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Steller's Jay
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Trumpeter Swan
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Common Loon

Habitat - In summer this large, familiar waterbird breeds on islands and shores of lakes, and sometimes ponds, that are usually larger than ten acres (four hectares) in size. Occasionally it can be heard in backwaters of clear, sluggish rivers.

Identification - It is about the size of a goose and sits low in the water. Sexes are alike in breeding plumage. The black head and pointed bill, white necklace, white checkered back, and snow white breast and belly are the best field marks.

Voice - Can be heard throughout the day in summer; rarely heard in winter. There are four kinds of common sounds or calls:

(1) Tremolo - the well known loon's "laughter" which consists of three to eight or ten notes uttered rapidly either as a medium or high-pitched tremolo.

(2) Yodel - a variation of "a-a-who-quee-quee-whe oooo-quee" repeated five or six times, the pitch rising on the "who" and undulating on the rest.

(3) Wail - a long call sounding like "ahaa-ooo-oooo oooo-ooo-ahh" with a rise, then a fall in pitch in the long middle syllables.

(4) Talking - simple, one-syllable notes used to talk to each other. It sounds like a "kuk" or "kwuck".

Range - Breeds across most of northern North America, except the high Arctic, south to the northern United States.

Morsels - Folktales about loons abound in the cultures of many people. A favorite involves a miracle performed by a loon to restore the sight of a blind boy. The loon apparently carries the blind boy on its back to the bottom of the lake, again and again, until his eyes are clear. In thanks, the medicine man throws his magic necklace of white dentalium shells over the loon's head. As it falls over the neck of the bird it becomes what we see today as the loon's necklace.

Pied-billed Grebe

Habitat - In summer, this common but solitary grebe frequents lakes, ponds, and slow moving streams wherever cattails, bulrushes, and pond lilies are plentiful. It is seldom found on salt water.

Identification - It is somewhat smaller than a crow with a stocky body, a short neck, and a fluffy white rear. In summer, the white, stubby, chicken-like bill, encircled by a broad black band, and the black throat patch are good field marks. Sexes are alike in summer.

Voice - In the breeding season, the male Pied-billed Grebe often calls all day long, even at night, its voice ringing across the marsh. Its voice sounds like a series of hollow "cow-cow-cow's" repeated and increasing in speed, usually ending with "cow-ah-cow-ah". The entire repertoire might sound like "oo-o- o-ah-ah-eh-i-ay-eee- eeto-eeto- eeto-eeto ayto ayto yto ah ih oh oo oo oo". It also makes a "whinny" sound and utters a single mellow note.

Range - It breeds throughout most of North America from central Canada and the maritime provinces south.

Morsels - When disturbed, the Pied-billed Grebe can sink slowly beneath the surface of the water leaving scarcely a ripple. Now you see it, now you don't! It does this by expelling air from its lungs and feathers which lowers its specific gravity. Grebes carry their young on their backs, and when alarmed, actually dive under the water taking their young along with them.

American Bittern

Habitat - In summer, this small heron can be found in fresh or brackish marshes and marshy lakes, especially where cattails and bulrushes occur. Often the vegetation is so dense that it makes the area inaccessible to humans.

Identification - It is quite secretive and difficult to spot and is usually heard before it is seen. It is about the size of a small goose and has streaked, rich-brown plumage, a long neck, and a long, pointed bill. Look for the black neck stripe on each side of its neck and, in flight, the dark flight feathers. Sexes are alike.

Voice - It is usually silent. In the breeding season, however, it makes a loud, resounding, guttural "pump-per-lunk" or "oonk-ka choonk" repeated up to five times as it gulps air and forces it over its bulging esophagus. It is most often heard in the evening. When flushed, it often makes a series of low "kok-kok-kok" calls or a single, loud "kwok" or "croak".

Range - Widespread; breeds from central Canada and the maritime provinces south to the southern United States. It is migratory in the North.

Morsels - To hide, the American Bittern stands motionless amongst the cattails, its bill pointing straight up, and blends perfectly into the surrounding marsh. To complete the camouflage, it will even sway with the vegetation as the plants move in the wind.

Great Blue Heron

Habitat - In summer, our largest and most common heron, feeds in both fresh and salt areas with open shallow water such as lakes, ponds, marshes, mud, tidal, and sandflats, bays, and lagoons. It nests in small to large colonies usually in deciduous, coniferous, or mixed forests, often some distance from their feeding areas.

Identification - A tall (up to four feet [1.2 meters]), long-legged bird with a large, gray-blue body and long, gray neck with a white, frontal stripe. The whiteish head with its long, yellow bill has a black streak over each eye that extends into plumes at the back of the head. Unlike cranes, with which it is often mistaken, the Great Blue Heron flies with its neck tucked back onto its shoulders and with slow, labored wingbeats.

Voice - Although it is usually silent, it often utters a harsh, low, "kraak", "krwaak", or "kwaaark" sound, even in flight. When disturbed, especially at the breeding colonies, it makes a variety of squawks and croaks some that sound like "frawnk".

Range - Widespread in North America except in tundra and boreal forest areas in the far north. It is migratory where ice forms in winter.

Morsels - The Great Blue Heron can often be seen standing alone and motionless in the shallows waiting for a fish or other prey to move within striking distance. Then with a lightning thrust of the neck it catches the prey in its bill and swallows it whole; large prey will be speared. In southern Florida, it can be found as a pure white race known as the "Great White Heron."

Tundra Swan

Habitat - This, the most common of the North American swans, breeds in open tundra ponds, lakes, slow moving streams, and occasionally bogs in the high Arctic. It winters on fresh water marshes, lakes and rivers, as well as reservoirs and flooded fields.

Identification - It is a medium-size, all-white swan with black bill and feet. Occasionally a rust-colored stain can be seen on the head and neck. Usually the bill has a small yellow spot just in front of each eye, but it may be absent. The bill is slightly concave on the upper surface, unlike the straight bill of the Trumpeter Swan. Sexes are similar in appearance.

Voice - A mellow, high-pitched, whooping or yodeling, "hoo-ho-hoo" or "wow-wow-ow", more goose-like than crane-like. It is most often heard, up to distances of four miles (6.5 kilometers) away, while in migration or at staging areas in the interior of the continent when the Tundra Swan is most vocal.

Range - Breeds mainly in Arctic North America including Alaska and Canada and spends the winter along the Pacific coast from southern British Columbia to southern California and in parts of the mid Atlantic coast. Some birds are also present in winter in the marshes of southern New Mexico and western Texas.

Morsels - There may be more truth than legend to the "Swan Song". More than one observer has heard dying Tundra Swans utter a "song" unlike that of any normal call, although one observer thought the vocalizations that precede a Tundra Swan's takeoff, "one of the most beautiful utterances of waterfowl--a melodious, soft, muted series of notes," is likely the swan song of legend.

Trumpeter Swan

Habitat - In summer this swan, the largest waterfowl in the world, breeds on lakes, ponds and marshes, and quiet flowing rivers where reedy margins and reed beds occur. Sometimes it breeds in open tundra situations. It is found in winter in sheltered bays, estuaries, and farmland.

Identification - It is a large, all-white swan with black bill and feet. The bill lacks any yellow and, at close range, has a noticeable long and flat profile. The base of the long neck is usually carried far back on the shoulders. Occasionally the neck and head are rust stained. Sexes are similar in appearance.

Voice - A deep, resonant, low-pitched, single "ho", or double trumpet-like note, "koo-hoh", sounded when alarmed and when getting airborne or landing. It also calls when flying but not continuously as do geese. The Trumpeter Swan is most vocal during migration. It frequently calls on the wintering grounds but is usually silent when eggs are being incubated.

Range - Breeds mainly in central Alaska and northern British Columbia although introduced populations, present year-round, occur in the north-central United States. It spends the winter mainly along the Pacific coast from Alaska to northern California.

Morsels - This large swan has an average weight of 26 pounds (11.8 kilograms), although some individuals can weigh over 30 pounds (13.6 kilograms). To get all that weight airborne, they must "taxi" across the surface of the water for a considerable stretch. Their flight feathers make a loud rattle and can be heard at some distance from the flying swans.

Snow Goose

Habitat - In summer, this goose breeds on open Arctic tundra near water, often in huge colonies. It occurs in winter on fresh and salt marshes, estuaries and often feeds in noisy flocks in pastures and flooded agricultural fields.

Identification - There are two color-phases of this goose. The dark phase or "Blue Goose" has a blue-gray body and wings, black primaries or flight feathers with a white head and upper neck. The light phase, or "Snow Goose" is pure white with black wing tips. Both color phases have pink bills with a black "grin patch." The white head is often rusty-stained. Sexes are similar.

Voice - The Snow Goose is the most vocal of all waterfowl, calling constantly while in flight, even on the breeding grounds. Their call is a shrill scratchy "uh-uk" or high-pitched "la-luk", reminiscent of the barking of a small dog.

Range - Breeds in Arctic areas of North America including the southwestern coast of Hudson Bay. Winters mainly in Puget Sound and California in West, the mid-Atlantic coast in the East, and Texas, Louisiana, New Mexico in the South.

Morsels - This goose was originally thought to be two species, the Snow Goose and the Blue Goose. When a white phase and a blue phase bird mate, the offspring tend to be mainly blue phase birds. Certain populations are now becoming dominated by blue phase birds as they tend to have higher breeding success than the white phase birds. Perhaps that is due to better camouflage on the breeding grounds, the result of warming trends in our climate. Also, white phase birds in those populations have a smaller chance to pair with white phase mates, which would continue the favoring of blue phase young.

Canada Goose

Habitat - This well-known goose breeds in a wide variety of habitats near water such as open tundra, marshes, meadows, islands in rivers, estuaries and any open situations that offer clear panoramic views; winters on estuaries, lakes, marshes, and agricultural lands.

Identification - Its general appearance includes a gray-brown back and wings, with a lighter breast and grading to a white belly and white under the tail. The black head and neck with a white cheek patch are good field marks. Sexes are similar.

Voice - Ranges from a musical, honking call, a resonant "ah-whonk" or "ha-lunk" of larger birds, to a yelping, high-pitched "cackle", "lunc" or "yelk, yelk, a-lick, a-lick", of smaller ones.

Range - Breeds across North America, except the very high Arctic, south to the mid-United States where it is found year-round. It occurs in winter along coastal Oregon and California and across southern portions of the United States.

Morsels - To most people, the word goose conjures up images and sounds of the Canada Goose, the "wild goose" of stories and songs. Large migrating flocks with their spectacular V-formations and honking calls cannot help but bring out the sense of wonder in anyone who turns their eyes skyward to watch. At least ten subspecies or races of the Canada Goose occur, ranging from a small (three pounds [1.4 kilograms]) dark bird, the Cackling Canada Goose, to a large (11 pounds [5 kilograms]) paler bird, the Giant Canada Goose.

Wood Duck

Habitat - This is the most colorful of all the North American ducks. It breeds along quiet waters such as sloughs, swamps, ponds, and marsh or stream edges as well as open woods wherever tree cavities, large enough to hold the nest, occur. It spends the winter on ponds, streams, marshes and occasionally estuaries.

Identification - Perhaps the most attractive of all the ducks, breeding males have virtually "all the colors of the rainbow" which, along with their crested heads, make the Wood Duck easy to identify. The female has a gray head and crest with a large, white "teardrop" around the eye.

Voice - The Wood Duck is relatively silent. Male gives a rising "ter-we-ee" or "jeeeeee". When alarmed, the female has a squealing "woo-e-e-e-ek", "oo-eek", or "hoo-eek" call. It also utters a sharp "cr-r-ek, cr-r-ek" sound.

Range - It breeds across central North America, from the Pacific coast to the Atlantic coast, wherever large trees with cavities are found. It is present year round on the Pacific coast from southern British Columbia through California and throughout the southeastern United States.

Morsels - Soon after the young have hatched, the female Wood Duck flies to the ground below the nest and calls the young. In response to her calls, the young climb to the cavity entrance, up to eight feet (2.4 meters) from the bottom of the cavity, and leap to the ground from a height of usually over 30 feet (nine meters) but occasionally up to 75 feet (23 meters) above the ground. The hen then leads the ducklings to the nearest water.

Mallard

Habitat - Our most abundant and common duck prefers shallow ponds, lakes, marshes, and flooded fields and edges of ditches where suitable cover is available during the breeding season. In winter, it lives in freshwater lakes, ponds, rivers, and brackish estuaries to salt marshes as well as farmlands.

Identification - The male's green head and neck, white neck ring and dark brown chest are diagnostic. Also note the black rump, yellow bill and orange legs. Females are a mottled brown with orange legs and bill. Both sexes have a blue wingpatch or speculum bordered on the leading and trailing edges by white. In flight, this field mark separates both Mallard sexes from all other ducks. In summer, males in eclipse plumage can be distinguished most easily from females by their greenish-yellow bills.

Voice - The most "talkative" of the ducks, voicing a variety of quacks heard most often in autumn and winter, particularly on drizzly days. Females can often be heard uttering a series of laughter-like quacks, becoming more rapid as they descend in loudness and tone. The males have a quack or "kwek", quieter than those of the female.

Range - Breeds throughout most of North America except the high Arctic, Atlantic coastal areas where the American Black Duck is more numerous, and the southeastern United States.

Morsels - This, the most familiar of all the ducks in the world, has given rise to several domestic breeds. While most waterfowl, such as the Mallard, live less than ten years, banding has shown that some may live up to 29 years.

Northern Pintail

Habitat - This long-tailed duck breeds on lakes, rivers, ponds, and marshes usually in grassland areas as well as in tundra, open boreal forest, and cultivated fields. It spends the winter on both fresh-water and brackish-water areas.

Identification - In summer, males have a brown head and white breast and belly with a thin white finger extending up the neck from the breast. Note the long, black central pair of tail feathers that gives the bird its name. Females are a mottled brown. Both sexes have a grayish bill and a green wing patch with a white border on its trailing edge.

Voice - The male, which has a higher-pitched voice than the female, gives a short, piping, cricket-like whistle which sounds like "prooh-proop" or "dreep-eep". The female utters a harsh quack, especially when alarmed.

Range - Breeds throughout much of North America except the southern United States where it winters. It is present year-round along the Pacific coast from British Columbia to southern California, through some of the central United States as well as the Maritime provinces of Canada. It is not found in some areas of the southeastern United States.

Morsels - When her ducklings are threatened, the hen pintail will feign injury as the young scatter and hide. To a predator, such as a fox, the female appears to be easy prey as she diverts attention from the young. Once the young have hidden, the female flies off, returning only when the threat is over.

