

# **CONTENTS FOR NORTH AMERICAN WILD BIRDS**

North American Wild Birds is a database and identification program designed to enable a user to easily display birds found in their particular region.

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## **About Birding**

Birding has become one of the most popular wildlife related leisure activities in North America. Its popularity is due to the fact that it can be pursued by the young and old through all the seasons, and requires only a minimum of equipment. One can take a casual interest maintaining a backyard feeder, to constructing an elaborate blind to study birds of prey. In all cases, birds provide a lifetime of challenge and enjoyment in the quest to identify them.

## **About North American Wild Birds**

North American Wild Birds (NAWB) is an educational reference program designed to help bird enthusiasts quickly sort through the many species of birds in their area. This is accomplished by allowing users to perform searches based on the state or province they live in, thereby reducing the number of birds to look at.

Where most reference books list birds in one specific order, NAWB allows the user to perform searches in many ways. Birds can be searched alphabetically, by general type, by family, by field mark and by season. This search is then filtered by the birds in the state or province that meets the selected criteria. NAWB also includes a Custom Region Editor that allows users to define their own regions or modify the ones given.

Once a bird has been selected other features become available. The program contains over 500 high resolution images and 135 bird songs that can be heard if the computer system has a sound board and speakers. A brief description of field marks, preferred nesting and habitat is given for most species. Abundance and breeding status is given for each season. If further information is required, the program will show a cross-reference page number to a reference book of your choice. NAWB includes a Reference Book Editor that allows one to edit book cross-references.

NAWB is not designed to identify every bird that you may see in the field. For each species there may be variations in plumage based on sex age and season. However the program provides a starting point by narrowing down choices to a manageable number of species, and allowing quick comparisons between species.

## Quick Start

Perform the following steps to initiate a search for a group of birds.

- Select a region from the top region menu.
- Click the **Options** button and ensure that all seasons are checked on.
- Click the **Type** button and choose which type of bird you wish to search for.
- For an alphabetical or song list search, bird names will appear in the list box.
- Click on a bird name to view the picture and receive information.
- For other searches a **Field Mark Window** will open.
- Select one or two marks and click the search button. A list of birds will appear.
- Click on a bird name to view the picture and receive information.

## **Search and Display Screen**

### Status and Abundance Definitions

This is the main screen used in the program. From here searches can be initiated and the bird information can be viewed. The screen consists of the following components:

#### **Picture Window**

The top left window is the picture window. All bird images will be viewed here. If a picture is not available, a cross-reference page number will be shown. If there is more than one image to view an arrow will appear that when clicked on cycles to the next picture. If the bird has a song associated with it, a song button will appear that when clicked on will play a short song through the system speakers.

#### **Search List Box**

The bottom left window is the bird list box. This will show a list of birds after a search is completed. Clicking on a bird in the list will bring up information on that bird.

#### **Data Window**

The top right window is the Data Window. After a bird has been chosen the type of information shown here depends on which mode is selected. If **status** is selected then information on family, size, abundance and breeding status is given. If **data** is selected information on description, habitat and nesting is given.

#### **Search Controls**

Search Type box displays the general type of bird being searched for.

Search Region box displays the region being searched.

# of Matches box displays the number of birds that matched the search conditions.

Search Button initiates a search. A region and bird type must be defined first.

Type Button selects the type of bird to be searched for.

Option Button opens the General Options screen for search settings.

Marks Button brings back the last field mark screen.

## **Field Mark Screens**

The field mark screens allow you to begin a search for a bird with specific characteristics. Select one or more features from the pop-ups, then click the search button. You will return to the Search and Display Screen to see the results of your search. To change the search parameters click on the Marks button to return to the Field Mark Screen. It is best to enter one or two characteristics as this will usually bring up a list small enough to browse through. The Clear Button will reset any field mark entries while the Close Button closes the window. Some screens will only let you choose between several bird families. Because the numbers of birds in these groups are so small it is easier to bring them all up in a list and browse through them.

## **Songbird Search Screen**

### Color Entries

### Field Mark Entries

Due to the fact that songbirds comprise the largest group of birds the search screen for them is the most complex. There are two main sections for search criteria. The top section allows you to enter colors for various parts of the bird. The bottom section lets you select various field marks. One box will let you enter a size while another lets you specify a particular family. The list of families is confined to those that have a greater number of species than average.

The best procedure is to enter your most positive color or mark then make a search. Sometimes one or two entries will narrow the list to one bird. If the list is too long enter the next best color or mark. Repeat until the list is small enough to easily browse through. If your entries results in no match then it is possible that that the bird does not yet exist in the database, or the colors stored in the database do not match your entry. Immatures, some females, and seasonal plumages are not yet represented. Adult birds in breeding plumage comprise the majority of the entries.

## Songbird Color Entries

### Color Definitions

Colors can be entered for upperparts, underparts, and the head. For upperparts and underparts it is possible to enter a dominant color. This should only be entered if one color represents greater than 75% of the upper or lower area. If a dominant color is entered, a color entry is made for other parts in that section only if it is different from the dominant color.

#### Example 1

A crow would have a Dominant Upper and Dominant Lower entry of black. You would not enter black for any other body part.

#### Example 2

The Eastern Bluebird would have blue as the Dominant Upper entry. You would not enter blue under the wings or back. The Dominant Under color would be rusty. You would not enter rusty under the breast. You could enter white for the belly as this is a different color from the Dominant Under.

