

Think HABITAT first!

Think of **Habitats** as collections of plants that support predictable bird species. Birds require sources of:

- food,
- water,
- Cover and protection
- nesting materials
- nest sites.



Together, the **time of year and type of habitat** gives you strong predictability for a particular bird species within that geographic location.

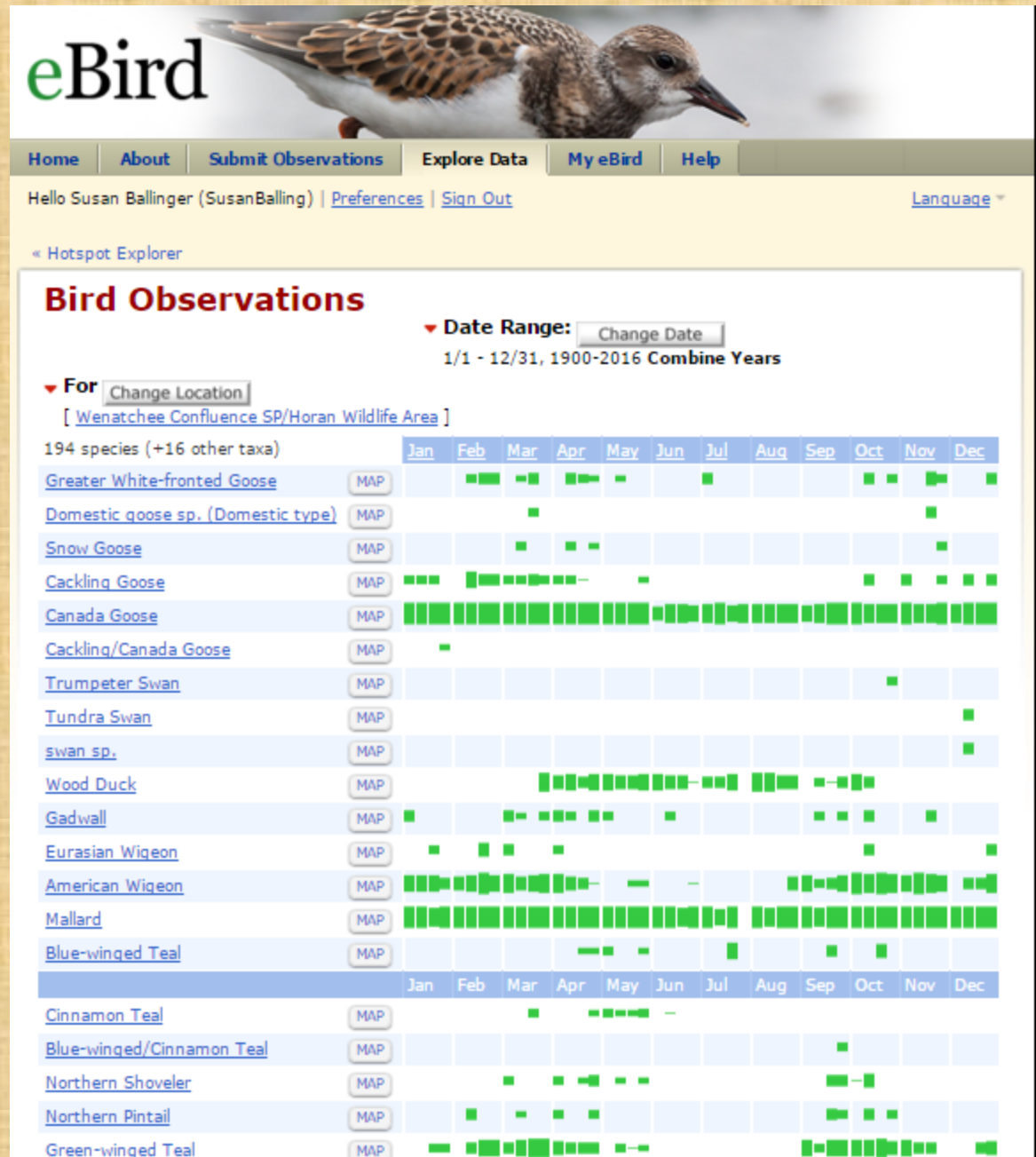
eBird

<http://ebird.org/ebird/hotspots>

Use eBird to view
barcharts, range maps,
and time period and
location for any species in
a given region