American Wigeon

Habitat - This handsome duck breeds on small or large marshes and lakes with exposed shorelines and nearby cover for nest concealment. It winters on both fresh-water and brackish-water areas including intertidal shorelines, such as estuaries and bays. In winter it frequently grazes on farmlands, golf courses, city parks, and airports.

Identification - Breeding males have a gray-brown head with a cream to white crown and a green band that moves back from the eye. In flight, males show a large white patch on the upper wing. Females are dark mottled brown with a gray head. Both sexes have a light blue, black-tipped bill.

Voice - The male usually makes two or three clear whistling notes, "wheee-eee-eew" or "wheee-eew", reminiscent of a child's rubber duck. The females make a low quack, usually given when flushed.

Range - Breeds from the tundra of Alaska and Northwest Territories south to the west-central United States and east to the Great Lakes region. It winters along all coasts of North America south of the Arctic.

Morsels - Waterfowl, such as wigeon, go through an extended period when they cannot fly. Unlike most other birds that molt their flight feathers one at a time from each wing, waterfowl molt all their flight feathers at once. The bright colors of the male duck would be a hindrance at that time. To solve the problem they take on an eclipse plumage and resemble the drab females.

Oldsquaw

Habitat - In summer, this long-tailed duck breeds in the taiga and tundra near shallow lakes and ponds as well as along northern coasts and inlets. In winter, it frequents the more open and deeper coastal waters of straits, bays, and inlets. Sometimes large flocks pass the winter on open freshwater lakes and rivers.

Identification - The male has a long, slender tail throughout the year. In summer, the dark with white flanks and belly and white around the eye and cheek are characteristic. In winter, it is mainly white with a dark cheek and breast.

Voice - The male has a talkative, musical yodel, like "ow-oodle-ooo", or "poorh-poordle-oo", that carries for miles. Its eerie call can be heard year-round but it is especially loud and frequent during courtship activities.

Range - Breeds mainly in tundra situations from Alaska and northern Canada, including the high Arctic islands, to Hudson Bay and Labrador. In winter it is found offshore along the Pacific coast mainly from Alaska to Oregon and on the Atlantic coast from Labrador to South Carolina. Sometimes it can be found inland in winter on larger lakes like the Great Lakes.

Morsels - The Oldsquaw is the deepest diver of all the ducks and has been trapped in fish nets at depths of more than 200 feet (60 meters). It is also the only duck that has two discrete plumages, one in winter and one in summer, as well as an eclipse plumage when it is molting.

Osprey

Habitat - This large hawk is almost exclusively a fish eater and so is tied to rivers, lakes, marshes, and seacoasts. It nests on the top of tall trees or on man-made structures such as pilings, light beacons, and power poles near water.

Identification - In flight note the all-white breast and belly and the long wings that are quite bent at the wrist. The wrists have a large dark patch. When perched, the white head can suggest a Bald Eagle, but note the dark crown and eye stripe and the white breast. Sexes are similar in appearance.

Voice - It is quite vocal, especially during nesting, and particularly when it finds itself in the presence of a Bald Eagle. When alarmed, it utters a series of loud, sharp cries sounding like "kip kip kip kiweek kiweek" or "kyew kyew kyew kyew kyew". It also has a variety of soft chirps and whistles.

Range - It breeds throughout much of North America but populations are mainly found from northwestern Alaska and north-central Canada south to northern California and Wyoming and along the Atlantic coast and the Gulf States.

Morsels - Unlike the Bald Eagle, which usually takes a fish from the water at the end of a long, low glide, the Osprey normally hovers up to 100 feet (30 meters) above the water, then dives feet first with wings held over the back. It can hit the water with a tremendous splash and its body often goes completely under. Then with powerful wingbeats, it lifts itself and the fish out of the water, shaking the water from its plumage and aligning the fish headfirst with its talons as it flies off to the nest.

Bald Eagle

Habitat - Year-round, this large hawk is seldom found far from water, particularly seacoasts, rivers, and lakes as its primary food is fishes and waterbirds. It selects tall trees or cliffs as nesting sites.

Identification - The breeding adult has a dark brown body with a white head and tail. At close range note the large yellow bill, yellow eyes, and unfeathered legs. It soars on long (six to seven feet [1.8 to 2.1 meters]), flat or horizontal wings. Sexes are similar, although the female can often be recognized by her larger size when both adults are perched together at the nest site.

Voice - The male and the female make a sequence of harsh, squeaky, un-eagle-like chitters and whistles, particularly at the nest site and where eagles congregate at winter roosts or feeding areas such as salmon streams. The bird's call is a "keee-ki-ki-ki-ki-ki", normally descending in pitch and loudness. It occasionally makes guttural grunting calls.

Range - Widely distributed throughout North America south of tundra areas. It is present year-round along the Pacific coast from Alaska to northern California, in the vicinity of the Great Lakes, and along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. It winters throughout much of the interior of the United States.

Morsels - Many stories endure about eagles carrying off children but they are totally without foundation. Studies have shown that, unless conditions are favorable, an eagle would have trouble lifting and carrying half its weight. Thus an exceptionally large female Bald Eagle, that may weigh up to 14 pounds (6.4 kilograms), would have trouble carrying anything that approached six to seven pounds (2.7 to 3.2 kilograms) unless the wind or thermals were fortuitous. The ideal weight is about 2 pounds (0.9 kilograms).

Red-tailed Hawk

Habitat - This "buzzard", the most common of the North American hawks, inhabits a wide variety of open country such as farmland and prairie with accompanying scattered trees as well as open woodlands, deserts, or forests adjacent to open areas.

Identification - Its plumage is variable. Light phase breeding birds have a large, mainly brown body with brick red upper tail, paler red when seen from below, and a streaked band across the white belly. Dark phase birds are similar, except the breast and belly is brown rather than white. Sexes are similar.

Voice - In summer, while territorial, its call is a raspy descending "tseeeeeer", "keeeeeer", or "kee-abrrr" reminiscent of a high faint scream like the squeal of a pig. It calls while perched and when flying.

Range - It breeds throughout North America south of the tundra. Northern populations are migratory while birds in the southern part of the continent are present year-round.

Morsels - As with many other birds of prey, Red-tailed Hawk numbers have suffered declines through persecution by humans, loss of their habitat, and loss of productivity through the thinning of their eggshells. The latter is thought to be a result of their eating pesticide contaminated prey. While the pesticide levels in the prey (usually rodents) are often small, the Red-tailed Hawk consumes large numbers of these contaminated rodents. Thus, the pesticide levels in the hawk, which accumulate in its fatty tissues, build to the point where they affect the breeding success of the bird.

Ring-necked Pheasant

Habitat - This large, brightly colored bird depends on open country such as cultivated farmland, prairies, waste shrublands, open woodlands and woodland edges, as well as hedgerows and riparian thickets.

Identification - It is about the size of a Mallard. The male has a glossy green head with green ear feathers and a bright fleshy-red face patch, white necklace, and very long tail.

Voice - The male gives a raspy, two-note squawk, "caw-cawk" or "squaw-awk", usually followed by a ruffled flurry of wingbeats. It also gives a "cackle" when flushed or startled.

Range - An introduced species with viable populations established in midlatitudes from southwestern British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan south to southern California, Kansas, Virginia, and New England. It does not occur in the southern United States where hot temperatures in the breeding season makes males infertile.

Morsels - The reproductive potential of birds, while seldom realized, can under certain conditions allow a species to reach incredible populations. In the late 1930s, two male and six female pheasants were released on an island off the Washington coast. After six years, nearly 1,900 pheasants were found on the island. Often, exotic species-introductions follow this trend, increasing their numbers spectacularly, often at the expense of native birds. The starling is another example, where from an initial 120 birds introduced to New York City, their North American population has grown to billions.

Willow Ptarmigan

Habitat - This northern grouse frequents open tundra and muskegs, especially areas with grasses, mosses, willow thickets, and herbs. Sometimes it can be found along forest edges and in openings near timberline.

Identification - The breeding male is the size of a plump crow, with a rust-brown body, white belly, legs, and wings and a black tail. Note the red eyebrows.

Voice - It makes a loud staccato call: "go-back, go-back, go-back, go backa, go backa" or "tobacco, tobacco, tobacco", especially at end of display flight. It also makes other guttural calls such as cackles and growls.

Range - Present year-round across the Arctic from Alaska to Newfoundland and south to the limit of the forest tundra and including mountainous and tundra areas into southern British Columbia.

Morsels - All members of the grouse family grow "snowshoes" in the winter. Some, like the ptarmigan, have feathered toes, while others, like the Ruffed Grouse, have short, comb-like projections on either side of their toes. Both serve to distribute the bird's weight over a greater surface area, and allow them to walk more easily on the surface of the snow.

Ruffed Grouse

Habitat - This chicken-like fowl breeds in coniferous, deciduous and hardwood, and mixed forests and woodlands, especially where dense undergrowth is present. It is most common in aspen forests.

Identification - The breeding male is about the size of a crow. It has gray or brown plumage, a tail with a dark band near the tip, and dark neck ruffs which are raised during displays or when the bird becomes otherwise agitated.

Voice - It gives a loud "chuck" or "quit-quit" sound. But the noise most often heard is the "drumming" sound which is produced with wings beating on its chest. This grows faster toward the end of the "drumming". This thumping sound is usually heard at night and in morning, especially during the breeding season, but can be heard throughout the day.

Range - Present year-round from the northern tree limit across North America south to the limit of good woodlands to northern California, northern Utah, Wyoming, South Dakota, Missouri, Kentucky, to the Atlantic coast. It has recently been introduced to Newfoundland and northeastern Nevada.

Morsels - The Ruffed Grouse, like a chicken, is a weak flyer and has white breast or flight muscles but is a strong walker and runner with its red thigh and leg muscles. White muscles, "burn" mainly sugars and provide birds with quick and powerful bursts of energy, but they cannot be relied upon for continuous use. Red muscles "burn" mainly fats and are used for sustained energy output such as constant walking, running, or flying. Thus, the flight muscles of strong flyers, such as geese or songbirds, are red.

Wild Turkey

Habitat - In summer, this large, swan-sized bird, frequents forest and open mixed or deciduous forests. It especially prefers oak woodlands and pine-oak forests.

Identification - The breeding male, with his iridescent bronze body, has a large tail that it fans during courtship displays as it droops its wing feathers. It has a naked red or bluish head and neck and usually sports a black "beard" or tuft on its breast. It is a weak flier and prefers to run to escape danger.

Voice - The male gobbles the year-round. During the nesting season, the gobble is used to attract females. The male also makes a "pit" or "put-put" alarm call and a "keow-kow" call when in a feeding flock.

Range - Even though it is found locally, the Wild Turkey is still most common in the eastern and southwestern United States. Restocking and re-introduction programs by game managers have resulted in additional local populations being re-established in former parts of its range on the continent.

Morsels - All birds have a gizzard which forms part of their stomach. In some birds, such as loons and owls, the gizzard is weak. However, seed eaters such as the Wild Turkey, have strong, muscular gizzards that grind their foods. Experiments have shown that turkeys can grind up 24 walnuts in four hours, their gizzards exerting pressures of over 300 pounds per square inch on the nuts. They can even grind up steel needles in these muscular organs!

Northern Bobwhite

Habitat - In summer, this tiny quail frequents hedgerows, mixed brushy fields, forest edges, long-grass grasslands, burns, prairies, cultivated farmlands and open woods.

Identification - It is about the size of a plump robin with a mottled red-brown body, a striking black-and-white face pattern, and irregular streaking on the sides or flanks. It prefers to run and hide than to fly.

Voice - The call is a clear, whistled "bob-white" or "ah bob-white", with a rising emphasis on the "white". Also, it gives a whistled "hoy" or "a-loy-hee" and a variety of other chatty-like calls. The Northern Bobwhite is heard mostly from spring to autumn, calling from a favorite perch, but it also calls in winter, usually in the early morning or late afternoon.

Range - Present year-round throughout the southeastern United States. It has been introduced in the West, with some success, into Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Wyoming. The severity of the winter and the amount of rainfall restricts the bobwhite's distribution on the continent.

Morsels - In winter, these little birds join together in a covey or small group of 10 to 20 birds when they roost. The birds form a circle, each bird facing outwards and they squeeze themselves closely together. This provides the birds with the benefit of reducing their body heat loss. It also provides protection for the covey as the birds have an opportunity to see predators approaching from all directions. When a predator approaches, the birds explode into the air with a loud roar and disperse in all directions.

California Quail

Habitat - In summer, this quail with a top knot, frequents brushy, grassy, and weedy areas including forest edges, chaparral, cultivated farmlands, thickets, sagebrush areas, parks, and residential areas in suburbs.

Identification - It is the size of a plump robin. Breeding males have a bold black-and-white face pattern with tear-shaped head plume that faces forward. The back is a uniform blue-gray, underparts show a scaly belly with a red-brown patch.

Voice - The breeding male makes an unforgettable three note call which sounds like "ca-CAH-ho", "o-HI-oh", or "chi-CA-go". It also utters a "whit-whit-whit", "tek-tek" as well as an assortment of other clicks and cackles.

Range - Present throughout the year along the Pacific coast from southwestern and south-central British Columbia south through California and east to Idaho and Utah. Originally native populations only existed in southern Oregon, California, and western Nevada. It has been introduced elsewhere in its present range.

Morsels - Studies have shown that some plants can govern the breeding success of quail. In times of drought, clovers produce higher concentrations of "phytoestrogens", which are similar to the hormones that regulate reproduction in birds and mammals. Birds feeding on the clovers, tend to have reduced production of eggs during drought years, which may be nature's way of ensuring that only the number of young the food source can support, will be produced.

Virginia Rail

Habitat - This secretive bird lives in freshwater and brackish marshes associated with lakes and ponds as well as estuaries.

Identification - It is about the size of a robin. Note the long, thin bill that is slightly downcurved, the gray cheeks, the rusty-breast, and the white and black, barred flanks. Sexes are similar in appearance.

Voice - The call is a series of sharp, metallic "ki-dick, ki-dick, ki-dick's"; also a "waaack-waaack-waaack. . ." or "whish-whish-whish-whish. . ." descending, becoming more rapid near the end.

Range - It breeds in wetlands across the continent from southern Canada to the southern United States. It is present year-round along the Pacific coast, in the southwestern United States, and along the northeast Atlantic coast.

