How to Identify Common Seattle Birds

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School: _____________________   Grade: _____City: ________________ Zip: __________

Parent Signature: __________________________

Where did you hear of Seattle Audubon before seeing this booklet? ________________

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Seattle Audubon Education
8050 35th Ave NE
Seattle, WA 98115

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Seattle is --

FOR THE BIRDS

How to Identify Common Seattle Birds

Seattle Audubon Society
for birds and nature
8050 35th Avenue NE
Seattle WA 98155
(206) 923-8243
www.seattleaudubon.org
We hope you will use this book to learn how to look at the birds all around us in a new light. Over a hundred different bird species share our great city. This book features some of the ones you are most likely to see. Can you find them all in your neighborhood and nearby parks?

Brought to you by:
The Seattle Audubon Society
and
Seattle Parks and Recreation

Concept used with permission from Adam Kent and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Adapted by Emily Sprong and Rachel Lawson Artwork by Kelley Palmer-McCarty With thanks to the Seattle Parks and Recreation Summer Day Camp Environmental Stewardship Task Force

Available for download at www.seattleaudubon.org - click on Education
The Featured Flock...

- **American Crow**
  - Habitat: everywhere

- **Barn Swallow**
  - Habitat: open areas, fields

- **American Robin**
  - Habitat: lawns, parks, woods

- **Steller’s Jay**
  - Habitat: forests, wooded parks

- **Belted Kingfisher (♀)**
  - Habitat: near water

- **Red-breasted Nuthatch**
  - Habitat: parks, gardens, woods

- **Glaucous-winged Gull**
  - Habitat: beaches, lakes, open areas, parking lots

- **Bushtit**
  - Habitat: everywhere

- **Mallard (♂)**
  - Habitat: wetlands, open water

Check the box beside each bird you have seen
How many of these have you seen?

**Northern Flicker** (♂)
Habitat: woods, parks, gardens

**Anna's Hummingbird** (♂)
Habitat: woods, parks, gardens

**Spotted Towhee**
Habitat: woods, parks, gardens

**Bewick's Wren**
Habitat: woods, parks, gardens

**American Coot**
Habitat: water

**European Starling**
Habitat: everywhere

**Killdeer**
Habitat: near water, gravel parking lots

**Great Blue Heron**
Habitat: near water, flying overhead

Create Your Own Bird
Now make up your own bird and draw it below. Be sure to describe its size, shape, field marks, habitat, behavior and song. What does it eat?

---

**your bird's name**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>size and shape</th>
<th>field marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>habitat</td>
<td>song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behavior</td>
<td>bill type / food</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Can you describe the size and shape of one bird?

bird name: ____________________________

size and shape: ________________________

Can you describe the field marks of one bird?

bird name: ____________________________

field marks: __________________________

Can you describe one bird’s bill and what it eats?

bird name: ____________________________

kind of bill: __________________________

food: _________________________________

Can you describe one behavior and a bird that does it?

bird name: ____________________________

behavior: _____________________________

Can you name one habitat and a bird that lives there?

bird name: ____________________________

habitat: ______________________________

Can you describe one bird’s voice?

bird name: ____________________________

voice: _______________________________
Bird Identification Clues
Use these important clues to identify a bird...

Clue 1: Body Type (Size & Shape)
Often the first thing you notice. Things to look at: Overall shape of the bird (fat, thin, tall, short); length of neck, legs, tail, bill; shape of tail, wings, bill, head

The Great Blue Heron is tall and thin. It has long legs, a long neck and a short tail.

The Glaucous-winged Gull has a wedge-shaped body and a round head.

The Bushtit is tiny with a round body, long tail and small, thin bill.

Can you think of the sizes and shapes of any other birds?

Bird Name: _____________________________________
Size and shape: _________________________________

Draw a Bird
Choose a bird from this book or another one you’ve seen, then draw it and fill out the information for it at the bottom of the page.

Bird’s name

Size and shape

Field marks

Habitat

Sound

Behavior

Bill type / food
Clue 2: Colors & Patterns (Field Marks)
Very important for identifying birds that are a similar size and shape. Things to look at: Overall colors, colors of the head, bill, wings, tail, back, breast, belly, legs, feet; patterns on the head, wings, tail, upper and under-parts.

The **White-crowned Sparrow** has a distinctive striped pattern on its head. Its undersides are clear gray with no streaks or spots.

The **American Goldfinch** (♂) is bright yellow with black wings and tail and a black forehead. Its wings have white bars.

The **Killdeer** has a brown back, white belly, and two distinctive black bands around its neck and breast. It also has a dark moustache stripe on its cheek.

Can you think of some field marks for other birds?

Bird Name: _______________________________ Field Marks: ______________________________

Where Are They Seen?
Draw a line from the bird to the kind of **HABITAT** where you'd expect to see it.

- at a bird feeder
- in an urban area
- in a park or lawn
- in the water
- in a wetland

Can you think of any other kinds of birds and their habitats?

Bird _____________________ Bird _____________________

Habitat__________________ Habitat__________________
Clue 3: Bill Types, Also Called Beaks

Bills help us identify birds and know something about what they eat.

The **Great Blue Heron**'s bill is long and pointed like a spear. It is good for catching fish.

The **Song Sparrow**'s bill is short, thick and pointed. It is good for cracking and eating seeds.

The **Bewick's Wren**'s bill is small and thin. It is good for eating insects.

The **Bald Eagle**'s bill is large and sharply hooked. It is good for tearing meat.

Can you think of any other kinds of bills and their uses?

