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: FORESTS

HABITAT: LIVE IN OPEN AND FOREST HABITATS ACROSS WESTERN AND NORTHERN NORTH AMERICA. THIS INCLUDES DECIDUOUS AND EVERGREEN FORESTS UP TO TREELINE, AS WELL AS HIGH DESERT, SEA COAST, SAGEBRUSH, TUNDRA, AND GRASSLANDS.

BEHAVIOR: AREN'T AS SOCIAL AS CROWS: YOU TEND TO SEE THEM ALONE OR IN PAIRS EXCEPT AT FOOD SOURCES LIKE LANDFILLS. RAVENS ARE CONFIDENT, INQUISITIVE BIRDS THAT STRUT AROUND OR OCCASIONALLY BOUND FORWARD WITH LIGHT, TWO-FOOTED HOPS.

RANDOM FACTS: THE COMMON RAVEN IS AN ACROBATIC FLIER, OFTEN DOING ROLLS AND SOMERSAULTS IN THE AIR. ONE BIRD WAS SEEN FLYING UPSIDE DOWN FOR MORE THAN A HALF-MILE. YOUNG BIRDS ARE FOND OF PLAYING GAMES WITH STICKS, REPEATEDLY DROPPING THEM, THEN DIVING TO CATCH THEM IN MIDAIR.





VOICE:



BARN SWALLOW

HIRUNDO RUSTICA

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: HIRUNDINIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 6-7 INCHES TALL, RUSTY-RED FOREHEAD AND THROAT; METALLIC-BLUE BACK, CINNAMON BELOW, LONG DEEPLY FORKED TAIL

BEST SEEN: SPRING, SUMMER, FALL; GRASSLANDS

HABITAT: YOU CAN FIND THE ADAPTABLE BARN SWALLOW FEEDING IN OPEN HABITATS FROM FIELDS, PARKS, AND ROADWAY EDGES TO MARSHES, MEADOWS, PONDS, AND COASTAL WATERS. THEIR NESTS ARE OFTEN EASY TO SPOT UNDER THE EAVES OR INSIDE OF SHEDS, BARNES OR BRIDGES.

BEHAVIOR: FEED ON THE WING, SNAGGING INSECTS FROM JUST ABOVE THE GROUND OR WATER TO HEIGHTS OF 100 FEET OR MORE. WHEN AQUATIC INSECTS HATCH, BARN SWALLOWS MAY JOIN OTHER SWALLOW SPECIES IN MIXED FORAGING FLOCKS.

RANDOM FACTS: AN UNMATED MALE BARN SWALLOW MAY KILL THE NESTLINGS OF A NESTING PAIR. HIS ACTIONS OFTEN SUCCEED IN BREAKING UP THE PAIR AND AFFORD HIM THE OPPORTUNITY TO MATE WITH THE FEMALE.





VOICE:



CLIFF SWALLOW

PETROCHELIDON PHYRRHONOTA

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: HIRUNDINIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 6-7 INCHES TALL, BUFF FOREHEAD WITH CHESTNUT THROAT: WHITE BELLY, DARK BACK, TANNISH RUMP, UNFORKED SQUARISH TAIL

BEST SEEN: SPRING, SUMMER: LAKES AND PONDS

HABITAT: TRADITIONALLY BUILT THEIR NESTS ON VERTICAL CLIFF FACES. WITH THE EXPANSION OF ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE THEY HAVE ADOPTED MANY BRIDGES, OVERPASSES, AND CULVERTS AS THEIR COLONIAL NESTING SITES. THEY FEED IN AREAS NEAR AND OVER WATER.

BEHAVIOR: ZOOM AROUND IN INTRICATE AERIAL PATTERNS TO CATCH INSECTS ON THE WING. WHEN FEEDING IN FLOCKS WITH OTHER SPECIES OF SWALLOWS, THEY OFTEN STAY HIGHER IN THE AIR. THEY BUILD MUD NESTS IN COLONIES ON CLIFF LEDGES OR UNDER BRIDGES, EAVES, AND CULVERTS.

RANDOM FACTS: ALTHOUGH THE CLIFF SWALLOW CAN NEST SOLITARILY, IT USUALLY NESTS IN COLONIES. COLONIES TEND TO BE SMALL IN THE EAST, BUT FURTHER WEST THEY CAN NUMBER UP TO 3,700 NESTS IN ONE SPOT.





VOICE:



TREE SWALLOW

TACHYGINETA BICOLOR

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: HIRUNDINIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 4-6 INCHES TALL, BLUE-GREEN ABOVE, WHITE BELOW: BLACKISH FLIGHT FEATHERS: THIN BLACK EYE MASK

BEST SEEN: SPRING, SUMMER: LAKES AND PONDS

HABITAT: TREE SWALLOWS BREED IN OPEN HABITATS SUCH AS FIELDS AND WETLANDS, USUALLY ADJACENT TO WATER. THEY NEST IN ARTIFICIAL NEST BOXES AS WELL AS TREE CAVITIES. FORAGING FLOCKS ARE FREQUENTLY SEEN OVER WETLANDS, WATER, AND AGRICULTURAL FIELDS.

BEHAVIOR: TREE SWALLOWS FEED ON SMALL, AERIAL INSECTS THAT THEY CATCH IN THEIR MOUTHS DURING ACROBATIC FLIGHT. AFTER BREEDING, TREE SWALLOWS GATHER IN LARGE FLOCKS TO MOLT AND MIGRATE. IN THE NONBREEDING SEASON, THEY FORM HUGE COMMUNAL ROOSTS.

RANDOM FACTS: TREE SWALLOWS HAVE HELPED RESEARCHERS MAKE MAJOR ADVANCES IN SEVERAL BRANCHES OF ECOLOGY, AND THEY ARE AMONG THE BEST-STUDIED BIRD SPECIES IN NORTH AMERICA. STILL, WE KNOW LITTLE ABOUT THEIR LIVES DURING MIGRATION AND WINTER.





VOICE:



BUSHTIT

PSALTRIPARUS MINIMUS

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES
FAMILY: AEGITHALIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 3-4 INCHES TALL, GRAY ABOVE WITH LIGHT UNDERPARTS: SMALL BILL, BLACK EYES

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: SCRUB

HABITAT: BUSHTITS LIVE IN OAK FOREST, EVERGREEN WOODLANDS, DRY SCRUBLANDS, STREAMSIDES, AND SUBURBS. YOU CAN FIND THEM AT ELEVATIONS FROM SEA LEVEL TO OVER 10,000 FEET.

BEHAVIOR: MOVE QUICKLY THROUGH VEGETATION, ALMOST ALWAYS IN FLOCKS, AND CONTINUOUSLY MAKE SOFT CHIPS AND TWITTERS. THEY FORAGE FREQUENTLY HANGING UPSIDE DOWN TO GRAB SMALL INSECTS AND SPIDERS FROM LEAVES.

RANDOM FACTS: A BREEDING BUSHTIT PAIR OFTEN HAS HELPERS AT THE NEST THAT AID IN RAISING THE NESTLINGS. THIS ALREADY RARE BEHAVIOR IS MADE MORE UNUSUAL BY THE FACT THAT THE HELPERS ARE TYPICALLY ADULT MALES.





VOICE:



RUBY - CROWNED KINGLET

CORTHYLIO CALENDULA

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: REGULIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 3-4 INCHES TALL, SCARLET CROWN, LIGHT EYE RING, OLIVE-GRAY ABOVE, WHITE BELOW; WHITE-WING BARS

BEST SEEN: FALL, WINTER, SPRING: FORESTS

HABITAT: RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS BREED IN TALL, DENSE CONIFER FORESTS SUCH AS SPRUCE, FIR, AND TAMARACK. IN WINTER AND DURING MIGRATION, ALSO LOOK FOR THEM IN SHRUBBY HABITATS, DECIDUOUS FORESTS, PARKS, AND SUBURBS.