Morsels - One of the best ways to see rails is to sit motionless near the edge of a marsh where a small opening in the vegetation occurs. Patience will reward you with a look at one of the most secretive of birds. Often clapping your hands sharply near a marsh in spring and summer will elicit a response from a Virginia Rail.

Sora

Habitat - This is the most common of the North American rails. In summer it inhabits freshwater marshes and the densely vegetated borders of lakes and ponds.

Identification - It is slightly smaller and plumper than a robin. In summer, the short yellow bill, the black face and throat, and the cocked tail are good field marks. The back is mottled brown, the neck and breast is gray, and the sides are barred. Sexes are similar in appearance.

Voice - It gives a descending whinny which sounds like "kweee-wi-wi-wi". As well it gives a plaintive, whistled, rising "ker-wee" or "ner-wee" and a sharp "keek". It is most often heard in the early evening and during the night although it can be heard during daylight hours.

Range - It breeds from British Columbia and southwest Mackenzie across Canada to the Maritime Provinces and south to the southwestern United States east across mid-latitudes to North Carolina.

Morsels - Rails, such as the Sora, are very secretive birds, more often heard than seen. The rail body is very narrow, hence the term "skinny as a rail." Their thin body is an adaptation that allows them to move quickly through the vertical marsh vegetation. They also have a claw-like attachment at the wrist, or bend of the wing, which helps them to move and even climb through dense marsh vegetation.

Sandhill Crane

Habitat - In summer this large, heron-like bird frequents marshes, muskegs, bogs, and tundra grasslands.

Identification - A long legged, gray, heron-sized bird with bald red crown and a "bustle" at the rear of the body. Its plumage is often rust stained. Sexes are similar. It can be distinguished from the Great Blue Heron by its overall gray coloration, its extended neck in flight, and the manner in which it moves its wings with slow down strokes but quick upstrokes.

Voice - Their pre-historic sounds are often heard as large flocks of cranes, migrating northward to their breeding grounds, pass high overhead. The calls also form part of their courtship dance on the roosting and nesting grounds. They have been described as a rolling, guttural, rattle, "krooo-oo" or "garooo-a-a-a", which is repeated, and can be heard for well over one mile (0.62 kilometers).

Range - It breeds from Alaska to the central Canadian Arctic and south to south-central Canada and locally southward where resident populations have been established.

Morsels - The rusty plumage results from birds feeding in areas where the mud contains a ferrous (iron) solution; their plumage is stained as the birds preen and the oxidized iron, or rust, gets transferred to their feathers. Cranes have a very graceful courtship dance. They repeatedly bound up and down six to eight feet (1.8 to 2.4 meters) in the air with wings half open, uttering their calls.

Killdeer

Habitat - This vocal and conspicuous shorebird is common in open habitats throughout most of North America, including short-grass fields, pastures, meadows, mudflats, road edges, freshwater margins, as well as sand spits and upper beaches along the coast. It even visits flat graveled roofs in cities in summer.

Identification - The Killdeer is about the size of a robin. The two black breast bands and the rusty-orange rump are the best field marks. It has brown upperparts and white underparts. Sexes are similar in appearance.

Voice - Here's a bird that calls its name; a loud "killdeeeeer" or "kill-deer kill-deer" often repeated. It also gives a plaintive, rising "dee-dee-dee" as well as a solitary, rising "dee".

Range - It breeds throughout much of North America from central Alaska along a line to Newfoundland and southward through the entire United States. It is present throughout the year along the Pacific coast from southern British Columbia southward and across the southern United States.

Morsels - The Killdeer, like some other ground nesting birds, goes into a distraction display when you approach its nest. Rather than hiding or covering the nest, as do some birds, the Killdeer purposefully draws attention away from the nest by feigning an injury such as a broken wing. It spreads its wing and tail and, while dragging them, calls loudly and slowly flutters away from the nest.

Black Oystercatcher

Habitat - This impressive marine shorebird haunts rocky seacoasts, islets, islands, and spits. It can also be seen on sandy beaches and gravel and mudflats and occasionally, in summer, on flat gravel roofs near the ocean.

Identification - It is the size of a heavily built crow and is unmistakable with its all-black plumage, orange-red bill, and pink legs and feet. Sexes are similar in appearance.

Voice - It gives a loud, sharp, whistled "wheeee-whee-whee-whee", usually repeated several times. It also gives a single note that sounds like "wheep" or "kleep".

Range - It is present year-round along the Pacific coast from the Aleutian Islands in Alaska south through California.

Morsels - The oystercatcher's long bill is flattened vertically with a chisel-like tip so it can quickly enter an open mollusk shell, and cut the bivalve's adductor muscle, the muscle that holds the shells closed. Then it feeds on the clam or mussel meat inside. It also uses its bill to "chisel" limpets, conical-shaped marine snails, off the rocks or to probe the marine mud for worms. This oystercatcher seldom eats oysters.

American Avocet

Habitat - In summer, this colorful shorebird breeds mainly on open areas along shallow lake shores, particularly alkaline lakes, sloughs, and marshes. It also uses mudflats, ponds, and estuaries. An unobstructed view is important.

Identification - The avocet is about the size of a slender crow. Its black and white body together with an orange-cinnamon head and neck are make this large shorebird unmistakable. The long, thin bill is upturned near the tip. Sexes are similar in appearance.

Voice - When disturbed it gives a noisy and ringing, often repeated "wheep", "kleep", "pleek", or "plee-eek". It also gives a softer "whuck".

Range - It breeds locally in southern British Columbia and the Canadian Prairie south through the Great Basin regions south to the southwestern United States; also breeds locally in the mid-Atlantic coast region.

Morsels - The American Avocet has a distinctive feeding habit. It walks through the marsh on its long legs, swinging its head from side to side as it sweeps its long, upturned bill through the shallow water or mud in search of food.

Spotted Sandpiper

Habitat - This widely distributed shorebird frequents a tremendous variety of habitats, virtually anywhere there is fresh water, from the seacoast to interior river valleys and streams, to the high alpine.

Identification - It is slightly smaller than a robin and has a white spotted breast and pink to yellowish bill and legs. While standing or walking, this little shorebird teeters, or bobs its tail up and down. Its flight is distinctive with very shallow but stiff, rapid wingbeats. Sexes are similar in appearance.

Voice - A clear "peet-weet", "weet", or "weet-weet-weet-weet-weet" is uttered, particularly when it flies away alarmed.

Range - Breeds throughout most of North America, including mountainous areas, south to southern California and east across the northern part of the Gulf States to North Carolina.

Morsels - Unlike most birds, the male Spotted Sandpiper, rather than the female, does most of the incubation duties and caring for the young.

Long-billed Curlew

Habitat - This, the largest of the sandpipers, can be found in grassy meadows and steppes, prairies, rangeland, pastures, and upland fields all with low vegetative cover often near water. In winter it also uses beaches and mudflats.

Identification - It is about the size of a slender duck with long gray legs and a very long, downcurved bill. In flight, look for its bright cinnamon wing-linings. Sexes appear similar, although the female can be separated from the male by her obviously larger bill when the pair are seen together.

Voice - When first contacted the Long-billed Curlew gives a loud, rising "cur-lee", and when alarmed a whistled "kli-li-li-li" or "wit-wit, wit-wit, wit, wit, wit". The song is a long, trilled, "cur-leeeeeeuuu".

Range - It breeds from south-central British Columbia east to Manitoba and south through the Great Basin to northern California and east to northern Texas and western Oklahoma.

Morsels - Shorebird young are precocial, that is they hatch fully feathered and can run, swim, and feed for themselves soon after. Precocial chicks come from proportionately larger eggs and spend a longer time in the egg than do chicks that spend time in the nest being fed and brooded by the adults after they hatch.

Common Snipe

Habitat - The snipe frequents wet grass habitats such as marshes, peat bogs, fens, wet fields and meadows from lowlands to Arctic tundra. In winter it frequents cattail and bulrush marshes, swamps, estuarine marshes, and flooded fields.

Identification - It is slightly larger than a robin. The very long thin but straight bill, striped head, and the tan stripes on the upper back are good field marks. Its belly is white. It flies in a zig-zag pattern when flushed. Sexes are similar in appearance.

Voice - When flushed, it utters a harsh or raspy "scaaap" or "zhak". Its song, sounds like "chip-a, chip-a, chip-a, chip-a". In flight during the breeding season a hollow sound is produced by the tail feathers that sounds like "huhuhuhu".

Range - It breeds throughout most of North America from the subarctic tundra south to California and northern New Jersey. It spends the winter mainly along the Pacific coast from Washington to California and across the southern United States.

Morsels - As part of its aerial display, the snipe also makes a loud winnowing sound. It flies up very high in the air, then dives with its tail feathers spread open. The air rushing through the outer tail feathers makes this unusual sound. This territorial sound is most often heard over their nesting areas but it can also be heard on the wintering grounds.

Laughing Gull

Habitat - In summer, this gull frequents seacoasts, bays, salt marshes and estuaries. It breeds in colonies on sandy islands with scattered grass or salt marsh plants. It rarely visits large inland lakes.

Identification - It is about the size of a crow. The breeding adult has an all-black head with white eye crescents above and below each eye and a dark all-red bill. The body has a dark gray back with the wings blending into black wingtips. The underparts are white contrasting with darker legs. Sexes are similar in appearance.

Voice - With a name like Laughing Gull, what else could it call but a harsh "ha-ha-ha-ha-haah-haah-haah-haah". It also gives a high "ca-ha".

Range - Breeds from Maine south along the Atlantic coast and Gulf coast states. It is present year round from North Carolina south along the Gulf coast states. It occurs regularly in the Salton Sea, California, where it formerly nested.

Morsels - In a colony of thousands of nests, how do the parents locate and feed only their own offspring? The Laughing Gull chick learns to recognize the adult's calls in stages over time. The adults, in turn, identify their chicks by the way the chicks react to their calls. The chicks use vocal recognition, while the adults use visual recognition.

Franklin's Gull

Habitat - Breeds on freshwater marshes, lakes, and sloughs in prairie and steppe regions. In summer, nonbreeding birds visit large lakes and irrigated fields.

Identification - It is smaller than a crow. The breeding adult has a black head with bright white eye crescents and a blood-red bill. The white underparts are tinged with different amounts of pink. The legs are reddish. The wingtips have a white band between the black tips and the gray of the upper wing and large white wing tips which helps separate it from the Laughing Gull of the east coast. Sexes are similar in appearance.

Voice - Its call is a piercing "kuk-kuk-kuk" or "ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha" higher than that of the Laughing Gull, changing to "weee-ahh, weee-ahh". It also utters a soft nasal "krrruk".

Range - It breeds throughout the prairies from Alberta to Manitoba in the north and from Oregon to South Dakota in the south. Some nonbreeding birds visit the Great Lakes, especially Lake Michigan, and large lakes in northeastern British Columbia.

Morsels - The Franklin's Gull is unique among the North American gulls in that most of the population winters south of the equator to Ecuador, Peru, and Chile. This gull feeds mainly on insects, such as grasshoppers and flying ants, and therefore is considered beneficial by farmers whose crops are protected from damage.

Ring-billed Gull

Habitat - In summer, this gull breeds on rocky, sandy, or grassy islands or islets in lakes and rivers or on isolated shores and sometimes in marshy lands. Recently it has established nesting colonies near large cities. It also frequents irrigated and plowed fields.

Identification - It is slightly larger than a crow. The breeding adults have a yellow bill with a distinct black ring, a slate-gray back with contrasting snow-white underparts, black wingtips with white "mirrors", and yellow-green legs. Sexes are similar in appearance.

Voice - Its call is a high, shrill squeal that sounds like "kree, kree, kree", similar to that of the Herring Gull, although higher-pitched. When alarmed it gives a "kakakakak-akakaka" or "uk-uk-uk-uk-uk" call. It also utters a shrill "ky-yow".

Range - Populations are expanding their range rapidly. At present, it breeds from south-central British Columbia, Great Slave Lake (Mackenzie), across the Canadian Prairie provinces to Newfoundland and south to northeastern California and across the northern United States to Prince Edward Island.

Morsels - This "seagull" is more at home following farm plows in the interior than feeding along marine shores. The Ring-billed Gull, originally a bird of the prairies, has successfully followed human settlement to greatly expand its range. Evidence suggests that gulls rely on their memory of topographic features in the landscape to find their way back to breeding colonies or wintering areas.

Herring Gull

Habitat - This large gull, the common "sea gull" in North America, frequents seacoasts, estuaries, rivers, and lakes where it nests on islands, cliffs, sandy peninsulas, and tundra.

Identification - It is slightly larger than a Mallard. Breeding adults have a yellow bill with a red spot on its lower edge, a light gray back, black wingtips, with white spots and pink legs. Sexes are similar in appearance.

Voice - Its call is a loud, harsh "keeyow, kyow-kyow-kyow" or "kuk-kuk-kuk, yucca-yucca-yucca" given throughout the year. Near its nest the Herring Gull makes a low "pup-pup-pup" sound. Sexes have similar sounds.

Range - It breeds from Alaska east across Canada to Newfoundland and south to south-central British Columbia, the Great Lakes, and south along the Atlantic coast to South Carolina. In winter it can be found along the southern portions of the Pacific and Atlantic coasts and generally across the southern United States. It is present year-round in the vicinity of the Great Lakes and northern Atlantic coast including the Maritime provinces.

Morsels - To break open a crab or clam, the Herring Gull has "learned" to carry the food into the air and drop it on the rocks, or pavement, or even rooftops below. This is an example of learned behavior, rather than instinct. The young learn the behavior from watching the older birds.

Western Gull

Habitat - This marine shoreline gull inhabits coastal waterways such as beaches, harbors, estuaries, bays, inlets and garbage dumps where it breeds on rocky islets and cliffs. It also occurs at sea.

Identification - It is larger than a Mallard. The best field marks in summer are its yellow bill with a red spot on the lower edge, a very dark gray back, black wingtips with small white "windows", and pink legs. In flight the underwings show dark areas. Sexes are similar in appearance.

Voice - Its call is a raucous, throaty "kuk-kuk-kuk", similar to that of the Glaucous-winged Gull. It also makes a "whee-whee-whee" and "ki-aa". It can be heard throughout the year and often call when flying.

Range - It is present year-round from southern British Columbia south through California. It breeds mainly in California.

Morsels - Gulls have a variety of plumages which makes them a difficult group for the birdwatchers to identify. Large gulls, such as the Western Gull, take four years to attain their adult plumage and in that period have at least five major plumage changes. Thus, you could see five different-looking gulls on the beach at the same time that are actually all the same species.