Example:
Wenatchee Confluence
State Park “hotspot”

[[Wenatchee
Confluence SP/Horan
Wildlife Area](#)]



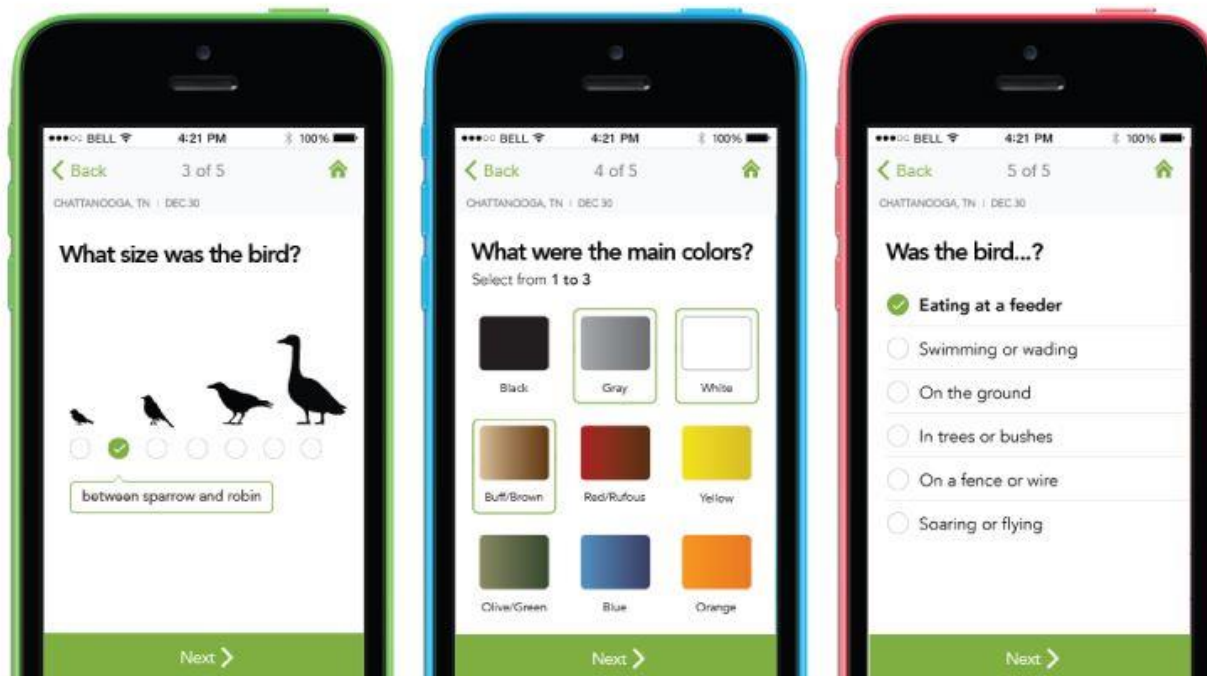
Download the Free
Merlin Bird ID App
Free, Instant Bird ID Help for 400 North American birds

Merlin[®]

- <http://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/>

Bird ID Wizard—Step-by-step

Answer five simple questions about a bird you are trying to identify and Merlin will come up with a list of possible matches. Merlin offers quick identification help for beginning and intermediate bird watchers to learn about North America's most common birds!



Building Skills: The 4 Keys to Bird Identification

To identify an unfamiliar bird, focus first on four keys to identification.