BEHAVIOR: THESE ARE RESTLESS, ACROBATIC BIRDS THAT MOVE QUICKLY THROUGH FOLIAGE, TYPICALLY AT LOWER AND MIDDLE LEVELS. THEY FLICK THEIR WINGS ALMOST CONSTANTLY AS THEY GO.

RANDOM FACTS: METABOLIC STUDIES ON RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS SUGGEST THAT THESE TINY BIRDS USE ONLY ABOUT 10 CALORIES (TECHNICALLY, KILOCALORIES) PER DAY.





VOICE:



AMERICAN ROBIN

TURDUS MIGRATORIUS

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: TURDIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 10-11 INCHES TALL, BLACKISH HEAD, DARK GRAY BACK, BRICK-RED BREAST, DARK STRIPES ON WHITE THROAT: YELLOW BILL

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: OPEN WOODLANDS

HABITAT: AMERICAN ROBINS ARE COMMON ACROSS THE CONTINENT IN GARDENS, PARKS, YARDS, GOLF COURSES, FIELDS, PASTURES, TUNDRA, AS WELL AS DECIDUOUS WOODLANDS, PINE FORESTS, SHRUBLANDS, AND FORESTS REGENERATING AFTER FIRES OR LOGGING.

BEHAVIOR: BANG ACROSS LAWNS OR STAND ERECT, BEAK TILTED UPWARD, TO SURVEY THEIR ENVIRONS. WHEN ALIGHTING THEY HABITUALLY FLICK THEIR TAILS DOWNWARD SEVERAL TIMES. IN FALL AND WINTER THEY FORM LARGE FLOCKS AND GATHER IN TREES TO ROOST OR EAT BERRIES.

RANDOM FACTS: ROBINS EAT A LOT OF FRUIT IN FALL AND WINTER. WHEN THEY EAT HONEYSUCKLE BERRIES EXCLUSIVELY, THEY SOMETIMES BECOME INTOXICATED.





VOICE:



EUROPEAN STARLING

STURNUS VULGARIS

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: STURNIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 8-9 INCHES TALL, METALLIC-BLACK WITH WHITE SPOTS THROUGHOUT HEAD, NECK AND BREAST: SHORT SQUARISH TAIL

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: TOWNS

HABITAT: STARLINGS ARE COMMON IN TOWNS, SUBURBS, AND COUNTRYSIDE NEAR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS. THEY FEED ON THE GROUND ON LAWNS, FIELDS, SIDEWALKS, AND PARKING LOTS. THEY PERCH AND ROOST HIGH ON WIRES, TREES, AND BUILDINGS.

BEHAVIOR: BOISTEROUS, LOUD, AND THEY TRAVEL IN LARGE GROUPS (OFTEN WITH BLACKBIRDS AND GRACKLES). THEY RACE ACROSS FIELDS, BEAK DOWN AND PROBING THE GRASS FOR FOOD: OR THEY SIT HIGH ON WIRES OR TREES MAKING A CONSTANT STREAM OF RATTLES, WHIRRS, AND WHISTLES.

RANDOM FACTS: "STARLINGS WERE INTRODUCED TO THE US AT NEW YORK CENTRAL FROM EUROPE. THEY HAVE SPREAD AND ARE NOW ONE OF THE MOST NUMEROUS BIRDS, DISPLACING CAVITY NESTING BIRDS LIKE BLUEBIRDS". - NOREEN WEEDEN, MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY





VOICE:



NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD

MIMUS POLYGLOTTOS

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: MIMIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 10-11 INCHES TALL, GRAY WITH LONG TAIL: FLASHING WHITE PATCHES ON WINGS AND TAIL WHILE IN FLIGHT

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: TOWNS

HABITAT: LOOK FOR NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRDS IN TOWNS, SUBURBS, BACKYARDS, PARKS, FOREST EDGES, AND OPEN LAND AT LOW ELEVATIONS.

BEHAVIOR: ENJOYS MAKING ITS PRESENCE KNOWN. IT USUALLY SITS CONSPICUOUSLY ON HIGH VEGETATION, FENCES, EAVES, OR TELEPHONE WIRES, OR RUNS AND HOPS ALONG THE GROUND. FOUND ALONE OR IN PAIRS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, MOCKINGBIRDS AGGRESSIVELY CHASE OFF INTRUDERS ON THEIR TERRITORY.

RANDOM FACTS: NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRDS SING ALL THROUGH THE DAY, AND OFTEN INTO THE NIGHT. MOST NOCTURNAL SINGERS ARE UNMATED MALES, WHICH SING MORE THAN MATED MALES DURING THE DAY, TOO. NIGHTTIME SINGING IS MORE COMMON DURING THE FULL MOON.





VOICE:



COMMON YELLOWTHROAT

GEOTHLYPIS TRICHAS

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: PARULIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 5-6 INCHES TALL, BLACK MASK BORDERED ABOVE BY WHITE: BRIGHT YELLOW THROAT AND BREAST: OLIVE ABOVE, WHITISH BELOW

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: SCRUB

HABITAT: YELLOWTHROATS LIVE IN OPEN AREAS WITH THICK, LOW VEGETATION, RANGING FROM MARSH TO GRASSLAND TO OPEN PINE FOREST. DURING MIGRATION, THEY USE AN EVEN BROADER SUITE OF HABITATS INCLUDING BACKYARDS AND FOREST.

BEHAVIOR: SPEND MUCH OF THEIR TIME SKULKING LOW TO THE GROUND IN DENSE THICKETS AND FIELDS, SEARCHING FOR SMALL INSECTS AND SPIDERS. MALES SING A VERY DISTINCTIVE, ROLLING WICHETY-WICHETY-WICHETY SONG, AND BOTH SEXES GIVE A FULL-SOUNDING CHUCK NOTE THAT IS EASY TO LEARN. DURING MIGRATION, THIS IS OFTEN THE MOST COMMON WARBLER FOUND IN FIELDS AND EDGES.

RANDOM FACTS: EACH MALE NORMALLY HAS ONLY ONE MATE IN HIS TERRITORY DURING A BREEDING SEASON. HOWEVER, A FEMALE'S MATING CALLS OFTEN ATTRACT OTHER MALES, AND SHE MAY MATE WITH THEM BEHIND HER MATE'S BACK.





VOICE:



YELLOW - RUMPED WARBLER

SETOPHAGA CORONATA

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: PARULIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 5-6 INCHES TALL, YELLOW CROWN, THROAT, SIDE PATCHES AND RUMP: GRAY ABOVE, HEAVY BLACK BREAST PATCH

BEST SEEN: FALL, WINTER, SPRING: FORESTS

HABITAT: IN SUMMER, FIND THEM IN OPEN CONIFEROUS FORESTS AND EDGES, AND TO A LESSER EXTENT DECIDUOUS FORESTS. IN FALL AND WINTER THEY MOVE TO OPEN WOODS AND SHRUBBY HABITATS, INCLUDING COASTAL VEGETATION, PARKS, AND RESIDENTIAL AREAS.

BEHAVIOR: YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS TYPICALLY FORAGE IN THE OUTER TREE CANOPIES AT MIDDLE HEIGHTS. THEY'RE ACTIVE, AND YOU'LL OFTEN SEE THEM SALLY OUT TO CATCH INSECTS IN MIDAIR, SOMETIMES ON LONG FLIGHTS. IN WINTER THEY SPEND LOTS OF TIME EATING BERRIES FROM SHRUBS, AND THEY OFTEN TRAVEL IN LARGE FLOCKS.