Glaucous-winged Gull

Habitat - In summer this large, west coast gull is primarily restricted to coastal waters nesting on rocky islets, cliffs, grassy island slopes or barren flats. Some now breed on flat gravel roofs of buildings in large cities. In winter garbage dumps, agricultural fields, bays, harbors, and estuaries are frequented.

Identification - It is slightly larger than a Mallard. Breeding adults have a yellow bill with a red spot on the lower edge, a light gray back and pale wingtips, and pink legs. Sexes are similar in appearance. In flight the pale tips to the wings are a good identification feature.

Voice - Its calls include a loud, high "keer, keer" and a low "kak-kak-kak", given throughout the year but mainly in summer. When disturbed, at any time, it utters a series of "ga-ga-ga" calls.

Range - In summer, it breeds in coastal western and southwestern Alaska and migrates to its winter grounds further south along the Oregon and California coasts. It is present year-round in south-eastern Alaska, British Columbia, and Washington.

Morsels - The red spot on the lower edge of a gull's bill is a visual stimulus for the young which evokes a food-begging response. When an adult returns to the nest with food, the red spot stimulates the young to peck at it. That, in turn, stimulates the adult to regurgitate the food and dinner is served.

Black-legged Kittiwake

Habitat - This pelagic gull, possibly the most numerous of all the gulls in the world, is mainly a bird of offshore waters but in summer it breeds on steep cliffs of islands and on headlands along rocky seacoasts.

Identification - It is the size of a crow. Breeding adults can be identified by their all-yellow bill (no red spot), gray back, completely black wingtips, and black legs. It is graceful in flight. Sexes are similar in appearance.

Voice - This is another bird that calls its name, if you have a good imagination. Its voice sounds like a loud, nasal "kitti-waake". It also gives an assertive "kek-kek" call. It is especially noisy at breeding colonies and calls continuously all day long!

Range - In summer, it breeds in the Arctic Ocean as far north as open water prevails and southward on the Pacific coast to southeastern Alaska and on the Atlantic coast to the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Canadian Maritime provinces. The latter location is the southernmost breeding site for this species in the world.

Morsels - Gulls can drink both fresh and salt water. They have a pair of salt glands that lie on the skull above each eye. The glands have thousands of salt-removing cells that extract the salt from the sea water. The concentrated salt solution is then evacuated through the gull's nostrils.

Rock Dove

Habitat - This well known, introduced pigeon inhabits cities, towns, and farmyards where it breeds throughout the year on a variety of buildings, wharves, and bridges. Feral birds, such as most of those in North America, occasionally nest in natural sites such as cliffs and rocky outcroppings.

Identification - The common pigeon of cities and parks. Note the iridescent neck feathers, black wingbars, and the white rump. It takes flight with a clapping sound made when its wings slap together. Through domestication and selective breeding there are many color variants.

Voice - The male makes a constant cooing sound when displaying, variously described as a soft "coo-a-roo, coo-roo-coo", or "coo-crooo".

Range - It is present year-round throughout North America, south of the taiga and tundra regions, from southeastern Alaska and British Columbia across southern Canada and south throughout the United States.

Morsels - According to some authorities, the Rock Dove was the first bird to be domesticated, over 6,000 years ago. Initially, it was used for its meat and later became important for carrying messages. Its homing ability gives the Rock Dove its other name: Homing Pigeon. Using both the position of the sun and the earth's magnetic field, some pigeons have found their way "home" when released 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometers) away. In summer and winter, hawks, especially the Peregrine Falcon, often prey on this pigeon.

Mourning Dove

Habitat - This graceful dove breeds in a variety of open situations such as dry uplands, orchards, farmlands and their adjacent hedgerows, grain fields, deserts, open woodlands, suburban areas, and riparian situations.

Identification - The Mourning Dove is slightly larger than a robin and has a long pointed tail with white tips on the outer feathers. It also has a slender neck and small head with a small black spot just below the ear.

Voice - Its voice is often mistaken for an owl by beginners. The Mourning Dove makes a low, mournful, "oo-ah, cooo-cooo-coo", or "who-ah, whoo-who-who". From a distance, the first phrase of the call may not be detectable.

Range - It occurs throughout North America from southern Canada south through the United States except in montane and boreal forests. Northern populations are migratory. It is present year-round in the southern United States.

Morsels - Doves and pigeons feed their nestlings a substance called "pigeon milk." As the adults near the end of their incubation duties, the inner lining of their crop thickens by as much as 20 times. When the young hatch and begin to feed, this lining sloughs off the crop walls periodically to form the pigeon milk, a curd or cottage cheese-like substance that is very nutritious. The young stick their bills into the adult's throat and the adult regurgitates the "milk".

Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Habitat - This secretive bird frequents dense undergrowth and tangles, riparian willow thickets, riverside woods, and open deciduous forests with thick undergrowth.

Identification - The Yellow-billed Cuckoo is about the size of a long slender crow. It is generally olive-brown above and white below and can be quickly identified by its curved yellow lower bill, the rufous color on its wings (most noticeable in flight) and large white spots on the ends of each of the black outer tail feathers.

Voice - The cuckoo usually calls while hidden in a thicket or from some other dense undergrowth. It gives a series of rapid, guttural "kuks" ending with a slower "keow-keow-keow". A full call may sound like "kakakaka kakakakaka, ka, ka-oh, ka-oh, kka-oh, kow, kow".

Range - It breeds mainly in the Midwest and eastern part of North America from southern Canada south through the United States. It is uncommon in the West.

Morsels - Folklore suggests that when the Yellow-billed Cuckoo utters its frequent calls on hot, muggy days, it is calling for rain, hence its colloquial name "Rain Crow." Cuckoos are some of the few birds that eat hairy caterpillars and are considered beneficial in helping control insects that defoliate forests.

Great Horned Owl

Habitat - In summer, this owl, one of the most powerful birds in North America, frequents most habitats including a variety of wooded areas such as dense and open deciduous, coniferous and mixed forests, deserts, orchards, parklands, and riparian woods. It often usurps the nest of other species such as the Red-tailed Hawk but also nests in cavities, stumps, and occasionally cliffs and crevices.

Identification - This is the bird most people think of when they hear the phrase "wise old owl." It is a large brown owl, only slightly smaller than a goose. It has bright yellow eyes, large ear tufts set wide apart, a white throat, and heavily barred underparts.

Voice - Both the male and the female give a deep hooting sound. The full voice typically utters a five or six note series of "whooo's", sounding like "Who! Who! Who! Who! Who!"

Range - It occurs throughout North America south of the northern limit of trees. It is absent from some of the larger offshore islands like the Queen Charlotte Islands in British Columbia.

Morsels - Owls typically have a flattened face with feathers forming what is called a facial disk. This disk, like a TV dish that collects radio waves, collects sounds of prey rustling on the ground and funnels those sounds to the owl's ears that are located asymmetrically on the sides of the head. The asymmetry of the ears gives the bird "binocular" hearing, and allows it to effectively locate the prey by sound alone.

Barred Owl

Habitat - This nocturnal owl frequents dense coniferous, deciduous, or mixed coniferous-deciduous forests, and riparian habitats such as rivers and lake edges and the margins of marshes and swamps.

Identification - It is a large gray owl similar in size to the Great-horned Owl. It has a large rounded head that lacks ear tufts, dark eyes, barring on the neck and upper breast, and vertical belly streaks.

Voice - It has the most distinctive call of all North American owls and can be heard throughout the year. It gives a loud series of "whooo's" suggesting the phrase, Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you-all? The last syllable drops off noticeably. It also utters a long "hooo-ahhh" and a variety of other screams and cackles.

Range - Recently, this owl has been expanding its range, moving farther westward from southern Canada and the eastern United States. It now occurs across the central Canadian Prairies and in the Pacific Northwest mainly south of Alaska and the Yukon.

Morsels - Most owls are active during twilight or at night, but it is not true that owls can't see in the daylight. The Snowy Owl nests in the arctic during summers that have 24 hours of daylight, and the Barred Owl frequently hunts during the day. The eyes of an owl are extraordinarily acute and are so large that they can't move within the eye sockets as can those of a human. To compensate for this, owls have the ability to turn their heads up to a remarkable 270 degrees. Were you able to do this, it would mean you could turn your head clockwise until you were looking over your left shoulder!

Common Poorwill

Habitat - This small goatsucker frequents shrub areas in prairies, deserts, as well as open forests, dry pastureland, sagebrush areas, parklands, brushy sites and rocky canyons in arid or semi-arid situations. It often feeds on or adjacent to unpaved roads.

Identification - This insect eater is smaller than a robin. Its mottled gray-brown body makes it difficult to find in its surroundings. It sports a whitish collar that separates the black throat from the mottled body. In flight, note the rounded wings and the white outer tail feathers.

Voice - This little bird is rarely seen or heard during the day. In the breeding season, however, it can be heard in the evening saying "poor-will-low" or "poor-will-lip". At some distance, the last note is difficult to hear, so its call sounds like its name, poor-will.

Range - It breeds from southern British Columbia and Saskatchewan south through the western part of the United States. It is present year-round only in the southwestern United States.

Morsels - The Common Poorwill is the only bird that is known to hibernate! When a hibernating bird was first discovered in 1946, measurements showed that its temperature was 42 degrees Fahrenheit below normal and its heartbeat could not be detected with a stethoscope. Years ago, hibernation was a myth that explained the disappearance of many birds over the winter. We now know that most birds migrate to warmer lands.

Common Nighthawk

Habitat - In summer, the "mosquito hawk" uses a variety of open habitats such as grasslands, meadows, farmland, clearings, parklands with their associated wetlands such as ponds and marshes, clearcuts, forest burns, sand and gravel habitats of marine and fluvial beaches, and cities where they occasionally nest on gravel roofs. They often roost on tree branches and fence posts.

Identification - The breeding male is about the size of a robin. It has a white throat and bar across its tail. Look for the white wing patch near the wrist on its long pointed wings, which is highly visible in flight. It flies mainly at dusk, although the Common Nighthawk may be seen throughout the day.

Voice - In flight, it gives a nasal "peeent" or "spee-ik". During courtship displays, it also makes a loud roar with its wings as it dives. This vibrant buzz can be heard day or night.

Range - Widespread in summer throughout the continent except for tundra regions and deserts of the southwest United States.

Morsels - Legend proclaims that members of this family, sometimes called Goatsuckers, were thought to suck milk from goats at night. Actually, their large mouths are effective in catching their main food item which is insects. Recently, this bird has moved into cities and towns where flat gravel roofs, playing fields, golf courses, and vacant lots have provided open environments in which to nest and feed.

Whip-poor-will

Habitat - In summer, this member of the goatsucker family frequents both deciduous and coniferous forests and open woods and oak or pine canyons.

Identification - The breeding male is about the size of a robin with a mottled body of browns, blacks, and grays. Good field marks are the rusty collar and the white tips to the outer tail feathers. The wings lack white patches characteristic of the Common Nighthawk.

Voice - This is another bird that calls its name. The sound is usually a long series of "whip-poor-weel's" which is also reported as "purple-RIB, purple-RIB". If you can get close to the bird when it's calling, you may hear what has been described as "cuck-rhip-oor-ree" call.

Range - It occurs in summer in the eastern portion of the continent from southern Canada to the southern United States. Recently it has been spreading westward into the southwestern United States.

Morsels - The Whip-poor-will begins its call about dusk and continues for one or two hours. It then begins to call again around 2:00 a.m. and continues until dawn. It is common to hear it call 50 or more times and some of these birds have been recorded calling over 1,000 successive times.

Belted Kingfisher

Habitat - It uses a variety of clear water habitats and their attendant margins where adequate perches are available, including lakes, rivers, streams, and the seacoast including bays, estuaries, and rocky shores.

Identification - The breeding male is larger than a robin. The body is bluish-gray above and white below. Its big head, long stout bill, bushy crested head, and blue-gray band across the chest are good field marks of the male.

Voice - Its call is variously described as a loud, often prolonged rattle or clatter. It can be heard throughout the year.

Range - Breeds mainly from Alaska across central Canada to Newfoundland and south to the northern United States. It is present year-round along the Pacific coast from southeastern Alaska to California and east across much of the southern United States.

Morsels - This kingfisher, a relative of the famed Australian Kookaburra, nests in a chamber at the end of a burrow that can be up to 15 feet (4.6 meters) long. The burrow is usually dug in a sand-clay bank very close to water. When the young fledge, the adults teach them to feed by catching and then dropping dead fish into the water. The young practice by "catching" these easy prey. When fishing it often hovers over the water before plunging head first after its prey.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

Habitat - This woodpecker prefers deciduous or mixed forests, especially aspen, cottonwood, and alder, often adjacent to water bodies.

Identification - It is smaller than a robin. Look for a long white, vertical wing patch on the folded wing which identifies it as a sapsucker. The breeding male has a barred back, red forehead, crown, and throat, and a striped face. In flight, a white rump is visible.

Voice - It makes a series of soft, nasal "cheurrr, whee-ur", and "meeew" calls and a variety of other calls that bring to mind the mewing of a cat. The sapsucker also drums with its bill that sounds like a few rapid beats followed by a number of slow, accentuated thumps. It may sound like "prrrrrrp, prrp, prp, prp".

Range - It occurs from southern Yukon and northeastern British Columbia east across the Canadian Prairies to Nova Scotia and south to the Great Lakes vicinity and northeastern United States. Two other species, the Red-breasted Sapsucker occurs mainly in the West, and the Red-naped Sapsucker occurs mainly in the Rocky Mountain areas.

Morsels - Sapsuckers get their name from their habit of feeding on sap that collects in small holes, or wells, that they drill in the bark of trees. They also feed on insects that are attracted to the sap wells. Under certain conditions, the sap can ferment and when consumed the sapsucker can become intoxicated and actually fall from the tree to the ground. This is not unusual in the bird world. Many birds, particularly robins, have been found intoxicated after eating fermented berries, apples, and other fruits. At times their drunkenness has allowed observers to walk up and pick them out of the tree. It also causes them to fly erratically and many die by flying into windows or moving automobiles.

Northern Flicker

Habitat - This common woodpecker is the only woodpecker that commonly feeds on the ground. It frequents pure or mixed deciduous and coniferous forests, open forests, riparian edges, forest burns, alpine meadow edges, rangeland and pastureland, and rural and urban gardens.

Identification - The breeding male is larger than a robin and occurs in two races or forms. The "yellow-shafted" male has a gray crown, red crescent on nape, black mustache, and yellow underwings. The "red-shafted" male has a brown crown, red mustache, and orangy underwings; it lacks the red crescent on the nape.

