

# What kind of bird is that...

When trying to identify a bird, the first things to look for are location and behavior. Is the bird up high making noise, or on the ground digging in leaves? Next, think about size and shape. Is it big like a crow or small like a sparrow? Does it have pointy wings or a long tail? Finally, you can use field marks to identify birds – flip to the side panel to discover how.

Circle the birds you find on your hike today!

## in the trees?

Many birds use trees and shrubs for food, shelter, or nesting. Woodpeckers and chickadees make their nests in the cavities of trees and pick insects from the bark. Trees can provide seeds and berries for birds such as cardinals and goldfinches to eat. **Look into the trees.** How many different birds can you find? \_\_\_\_ What parts of the tree are the birds using? \_\_\_\_\_



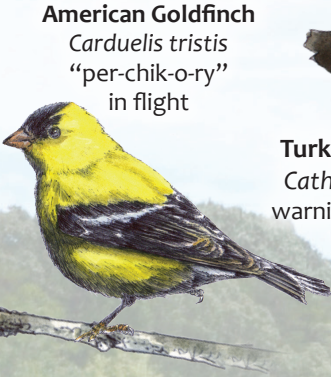
Black-capped Chickadee  
*Poecile atricapillus*  
“chickadeedeedee”



Downy Woodpecker  
*Picoides pubescens*  
“Pik, pik, pik”



Northern Cardinal  
*Cardinalis cardinalis*  
whistles “woit woit  
chew chew chew.”



American Goldfinch  
*Carduelis tristis*  
“per-chik-o-ry”  
in flight



Turkey Vulture  
*Cathartes aura*  
warning “hsssss”



Red-tailed Hawk  
*Buteo jamaicensis*  
“keeee-arr” raspy scream



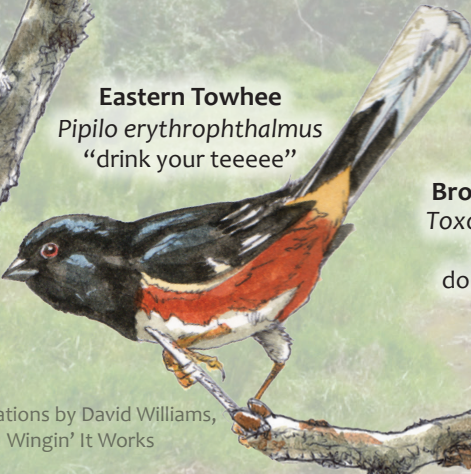
Bald Eagle  
*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*  
high-pitched scream

## on the ground?

Birds that feed on the ground usually specialize in catching bugs or finding seeds. American Robins use their beaks to pull earthworms from the ground. Towhees scratch through leaves to uncover fallen seeds and berries. Thrashers sweep their bills sideways through leaf litter and soil to collect insects. **Check the ground near trail, stream and field edges.** How many different birds can you find? \_\_\_\_ Can you tell what they are eating? \_\_\_\_\_



American Robin  
*Turdus migratorius*  
“plurri, kliwi,  
plurri, kliwi”



Eastern Towhee  
*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*  
“drink your teeeee”



Brown Thrasher  
*Toxostoma rufum*  
series of  
double phrases



Red-winged Blackbird  
*Agelaius phoeniceus*  
“conk-la-ree”



Wild Turkey  
*Meleagris gallopavo*  
“gobble gobble gobble”