RANDOM FACTS: THE YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER IS THE ONLY WARBLER ABLE TO DIGEST THE WAXES FOUND IN BAYBERRIES AND WAX MYRTLES. ITS ABILITY TO USE THESE FRUITS ALLOWS IT TO WINTER FARTHER NORTH THAN OTHER WARBLERS, SOMETIMES AS FAR NORTH AS NEWFOUNDLAND.





VOICE:



CALIFORNIA TOWHEE

MELOZONE CRISSALIS

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: PASSERELLIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 8-9 INCHES TALL, DULL BROWN, RUSTY-STREAKED THROAT: RUSTY UNDER BASE OF LONG DARK TAIL

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: SCRUB

HABITAT: CALIFORNIA TOWHEES LIVE IN CHAPARRAL AND OTHER TANGLED, SHRUBBY, AND DRY HABITATS. THEY'RE ALSO AT HOME IN THE SMALL BACKYARDS AND NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS OF LOWLAND CALIFORNIA TOWNS.

BEHAVIOR: CALIFORNIA TOWHEES HOP OR RUN ON THE GROUND BUT TEND TO STAY CLOSE TO THE PROTECTION OF LOW SHRUBS AND TREES. WHEN NOT FORAGING THEY MAY PERCH ON SHRUBS, ROOFTOPS, AND BACKYARD FENCES, TO SIT AND CHIP FOR LONG PERIODS. IN FLIGHT THEY LOOK OUT OF PRACTICE, USING LOTS OF WINGPOWER TO TRAVEL SHORT DISTANCES.

RANDOM FACTS: POISON OAK IS ONE OF THE HAZARDS OF OUTDOOR RECREATION IN CALIFORNIA. IT LINES TRAILS AND COVERS HILLSIDES, SEEMINGLY LYING IN WAIT TO INFLICT ITS ITCHY, WEEPING RASH ON THE UNWARY. BUT IT'S ALSO AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE LANDSCAPE AND PART OF THE DAILY LIFE OF CALIFORNIA TOWHEES. MANY TOWHEES BUILD THEIR NESTS IN POISON OAK AND FEAST ON THE PLANT'S COPIOUS CROPS OF PALE WHITE BERRIES.





VOICE:



SAVANNAH SPARROW

PASSERCULUS SANDWICHENSIS

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: PASSERELLIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 4-6 INCHES TALL, BROWN ABOVE AND WHITE BELOW, CRISP STREAKS THROUGHOUT. UPPERPARTS ARE BROWN WITH BLACK STREAKS; UNDERPARTS ARE WHITE WITH THIN BROWN OR BLACK STREAKS ON BREAST AND FLANKS; SMALL YELLOW PATCH IN FRONT OF THE EYE

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: SCRUB

HABITAT: BREED IN OPEN AREAS WITH LOW VEGETATION, INCLUDING MOST OF NORTHERN NORTH AMERICA FROM TUNDRA TO GRASSLAND, MARSH, AND FARMLAND. EVEN IN WINTER, YOU'LL FIND SAVANNAH SPARROWS ON THE GROUND OR IN LOW VEGETATION IN OPEN AREAS.

BEHAVIOR: EAT SEEDS ON OR NEAR THE GROUND, ALONE OR IN SMALL FLOCKS. WHEN FLUSHED, THEY USUALLY FLY UP, FLARE THEIR SHORT TAILS, AND CIRCLE AROUND TO LAND SOME YARDS AWAY. IN SPRING AND SUMMER, MALES SING THEIR DRY, INSECT-LIKE MELODIES FROM EXPOSED, LOW PERCHES SUCH AS FENCEPOSTS.

RANDOM FACTS: RAISING YOUNG IS HARD WORK: A FEMALE SAVANNAH SPARROW MUST GATHER 10 TIMES HER WEIGHT IN FOOD TO FEED HERSELF AND HER YOUNG DURING THE 8 DAYS THEY ARE IN THE NEST.





VOICE:



LINCOLN'S SPARROW

MELOSPIZA LINCOLNII

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: PASSERELLIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 5-6 INCHES TALL, STREAKY BROWN, GRAY OVERALL; RUSTY EDGES TO WINGS AND TAIL; CHEST AND SIDES ARE RICH BUFF WITH BLACK STREAKING; BUFFY MUSTACHE; EYE RING, THICK GRAY EYEBROW; CROWN IS STRIPED WITH A GRAY CENTRAL CROWN STRIPE

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: SCRUB

HABITAT: BREED IN WET MEADOWS FILLED WITH WILLOWS, ALDERS, AND SEDGES. THEY ALSO BREED IN PATCHES OF ASPENS, COTTONWOODS, AND WILLOWS AS WELL AS SHRUBBY AREAS NEAR STREAMS. DURING MIGRATION LINCOLN'S SPARROWS USE BRUSHY FIELDS, FOREST EDGES, AND THICKETS.

BEHAVIOR: LINCOLN'S SPARROWS ARE SECRETIVE LITTLE BIRDS THAT FORAGE ON OR NEAR THE GROUND, RARELY STRAYING FAR FROM DENSE COVER. DURING THE BREEDING SEASON, MALES SING EITHER FROM EXPOSED PERCHES OR TUCKED INSIDE A SHRUB.

RANDOM FACTS: IN A LABORATORY STUDY, FEMALE LINCOLN'S SPARROWS WERE MORE ATTRACTED TO MALES THAT SANG DURING COLDER MORNINGS MORE THAN THOSE SINGING DURING WARMER MORNINGS. THIS MAY BE BECAUSE MALES SINGING IN THE COLD SHOWED OFF MORE THAN JUST THEIR SONG; SINGING IN THE COLD REQUIRES MORE ENERGY AND COULD MEAN THAT MALES SINGING IN THE COLD WOULD MAKE BETTER MATES.





VOICE:



WHITE - CROWNED SPARROW

ZONOTRICHIA LEUCOPHRYS

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: PASSERELLIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 5-6 INCHES TALL, WHITE CROWN WITH BLACK STRIPES OVER AND BEHIND EYE: GRAYISH NECK AND BREAST: WHITISH BELLY, PALE YELLOW-ORANGE BILL

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: SCRUB

HABITAT: LOOK IN TANGLES OF BRUSH MIX WITH OPEN OR GRASSY GROUND FOR FORAGING. FOR MUCH OF THE UNITED STATES, WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS ARE MOST LIKELY IN WINTER (ALTHOUGH TWO RACES LIVE YEAR ROUND IN THE WEST, ALONG THE COAST AND IN THE MOUNTAINS).

BEHAVIOR: AT THE EDGES OF BRUSHY HABITAT, HOPPING ON THE GROUND OR ON BRANCHES USUALLY BELOW WAIST LEVEL. THEY'RE ALSO FOUND IN OPEN GROUND (PARTICULARLY ON THEIR BREEDING GROUNDS) BUT TYPICALLY WITH THE SAFETY OF SHRUBS OR TREES NEARBY.

RANDOM FACTS: SCIENTISTS INTERESTED IN MOVEMENT AND ENERGETICS HAVE DISCOVERED THAT WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS CAN RUN ON A TREADMILL AT A PACE OF ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF A MILE AN HOUR WITHOUT TIRING OUT.





VOICE:



GOLDEN - CROWNED SPARROW

ZONOTRICHIA ATRICAPILLA

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: PASSERELLIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 6-7 INCHES TALL, STREAKED BROWN ABOVE, SMOOTH GRAY TO BROWN BELOW, BLACK CROWN AND BRIGHT-YELLOW FOREHEAD: WINTER AND IMMATURE ARE DULLER, BROWN REPLACING BLACK ON THE HEAD, LESS OBVIOUS YELLOW ON THE CROWN

BEST SEEN: WINTER, FALL, SPRING: SCRUB

HABITAT: MOST VISIBLE DURING MIGRATION AND WINTER, WHEN THEY FREQUENT FOREST EDGE, SHRUBS, CHAPARRAL, AND BACKYARDS OF THE WEST COAST. DURING THE SUMMER, THEY NEST MUCH FARTHER NORTH, IN LOW, SHRUBBY AREAS OF TUNDRA OR AT THE EDGES OF BOREAL FORESTS.