Voice - Its call is a loud, clear, rapid "wik-wik-wik-wik-wik-wik", as well as a squeaky "flick-er, flick-er, flick-er". Also, it gives a loud descending "klee-year". It drums in regular bursts sounding like "br-r-r-r-r-r-rt".

Range - Breeds in forests and woodlands throughout most of North America except the tundra. Northern populations are migratory while most of the contiguous United States has flickers year-round.

Morsels - During the nesting season, some birds, such as the Barn Swallow, lay only a set number of eggs. Even if some of the eggs are removed, these determinate layers will begin incubating their smaller than normal clutches. Other birds, such as the flicker, are indeterminate layers. They will continue laying until they have laid their normal clutch before they start incubating. Thus, if an egg is removed from the clutch, they will replace the lost egg by laying another. In one experiment, where the eggs were removed soon after they were laid, a Northern Flicker laid 71 eggs over 73 days, although its normal clutch size is only five to eight eggs! It is lucky for us that chickens are indeterminate layers.

Pileated Woodpecker

Habitat - This, the largest woodpecker in North America, breeds in a wide variety of forest types from open deciduous forests to mature coniferous forests. It prefers mixed forests. It may also be found in open forests with large trees in and near residential areas and parks.

Identification - This woodpecker is about the size of a crow. The breeding male is mainly black with a bright red cap, often seen in the shape of a crest, and red mustache. The face shows black and white stripes. In flight, note the big white patches on the undersurface of the wings.

Voice - It has a call similar to that of the Northern Flicker, but irregular (both in rhythm and loudness); it is louder, higher, and more ringing, and sounds like "kuk-kuk-kuk-kuk-kuk-kuk". Its drumming is slow and ringing.

Range - It is present year-round in taiga forests across Canada, in coastal forests down the Pacific coast to California, and hardwood forests in the eastern contiguous United States.

Morsels - This is one bird that has been observed in the unusual behavior of carrying its eggs. When its nesting tree fell down, a female Pileated Woodpecker was observed removing the eggs from the old cavity and carrying them in her bill to a new cavity some distance away. She had transferred all three of her eggs within 20 minutes.

Olive-sided Flycatcher

Habitat - In summer, this large flycatcher breeds in coniferous and mixed forests, especially aspen, birch, and maple and other forested areas, as well as clearcuts and burns with standing trees. In California it can be found in eucalyptus woods.

Identification - It is slightly smaller than a robin. Look for the large head, stout dark brownish-gray body, dark gray flanks and white center of the breast and belly. Occasionally you can see white tufts on each side of the rump which are distinctive.

Voice - It gives a dynamic but clear whistle, usually from an exposed perch, variously described as "whip-three-beers, whip-wee-wheer", quick-three-beers or I say there. Also it gives a "pip-pip-pip" call.

Range - Widely distributed throughout the boreal forest from Alaska across Canada to Newfoundland and south through the forested West to Baja, California and in the East through the Appalachian Mountains to South Carolina.

Morsels - The flycatchers, one of the most difficult groups for the birdwatcher to identify, get their name from their habit of catching flying insects. Typically, they dart out from a perch and catch the insect with often an audible click of the bill. They then return to the perch to consume the insect and wait for another to come along.

Eastern Phoebe

Habitat - This phoebe frequents open forested and wooded areas, riparian habitats, farmlands, and rocky canyons and ravines. Invariably, fresh running water of brooks, streams, and small rivers is near.

Identification - It is about the size of a sparrow. The body is generally dark grayish above and whitish-gray below. It has a dark head, all-black bill, and lacks both an eyering and wingbars. It sits upright and continuously pumps its tail while perched.

Voice - It calls a repeated, rising and falling "fee-bee, fee-bee" or "fee-bree".

Range - Breeds from central Canada east to Nova Scotia, south to central Texas and South Carolina. It is present year-round in most of the southeastern United States excluding Florida.

Morsels - This species was the first bird in North America to be "banded," when in the early 1800s, John James Audubon placed some silver wire around the legs of a family of Eastern Phoebes. Today, more than 50 million birds have been banded or ringed with small, numbered, aluminum or stainless steel bands. From those activities we have learned how long birds can live in the wild and that many birds return to their same nesting site or wintering site year after year.

Scrub Jay

Habitat - This jay breeds in oak, pinon, and juniper scrub and brush areas, chaparral and pine-oak forests as well as in suburban gardens. It avoids low scrubby areas as it needs perches to watch from.

Identification - It is slightly larger than a robin. Look for the mainly blue upper body and grayish underparts, gray-brown back, whiteish throat with a blue necklace, and head that lacks a crest. It has a large bill and long tail which makes it look larger than it really is.

Voice - It has a variety of calls, including a very dissonant, loud and grating series of "ike-ike-ike" or "check-check-check" sounds. It also utters a "jhreek-jhreek" or "shreeek" call.

Range - It is present year-round in southwestern North America from Washington east to Wyoming and south to California and western Texas. It also has become established in central Florida.

Morsels - Some songbirds, such as the Scrub Jay, have been known to live over ten years in the wild. Considering the many threats that these small birds face, that lifespan is surprising. Most songbird mortality takes place in the first six months to year of their lives. If they are able to make it through their first year, the odds of surviving into their second year are significantly higher. Some exceptional bird ages include: American Robin - 11.5 years, Purple Finch - 12.5 years, Red-winged Blackbird - 14.5 years, and Common Grackle - 16 years!

Steller's Jay

Habitat - This crested jay occurs mainly in western coniferous and mixed forests in the North and pine and oak woods and mixed oak and redwood forests in the South. It also frequents orchards, parks, suburban gardens and campsites.

Identification - This jay, the only western one with a crest, is larger than a robin. Its best field marks are the long dark crest that tops its black head and its black breast and back. The rest of the body is a deep blue that varies in intensity throughout its range. Northern jays appear darker than those in southern areas. As well birds in the interior have a white eyebrow which the coastal form lacks.

Voice - It makes a raucous "shaack-shaack-shaack-shaack" or "chook-chook-chook" call. It also gives a variety of other notes and can mimic other birds.

Range - It is widely distributed throughout the West from coastal southeastern Alaska south along the Rocky Mountains to California and New Mexico.

Morsels - The Steller's Jay, like most songbirds, gives loud alarm calls in the presence of an enemy. The call not only warns other birds of the intruder but may also indicate whether an enemy is on the ground, like a cat, or in the air, like a hawk. Even forest mammals benefit from the alarm calls of these birds. Near its nest it is unusually silent and shy.

Blue Jay

Habitat - This handsome jay breeds mainly in deciduous or mixed forests and woodlands, parklands, and residential areas.

Identification - It is larger than a robin. The body is bright blue above and white below. The best field marks are its "baby-blue" crest, white face and throat, black necklace, and blue upperparts which vividly show white spots on the wings and tail.

Voice - This jay has a wide variety of calls including a harsh "jay" or "jeeah", and a note-like "queedle, queedle" or "too-weedle, too-weedle". It also mimics other birds. It can be heard throughout the year.

Range - It breeds or is present year-round from northeastern British Columbia, where it has recently expanded its range, east across the Canadian Prairies to Newfoundland and south to eastern Colorado and New Mexico and Florida.

Morsels - A number of birds, such as the Blue Jay, take part in an activity called anting. The activity involves the bird actually picking up ants in its bill and wiping the ants over its feathers or lying passively on an anthill and allowing the ants to crawl all over its feathers. The process is thought to cause the ants to release formic acid which acts as an insecticide, ridding the birds of feather lice and other feather pests. Individual Blue Jays can be identified by their facial markings so you can tell if the same bird is visiting your feeder each year.

Gray Jay

Habitat - The "Whiskey Jack" breeds in a variety of coniferous and mixed forests usually at higher elevations including open woodlands and edges of bogs.

Identification - It is an unmistakable, all-gray bird that is about the size of a robin. It is usually darker on the back and lighter below. Look for a black "cap" on the back of the head and a white forehead on a fluffy gray body.

Voice - This bird is usually silent and is often seen flying quietly in small groups from tree to tree before it is heard. It occasionally it gives a soft whistled "wheee-ah" or "whee-ooo" or a low "chuck".

Range - It is present year-round in northern boreal forests from Alaska east to Newfoundland, along the Pacific coast in forests to northern California, and in the interior in the Rocky Mountains south to northern New Mexico.

Morsels - Also known as "Camp Robber," the Gray Jay is one of the tamest and most brazen birds in North America. It quietly moves to a campsite and will land on a camper's hand to grab a bite of the sandwich that is being held. This jay will also steal bacon from a hot frying pan or any foods left in the open. It will even enter tents and fly off with matches, candles, or other items it finds of interest. It stores its food by wrapping it into balls, held together with saliva, and hiding it for a future meal.

Clark's Nutcracker

Habitat - The Clark's Nutcracker frequents mountainous coniferous and mixed forests including edges and clearings. It prefers open forests of juniper and ponderosa pine, or whitebark pine and larch. It can frequently be found near the tree line on high mountains.

Identification - It is almost the size of a crow. At rest or in flight it shows a contrasting black, white, and gray pattern on the body. Up close look for the long pointed black bill, all gray body, and black wings with white patches on the trailing edge of the wings near the body, and white outer tail feathers.

Voice - It gives a harsh, guttural and drawn out "kra-a-a" or "khaaw". It is usually heard before it is seen. In late summer family flocks are very noisy as they feed in subalpine areas of the continent.

Range - It is present year-round in the West from southern British Columbia and Alberta south throughout the western mountains south to California and New Mexico.

Morsels - Many birds, like titmice, jays, and the Clark's Nutcracker, harvest and store or cache food. These birds place seeds or seed cones under rocks, leaves or even into the soft ground to return for them at a later date. While many of these stored seeds are not recovered a surprising proportion are. Studies have shown that Clark's Nutcrackers can find their caches in two of three attempts by using local landmarks such as stumps, rocks, or trees, and one was observed digging down through eight inches (20 centimeters) of snow to get a cached fir cone.

American Crow

Habitat - This, our most common crow, breeds in open forests and woodlands, deciduous growth along rivers, streams, and sloughs, orchards, woodlots, city parks, and residential areas. It avoids dense, heavily forested areas. It forages mainly in agricultural areas, urban sites, and tidal flats on the east coast.

Identification - This familiar bird has an entirely black plumage and black bill and feet. In flight, the squared or slightly rounded tail separates it from the Common Raven.

Voice - Its call is the familiar "caw" or "cah" repeated several times and less hoarse than that of the Common Raven. It can be heard throughout the year.

Range - It breeds from north-central British Columbia east to Newfoundland and south to California, east Texas, and Florida. Northern populations, mostly in Canada, are migratory while those throughout the United States are resident.

Morsels - The crow family is considered to have some of the more intelligent members in the bird world. The American Crow has been taught to count up to four, can solve puzzles, and quickly learns to associate certain sounds with food. Because of its habits, such as feeding on farm crops and eating songbird eggs and their young, they have been persecuted for years. Yet all the shooting and poisoning that humans have done to them has not deterred this bird and other members of its family from enduring. Many believe they have persisted simply because of their intelligence and wit.

Common Raven

Habitat - This, our largest songbird, occurs throughout North America in a wide variety of habitats from coastal beaches and islands to mountain forests, canyons, deserts and the arctic tundra.

Identification - It is larger than a duck and has an all-black body with a large, heavy black bill. In flight the wedge-shaped tail separates it from the crows. Unlike crows, it alternately flaps and soars often resembling a hawk.

Voice - It makes a low, guttural "cr-r-roak" or "kraaak" which can be heard throughout the year. It also gives a wide variety of other calls, notes, and sounds including a melodious "kloo-klok" which is often uttered while flying.

Range - It is present year-round throughout most of North America, including the high Arctic islands, from Alaska east to Newfoundland and south through the West, and around the Great Lakes and northeastern United States regions. It is absent from most southeastern North America.

Morsels - Many arctic birds, such as the Snowy Owl and ptarmigan, adopt a white plumage and have feathered legs, but not the raven. Here's a black bird with naked legs! Many think it survives the arctic winters through its intelligence alone. It has been seen working sled dogs for their food. One raven approaches the dog and when it chases the raven, a second raven moves in and steals the dog's food. Ravens have also been observed sitting on the edges of garbage cans and rocking them until they fall over. Once the can is down, the raven can pick out any scraps with ease.

Black-capped Chickadee

Habitat - This very active bird is the most common of our chickadees and is found primarily in deciduous or mixed forests and woodlands, thickets, open woods, parks, and residential areas with adjacent trees. It often visits bird feeders.

Identification - It is smaller than a sparrow. The Black-capped Chickadee is gray above, creamy-white below, with buffy sides. It has a distinctive black cap and throat.

Voice - It calls its name with a familiar "chick-a-dee-dee-dee". Its spring song is a slow whistled, easily imitated "fee-bee-ee" or "fee-bee", the first note higher than the last two. It can be heard throughout the year.

Range - It is present throughout the year across North America from Alaska east to Newfoundland and south to northern California, northern Nevada, northern Oklahoma, and New Jersey.

Morsels - When birds, like crows or chickadees, find a perched owl as they move through the forest, they fly around it, sometimes diving close to the predator, calling and creating a lot of raucous activity. This behavior, called mobbing, is thought to be an attempt to get the predator to move away from the area. Some birds, such as robins, usually mob only during the breeding season when they defend a nesting territory. Others, that use the same area throughout the year such as the Black-capped Chickadee, tend to mob predators throughout the year as well.

Chestnut-backed Chickadee

Habitat - This chickadee is found mainly in the humid, coniferous and mixed forest habitats of the west. It frequently visits feeders ,year-round, in residential areas adjacent to woodlands.

Identification - This little bird, smaller than a sparrow, is the only chickadee with a bright chestnut back and sides. It also has a black cap and throat, like the Black-capped Chickadee.

Voice - It is quieter than the Black-capped Chickadee and lacks a whistled song but gives the familiar chick-a-dee call. It also gives a hoarse "sheek-zee-zee" or "tseeek-a-dee-dee" call as well as a thin lisping "tsee-dee" call. It can be heard year-round.

Range - It is present year-round in western North America from south-eastern Alaska south to southern coastal California and east to the western ranges of the Rocky Mountains. It is the only resident chickadee on some offshore islands like Vancouver Island in British Columbia.

