



# Birds of Lakes and Rivers



Great Blue Heron  
*Ardea herodias*  
hoarse "fraawnk"

Whether perching along the banks, wading in the shallows, flying overhead, or diving in open water, many types of birds specialize in a life on or near the water. Use this brochure to see how many birds you can find on your hike today.

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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?

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

**nape**  
Is the back of the bird's neck a different color?

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

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

**eyestripe**  
Does the bird have a stripe or ring around the eye?

**beak**  
What shape and color are the beak?

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

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

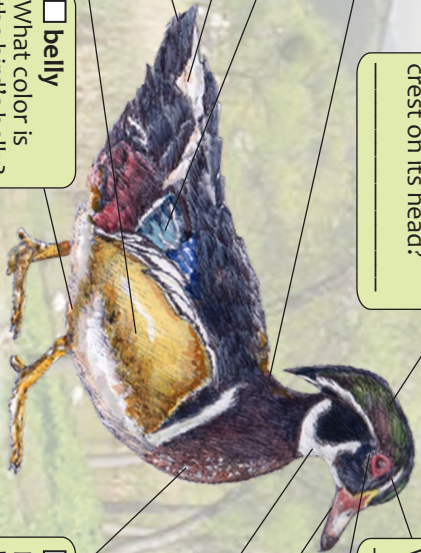
**belly**  
What color is the bird's belly?

**Wood Duck**  
Aix sponsa  
squeaks "ooEEK ooEEK"

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

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

Aix sponsa  
squeaks "ooEEK ooEEK"



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# 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 hovering up high over the water, or wading in the shallows? Next, think about size and shape. Is it big like an eagle, or small like a swallow? 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.

**Check off each bird you find on your hike today!**

## in the trees and shrubs?

Almost all birds found around the water use trees and shrubs for feeding, shelter, or nesting. Red-winged blackbirds and tree swallows nest in the trees and shrubs and feed on the abundant insects near the water. Belted kingfishers perch on branches over the water and dive for small fish. **Look into the trees and shrubs along the banks. How many different birds can you find?** \_\_\_\_\_



**Red-winged Blackbird**  
*Agelaius phoeniceus*  
trills “kon-ka-reee”

**Tree Swallow**  
*Tachycineta bicolor*  
high-pitched chirps  
and gurgles

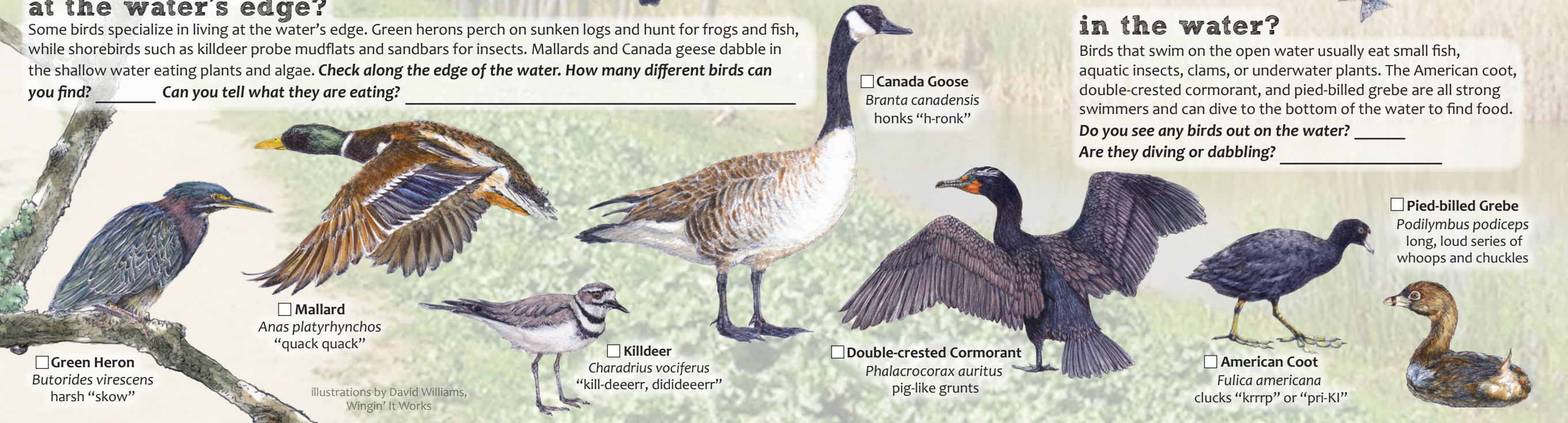
**Belted Kingfisher**  
*Megasceryle alcyon*  
long, mechanical rattle

**Osprey**  
*Pandion haliaetus*  
whistles “cheerp,  
cheerp, cheeyee-urp”

**Bald Eagle**  
*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*  
weak, chattering whistle

## at the water's edge?

Some birds specialize in living at the water's edge. Green herons perch on sunken logs and hunt for frogs and fish, while shorebirds such as killdeer probe mudflats and sandbars for insects. Mallards and Canada geese dabble in the shallow water eating plants and algae. **Check along the edge of the water. How many different birds can you find?** \_\_\_\_\_ **Can you tell what they are eating?** \_\_\_\_\_



**Green Heron**  
*Butorides virescens*  
harsh “skow”

**Mallard**  
*Anas platyrhynchos*  
“quack quack”

**Killdeer**  
*Charadrius vociferus*  
“kill-deeerr, didideeerr”

**Double-crested Cormorant**  
*Phalacrocorax auritus*  
pig-like grunts

**American Coot**  
*Fulica americana*  
clucks “krrrrp” or “pri-KI”

illustrations by David Williams,  
Wingin' It Works

## in the air?

Birds that spend a lot of time in the air use their strong eyesight to find food. Bald eagles and osprey can usually be found perched or hovering high over the water looking for fish. **Scan the sky over the water and above the trees. Are there any large birds flying overhead?** \_\_\_\_\_ **Are they circling or hovering?** \_\_\_\_\_



**Osprey**  
*Pandion haliaetus*  
whistles “cheerp,  
cheerp, cheeyee-urp”

**Bald Eagle**  
*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*  
weak, chattering whistle

## in the water?

Birds that swim on the open water usually eat small fish, aquatic insects, clams, or underwater plants. The American coot, double-crested cormorant, and pied-billed grebe are all strong swimmers and can dive to the bottom of the water to find food. **Do you see any birds out on the water?** \_\_\_\_\_ **Are they diving or dabbling?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pied-billed Grebe**  
*Podilymbus podiceps*  
long, loud series of  
whoops and chuckles