BEHAVIOR: FEED ON SEEDS AND INSECTS ON THE GROUND AND IN LOW VEGETATION. THEY WHISTLE THEIR SLOW, MOURNFUL-SOUNDING SONGS FROM HIGH PERCHES AND NEST IN DENSE, LOW VEGETATION.

RANDOM FACTS: MINERS IN THE YUKON AT THE TURN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY WOEFULLY REFERRED TO THE GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW AS THE "NO GOLD HERE" BIRD, BECAUSE ITS SONG RESEMBLED THAT DEPRESSING PHRASE. THEY ALSO INTERPRETED ITS SONG TO SAY "I'M SO TIRED," PROMPTING THEM TO DUB THE BIRD "WEARY WILLIE."





VOICE:



DARK - EYED JUNCO

JUNCO HYEMALIS

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: PASSERELLIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 5-6 INCHES TALL, BLACK EYES, HOOD AND THROAT: LIGHT BROWN BACK AND SIDES WITH WHITE UNDERPARTS: GRAYISH TAIL WITH BROAD WHITE EDGES

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: FORESTS

HABITAT: DARK-EYED JUNCOS BREED IN CONIFEROUS OR MIXED-CONIFEROUS FORESTS ACROSS CANADA, THE WESTERN U.S., AND IN THE APPALACHIANS. DURING WINTER YOU'LL FIND THEM IN OPEN WOODLANDS, FIELDS, PARKS, ROADSIDES, AND BACKYARDS.

BEHAVIOR: THEY HOP AROUND THE BASES OF TREES AND SHRUBS IN FORESTS OR VENTURE OUT ONTO LAWNS LOOKING FOR FALLEN SEEDS. YOU'LL HEAR THEIR HIGH CHIP NOTES, GIVEN ALMOST ABSENT-MINDEDLY WHILE FORAGING, OR INTENSIFYING AS THEY TAKE SHORT, LOW FLIGHTS THROUGH COVER.

RANDOM FACTS: JUNCOS ARE THE "SNOWBIRDS" OF THE MIDDLE LATITUDES. OVER MOST OF THE EASTERN UNITED STATES, THEY APPEAR AS WINTER SETS IN, AND THEN RETREAT NORTHWARD EACH SPRING. OTHER JUNCOS ARE YEAR-ROUND RESIDENTS, RETREATING INTO WOODLANDS DURING THE BREEDING SEASON, OR, LIKE THOSE OF THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS, MOVING TO HIGHER ELEVATIONS DURING THE WARMER MONTHS.





VOICE:



RED - WINGED BLACKBIRD

AGELAIUS PHOENICEUS

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: ICTERIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 7-9 INCHES TALL, GLOSSY BLACK OVERALL: RED SHOULDER PATCHES: BLACK BILL, LEGS AND FEET

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: MARSHES

HABITAT: LOOK FOR RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS IN FRESH AND SALTWATER MARSHES, ALONG WATERCOURSES, WATER HAZARDS ON GOLF COURSES, AND WET ROADSIDES, AS WELL AS DRIER MEADOWS AND OLD FIELDS. IN WINTER, YOU CAN FIND THEM AT CROP FIELDS, FEEDLOTS, AND PASTURES.

BEHAVIOR: MALE RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS DO EVERYTHING THEY CAN TO GET NOTICED, SITTING ON HIGH PERCHES AND BELTING OUT THEIR CONK-LA-REE! SONG ALL DAY LONG. FEMALES STAY LOWER, SKULKING THROUGH VEGETATION FOR FOOD AND QUIETLY WEAVING TOGETHER THEIR REMARKABLE NESTS. IN WINTER RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS GATHER IN HUGE FLOCKS TO EAT GRAINS WITH OTHER BLACKBIRD SPECIES AND STARLINGS.

RANDOM FACTS: THE RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD IS A HIGHLY POLYGYNOUS SPECIES, MEANING MALES HAVE MANY FEMALE MATES – UP TO 15 IN SOME CASES. IN SOME POPULATIONS 90 PERCENT OF TERRITORIAL MALES HAVE MORE THAN ONE FEMALE NESTING ON THEIR TERRITORIES. BUT ALL IS NOT AS IT SEEMS: ONE-QUARTER TO ONE-HALF OF NESTLINGS TURN OUT TO HAVE BEEN Sired BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN THE TERRITORIAL MALE.





VOICE:



BREWER'S BLACKBIRD

EUPHAGUS CYANOCEPHALUS

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: ICTERIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 8-10 INCHES TALL, GLOSSY BLACK WITH YELLOW EYE AND BLUE SHEEN ON HEAD GRADING TO GREENISH IRIDESCENCE ON THE BODY; FEMALES ARE PLAINER BROWN, WITH A DARK EYE

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: TOWNS

HABITAT: LOOK FOR BREWER'S BLACKBIRDS IN OPEN HABITATS OF THE WEST, SUCH AS COASTAL SCRUB, GRASSLANDS, RIVERSIDES, MEADOWS, AS WELL AS LAWNS, GOLF COURSES, PARKS, AND CITY STREETS.

BEHAVIOR: FEED ON OPEN GROUND OR UNDERFOOT IN PARKS AND BUSY STREETS. THEIR LONG LEGS GIVE THEM A HALTING WALK, HEAD JERKING WITH EACH STEP ALMOST LIKE A CHICKEN'S. IN FLOCKS, BREWER'S BLACKBIRDS RISE AND FALL AS THEY FLY.

RANDOM FACTS: MOST BIRDS FLY SOUTH FOR THE WINTER, BUT A SMALL NUMBER OF BREWER'S BLACKBIRDS FLY WEST – LEAVING THE FRIGID CANADIAN PRAIRIES FOR THE Milder COASTAL REGIONS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA AND WASHINGTON.





VOICE:



BROWN - HEADED COWBIRD

MOLOTHRUS ATER

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: ICTERIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 7-9 INCHES TALL, GLOSSY BLACK PLUMAGE, RICH BROWN HEAD THAT LOOKS BLACK AT DISTANCE: FEMALES ARE PLAIN BROWN BIRDS, LIGHTEST ON THE HEAD AND UNDERPARTS, WITH FINE STREAKING ON THE BELLY AND A DARK EYE

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: GRASSLANDS

HABITAT: FOUND IN MANY OPEN HABITATS, SUCH AS FIELDS, PASTURES, MEADOWS, FOREST EDGES, AND LAWNS. WHEN NOT DISPLAYING OR FEEDING ON THE GROUND, THEY OFTEN PERCH HIGH ON PROMINENT TREE BRANCHES.

BEHAVIOR: FEED ON THE GROUND IN MIXED-SPECIES GROUPS OF BLACKBIRDS AND STARLINGS. MALES GATHER ON LAWNS TO STRUT AND DISPLAY FOR MATES. FEMALES PROWL WOODLANDS AND EDGES IN SEARCH OF NESTS.

RANDOM FACTS: THE BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD IS NORTH AMERICA'S MOST COMMON "BROOD PARASITE." A FEMALE COWBIRD MAKES NO NEST OF HER OWN, BUT INSTEAD LAYS HER EGGS IN THE NESTS OF OTHER BIRD SPECIES, WHO THEN RAISE THE YOUNG COWBIRDS.