The **Cornell** Lab  of Ornithology



Put The 4 Keys Into Practice

Bird watchers can identify many species from just a quick look.

They're using the four keys to visual identification:

Size & Shape,

Color

Pattern,

Behavior,

Habitat.

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/building-skills-the-4-keys-to-bird-identification/>

Beginning Birdwatching: Bird ID Skills SILHOUETTE



Lower left to upper right:

California Condor

Golden Eagle

Turkey Vulture

Prairie Falcon

California Scrub Jay

Anna's Hummingbird

Bird ID Skills

SILHOUETTE

Head projection

Bill size

Leg size

Tail shape

Wing shape

Throat

Common
Raven



Photos: Lori Aylesworth

Bird ID Skills SILHOUETTE

COMPARE:

Crow Raven

Head projection

Tail shape

Bill size

Wing shape

Leg size

Throat

AMERICAN CROW
17.5 INCHES LONG
39 INCH WING SPAN



SMALLER BILLED
SHORT, SQUARED TAIL
STRAIGHT WINGS WITH LITTLE BENDING
ON LEADING OR TRAILING EDGE

COMMON RAVEN
24 INCHES LONG
58 INCH WINGSPAN



LARGER BILLED
LONGER NECKED
LONGER WEDGE SHAPED TAIL
'HANDS' MORE SWEEPED BACK



SHORTER, ROUNDED WINGS
WINGS SILENT IN FLIGHT
DOES NOT SOAR FOR EXTENDED PERIODS
DOES NOT SOMERSAULT IN FLIGHT



LONGER, MORE TAPERED WING TIPS
WINGS MAKE SWISH, SWISH SOUND
SOARS FOR EXTENDED PERIODS
CAN SOMERSAULT IN FLIGHT



THINNER, SHORTER LEGS
NO SHAGGY THROAT FEATHERS



STRONGER, LONGER LEGS
SHAGGY, ELONGATED POINTED NECK
FEATHERS

Beginning Birdwatching: Bird ID Skills SIZE COMPARISON



American robin

Compare size to a known
familiar bird:
Bigger than...smaller than

Sparrow
Robin
Crow
Goose



Golden-crowned sparrow



American crow



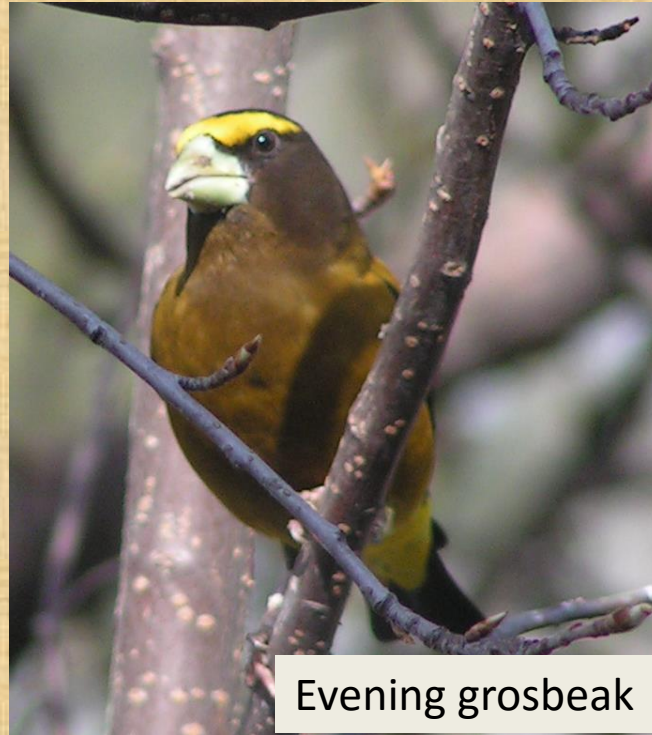
Canada geese

Bird ID Skills BILL SIZE & SHAPE

“nutcracker”