It is not always necessary to enter a dominant upper or lower color. Where there is no clear dominant color fill in the appropriate body part color. It is not necessary to fill in the color of every part. In fact too much detail could lead to no matches. Only the most prominent marks and colors are entered in the database. Therefore if a bird has gray undertail coverts it will not be entered in the database unless it is very conspicuous or is a critical field mark identifier.

## Songbird Field Marks

### Head Marks

### Body Details

You can select either **Yes** or **No** for any field mark. As an example you could search for all birds that have streaked underparts and no wing bars. The following is a definition of each field mark.

Head Stripes can be either bold white stripes or a thin center stripe.

Eyebrow is a broad stripe over the eye.

Eyestripe is a thin stripe passing through the eye.

Eye Ring is a ring around the eye in a contrasting color.

Eye Patch is a small patch of color around the eye. Smaller than a mask.

Mask is a broad patch of color similar to a mask over the face.

Wing Patch is a large spot of color on the wing.

Wing Bars are one or two thin bars on the wings.

Crest are feathers on the crown giving it a peaked appearance.

Necklace is a ring of color around the neck or a breast band.

Chest Spot is a dark spot on the breast.

Streaked Upper is streaking or barring on the upperparts.

Streaked Lower is streaking or barring on the underparts.

Tail Edging is a white edge trim on the tail.

Spectacles are a combination of an eyestripe and eyering giving the appearance of spectacles.

To become familiar with each field mark perform random searches with each one and observe the picture to locate the mark. Field marks are very important when trying to identify a species. Notice whether a bird has solid colors or streaked. Are there wing bars on the wings? What sort of details are there on the head? One or two good marks can narrow the list quickly.

## **Color Definitions**

The colors given are general and can represent the following:

**Black** can be black, slate or dusky.

**Blue** is light blue or dark blue.

**Brown** is light brown, sandy, brown, and dark brown.

**Buff** is yellowish-brown or tawny.

**Gray** is light gray, gray, or dark gray.

**Green** is light green, green, and dark green.

**Olive** is greenish-yellow and olive.

**Orange** is orange.

**Purple** is purple.

**Red** is pink, red, rose, dark red.

**Rusty** is reddish-brown, rusty, and chestnut.

**White** is creamy, white, or dull white.

**Yellow** is light yellow or yellow.

Entering colors can be difficult. There may be times when you do not get a match even though you think you have the correct color. Some colors change under certain light conditions or a borderline color is entered differently in the database. One persons olive may be another persons yellow. I have tried to be consistent with color entries based on what is given in standard field guides. For difficult colors it may be wise to perform more than one search trying different colors. Close colors are:

Green and Olive.

Buff and Yellow.

Brown and Rusty.

White and Gray.

## **Options Screen**

This screen is used to set several options when making searches.

The Seasons check boxes will limit your search to whatever seasons are selected. The search data for winter birds is taken for January and February sightings only. Migration may be either spring or fall. To simplify searches there is an option to ignore very rare species or vagrants.

The Measurement Option decides whether size descriptions are in metric or imperial units.

## **Status and Abundance Definitions**

### **Status**

Breeder is a bird with confirmed nesting and breeding.

Permanent is a bird found during all seasons.

Vagrant is a bird occurring outside its established range during migration.

Transient is a bird occurring within its established range during migration.

### **Abundance**

The abundance codes are a subjective appraisal that represents the number of individual birds of each species that can be encountered by a diligent, experienced birding party within the species range and preferred major habitat type. The concept of habitat is important. A species may be classified as common for a particular habitat even though that habitat may only occupy a small portion of the total area of the state or province. The abundance codes should only be used to compare the relative abundance of species within the same habitat type because the different habitat types occupy different proportions of any given state or province.

Abundant is a few birds > 90% of days or many birds >50% of days.

Common is a few birds 50-90% of days or many birds 10-50% of days.

Uncommon is a few birds 10-50% of days or many birds <10% of days.

Rare is a few birds <10% of days.

Very Rare is 10 or fewer records for that season.

## **File Menu**

### **Save Settings**

Clicking here will save the region, search settings, and reference book to a file, and loaded during program startup.

### **Exit**

Exits the program.

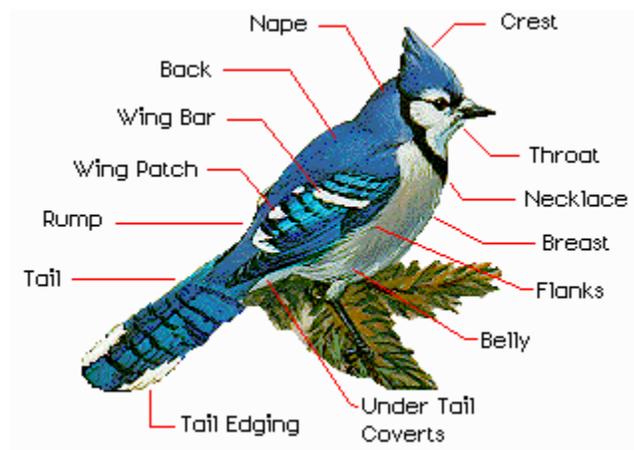
## **Menu-Region**

This menu lets you select which region a search will be limited to. Regions are not applicable during alphabetical searches.

## **Custom Regions**

Selecting this will let you open a custom region. This must have been previously created with the Custom Region Editor included with this program.

## Body Details



## Head Details



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## **Reference Menu**

Reference book information can be entered using the Reference Book Editor utility supplied with the registered version of the program.

### **Current**

This will bring up the list of books that can be used as a cross-reference, and allows one to be selected as the default for the program.

### **Show All**

Shows cross-reference page information for the selected bird.