VOICE:



WESTERN MEADOWLARK

STURNELLA NEGLECTA

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: ICTERIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 8-9 INCHES TALL, BRIGHT YELLOW THROAT AND BREAST: BLACK AND WHITE SPOTTING ON SIDES: SHORT WIDE TAIL WITH WHITE SIDES

BEST SEEN: FALL, WINTER, SPRING: GRASSLANDS

HABITAT: SEEK THE WIDE OPEN SPACES OF NATIVE GRASSLANDS AND AGRICULTURAL FIELDS FOR SPRING AND SUMMER BREEDING AND WINTER FORAGING. LOOK FOR THEM AMONG LOW TO MEDIUM-HEIGHT GRASSES MORE SO THAN IN TALL FIELDS. THEY ALSO OCCUR ALONG THE WEEDY VERGES OF ROADS, MARSH EDGES, AND MOUNTAIN MEADOWS UP TO 10,000 FEET.

BEHAVIOR: FORAGE ON THE GROUND ALONE OR, IN WINTER, IN SMALL, LOOSE FLOCKS. IN SPRING AND SUMMER, MALES SING OUT FROM ATOP FENCE POSTS, BUSHES, POWER LINES, AND OTHER HIGH POINTS.

RANDOM FACTS: JOHN JAMES AUDUBON GAVE THE WESTERN MEADOWLARK ITS SCIENTIFIC NAME, STURNELLA (STARLING-LIKE) NEGLECTA, CLAIMING THAT MOST EXPLORERS AND SETTLERS WHO VENTURED WEST OF THE MISSISSIPPI AFTER LEWIS AND CLARK HAD OVERLOOKED THIS COMMON BIRD.





VOICE:



HOODED ORIOLE

ICTERUS CUCULLATUS

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: ICTERIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 7-8 INCHES TALL, YELLOW AND BLACK: YELLOW HOOD, BLACK THROAT, CURVED BILL, DARK-GRAY WINGS, LIGHT YELLOW UNDERPARTS

BEST SEEN: SPRING, SUMMER: OPEN WOODLANDS

HABITAT: HOODED ORIOLES LIVE IN OPEN WOODLANDS WITH SCATTERED TREES, INCLUDING COTTONWOODS, WILLOWS, SYCAMORES, AND ESPECIALLY PALM TREES.

BEHAVIOR: HOODED ORIOLES ARE ACROBATIC FORAGERS AND OFTEN HANG UPSIDE DOWN WHILE THEY GRAB THEIR PREY, BUT THEY TEND TO FORAGE SLUGGISHLY AMONG LEAVES AND BRANCHES. THEY MAKE DIRECT FLIGHTS BETWEEN TREES WITH STRONG WINGBEATS.

RANDOM FACTS: HOODED ORIOLES IN CALIFORNIA EARNED THE NICKNAME "PALM-LEAF ORIOLE" BECAUSE OF THEIR TENDENCY TO BUILD NESTS IN PALM TREES. WHEN THE NEST IS SUSPENDED FROM PALM LEAVES, THE FEMALE POKES HOLES IN THE LEAF FROM BELOW AND PUSHES THE FIBERS THROUGH, EFFECTIVELY SEWING THE NEST TO THE LEAF.





VOICE:



AMERICAN GOLDFINCH

SPINUS TRISTIS

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: FRINGILLIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 4-5 INCHES TALL, BLACK CAP, STUBBY BILL: BRIGHT YELLOW BELOW, WHITE RUMP, WHITE EDGES ON BLACK WINGS

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: OPEN WOODLANDS

HABITAT: WEEDY FIELDS AND FLOODPLAINS, WHERE PLANTS SUCH AS THISTLES AND ASTERS ARE COMMON. THEY'RE ALSO FOUND IN CULTIVATED AREAS, ROADSIDES, ORCHARDS, AND BACKYARDS.

BEHAVIOR: THESE ARE ACTIVE AND ACROBATIC LITTLE FINCHES THAT CLING TO WEEDS AND SEED SOCKS, AND SOMETIMES MILL ABOUT IN LARGE NUMBERS AT FEEDERS OR ON THE GROUND BENEATH THEM. FLY WITH A BOUNCY, UNDULATING PATTERN AND OFTEN CALL IN FLIGHT, DRAWING ATTENTION.

RANDOM FACTS: GOLDFINCHES ARE AMONG THE STRICTEST VEGETARIANS IN THE BIRD WORLD, SELECTING AN ENTIRELY VEGETABLE DIET AND ONLY INADVERTENTLY SWALLOWING AN OCCASIONAL INSECT.





VOICE:



LESSER GOLDFINCH

SPINUS PSALTRIA

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: FRINGILLIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 4-5 INCHES TALL, BLACK CROWN, BRIGHT YELLOW NECK AND BREAST: DARK ABOVE, DARK RUMP, WHITE WING PATCH AT BASE OF PRIMARIES

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: OPEN WOODLANDS

HABITAT: LESSER GOLDFINCHES FEED IN WEEDY FIELDS, BUDDING TREETOPS, AND THE BRUSH OF OPEN AREAS AND EDGES. DEPENDING ON FOOD AVAILABILITY, THEY MAY CONCENTRATE IN MOUNTAIN CANYONS AND DESERT OASIS, BUT THEY ARE ALSO FAIRLY COMMON IN SUBURBS.

BEHAVIOR: LESSER GOLDFINCHES GATHER IN GROUPS OF UP TO SEVERAL HUNDRED AT A TIME. THEY FEED ON SEEDS AND GRAINS, BOTH IN WEEDY FIELDS AND AT BIRD FEEDERS. THEIR FLOCKS MIX WITH OTHER SEED-EATING SONGBIRDS, ESPECIALLY AT BIRD FEEDING STATIONS.

RANDOM FACTS: MALE LESSER GOLDFINCHES IN THE EASTERN PART OF THEIR RANGE IN THE U.S. TEND TO HAVE BLACK BACKS. ALONG THE WEST COAST, THEIR BACKS ARE GREEN, WITH ONLY A BLACK CAP. ELSEWHERE, THE AMOUNT OF BLACK VARIES, WITH MANY BIRDS HAVING PARTLY GREEN BACKS. SOUTH OF CENTRAL MEXICO, ALL OF THE MALES ARE BLACK-BACKED.





VOICE:



HOUSE FINCH

HAEMORHOUS MEXICANUS

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES
FAMILY: FRINGILLIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 5-6 INCHES TALL, REDDISH-ORANGE FOREHEAD, BREAST AND RUMP; HEAVY STREAKING ON LIGHT FLANKS AND UNDERPARTS

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: TOWNS

HABITAT: HOUSE FINCHES FREQUENT CITY PARKS, BACKYARDS, URBAN CENTERS, FARMS, AND FOREST EDGES ACROSS THE CONTINENT. IN THE WESTERN U.S., YOU'LL ALSO FIND HOUSE FINCHES IN THEIR NATIVE HABITATS OF DESERTS, GRASSLAND, CHAPARRAL, AND OPEN WOODS.

BEHAVIOR: GREGARIOUS BIRDS THAT COLLECT AT FEEDERS OR PERCH HIGH IN NEARBY TREES. WHEN THEY'RE NOT AT FEEDERS, THEY FEED ON THE GROUND, ON WEED STALKS, OR IN TREES. THEY MOVE FAIRLY SLOWLY AND SIT STILL AS THEY SHELL SEEDS BY CRUSHING THEM WITH RAPID BITES.

RANDOM FACTS: THE HOUSE FINCH WAS ORIGINALLY A BIRD OF THE WESTERN UNITED STATES AND MEXICO. IN 1940 A SMALL NUMBER OF FINCHES WERE TURNED LOOSE ON LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK, AFTER FAILED ATTEMPTS TO SELL THEM AS CAGE BIRDS ("HOLLYWOOD FINCHES"). THEY QUICKLY STARTED BREEDING AND SPREAD ACROSS ALMOST ALL OF THE EASTERN UNITED STATES AND SOUTHERN CANADA WITHIN THE NEXT 50 YEARS.