Morsels - The Chestnut-backed Chickadee is often found in flocks with other species such as warblers, creepers, and Downy Woodpeckers, particularly just before autumn migration. This mixed-species flocking is thought to benefit the birds by increasing the number of eyes and ears available to detect predators in the area. Mixed species flocks also benefit through individuals of one species locating similar but somewhat different food items from the other species; thus, there is less competition from individuals in mixed-species flocks.

Red-breasted Nuthatch

Habitat - In summer, this nuthatch breeds in coniferous and mixed forests as well as aspen forests. In residential areas it is found throughout the year where feeders and cavities in nearby trees provide feeding and nesting areas.

Identification - It is smaller than a sparrow with blue-gray above and rusty below. Up close look for the black crown and eyeline with a white stripe over the eye. It is often seen going headfirst down the tree as it forages in the bark and branch crotches for insects.

Voice - It gives a high, nasal "yhank-yhank-yhank" or "anck-anck-anck" which can be heard throughout the year.

Range - It is present year-round from southeast Alaska east across Canada to Newfoundland and south mainly in mountainous regions to southern California in the West and the Appalachian Mountains in the East. It spends the winter mainly in the central and southeastern United States.

Morsels - The nuthatches are the only tree foraging birds that move headfirst down the trunk. This may help them find food items that birds moving up the trunk, such as the Brown Creeper, miss. Nuthatches also store extra food in bark crevices for use later.

American Dipper

Habitat - In summer, it breeds near clear, swift mountain streams. In autumn and winter, it moves to lower elevations where water stays open, and sometimes is seen along lowland rivers and along lake shores.

Identification - The American Dipper is a chunky all slate-gray bird about the size of a large sparrow. It has a brown tinge to its head, a short stubby tail and short wings. It bobs constantly even while standing in place. The dipper wades, dives, and even flies into swift streams to swim above and below water and to feed along the bottom. It almost always perches on boulders in the middle of the stream.

Voice - The song, which can be heard throughout the year, is loud and bubbling, with trills. The call is a loud "zeet" or "ze-ee-ee-et".

Range - It is present year-round in the West from Alaska through mountainous country to California and New Mexico.

Morsels - The American Dipper will vigorously defend a stretch of stream as its territory, driving out all others of its kind. Pair-bonds between males and females can be short-lived, sometimes lasting only three weeks. It often builds its nest against the backs or sides of waterfalls. This allows its large moss nest to be kept healthy, and alive, from airborne water vapor from the falls.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet

Habitat - This tiny songster breeds in overgrown brushy forest meadows, spruce bogs, beaver and moose meadow edges, open stands of coniferous forests and evergreens, mixed forests, and wooded parks. In winter it favors deciduous thickets and brushy edges.

Identification - This very active olive green bird is smaller than a sparrow. It has an incomplete white eye ring, short, slightly forked tail, two white wing bars, and golden edges to its dark wings. The tiny ruby crown of the male is seldom seen. It often flicks its wings.

Voice - The song is very loud for such a small bird. It starts with several high, thin notes, drops to several low ones, and goes into a series of loud phrases. It may sound like "See-See-See, Just Look At Me, Just Look At Me, Just Look At Me, See-See-See". The call is a dry little 'ji-dit'.

Range - It breeds from coast to coast in the taiga from Alaska through Canada, along the Rocky Mountains to Arizona and New Mexico, and in the coastal mountains along the Pacific coast.

Morsels - This kinglet feeds predominantly upon insects and spiders which it finds among leaves and needles often at the tips of branches in bushes and trees. Sometimes it feeds on the forest floor. Other insect prey includes a variety of wasps, butterflies, moths, caterpillars, and flies. It also drinks sap from sapsucker wells in birch and willow trees and eats some fruit, particularly elderberries. In winter, it is hard to spot this bird because it is mainly a loner unlike its close relative, the Golden-crowned Kinglet, that occurs in flocks.

Northern Mockingbird

Habitat - The mockingbird originally bred in scrubby woodlands and canyons but now it is at home in gardens, parks, woodlands, brushy farmland, brushy deserts, and streamside thickets at low elevations. It prefers short grass or nearly bare ground, and favors mowed lawns. It is absent from the interior of forested areas.

Identification - The Northern Mockingbird is slightly longer than a robin. It is a slim, long-tailed gray bird with medium gray upperparts and light gray underparts. The wings and tail are dark with a white flash at the bend of the wing and the outer tail feathers are white. It shows large white patches on the wings in flight.

Voice - The Northern Mockingbird is a very fine singer. It has an extensive repertoire of songs which often incorporate skillful imitations of other species. Individual phrases are repeated three or four times unlike the Gray Catbird. The alarm call is a raspy hew and an explosive chat. It often sings at night.

Range - It occurs year-round throughout much the contiguous United States and is a rare summer visitor and breeder to extreme southern regions of Canada except Newfoundland.

Morsels - Both sexes sing during the day but only unmated males sing at night. A male may have a song repertoire as large as 150 or more songs for spring and an equally large, but almost completely different repertoire, for autumn. The older the bird, the more songs it knows. Mockingbirds acquire their songs by imitating the songs and calls of other birds, mammals, amphibians, and even machines. Young mockingbirds begin singing, although quietly, between one and two months of age.

Hermit Thrush

Habitat - The Hermit Thrush breeds mainly in cool, open coniferous and mixed forests and woodlands of the north and the western mountains as well as along ocean shores on the Queen Charlotte Islands in British Columbia. It also occurs in thickets as high as the subalpine zone in the mountains.

Identification - This thrush is between a sparrow and a robin in size. It belongs to the brown-backed thrush group and is the only one with a reddish or rufous tail, which it often flicks upwards and slowly lowers. The eye ring is thin and whitish. The bird's back and wings are olive-brown or gray brown. Its underparts are spotted, with the spots concentrated on the breast.

Voice - This thrush may have the most beautiful song of any North American bird. It sings a loud, slow descending flute-like song which begins each phrase with a clear whistle. Its call notes include a quarrelsome "chup", a soft "chup-chup", and a scolding "tuk-tuk-tuk". It sings mainly in the evening and at dawn.

Range - The Hermit Thrush breeds in the boreal forest across North America from Alaska to Newfoundland, south to California in the West and Maryland in the East.

Morsels - The Hermit Thrush, like many songbirds, sometimes engage in an odd activity called 'anting'. Birds seize ants and place them in their feathers. They may also crush the ants and rub the juices on their feathers or dust themselves on ant hills. Scientists speculate that formic acid from the ants acts as an insecticide to combat skin and feather parasites.

Gray Catbird

Habitat - In the East, the Gray Catbird is often found in backyards where it lives in dense undergrowth, brush, thorns scrub, and brushy gardens. In the West, it is often found in deciduous thickets, forest edges, and thick brushes growing in draws and along streams.

Identification - This bird is slightly smaller than a robin. It is a slim bird with an all slate-gray body, long tail, and black cap on its head. Note the rusty feathers beneath its dark tail. It often flips its tail when perched.

Voice - The Gray Catbird is a good mimic. Its songs are a jumble of bits of other birds' songs, inventively arranged in series. It seldom repeats the same phrases, which sets it apart from both the Brown Thrasher and the Northern Mockingbird. It also utters hoots, cackles, whistles, a catlike meow from which it gets its name, and a questioning Mary? The alarm note is a loud check.

Range - It breeds across southern Canada from mainland British Columbia to Nova Scotia and south through the central and eastern United States to the Gulf states. It does not occur in Florida, and populations along the southeastern coastal states are present year-round.

Morsels - The Gray Catbird is a member of a small group of 30 'mockingbirds' or 'mimic-thrushes' which are able to skillfully mimic other birds and a variety of other animals. The catbird is known to imitate at least 40 other species. It nests in dense shrubbery. The blue-green eggs require 12 to 13 days of incubation. The female does the incubating. The young remain in the nest 10 to 11 days and are tended by both parents. A pair is more likely to separate if they fail to raise young than if they succeed.

Golden-crowned Kinglet

Habitat - The Golden-crowned Kinglet breeds in cool coniferous forests, often very dense. It is also found in summer in spruce plantations.

Identification - This is a tiny, short-tailed, olive gray bird that is smaller than a sparrow. On the head it shows a black-and-white bordered crown patch of orange in the male and yellow in the female. It has conspicuous white wing bars and golden feather edges to its tiny dark wings. It feeds in evergreens at the tips of branches and often flutters as it picks out insects from between the needles.

Voice - The call is a very high pitched "seee" or "see-see-see" note delivered alone or in a series of threes. The song is similar but is made up. The song consists of three to four long notes followed by three shorter chattering notes falling in pitch. It can be heard throughout the year high in the forest canopy.

Range - It occurs across the boreal forest zone from southeastern Alaska to Newfoundland and south in the East into the northern Appalachian Mountains, and in the West southward through the coniferous forests and wet coastal rain forests. It spends the winter from southern Canada southward through the United States.

Morsels - The Golden-crowned Kinglet usually builds its nest in tree tops, sometimes nearly as high as 100 feet (30 meters) from the ground. Nests are woven cups so well hidden in thick branches of spruce, fir, and other conifers that they are relatively weather proof and concealed from predators. Squirrels and jays, however, will methodically search branches and when they do, agitated kinglets often follow them, calling and flicking their wings. Other songbirds may join the kinglets in protesting the presence of the nest hunters and actually "mob" them. Often the predator gives up and moves away.

European Starling

Habitat - The European Starling is very adaptable and breeds in a very wide range of natural and human-associated habitats including almost any location where it can find a cavity in which to nest. It breeds in wooded areas, cities, suburban areas, orchards, parks, farms, cliffs, and along highway corridors. It avoids large expanses of forest, desert, and chaparral.

Identification - This bird is larger than a sparrow but smaller than a robin. It is a compact, stocky, glossy black bird with a short, squared tail, pointed wings, and a longish bill. In breeding season the starling's head, back, and breast show a purple-greenish iridescence. From mid-summer through winter it changes its plumage to show many small white spots. In spring its bill is yellow; in winter it is dark. Young starlings are uniformly gray-brown.

Voice - The song is a jumbled, prolonged series of various whistles, chatters, down-slurred and up-slurred notes, squawks, and gargling sounds. It is an excellent mimic and incorporates parts of other birds' songs into its own. A common call is a harsh "prurrrp" or a high whistled "wheee-eee".

Range - It occurs from Alaska east across southern Canada and south through the United States. It is present year-round throughout much of its range except the northern areas where it is migratory.

Morsels - The European Starling is not native to North America. The bird was introduced into New York City in 1890 and 1891 when 60 individuals were released into Central Park. From that handful of birds the North American population has grown to 200 million starlings now distributed across most of the continent. The starling was able to spread so quickly because it is a very adaptable bird. It is very aggressive in claiming nesting cavities, forcing many native cavity nesters to abandon their holes. It is also prolific, raising two or three broods a year.

Brown Thrasher

Habitat - The Brown Thrasher breeds in streamside thickets, gullies, canyons, shrubby areas, and flood plain forest edges as well as back yards, gardens, woodlots, and hedgerows. It also likes vine tangles and brushy areas.

Identification - It is larger than a robin and appears to be a long, rangy, powerful looking bird. The upperparts are a rich red brown, including the wings which have two distinct white bars. The bill is long and mostly dark, the face is grayish, and the eyes are golden. The underparts are white with a buff wash on the breast and sides and sharply defined brown streaks from the throat to the belly.

Voice - The song is loud and is full of short paired (sometimes tripled) phrases such as "drop it, drop it, cover it cover it, pull it up pull it up". The call notes include a hard crack, a low spunk, and a three note whistle. The Brown Thrasher is also an excellent mimic.

Range - It breeds mainly from southern Canada to the Gulf states east of the Rocky Mountains. Northern populations are migratory, while those in the southeastern United States are sedentary.

Morsels - The Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, and Northern Mockingbird all belong to the Family Mimidae. As the name suggests, the birds are mimics, adding imitations of other birds to their own vocal repertoire. Yet each mimic displays a specific style of song delivery that identifies it. The Gray Catbird utters phrases once, the Brown Thrasher utters phrases in pairs (sometimes trios), while the Northern Mockingbird utters each phrase three or four times.

American Robin

Habitat - The American Robin breeds in many human habitats such as orchards, gardens, parks, farm shelter belts, as well any wooded area such as subalpine forest, mixed forest, hedgerows, windbreaks, and brushy country.

Identification - This familiar bird is gray-brown above and brick red below. Usually the tail is a darker. It has a black head with a broken white eye ring and white streaks on the throat. The bill is short and straw colored. The lower belly and feathers under the tail are white.

Voice - The melodious song is a series of loud, rising and falling phrases, which sound like "cheerily, cheerup, cheerily". Its calls include a rapid but-but-but or put-put-put as well as a high pitched see-lip note of alarm.

Range - It occurs throughout most of North America from the northern limit of the tree line to the southern limit of the deserts. Populations in the north are migratory, while those in southern regions are present year-round.

Morsels - To most people the American Robin heralds spring. It has adapted to the suburban backyards better than almost any other bird in North America. In spring, males vigorously defend their backyards from other male robins. Robins build their cup-like nests on stout branches or on shelves or ledges. Three to five eggs are incubated by the female for 14 to 16 days. A pair may have two or occasionally three broods a year. Robins eat earthworms which they hunt on lawns, snails, insects, and fruit.

Wood Thrush

Habitat - The Wood Thrush breeds in cool deciduous forests, often near water. If large wooded areas occur near towns, the Wood Thrush might occur there as well. This bird favors swamps and other wooded wet spots.

Identification - The Wood Thrush is smaller than a robin but larger than a sparrow. It is a plump, brown-backed thrush with a white eye ring and a rusty-colored head. It is brightest on the crown and nape. Its lower face and underparts are heavily covered with large dark round spots.

Voice - This songster sings beautiful flute-like songs. It delivers a short three part song transcribed as "eee-o-lay". Its call notes include a short pit, a soft but rapid "pip-pip-pip-pip" and a low "kirt".

Range - It breeds in eastern portion of the continent from southern Canada, excluding Newfoundland, south to the southern United States excluding southern Florida.

Morsels - The Wood Thrush builds a robin-like nest of mud and plant material. It is very fond of incorporating white paper, birch bark, cloth or other white material in the nest. Some scientists speculate that large white patches of nesting material help visually break up the shape of the nest in the same way that the small white underparts parts of the incubating bird do.

Veery

Habitat - The Veery breeds in moist deciduous forests and thickets almost always associated with water including streams, swamps, sloughs, and beaver ponds. Because it prefers thickets, this thrush is not easily seen.

