

BIRDING FOR BEGINNERS



HOW TO OBSERVE FOR IDENTIFICATION

- Size--compare relative to a known bird: Robin, Crow, Chickadee, etc.
- Overall shape--is it slender, plump? What is the length of tail and wings relative to the body?
- Color--above and below; this is not always a reliable clue, as it often varies with the season and light.
- Field marks--look for wing bars (one or two or none), an eye stripe or eye ring, whether the breast is streaked or unstreaked, if there is any tail pattern or rump color.
- Bill shape and length--is it conical, needle-like, heavy and pointed, hooked?
- Habitat--is the bird in the woods (deciduous or conifers), shrubs, open fields, wet or dry area?
- Location--within its habitat, is the bird on or near the ground, at shrub height, or in the tree canopy?
- Behavior--how is the bird feeding? Moving through the foliage gleaning insects and eggs; perched in the open looking for flying insects or down for prey; picking and scratching through leaves and litter; moving along a tree trunk or branches?