VOICE:



HOUSE SPARROW

PASSER DOMESTICUS

ORDER: PASSERIFORMES

FAMILY: PASSERIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 5-6 INCHES TALL, BLACK THROAT WITH LARGE WHITE CHEEKS: CHESTNUT NAPE MEETS BLACK EYE LINE

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: TOWNS

HABITAT: HAVE LIVED AROUND HUMANS FOR CENTURIES AND WERE FIRST INTRODUCED TO THE U.S. FROM EUROPE. LOOK FOR THEM ON CITY STREETS, OR CHEEPING FROM A PERCH ON YOUR ROOF. HOUSE SPARROWS ARE ABSENT FROM UNDISTURBED FORESTS AND GRASSLANDS, BUT THEY'RE COMMON IN COUNTRYSIDE AROUND FARMSTEADS.

BEHAVIOR: NOISY SPARROWS THAT HOP AND PECK AT CRUMBS OR BIRDSEED. LOOK FOR THEM FLYING IN AND OUT OF NEST HOLES HIDDEN BEHIND SHOP SIGNS OR IN TRAFFIC LIGHTS, OR HANGING AROUND PARKING LOTS WAITING FOR CRUMBS AND PICKING INSECTS OFF CAR GRILLS.

RANDOM FACTS: HOUSE SPARROWS AGGRESSIVELY DEFEND THEIR NEST HOLES. A SCIENTIST IN 1889 REPORTED CASES OF HOUSE SPARROWS ATTACKING 70 DIFFERENT BIRD SPECIES. HOUSE SPARROWS SOMETIMES EVICT OTHER BIRDS FROM NEST HOLES, INCLUDING EASTERN BLUEBIRDS, PURPLE MARTINS, AND TREE SWALLOWS.





BIRDS: PICTURED AND DESCRIBED

NON - PASSERINES

ALTHOUGH THIS GROUP SHARES MANY CHARACTERISTICS WITH PASSERINES AND PERCHING BIRDS, THEIR FOOT STRUCTURE DISTINGUISHES THEM FROM THE REST. THIS GROUP IS COMPRISED OF HUMMINGBIRDS, PIGEONS, DOVES, WOODPECKERS, AND KINGFISHERS.



VOICE:



ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD

CALYPTE ANNA

ORDER: CAPRIMULGIFORMES

FAMILY: TROCHILIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 3-4 INCHES TALL, RED CROWN AND RED SPOTTED THROAT: DARK GREEN ABOVE, GRAY BELOW: WIDE OUTER TAIL FEATHERS

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: OPEN WOODLANDS

HABITAT: ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRDS ARE COMMON IN YARDS, PARKS, RESIDENTIAL STREETS, EUCALYPTUS GROVES, RIVERSIDE WOODS, SAVANNAHS, AND COASTAL SCRUB. THEY READILY COME TO HUMMINGBIRD FEEDERS AND FLOWERING PLANTS, INCLUDING CULTIVATED SPECIES IN GARDENS.

BEHAVIOR: ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRDS ARE A BLUR OF MOTION AS THEY HOVER BEFORE FLOWERS LOOKING FOR NECTAR AND INSECTS. LISTEN FOR THE MALE'S SCRATCHY METALLIC SONG AND LOOK FOR HIM PERCHED ABOVE HEAD LEVEL IN TREES AND SHRUBS.

RANDOM FACTS: WHAT DO YOU CALL A FLOCK OF HUMMINGBIRDS? FEW ANIMALS HAVE SO MANY APPLICABLE TERMS, AND NONE SO BEAUTIFUL. INSTEAD OF CALLING THEM A FLOCK, CHOOSE BETWEEN A BOUQUET, A GLITTERING, A HOVER, A SHIMMER, OR A TUNE OF HUMMINGBIRDS.





VOICE:



ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD

SELASPHORUS SASIN

ORDER: CAPRIMULGIFORMES

FAMILY: TROCHILIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 3-4 INCHES TALL, FIERY-RED THROAT, GREEN BACK, RUSTY SIDES, RUMP, AND TAIL: NARROW OUTER TAIL FEATHERS

BEST SEEN: SPRING, SUMMER: OPEN WOODLANDS

HABITAT: ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRDS BREED IN COASTAL FOREST, SCRUB, AND CHAPARRAL ALONG A NARROW STRIP THAT STRETCHES UP THE COAST FROM CALIFORNIA TO SOUTHERN OREGON.

BEHAVIOR: ZIP FROM FLOWER TO FLOWER HOVERING ABOVE THEM TO DRINK THE NECTAR, TICKING AS THEY GO. THEY ALSO FLYCATCH FOR INSECTS OR PLUCK THEM FROM VEGETATION. MALES DISPLAY BY FLYING SIDE TO SIDE OR IN WIDE ARCS WHILE EMITTING A BUMBLEBEE-LIKE BUZZ WITH THEIR WINGS

RANDOM FACTS: LIKE OTHER BIRDS, ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRDS USE THEIR FEET TO HELP CONTROL THEIR BODY TEMPERATURE. WHEN IT'S COLD OUTSIDE THEY TUCK THEIR FEET UP AGAINST THEIR BELLIES WHILE FLYING, BUT WHEN TEMPERATURES SOAR, THEY LET THEIR FEET DANGLE TO COOL DOWN.





VOICE:



MOURNING DOVE

ZENAIIDA MACROURA

ORDER: COLUMBIFORMES

FAMILY: COLUMBIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 11-12 INCHES TALL, GRAYISH-BROWN, SMALL HEAD, BLACK SPOT ON CHEEKS, PINKISH FEET, LONG POINTED TAIL

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: OPEN WOODLANDS

HABITAT: YOU CAN SEE MOURNING DOVES NEARLY ANYWHERE EXCEPT THE DEEP WOODS. LOOK FOR THEM IN FIELDS OR PATCHES OF BARE GROUND, OR ON OVERHEAD PERCHES LIKE TELEPHONE WIRES.

BEHAVIOR: MOURNING DOVES FLY FAST ON POWERFUL WINGBEATS, SOMETIMES MAKING SUDDEN ASCENTS, DESCENTS, AND DODGES, THEIR POINTED TAILS STRETCHING BEHIND THEM.

RANDOM FACTS: DURING THE BREEDING SEASON, YOU MIGHT SEE THREE MOURNING DOVES FLYING IN TIGHT FORMATION, ONE AFTER ANOTHER. THIS IS A FORM OF SOCIAL DISPLAY. TYPICALLY THE BIRD IN THE LEAD IS THE MALE OF A MATED PAIR. THE SECOND BIRD IS AN UNMATED MALE CHASING HIS RIVAL FROM THE AREA WHERE HE HOPES TO NEST. THE THIRD IS THE FEMALE OF THE MATED PAIR, WHICH SEEMS TO GO ALONG FOR THE RIDE.





VOICE:



ROCK PIGEON

COLUMBA LIVIA

ORDER: COLUMBIFORMES

FAMILY: COLUMBIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 11-15 INCHES TALL, VARIABLE IN COLOR, MOST ARE BLUISH GRAY WITH TWO BLACK BANDS ON THE WING; BLACK TIP ON TAIL; IRIDESCENT THROAT FEATHERS; WING PATTERNS MAY INCLUDE TWO BARS, DARK SPOTS, OR CAN BE PLAIN.

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: TOWNS

HABITAT: PIGEONS ARE FAMILIAR BIRDS OF CITIES AND TOWNS. YOU'LL ALSO SEE THEM AROUND FARMLAND AND FIELDS, AS WELL AS IN THEIR ARCHETYPAL HABITAT, ROCKY CLIFFS.