Identification - The Veery is between a robin and a sparrow in size. It is warm brown above with almost no eye ring and white below. The face is not buffy like the Swainson's Thrush. The breast spots are blurred, small, and clustered in lines converging from mid-breast to lower throat, unlike the big dark spots of the Wood Thrush or the large spots and 'arrow heads' of the Hermit Thrush.

Voice - The Veery is one of the finest songsters in North America. Its song is made up of four or five notes that descends in a spiraling manner of veer notes. Its call is a slurred "veer-ee", or whistled "whee-ou", almost like its name.

Range - It breeds from south-central British Columbia across southern Canada and northern half of the United States south in the Appalachian Mountains in the East and Rocky Mountains in the West.

Morsels - Experiments by ornithologists have shown that males of the brown-backed thrush group cannot distinguish between the various members of the group by sight alone. If stuffed specimens of the Wood Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush and Veery are placed in a Veery's territory, it will attack all of them. However, if the stuffed birds are paired with tape recorded songs, the Veery will attack only the dummy "singing" the Veery's song.

Varied Thrush

Habitat - The Varied Thrush prefers to breed in moist, dense western forests along the Pacific coast and in the cool evergreen forests of the western mountains. It also nests in deciduous forests. In winter, birds that nested in the mountains move to lowland forests. The Varied Thrush may appear in wooded gardens and backyards, especially during migration and in cold weather.

Identification - This bird is about the size of a robin. It resembles a robin but has a black mask topped by an orange eye brow and the underparts are orange with a black chest band. It also has a gray cap, nape, and back and darker wings and tail. Also the wings have two orange wing bars and show other orange flashes when in flight.

Voice - The unmistakable song is an eerie, haunting buzzy whistle that is usually combined with a second whistle higher or lower than the first. It almost sounds like a human trying to hum and whistle at the same time. Some of the lowest tones seem to vibrate. The commonest call is a chuk note. Its favorite time to call is in the very early morning or early evening.

Range - This deep forest bird lives primarily in rainforests of the Pacific Northwest. It occurs year-round from central Alaska and western Mackenzie south through British Columbia to northern California. It winters in lowland areas throughout its breeding range.

Morsels - The Varied Thrush is a bird of the deep forests of the West and has not become a familiar backyard bird, except when bad weather drives it into residential areas. It often ends up feeding on old fruit, especially wind fall apples. Two Varied Thrushes competing for food may display and become very aggressive toward each other. Each bird will extend its head forward, hold its body in a horizontal crouch and when the situation becomes really heated, spread and raise its tail and wings. Such a display usually serves to drive one of the birds away.

Swainson's Thrush

Habitat - The Swainson's Thrush breeds in deciduous, coniferous, and mixed forests, especially where conditions are moist, such as near beaver ponds, swamps, and bogs. It also frequents dense second-growth thickets.

Identification - The Swainson's Thrush is the buffiest of the brown-backed thrushes and like them is a woodland bird between a sparrow and a robin in size. It has a buffy face and upper breast. Also look for a bold buff eye ring. The upperparts are reddish brown, the underparts are white with spots on the chest.

Voice - The song starts on a quick series of low notes and spirals upwards becoming fainter towards the end. It has been transcribed as "Oh, Amelia, will-ya, will-ya, will-ya". The call is a sudden "wip, whit" or a soft "wheel".

Range - Breeds across North America from the boreal forest in Alaska, across Canada to Newfoundland and south to the Great Lakes regions and northern Appalachian Mountains in the East and in the rain forests along the Pacific coast and in the northern Rocky Mountains.

Morsels - The Swainson's Thrush migrates at night like all the brown-backed thrushes, and has a special migration call note. It utters a soft heep that is given in flight between dawn and dusk as it flies. On any calm September night across much of North America one can listen for this mysterious call and know that the Swainson's Thrushes are flying south towards South America.

Black-billed Magpie

Habitat - This "old coyote in the sky" breeds in open habitat such as grasslands, rangeland, savanna, and farmlands with scattered trees, riparian situations, open forests and woodlands, brush-covered country, and occasionally residential areas.

Identification - It is a crow-sized black-and-white bird with a long, wedge-shaped tail and black bill. It has large white patches in the flight feathers and white at the base of the wings.

Voice - It calls a questioning but nasal "mahg"? or "maag"? as well as a series of harsh "chek, chek" or "chuck, chuck" notes.

Range - It is present year-round from Alaska south to eastern California, and east to western Ontario and Oklahoma. Far northern populations migrate locally to towns with active garbage dumps.

Morsels - Outside the nesting season, the Black-billed Magpie can form roosting flocks of 40 or 50 birds, and spend the night in trees or riparian willow thickets. All birds roost and most birds roost at night. Some choose to roost singly while others roost in flocks of a few to millions of birds. The now extinct Passenger Pigeon formed the largest roosting flocks of all land birds, their roosts consisting of literally billions of birds covering many square miles.

Tufted Titmouse

Habitat - This titmouse occurs in deciduous and mixed forests, scrub, parks, shade trees, groves, and riparian habitats as well as residential areas. It regularly visits backyard feeders.

Identification - This little bird is smaller than a sparrow. It is our only small gray bird with a distinct crest. The crest is often held erect. It has a black forehead and rusty flanks. Birds found west of central Texas have a black crest and gray forehead.

Voice - Its song is a whistled "here, here, here", or "peter, peter, peter". It also gives a variety of other wheeze and whistle sounds.

Range - It is present year-round from extreme southern Ontario south through the eastern United States to the Gulf Coast including most of Florida.

Morsels - This little bird builds its nest in a cavity, such as an old woodpecker hole, and takes readily to man-made nest boxes. It uses hair as part of its nest material and has been observed plucking hair from live squirrels, opossums, and even from humans!

Cactus Wren

Habitat - This very large wren frequents deserts, especially where there is plentiful cactus, clumps of yucca and mesquite, as well as trees in urban arid areas.

Identification - It is chubby and slightly smaller than a robin. It has a rusty crown, white eye-stripe, streaked back, and heavy spotting on the breast that converges into a cluster just below the throat. The tail has white spots on the outer feathers.

Voice - Its song is a repetitious, monotone "chuh-chuh-chuh-chuh, choo-choo-choo-choo", or "chug-chug-chug-chug" suggesting an automobile trying to start. It also utters a variety of scolds and cat-like mews.

Range - It occurs year-round only in the southwestern United States.

Morsels - Unlike many birds who allow their nests to fall into disrepair after the breeding season is over, the Cactus Wren maintains old nests and uses them as roosts. It searches for food very methodically, checking the underside of leaves, fallen debris, and other ground litter.

Rock Wren

Habitat - This stocky western wren frequents open rocky areas including canyons and cliffs as well as talus slopes and rock piles, usually far from water. It inhabits suitable environments from deserts and coastal islands to alpine areas.

Identification - This sparrow-size wren is a pale gray or gray-brown with a rust-colored rump. It has a long, thin bill, whitish underparts with fine streaks on the pale breast, and the buffy corners on the tail.

Voice - The male's song is a series of three to five trilling notes, on one pitch, that makes a chant-like "kra-wee, keree", or "tra-lee". The song can be repeated a number of times. The call is a "tick-ear or ki-deeeee". It also gives a high trill.

Range - It breeds from south-central British Columbia east to Saskatchewan and south throughout the West. Northern populations are migratory.

Morsels - How many tunes can you remember? Studies have shown that some male Rock Wrens have a repertoire of more than 100 songs! Sometimes the Rock Wren builds a "path" of rock fragments leading to its nest. So far, this odd behavior is not understood.

Canyon Wren

Habitat - The Canyon Wren frequents steep walled canyons and cliff faces including rocky outcrops, rocky barrens, and boulder strewn sites especially associated with water. In some situations it will frequent human-made stone buildings and rock retaining walls.

Identification - This wren is about the size of a sparrow. It is brown above with a red-brown colored rump and tail. It has a pure white throat and breast contrasting with the finely streaked dark rufous-brown belly.

Voice - Males have a beautiful song often enhanced as it rings off the canyon walls. The full song consists of a pattern of about 12 clear, ringing notes tumbling down the scale like "te-yew, te-yew, te-yew, tew, tew, tew, tew". It also has a calls which sounds like a "metallic beet" or "tschee".

Range - It is present year-round from south-central British Columbia to Montana, and south to the southwestern United States.

Morsels - It is a common belief that a great deal is known about all the birds in North America. But, here's one species where the amateur birdwatcher can play a role, for the Canyon Wren is "virtually unstudied."

Carolina Wren

Habitat - This bird, one of the largest of all North America wrens, frequents open deciduous forests and woodlands with heavy undergrowth such as thickets and vines, as well as forest edges, parks, towns, and residential areas.

Identification - It is about the size of a sparrow and the rustiest of all wrens. It has a conspicuous white eyebrow stripe with rusty-brown or rufous upperparts and the buffy underparts.

Voice - The males sings a two or three-syllable chant which sounds like "tea-kettle, tea-kettle, tea, chirpty, chirpity, chirpity, chirp", or "wheedle-wheedle-wheedle-whee". It also gives a clear descending "tiirrr" call as well as other buzzy and chattering sounds.

Range - It is present year-round in the eastern United States from southern Iowa and New Jersey southward.

Morsels - Some wrens, like the House, Bewick's and Carolina Wren, seem attracted to some very unusual nest sites. While their traditional nest site is a cavity, nests of these species have also been found in pails, behind a frying pan hanging on a wall, in open bags partially filled with nails, in mailboxes, in abandoned cars, in empty cow skulls, in abandoned bald-faced hornet paper nests, in tea pots and old shoes, and one House Wren nested in the axle of a car that was used every day!

Bewick's Wren

Habitat - This wren frequents brushy areas and thickets, often in mixed forests, as well as riparian woods, chaparral, pinon-juniper woodlands, and residential yards.

Identification - The Bewick's Wren is slightly smaller than a sparrow. It is the only wren with mostly whitish underparts and white outer-tips to the tail. The upperparts are brownish and there is a conspicuous white eyebrow line above the eye.

Voice - The song is reminiscent of a Song Sparrow. It begins with a quiet buzz followed by a trill and a series of slurred notes. Its scolding call is a harsh "vit vit vit" or a buzzing note that sounds, at times, like a large insect.

Range - It breeds from southwestern British Columbia south along the coast to California and east across to southern United States to the Appalachian Mountains.

Morsels - This little wren has shown significant declines in numbers in the eastern regions of the United States. Loss of old farm sites with their shrubby habitats and extensive pesticide use are two possible causes. But, even in urban areas, homeowners can plant shrubs and reduce pesticide use, which could help the Bewick's Wren recover some of its former numbers.

House Wren

Habitat - The House Wren breeds in deciduous forests and woodlands and edges, shrubs and thickets, or brush in open situations, pine and oak woods at higher elevations in Arizona, along forest edges, farmlands, and residential areas.

Identification - This wren is smaller than a sparrow. Of all the wrens it is the grayest and lacks distinct markings. It has a very faint eyebrow stripe and ring and its heavily barred tail is without white spots.

Voice - It has variously been described as a cascading burst of bubbling song that rises then falls near the end. It gives a loud scolding call that sounds like "trrrrr" as well as a harsh buzz.

Range - It breeds from southern Canada south through most of the United States except the Gulf coast states. It is migratory in the northern part of its range.

Morsels - House Wren pairs have been observed destroying the nest, eggs, and even nestlings of other House Wrens and other species that nest close to their territory. The behavior, which is inhibited in mated males and breeding females, is thought to have evolved as a result of competition for nesting cavities.

Winter Wren

Habitat - The Winter Wren, one of the smallest birds in North America, breeds mainly in coniferous forest with dense understory often near water. It also lives in shady brushy areas, brush piles, slash areas, and thickets in wooded ravines.

Identification - This tiny wren is smaller than a sparrow. It is the only wren with dark brown underparts and a heavily barred belly. It also has a faint buffy eyebrow. Its short stubby tail is often held erect over its back.

Voice - Its song is a long series of clear but bubbly, cascading notes, trills and warbles which is high in pitch. It is one of the smallest songbirds but has one of the longest songs. Its call is a double "chimp-chimp".

Range - It occurs south of the boreal forest across North America in two main areas; the Appalachian Mountains in the East and the coastal rain forest and Sierra Nevada Mountains in the West. Northern populations are migratory.

Morsels - The Winter Wren is the only wren found in the Old World from the British Isles across northern Asia to northern Africa. In England, it is called Wren or Jenny Wren. Ornithologists believe that this tiny wren made its way to Eurasia from Alaska.

Sedge Wren

Habitat - This secretive wren can be found in wet meadows and savanna as well as sedge and grass marshes. Sometimes it visits grain fields.

Identification - This small wren, which is smaller than a sparrow, has brown upperparts and brown-washed underparts. It is stockier and buffier than its relative the Marsh Wren and has a buffy undertail and lacks a conspicuous white eye-stripe. Faint streaks on the top of the head are very difficult to see, as are streaks on the back.

Voice - Its song is a dry chatter which sounds like "chap-chap-chap-chap-chap-chaper-rrrrr" or "tsip-tsip-tsip-tsip-trrrrrrrrrrup". It also gives a sharp "chap, tick", or "tsip" call.

Range - It breeds mainly from eastern Saskatchewan, southern Manitoba and southern Ontario south to northeastern Kansas and Delaware.

Morsels - Most birds have monogamous relationships where the pair stays together at least during the breeding season. Others, like the Sedge Wren, have a polygynous relationship where the male mates with more than one female. Since the female tends to choose her mate, she wants to make a choice that will ensure the success of her raising the young. Thus, some females will choose an already mated male that has a productive territory rather than a bachelor male with a less productive territory.

Marsh Wren

Habitat - The Marsh Wren breeds in fresh, brackish, and salt-water marshes with abundant stands of low cattails, bulrushes, and reeds. It is also found along borders of rivers and streams where dense grasses and sedges occur.

Identification - This little bird is smaller than a sparrow. It is mostly brownish above and buff-washed with white below. The most noticeable field mark is the white eyebrow stripe. It is the only wren with white stripes on its back. The crown is unstreaked.

Voice - The Marsh Wren usually sings perched on the stem of a cattail or bulrush. It gives a series of rapid, gurgling, liquid warble-like notes and rattles, ending with a raspy trill. Its call is a low "tsuk-tsuk" or "chuk-chuk".

Range - It occurs widely in wetlands over most of the United States and southern Canada. It is migratory in northern areas where marshes freeze.