## in the air?

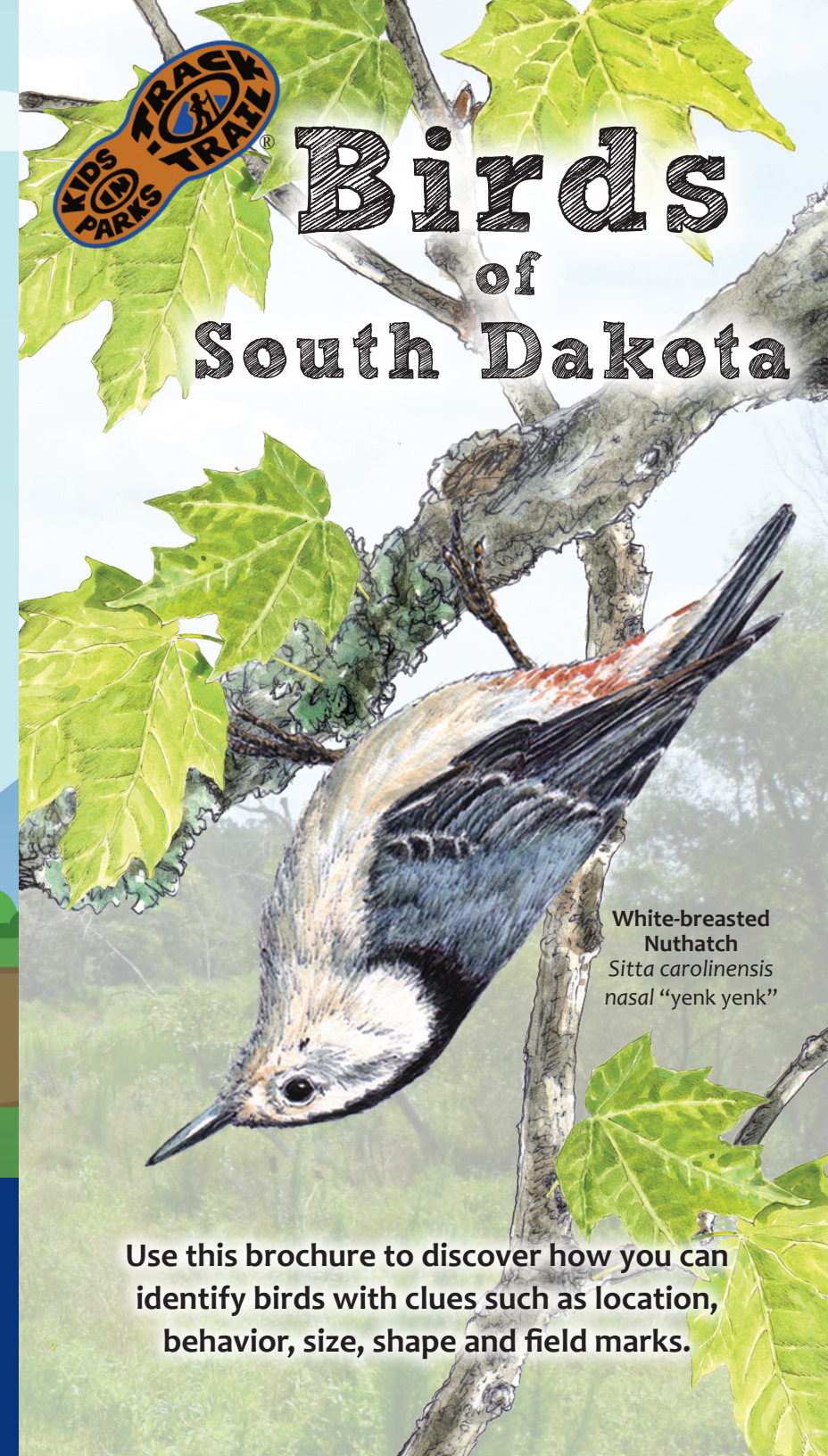
Birds that spend a lot of time in the air use their strong eyesight to find food. Hawks, eagles and vultures can usually be found perched or circling up high as they search for their next meal. **Scan the sky over fields and through openings in the trees.** Are there any large birds flying overhead? \_\_\_\_ Are they flapping or gliding? \_\_\_\_\_

## making noise?

Birds make all kinds of noises – some sing to attract a mate, while others will call attention to food, danger or territory. Red-winged Blackbirds are known for their loud, rattling song. Male wild turkeys will gobble to let hens know they are in the area. **Close your eyes and listen for one minute.** How many different birds can you hear around you? \_\_\_\_\_



# Birds of South Dakota



**White-breasted Nuthatch**  
*Sitta carolinensis*  
nasal "yenk yenk"

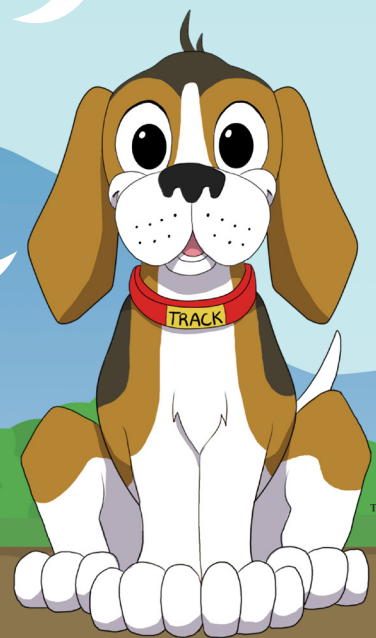
Use this brochure to discover how you can identify birds with clues such as location, behavior, size, shape and field marks.

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## Field Marks

In addition to size, shape, location and behavior, field marks can be used to help identify birds. If you can't identify a bird on your hike, remembering what certain parts of the bird looked like can help you identify it when you get home. On your birding adventure, try to find a bird you don't know and see if it has any of the following field marks:

☐ **wing bars**  
Does the bird have wing bars or patches?

☐ **nape**  
Is the bird's nape a different color?

☐ **crown**  
Does the bird have a colored "cap" or a crest on its head?

☐ **eyestripe**  
Does the bird have a stripe through the eye?

☐ **eyebrow**  
Does the bird have an eyebrow? What color?

☐ **tail bars**  
Are there any stripes across the bird's tail?

☐ **tail markings**  
Does the bird have white edges on its tail or a different color on the tip?

☐ **belly**  
What color is the bird's belly?

☐ **side**  
Does the bird have coloring on the sides?

☐ **breast**  
Does the breast have speckles or bands of color?

☐ **throat**  
Is the bird's throat a different color?

☐ **beak or bill**  
What shape and color are the beak?

**Blue Jay**  
*Cyanocitta cristata*  
harsh "jayy"