BEHAVIOR: PIGEONS OFTEN GATHER IN FLOCKS, WALKING OR RUNNING ON THE GROUND AND PECKING FOR FOOD. WHEN ALARMED, THE FLOCK MAY SUDDENLY FLY INTO THE AIR AND CIRCLE SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE COMING DOWN AGAIN.

RANDOM FACTS: MESOPOTAMIAN CUNEIFORM TABLETS AND EGYPTIAN HIEROGLYPHICS SUGGEST THAT PIGEONS WERE DOMESTICATED MORE THAN 5,000 YEARS AGO. THE BIRDS HAVE SUCH A LONG HISTORY WITH HUMANS THAT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL WHERE THE SPECIES' ORIGINAL RANGE WAS. PIGEONS CAN FIND THEIR WAY HOME FROM JUST ABOUT ANYWHERE, THEY NAVIGATE BY SENSING THE EARTH'S MAGNETIC FIELDS.





VOICE:



NORTHERN FLICKER

COLAPTES AURATUS

ORDER: PICIFORMES

FAMILY: PICIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 13-14 INCHES TALL, BROWN CROWN WITH GRAY FACE AND NECK: RED THROAT PATCHES, BARRED BACK, WHITE RUMP, BLACK SPOTTING BELOW

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: OPEN WOODLANDS

HABITAT: LOOK FOR FLICKERS IN OPEN HABITATS NEAR TREES, INCLUDING WOODLANDS, EDGES, YARDS, AND PARKS. IN THE WEST YOU CAN FIND THEM IN MOUNTAIN FORESTS ALL THE WAY UP TO TREE LINE.

BEHAVIOR: SPEND LOTS OF TIME ON THE GROUND, AND WHEN IN TREES THEY'RE OFTEN PERCHED UPRIGHT ON HORIZONTAL BRANCHES INSTEAD OF LEANING AGAINST THEIR TAILS ON A TRUNK. THEY FLY IN AN UP-AND-DOWN PATH USING HEAVY FLAPS INTERSPERSED WITH GLIDES.

RANDOM FACTS: LIKE MOST WOODPECKERS, NORTHERN FLICKERS DRUM ON OBJECTS AS A FORM OF COMMUNICATION AND TERRITORY DEFENSE. IN SUCH CASES, THE OBJECT IS TO MAKE AS LOUD A NOISE AS POSSIBLE, AND THAT'S WHY WOODPECKERS SOMETIMES DRUM ON METAL OBJECTS. ONE NORTHERN FLICKER IN WYOMING COULD BE HEARD DRUMMING ON AN ABANDONED TRACTOR FROM A HALF-MILE AWAY.





VOICE:



DOWNY WOODPECKER

DRYOBATES PUBESCENS

ORDER: PICIFORMES

FAMILY: PICIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 5-7 INCHES TALL, CHECKERED BLACK-AND-WHITE IMPRESSION: BLACK UPPERPARTS ARE CHECKED WITH WHITE ON THE WINGS, THE HEAD IS BOLDLY STRIPED, BACK HAS A BROAD WHITE STRIPE DOWN THE CENTER

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: FORESTS

HABITAT: YOU'LL FIND DOWNY WOODPECKERS IN OPEN WOODLANDS, PARTICULARLY AMONG DECIDUOUS TREES, AND BRUSHY OR WEEDY EDGES. THEY'RE ALSO AT HOME IN ORCHARDS, CITY PARKS, BACKYARDS AND VACANT LOTS.

BEHAVIOR: HITCH AROUND TREE LIMBS AND TRUNKS OR DROP INTO TALL WEEDS TO FEED ON GALLS. THEIR RISING-AND-FALLING FLIGHT STYLE IS DISTINCTIVE OF MANY WOODPECKERS. IN SPRING AND SUMMER BOTH WITH THEIR SHRILL WHINNYING CALL AND BY DRUMMING ON TREES.

RANDOM FACTS: THE DOWNY WOODPECKER EATS FOODS THAT LARGER WOODPECKERS CANNOT REACH, SUCH AS INSECTS LIVING ON OR IN THE STEMS OF WEEDS. YOU MAY SEE THEM HAMMERING AT GOLDENROD GALLS TO EXTRACT THE FLY LARVAE INSIDE.





VOICE:



BELTED KINGFISHER

MEGACERYLE ALCYON

ORDER: CORACIIFORMES

FAMILY: ALCEDINIDAE

SIZE, SHAPE, AND COLOR: STANDING 12-14 INCHES TALL, BLUISH-GRAY WITH WHITE UNDERPARTS: LARGE HEAD WITH RAGGED CREST: LONG THICK BLACK BILL

BEST SEEN: YEAR-ROUND: LAKES AND PONDS

HABITAT: LIVE NEAR STREAMS, RIVERS, PONDS, LAKES, AND ESTUARIES. THEY NEST IN BURROWS THAT THEY DIG INTO SOFT EARTHEN BANKS, USUALLY ADJACENT TO OR DIRECTLY OVER WATER. SPEND WINTERS IN AREAS WHERE THE WATER DOESN'T FREEZE SO THAT THEY HAVE CONTINUAL ACCESS TO THEIR AQUATIC FOODS.

BEHAVIOR: SPEND MUCH OF THEIR TIME PERCHED SEARCHING FOR SMALL FISH. THEY ALSO FLY QUICKLY UP AND DOWN RIVERS AND SHORELINES GIVING LOUD RATTLING CALLS. THEY HUNT EITHER BY PLUNGING DIRECTLY FROM A PERCH, OR BY HOVERING OVER THE WATER, BILL DOWNWARD, BEFORE DIVING.

RANDOM FACTS: ONE OF THE FEW BIRD SPECIES IN WHICH THE FEMALE IS MORE BRIGHTLY COLORED THAN THE MALE. AMONG THE NEARLY 100 SPECIES OF KINGFISHERS, THE SEXES OFTEN LOOK ALIKE. IN SOME SPECIES THE MALE IS MORE COLORFUL, AND IN OTHERS THE FEMALE IS.





DO YOU KNOW YOUR BIRDS?

PHOTO & SOUND QUIZ BY EBIRD: PRACTICE YOUR SKILLS AND HELP SCIENCE

EACH CUSTOM QUIZ PRESENTS YOU WITH 20 BIRDS THAT OCCUR AT A DATE AND LOCATION OF YOUR CHOOSING, PULLED FROM MILLIONS OF PHOTOS AND SOUNDS ADDED TO THE MACAULAY LIBRARY BY EBIRDERS AROUND THE WORLD. GUESS THE SPECIES—AND DON'T WORRY IF YOU'RE WRONG—THIS CHALLENGING QUIZ IS FOR YOUR OWN FUN AND LEARNING. AFTER EACH GUESS, YOU'LL RATE THE PHOTO OR SOUND FOR ITS QUALITY, HELPING US CURATE THE MACAULAY LIBRARY SO IT IS MORE USEFUL FOR YOU AND FOR SCIENCE. THANK YOU, AND ENJOY!



BIRD SONG HERO: THE SONG LEARNING GAME FOR EVERYONE BY ALL ABOUT BIRDS: BIRD ACADEMY

TRAIN YOUR BRAIN TO RECOGNIZE OVER 50 BIRD SONGS WITH THE BIRD SONG HERO MATCHING GAME. LISTEN CLOSELY TO FEATURED SONGS AND MATCH EACH WITH THE CORRECT SPECTROGRAM VISUALIZATION. YOU'LL BE HARNESSING THE POWER OF THE VISUAL BRAIN TO HELP YOU IDENTIFY THE UNIQUE QUALITIES OF EACH SONG AND COMMIT SOUND PATTERNS TO MEMORY. BIRD SONG HERO IS A FUN WAY TO PRACTICE THE KEY SKILLS YOU NEED TO ID ALL THE BIRD SONGS YOU'RE CURIOUS ABOUT.