White-crowned sparrow



Evening grosbeak



Black-headed grosbeak



Dark-eyed junco



Cassin's finch

Photos: Lori Aylesworth

Seed cracker: short, thick conical for cracking open tough outer seed coats

Bird ID Skills BILL SIZE & SHAPE



California quail



Turkey



Sooty grouse

Seed-picker: short and thick, to pick up seeds and insects from the ground

Photos: Lori Aylesworth

Bird ID Skills BILL SIZE & SHAPE



Photo: Lori Aylesworth

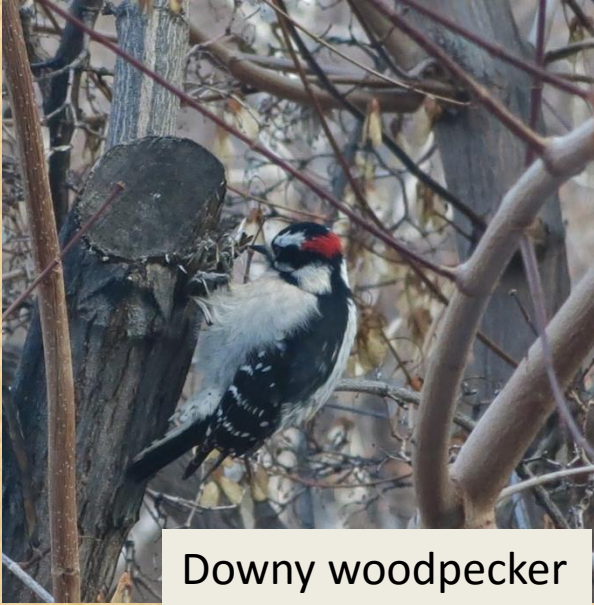


Photos: Susan Ballinger

Bald eagle, Great horned owl, American kestrel

Meat-tearer: sharp and hooked to rip meat; paired with talons on feet for killing prey

Beginning Birdwatching: Bird ID Skills BILL SIZE & SHAPE



Downy woodpecker



Williamson sapsucker



Chisel: long and sharp, for boring into wood, seeking insects



White-headed woodpecker

Bird ID Skills BILL SIZE & SHAPE



Barn swallow

net: small bill and wide mouth to catch insects on the wing



Say's phoebe



Violet-green swallow

Photos: Lori Aylesworth

Bird ID Skills BILL SIZE & SHAPE



Rufous hummingbird, juvenile

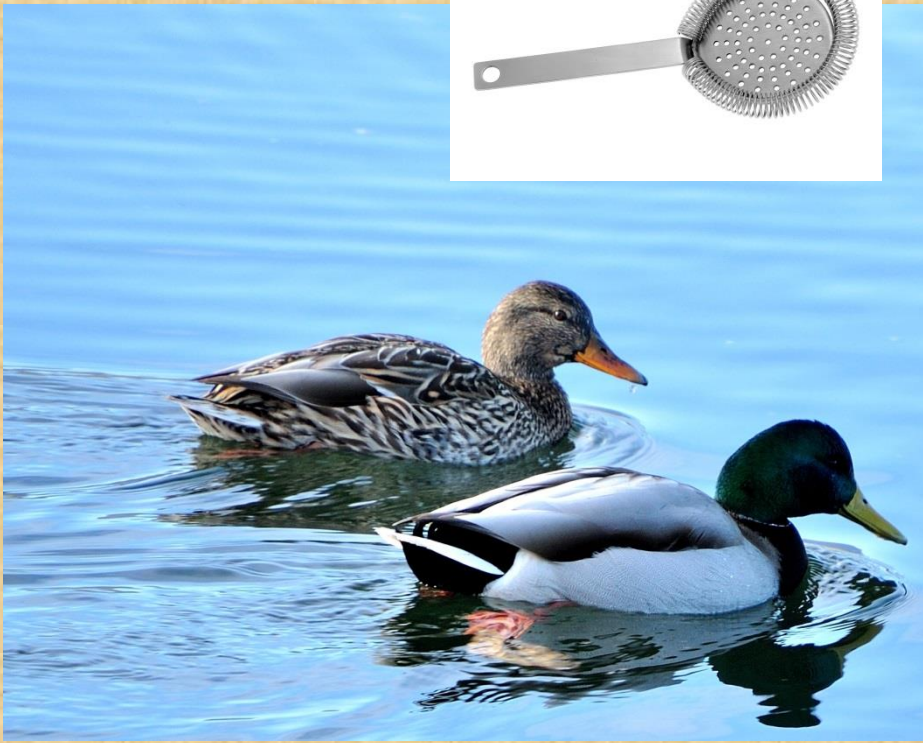
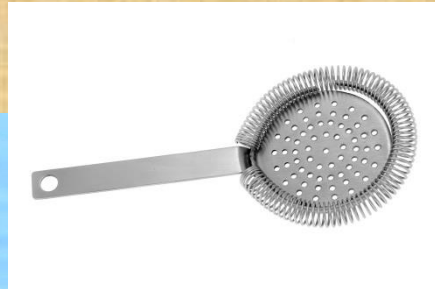
Photos: Lori Aylesworth