Bird Name: ________________________________________

Bill description_____________________________________

Uses: _______________________________________________
Can You Describe Them?
**FACIAL FEATURES:** Draw a line from the drawing of the bird's head to its description, then to the bird's name.

- **White-crowned Sparrow**
  - yellow with black forehead

- **Red-breasted Nuthatch**
  - white chin, thick black eyestripe, white line over eye, & black cap

- **Anna's Hummingbird**
  - gray cheek with black stripe, then white stripe, then black, then white crown

- **Downy Woodpecker**
  - Shiny red scales on entire head with white eye-stripe

- **Glossy blue-black back of head, reddish-brown face

Can You Think of Another Kind of Behavior and Why a Bird Acts This Way?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bird Name</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anna's Hummingbird</td>
<td>hovers in front of flowers and sips nectar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double-crested Cormorant</td>
<td>often swims low in the water. It also sits in the sun with its wings spread.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spotted Towhee</td>
<td>hides in low bushes and underbrush. It looks for insects under leaves by kicking backwards with both feet at once.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Clue 4: How do they act?**

Does the bird walk or hop? Does it stand in the water, on a branch, or hold onto the side of a tree? Does it flap its wings a lot, a little, or almost never? Does it move its head, wings or tail in an unusual way? How does it get its food? Is it found in a group, a pair, or alone?

The **Double-crested Cormorant** often swims low in the water. It also sits in the sun with its wings spread.

The **Spotted Towhee** hides in low bushes and underbrush. It looks for insects under leaves by kicking backwards with both feet at once.

Can you think of another kind of behavior and why a bird acts this way?

Bird name: ___________ Behavior: ______________

Why do you think the bird does this? ____________________________
Clue 5: Where is it seen?
A habitat is where an animal is usually found. Did you see the bird in the woods, in a park, in the city or on the water?

**Parks, Lawns and Gardens**
- American Robin
- House Finch (♀)
- Red-winged Blackbird (♂)

**Wetlands**

**Open Water - lakes, ponds, Puget Sound**
- Mallard (♂)
- House Sparrow (♂)

**Urban Areas**

**Many Habitats**
- Glaucous-winged Gull
- American Crow
- European Starling

Can you think of another habitat and some birds that live there?
Habitat: ______________________________________
Birds: ________________________________________

DISTINCTIVE MARKS: Match the bird with the best description of its FIELD MARKS. You can use the index to look up birds you don’t know.

- **Song Sparrow**
  - dark brown body, white head and tail
- **Killdeer**
  - plain brown with white eyebrow
- **European Starling**
  - two black rings around neck and breast
- **Black-capped Chickadee**
  - blue with black head and breast
- **Steller’s Jay**
  - glossy black with light spots and yellow bill
- **Bald Eagle**
  - black crown and throat, white cheeks
- **Bewick’s Wren**
  - streaky brown
Clue 6: What kind of voice does it have?
Birds can make many different sounds. Some birds sound a little bit like they are saying something in English.

The Black-capped Chickadee calls its name.
chick - a - dee - dee - dee

The Killdeer usually says ‘k’dee’ but sometimes it whistles its name, ‘kill-deer.’

The White-crowned Sparrow says ‘See me pretty pretty me.’

If these translations don’t make sense to you, make up your own to help you remember what a bird sounds like. No matter what birds say, be sure to listen to them. You’ll soon find that you can recognize them just by their sounds.

Clue 7: Dressed like a Boy or Girl?
Male and female birds sometimes look different. The symbol ♀ is used for females and ♂ for males. Can you find a male and female of the same kind of bird somewhere in this book (there are two) and describe the differences?

Bird Name: _______________ Bird Name: _______________
Differences: _______________ Differences: _______________

Which Clues Fit These Birds?
BODY TYPE: Draw a line from the drawing of the bird to its description, and then draw a line from the description to its name.

large body, round head with short curled tail

very short neck, stiff tail, short legs

tiny, narrow wings and long thin bill

large and solid, upright posture with heavy bill

Downy Woodpecker (♂)

American Crow

Mallard (♀)

Anna’s Hummingbird (♂)

The Killdeer

k’deeee k’deeee k’deeee k’deeee

The White-crowned Sparrow

says ‘See me pretty pretty me.’

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Let’s Review the Clues
Look through the first part of this book to help you with these games.

**BODY TYPE:** Circle the word or words under the bird that best describes its size and shape

- Barn Swallow
- Belted Kingfisher
- American Coot

- tall
- long tail
- long legs

- long neck
- large head
- long legs

- medium-length neck
- short tail
- upright posture

**FIELD MARKS:** Cross out the word or words under the bird that ARE NOT good field marks.

- Northern Flicker
- Red-breasted Nuthatch
- Steller’s Jay

- moustache stripe
- short bill
- plain underside

- spotted belly
- streaked back
- black eyestripe

- crest on head
- black head
- white chin

What do they eat? What kind of food do you think a bird with a **BILL** like this would eat? Circle your answer.

- Bushtit
- Anna’s Hummingbird
- Belted Kingfisher

- meat
- insects
- flower nectar

- fish
- flower nectar
- seeds

- what do you think?

How do they act? Circle the best description of each bird’s **BEHAVIOR.**

- Downy Woodpecker
- Great Blue Heron
- American Coot

- swimming
- standing on one leg
- holding onto the side of a tree

- standing in water
- diving
- hopping on ground

- what do you think?

Where are they seen? Cross out the name of the bird that does not belong in each **HABITAT.**

**Urban**

- European Starling
- House Sparrow
- Spotted Towhee

**Lawn**

- American Crow
- Bald Eagle
- American Robin

**Open Water**

- American Coot
- Double-crested Cormorant
- Song Sparrow