THE BIRDING SCENE

THE AUDUBON DICTIONARY FOR BIRDERS

TWITCHER: NOUN

DEFINITION: A HARD-CORE BIRDER WHO GOES TO GREAT LENGTHS TO SEE A SPECIES AND ADD IT TO HIS OR HER LIST.

LIFER: NOUN

DEFINITION: A FIRST-TIME SIGHTING FOR A BIRDER.

SPARK BIRD: NOUN

DEFINITION: A SPECIES THAT TRIGGERS A LIFELONG PASSION FOR BIRDING.

NEMESIS BIRD: NOUN

DEFINITION: A SPECIES THAT CONSTANTLY ELUDES A BIRDER.

BJS (LITTLE BROWN JOBS): NOUN

DEFINITION: A BLANKET TERM FOR DRAB SONGBIRDS THAT ARE DIFFICULT TO DISTINGUISH.

PISH: VERB

DEFINITION: A SOUND THAT BIRDERS MAKE TO TRY AND DRAW SONGBIRDS OUT INTO THE OPEN. SOUNDS LIKE PISHHHH PISHHHH.

PATAGONIA PICNIC TABLE EFFECT: NOUN

DEFINITION: A PHENOMENON THAT OCCURS WHEN ONE RARE BIRD DRAWS A BEVY OF BIRDERS TO AN AREA, RESULTING IN MORE INTERESTING SPECIES BEING DISCOVERED IN THE SAME LOCALE.

ENDEMIC: ADJECTIVE, SOMETIMES A NOUN

DEFINITION: INHABITING ONLY A LIMITED AND INSULAR REGION.

DIPPED: VERB

DEFINITION: TO MISS OUT ON A HIGH-PRIORITY BIRD.

SIESTA TIME: NOUN

DEFINITION: THE HEIGHT OF THE AFTERNOON, WHEN MOST BIRDS TUCK THEMSELVES OUT OF VIEW.

SOB (SPOUSE OF BIRDER): NOUN

DEFINITION: A PERSON WHO HAS HAD THE MISFORTUNE OF PLEDGING THEIR LIFE TO A BIRDER.

BUTTERBUTT: NOUN

DEFINITION: AN ENDEARING TERM FOR A YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER.

PURPLE POOPER: NOUN

DEFINITION: A LESS-THAN-ENDEARING TERM FOR A GRAY CATBIRD.

PELAGIC: ADJECTIVE, SOMETIMES A NOUN

DEFINITION: SPENDING A VAST AMOUNT OF TIME LIVING ON THE OPEN OCEAN.

VAGRANT: ADJECTIVE, SOMETIMES A NOUN

DEFINITION: STRAYING WELL OUTSIDE OF THE REGULAR ECOLOGICAL RANGE.

PHOTO ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PART 1:

ESME ROSEN - CANADA GOOSE
HERB ELLIOTT - MALLARD
KARL KRUEGER - AMERICAN WIGEON
DORIAN ANDERSON - LESSER SCAUP
DORIAN ANDERSON - BUFFLEHEAD
DORIAN ANDERSON - COMMON GOLDENEYE
IAN DAVIES - AMERICAN COOT
PIERRE MARTIN - RUDDY DUCK
DANIEL GROSSI - RED BREASTED MERGANSER
MATT DAVIS - SURF SCOTER
JULIE FILIBERTI - COMMON LOON
BILL CHEN - WESTERN GREBE
CAROLINE LAMBERT - EARED GREBE
DARREN CLARK - BROWN PELICAN
MARK SAWYER - DOUBLE CRESTED CORMORANT
EVAN LIPTON - GREAT BLUE HERON
EVAN LIPTON - SNOWY EGRET
EVAN LIPTON - GREAT EGRET
IAN DAVIES - BLACK CROWNED NIGHT HERON
BRAD IMHOFF - GREEN HERON
IAN HEARN - SPOTTED SANDPIPER
DORIAN ANDERSON - WILLET

DORIAN ANDERSON - MARBLED GODWIT
DORIAN ANDERSON - DUNLIN
JAY MCGOWAN - SHORT BILLED DOWITCHER
RYAN SCHAIN - KILLDEER
KYLE TANSLEY - SEMIPALMATED PLOVER
STEVEN MLODINOW - BLACK TURNSTONE
AD KONINGS - AMERICAN AVOCET
TED KEYEL - BLACK NECKED STILT
SHANNON O SHEA - GREAT EGRET
JERRY LIGUORI - RED TAILED HAWK
MIKE SCHIJF - COOPER'S HAWK
BRAD IMHOFF - RED SHOULDERED HAWK
SUZE SCHALBE - BLACK OYSTERCATCHER
MICHAEL JD - AMERICAN KESTREL
TIM LENZ - MERLIN FALCON
JOSHUA STACY - PEREGRINE FALCON
SHARIF UDDIN - BARN OWL
PAUL TAVARES - TURKEY VULTURE
ALIX D'ENTREMONT - GREATER YELLOWLEGS
KATELYN LUFF - LONG BILLED CURLEW
BRYAN CALK - WHIMBREL

PHOTO ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PART 2:

SIMON BOIVIN - HERRING GULL
ANDREW SPENCER - HEERMANN'S GULL
RYAN SANDERSON - CALIFORNIA GULL
JESSICA HADLEY - WESTERN GULL
CAMERON ECKERT - RING BILLED GULL
ETHAN MONK - ELEGANT TERN
JONATHAN IRONS - FORSTER'S TERN
NICK BONOMO - CASPIAN TERN
MASON MARON - ANNAS HUMMINGBIRD
ROBERT HAMILTON - ALLENS HUMMINGBIRD
TYLER FICKER - MOURNING DOVE
DON DANKO - ROCK PIGEON
MATT DAVIS - NORTHERN FLICKER
SCOTT MARTIN - DOWNY WOODPECKER
PAT HARE - BELTED KINGFISHER
BRIAN SULLIVAN - BLACK PHOEBE
SHARIF UDDIN - SAY'S PHOEBE
ILYA POVALYAEV - CALI SCRUB JAY
HENRY BURTON - AMERICAN CROW
DON ROBERSON - CALI TOWHEE
BRAD IMHOFF - SAVANNAH SPARROW
SCOTT MARTIN - LINCOLN'S SPARROW
MARK SMITH - GREAT BLUE HERON

RYAN SCHAIN - WHITE CROWNED SPARROW
DAVID M BELL - GOLDEN CROWNED SPARROW
RYAN SCHAIN - DARK EYED JUNCO
IAN DAVIES - RED WINGED BLACKBIRD
MATTHEW PENDLETON - BREWER'S BLACKBIRD
JACK & HOLLY BARTHOLMAI - BROWN HEADED COWBIRD
ALIX D ENTREMONT - WESTERN MEADOWLARK
TIM LENZ - HOODED ORIOLE
IAN ROUTLEY - AMERICAN GOLDFINCH
DORIAN ANDERSON - LESSER GOLDFINCH
JIM MERRITT - HOUSE FINCH
DREW WEBER - HOUSE SPARROW
EVAN LIPTON - COMMON RAVEN
JAY MCGOWAN - BARN SWALLOW
SETH AUSUBEL - CLIFF SWALLOW
MARTINA NORDSTRAND - TREE SWALLOW
MATT DAVIS - BUSHTIT
ERIC ELLINGSON - RUBY CROWNED KINGLET
RYAN SCHAIN - AMERICAN ROBIN
RYAN SCHAIN - EUROPEAN STARLING
GORDON DIMMIG - NORTHERN MOCKING BIRD
ANDREW SPENCER - COMMON YELLOWTHROAT
TAMMY MCQUADE - YELLOW RUMPED WARBLER

MADE POSSIBLE BY:



THANK YOU FOR
YOUR CONTINUED
SUPPORT!

