

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 in the field, 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:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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


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

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

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

☐ **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?



Blue Jay
Cyanocitta cristata
harsh "jay"

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Birds

of the Greater Washington, DC Area National Parks



Northern Flicker
Colaptes auratus
"kwikwikwikwik"

Depending on the season, over 130 species of birds can be found in the Greater Washington, DC Area National Parks. Use this brochure to discover how you can identify birds with clues such as location, behavior, size, shape and field marks.

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 back panel to discover how.

Circle the birds you find on your hike today!

in the trees?

Almost all the birds of the DC Region 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? ____**



Carolina Chickadee
Poecile carolinensis
"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

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. Juncos and towhees scratch through leaves to uncover fallen seeds and berries. Mourning doves peck insects and seeds from gravelly areas. **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"

Dark-eyed Junco
Junco hyemalis
short, musical trill



Mourning Dove
Zenaidura macroura
mournful "ooAAH
coo coo coo"

making noise?

Birds make all kinds of noises – some sing to attract a mate, while others will call attention to food, danger or territory. Carolina wrens are known for their loud, cheerful song and chattering sounds. Northern mockingbirds can imitate hundreds of different sounds, and will sometimes sing at night! **Close your eyes and listen for one minute. How many different birds can you hear around you? ____**



Turkey Vulture
Cathartes aura
warning "hsssss"



Red-tailed Hawk
Buteo jamaicensis
"chewwww" raspy scream



American Crow
Corvus brachyrhynchos
"caww caww"



Northern Mockingbird
Mimus polyglottos
varied phrases "krrDEE krrDEE
krrDEE, jeurrdi jeurrdi"



Carolina Wren
Thryothorus ludovicianus
varied "pidaro pidaro pidaro"



illustrations by David Williams, Wingin' It Works