Rufous hummingbird

nectar-eater: long, slender, & tapering to probe into flowers

Bird ID Skills BILL SIZE & SHAPE



Mallard Photos: Gary Provo

**filter/strainer: aquatic plant & animal feeders with flat bills
edges are bumpy**

Bird ID Skills BILL SIZE & SHAPE



Belted kingfisher Photo: Rod Gilbert



Great Blue Heron Photo: Lori Aylesworth

spear: long and sharp, adapted for catching fish

Bird ID Skills BILL SIZE & SHAPE



Black-capped chickadee
Yellow-rumped warbler
Nashville warbler

Photos: Lori Aylesworth

tweezer: thin and pointed to probe for insects

Bird ID Skills BILL SIZE & SHAPE



American golden plover Ruddy turnstone



Pectoral sandpiper



European starling

Photo: Greg Lavety, Seattle Audubon Birdweb

prober: a variety of lengths to probe & to capture animal foods

Bird ID Skills BILL SIZE & SHAPE

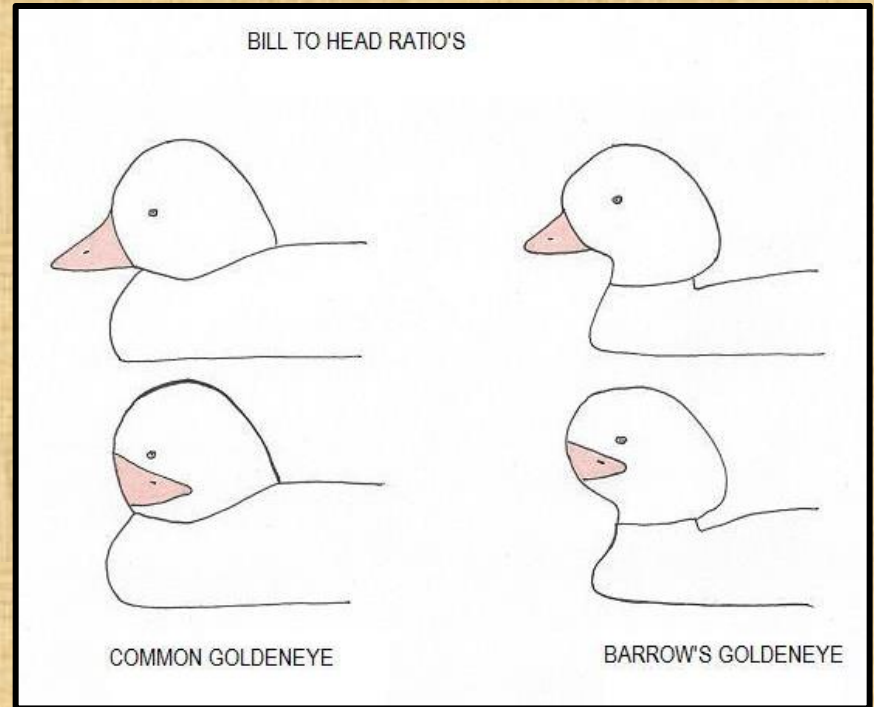


Steller's jay American Robin Photos: Lori Aylesworth

multi-purpose: thick and strong to allow a wide variety of foods

Bird ID Skills BODY PARTS PROPORTIONS

Photo: Gary Provo



How long is the bird's bill relative to the head: fold the bill backwards?

Bird ID Skills BODY PART PROPORTIONS

Left, Greater yellowlegs
Right, Lesser yellowlegs



Photo: Kevin Karlson
http://www.kevinkarlsonphotography.com/gallery/d/4466-3/Greater+_L_+Lesser+Yellowlegs_+juveniles_+NY_+Sept.jpg

© Kevin T. Karlson 2008

How does the bill length compare to the length of head

Bird ID Skills BODY PARTS PROPORTIONS



Canada geese Photo: Lori Aylesworth



Great Blue Heron photo Paul Ballinger

How long is the neck (in comparison to body or leg length?)

Bird ID Skills BODY PARTS MEASURED WITHIN THE BIRD



Great horned owl

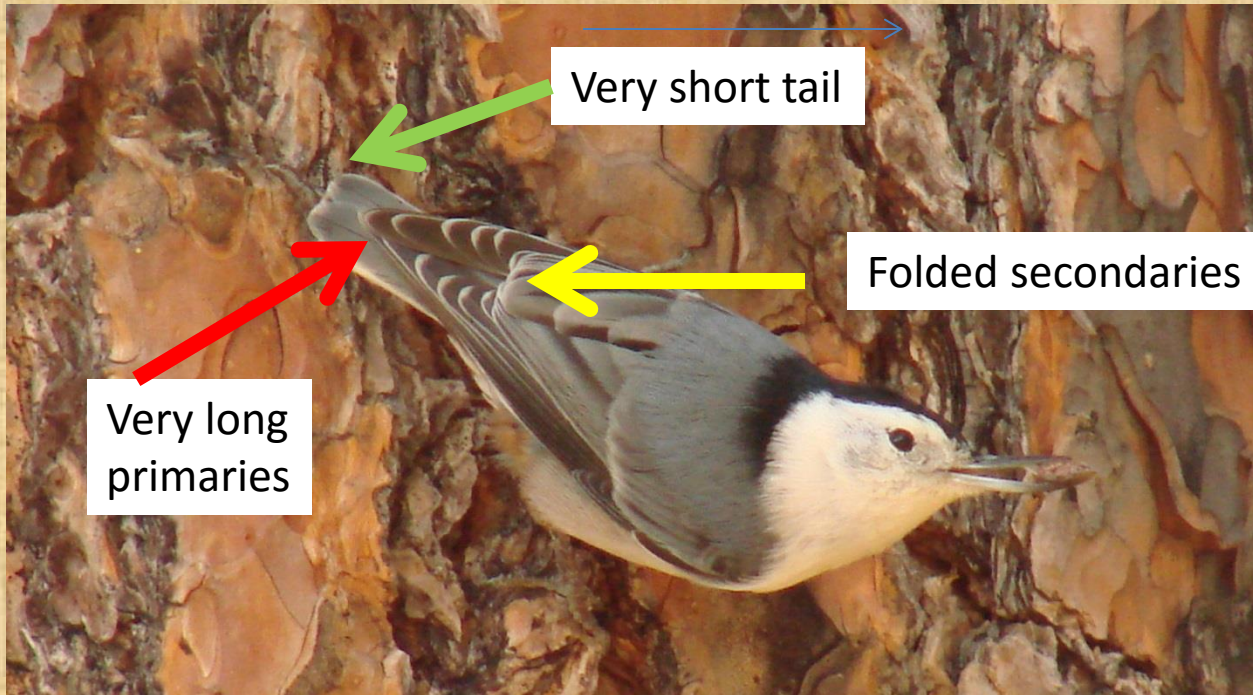


Steller's jay

Photos: Lori Aylesworth

How far does the tail extend beyond the body?

Bird ID Skills BODY PARTS MEASURED WITHIN THE BIRD



Tail Projection: how far past the primary wing feathers does the tail extend?

Primary Projection: how far past the secondary wing feathers do the primaries extend?

Bird ID Skills COLOR PATTERN

patterns of light and dark

Rod Gilbert <http://www.pbase.com/rodg>

Rod Gilbert <http://www.pbase.com/rodg>



Common merganser



Ducks Unlimited <http://www.ducks.org/hunting/waterfowl-id/common-merganser#ad-image-0>

PHOTO: MICHAEL FURTMAN.COM



Tom Gray, Seattle Audubon
<http://www.birdweb.org/birdweb>

Dark above, light below

“Counter-shading” - Defense against predators

Bird ID Skills COLOR PATTERN

patterns of light and dark



Common loon - molt patterns can drastically change looks



Common loon
Breeding plumage



Photos: Rod Gilbert <http://www.pbase.com/rodg>

Dark above, light below

Feathers can wear & fade

Bird ID Skills COLOR PATTERN

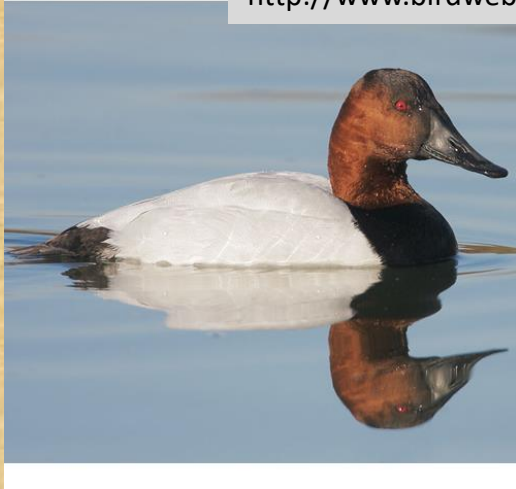
patterns of light and dark



Tom Grey Seattle Audubon
<http://www.birdweb.org/birdweb>



[tp://www.ducks.org/news-media/photogallery/wildlife/page/](http://www.ducks.org/news-media/photogallery/wildlife/page/)



Canvasback



Rod Gilbert <http://www.pbase.com/rodg>

Ends-capped with dark, light body

Bird ID Skills COLOR PATTERN

Patterns of light and dark



Dark-eyed Junco
Photo: Rod Gilbert



Clark's nutcracker
Photos: Lisa Robinson



Vesper sparrow

Photo: Greg Lavaty

<http://www.houstonaudubon.org/>

Outer tail feathers are white (notice when they fly away)

Bird ID Skills COLOR PATTERN

patterns of light and dark



White-headed woodpecker

Spotted towhee

White-crowned sparrow

photos: Lori Aylesworth

Bright patches of color in unique places

Bird ID Skills COLOR PATTERN BOLD & FAINT
Breast streaking: patterns of crisp and blurry



Cassin's finch, female



House finch, female

Photos: Lori Aylesworth

Bird ID Skills COLOR PATTERN BOLD & FAINT

Breast streaking: patterns of crisp and blurry



Photo: Greg Lavaty, Seattle Audubon Birdweb



Photo: Greg Thompson Seattle Audubon
Birdweb <http://www.birdweb.org/birdweb>

Bird ID Skills COLOR PATTERN

Photos:
Lori Aylesworth



Yellow-rumped warbler



Northern flicker



Red-breasted nuthatch



Black-headed grosbeak

Bright patches of color in unique places