Morsels - Like the House and Sedge Wren, the Marsh Wren male builds several nests within his territory, often called dummy nests. The exact function of these nests is not completely understood. The female may select one, line it, and use it as the nest site or she may decide to build her own from scratch. Observation has revealed, however, that the most enthusiastic males building the dummy nests tend to be the most successful in attracting females.

Red-eyed Vireo

Habitat - It breeds in deciduous and mixed deciduous forests as well as in groves of tall shade trees in suburbs and parks. It is a common bird of aspen groves in the prairies.

Identification - The Red-eyed Vireo is the size of a sparrow. It is a sleek, slim bird most often heard and seen in the forest's upper canopy. It is mostly olive-green above and white below. It is the only vireo with a distinct white stripe over the eye. Also look for a gray cap lined with black on its edge and a red eye which is difficult to see.

Voice - The song is a repetitious series of brief robin-like phrases separated by short pauses. The first phrases have a rising inflection like a question. The next phrase descends, like an answer. The song has been transcribed as "cherr-o-wit, cheree, sissy-a-wit, tee-o" or See me? Here I am! Up here. See? Vireo!. The call is a nasal chway and it utters a harsh chatter.

Range - It breeds from north-central Canada and across most of the southern portions south to the Gulf Coast and eastward to eastern Texas, northern Colorado, and northern Oregon.

Morsels - When on its breeding grounds the Red-eyed Vireo is a tireless singer. In fact it has been nick-named "marathon singer." One male was recorded singing more than 22,000 individual songs in one day! That's more than 916 songs every hour. A vireo may sing as many as 40 phrases a minute.

American Goldfinch

Habitat - This colorful finch breeds in old fields, weedy edges, streamside thickets, woodland edges, openings in coniferous forests, and treed and shrubby gardens and parks. It commonly visits feeders, especially in the non-breeding season and is also partial to willow thickets along streams in winter. It avoids heavy forests and treeless prairies.

Identification - This finch is about the size of a sparrow. The breeding male is the only bright yellow bird with black wings, tail, and forehead. Each wing has two white bars. It has a bouncy up and down flight.

Voice - The goldfinch's song consists of a long jumbled series of sweet canary-like "twitterings", "trills", and "zwee" notes. Its call is a "chee-dee-dup" or "per-chick-o-ree" which is often given in flight.

Range - It breeds from southern Canada south through the Pacific coast states and in the mountains south to the desert and widely in the eastern United States but not in southern regions.

Morsels - The American Goldfinch nests much later than most songbirds, from July to September. Nesting occurs at the same time that many of the goldfinch's favorite foods such as thistles, sunflowers, dandelions, and daisies come into seed. This 'crop' can account for almost all of the American Goldfinch's diet at that time. A family of noisy young goldfinches being fed by their parents among the late summer roadside thistles is a common sight in many parts of North America.

American Redstart

Habitat - The redstart prefers to breed in open deciduous second growth forests and woodlands but also is found in summer in mixed forests and woodlands, and dense forests and woodlands and tall bushes bordering streams. It avoids thick coniferous forests.

Identification - This flashy bird slightly smaller than a sparrow. The male is all coal-black and bright orange-red which shows in along the base of the tail, in the wings, and on the sides of its body. The belly is white. Year old males are olive gray above, often with small patches and flecks of black on the head or back. The tail and wing patches are yellow. There may be a trace of orange on the sides. The redstart often keeps its tail and wings slightly fanned when perched.

Voice - The song is a loud, musical series of notes easily confused with the song of a Yellow Warbler. One redstart song sounds like "see-see-see see see" or "chewee chewee chewee". Another is a high pitched series of couplets "wee-see, wee-see, wee-see".

Range - It breeds in the boreal forest from British Columbia and south-central Mackenzie east across Canada to Newfoundland and south through the eastern United States to the southern Gulf Coast states and in the West from eastern Washington and Oregon to northeastern Texas.

Morsels - The American Redstart builds its neat cup-like nest in the forks of short trees or shrubs. The female incubates the eggs. The young remain in the nest nine days after hatching. When an intruder gets near young that have just left the nest, adult redstarts call sharply and move conspicuously, spreading their tails and hopping into full view. Such a distraction display is not deliberately planned, but is the result of the adult bird's mixed flight or fight responses. Sometimes, however, it often is enough to distract the intruder and save the young.

Bobolink

Habitat - The Bobolink used to breed in tall grass prairie, but today it is found in summer in open hayfields, mixed grass fields, farmland, and lush meadows.

Identification - This bird is slightly larger than a sparrow. The male is our only songbird that is black below and mostly white above. It has a yellowish-buff patch on the back of its head and wide white streaks on its back. The rump and lower back are also white. The tail feathers are pointed.

Voice - The Bobolink's song is a loud bubbling jumble of notes delivered as the male flies over an open field with rapid, shallow wing beats. It resembles "rob-rob Lincoln-Lincoln bobolink bobolink bobolink spink-spank-spink" or simply "bob-o-LINK bob-o-LINK bob-o-LINK". The call is a "clink" or metallic "peenk".

Range - It breeds across central North America from south-central British Columbia east to Nova Scotia, south to eastern Oregon, northern Utah, Kansas, and western North Carolina.

Morsels - Bobolinks invade the rice fields of the southern United States during their southward migration. In the 1800s huge numbers of "Rice Birds", as they were known, were slaughtered as agricultural pests and used as delicacies in restaurants. Today, the Bobolink is protected from direct killing but it is losing habitat as its pampas wintering grounds in Argentina are being converted into croplands.

Chipping Sparrow

Habitat - The Chipping Sparrow is a familiar backyard bird breeding around ornamental evergreens, orchards, farmlands, country roadsides, and city parks. Away from human settlement it breeds on the edges of coniferous and deciduous forests and in mountain meadows with stunted trees.

Identification - This bird is a small sparrow. It is a delicately built bird and the only sparrow with a small chestnut-cap with a prominent black line through and white stripe above the eye. It also has a long tail. It habitually sings from a high perch. The underparts are unmarked and gray. The back is brown and streaked. The wings and tail are brown with narrow wing bars.

Voice - The song is a long, flat, rapid but monotonous "trill". It has been described as an insect-like "trill" on one pitch and resembling the sound from a small toy sewing machine. The call is a very high pitched "tisp".

Range - It breeds in the boreal forest from southeastern Alaska across Canada to western Newfoundland and south through coniferous and deciduous forests and montane areas through most of the United States. It is present year-round in many of the extreme southern states.

Morsels - The Chipping Sparrow builds a compact nest low to the ground, often in evergreens. The nest is constructed from stems, grasses, and rootlets and is lined with mammal hair or fur. In the 1800s horse hair was favored. These days Chipping Sparrows often have to make do with pet hair. Only the female incubates and is often a 'close sitter', meaning that she will stay on the eggs even while people and other intruders are close by.

Common Grackle

Habitat - The Common Grackle prefers open country with scattered trees, such as farms, riverside groves, wet woodlands parks, cemeteries, and suburban gardens. It nests in loose colonies, often in conifers.

Identification - This large blackbird is a little larger than a robin. Its body is a glossy black with pale eyes and a long tail which is keel-shaped and very noticeable in flight. The body of Common Grackles in the southeastern United States have a purple gloss while in the rest of the species' range it shows a bronzy gloss on the back and breast.

Voice - The song is a harsh but short and wheezy "co-ku-ba-geek". The call is a loud "chuck". The male often ruffles its plumage while singing.

Range - It breeds across Canada from northeastern British Columbia and southern Mackenzie, and the foothills of the Rocky Mountains in Alberta, Montana and south to New Mexico, to Newfoundland. It is present year-round in the southeastern United States.

Morsels - Blackbirds, including grackles, like to flock together after the breeding season, especially to roost in the evening. The size of such nightly roosts can be astounding. During the winter of 1974-75 the United States Fish and Wildlife Service counted 723 major gathering roosts with a total of 438 million blackbirds and 99 million starlings in the Lower Forty Eight States. The biggest roosts were in the lower Mississippi valley.

Common Yellowthroat

Habitat - The yellowthroat often breeds in wet or damp situations like reeds and cattails around streams, ponds, marshes, damp meadows, fields, and ditches. It also breeds in drier locations such as rejuvenated logging cuts and brushy forest openings. It stays low to the ground.

Identification - This warbler is the size of a small sparrow. The male is olive green above and yellow below with a white belly. The head has a broad black mask through the eyes and on the forehead. The mask is often edged by light gray. The throat is a bright yellow.

Voice - The song, which is short and vigorous, is made up of two or three syllable phrases sounding like "witchity-witchity-witchity" or "which-is-it? which-is-it? which-is-it?". Accent and notes may vary during the song. The call is a loud "chick".

Range - It breeds throughout most of North America from the tree line southward. It is present year-round in much of the extreme southern United States.

Morsels - The Common Yellowthroat is often among the bird corpses that litter city streets below today's glass-sided office towers. During autumn, but also at other times of the year, migrating birds become disoriented by the effects of electric lights left on. Also, reflective glass buildings attract the birds, which collide with the glass panes and die. In the United States alone it is estimated that about 955 million birds die each year after colliding with windows.

Dark-eyed Junco

Habitat - Juncos breed in openings and along edges of coniferous and mixed forests and woodlands. Some even nest in yards, parks, and along edges of golf courses. In migration and winter they flock around brushy and overgrown edges, roadsides, parks, and suburban gardens.

Identification - The Dark-eyed Junco is about the size of a sparrow which shows some geographical variation in its plumage. Males of western populations have black heads and reddish-brown backs with buffy sides and white underparts. Some may show a gray head. Eastern populations are a dark slate overall with white bellies. All juncos have pale pink bills and flashing white outer tail feathers.

Voice - Its song consists of a metallic, musical "trill" which is given on the same pitch. The common call is a sharp "smick" or "smack". As well "twittering" notes are given in flight. Some juncos may sing in winter.

Range - Breeds in forests and woodlands in North America from Alaska to Newfoundland and south across the northern United States to southern California and New Mexico in the West and the Appalachian Mountains in the East. It is present year-round in southern areas.

Morsels - The Dark-eyed Junco is a common feeder bird, but are we feeding them what they want? Tests on seed preferences show that there are regional differences in what they prefer to eat. Juncos preferred cracked corn in the northeastern United States and milo in the southwestern United States. If you want to know what your juncos prefer, offer them a selection of seeds and watch closely to see which they eat first.

Eastern Meadowlark

Habitat - The meadowlark breeds in open country such as grassy fields and meadows and open rangeland and farmland with extensive grasslands. Where the two species occur together, the Western Meadowlark is found in drier habitat.

Identification - This colorful songster is slightly smaller than a robin. It is a chunky, short-tailed bird that is brown above, yellow below. It has a black "V" on its breast and white outer tail feathers that are noticeable when it flies. It is almost identical to the Western Meadowlark but can best be separated by its song.

Voice - The song is a loud, clear whistled series of notes transcribed as "spring-of-the-year". The song is often slurred and descends in pitch. The call is a harsh "zree" or an abrupt "z-d-t".

Range - It breeds mainly in eastern North America from southern Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia south the Gulf Coast and west to central Arizona, and western Nebraska and South Dakota. It is present year-round in the southeastern United States.

Morsels - Both the Eastern and Western Meadowlark display a camouflage called "countershading" where the underparts of the body are lighter than the upperparts. As light comes from above, the meadowlark casts a shadow on its own underparts making itself uniformly colored and more difficult to see. Meadowlarks also habitually crouch so that only their streaky grass colored backs are presented against a grassland background, rendering them almost invisible.

Evening Grosbeak

Habitat - This beautiful finch breeds in coniferous and mixed forests of western mountains and in the boreal forest across Canada. It is a common visitor to backyard bird feeders and to parks where it seeks seeds from cones in spruces, firs, and maples.

Identification - The Evening Grosbeak is smaller than a robin. The male is a chunky, short-tailed yellow bird with a black head, wings, and tail and a distinctive thick whitish bill, and yellow eyebrow. In flight a large white rectangle can be seen on each wing.

Voice - The song is seldom heard but resembles a sweet rambling whistle. The call commonly heard is a loud whistled "chee-ip", "peet" or "deer". Flocks call continuously when flying and feeding to keep in touch with each other. It can be heard year-round.

Range - It breeds in the coniferous forest belt across the Canadian provinces from British Columbia to Nova Scotia and south through forested regions to central California and the southern Gulf coast states. It is present year-round in the West and is a winter visitor to the central and eastern United States.

Morsels - The Evening Grosbeak was once restricted to the mountain forests of western North America. Prior to the winter of 1889-90 this bird was almost unknown in the eastern United States. However, plantings of shelter belt trees on the prairies and box elder trees in the east caused nomadic flocks to move east where the Evening Grosbeak is now a common bird in winter. It has become a common feeder bird, particularly fond of sunflower seeds. A flock will remain near a well stocked feeder for months and will consume hundreds of pounds of these seeds.

Fox Sparrow

Habitat - The Fox Sparrow breeds in thickets and edges of coniferous, mixed, or second-growth forests. It also nests at high elevations in subalpine forest edges and in willows in bogs, damp meadows and along stream courses. On offshore islands it may be found in summer in chaparral-like dense shrub cover.

Identification - This bird is a large sparrow that shows much geographical variation in its appearance. The typical eastern bird has a rusty head, back, and wings, and a clear rufous-red tail. Along the Pacific coast it has much less rufous, or none at all, in the tail and all have gray brown or dark brown bodies. However, throughout its range most Fox Sparrows show the underpart streaks made up of dark 'arrow heads' or inverted "V"s. Some of these "V"s usually coalesce into a central chest spot. Fox Sparrows dig on the surface using both feet at once in a backward kick.

Voice - The song is loud and musical and is introduced by a whistle followed by sliding notes. It may resemble "hear hear I-sing-sweet sweeter most-sweetly". The call is a thick loud "smack", like that of a junco.

Range - It breeds from where the boreal forest meets the tundra from Alaska across Canada to Newfoundland and south to the central Canadian prairies and in the West south to California and the Rocky Mountains in Colorado.

Morsels - Birds of the same kind from different locations may look quite different from one another. The Fox Sparrow is a fine example. One from the mountains of British Columbia is a drab bird, plain sooty brown above. Another from Ontario is very pretty with a gray head and a back streaked with chestnut. Such variation is explained, in part, by differing environments. Birds from areas of high rainfall tend to be darker than birds from more arid areas.

House Finch

Habitat - This social finch is present year-round in a wide variety of open habitats including desert, grassland edge, orchards, chaparral, open pine forest edges, and suburban areas particularly around buildings. It avoids dense forests.

Identification - The House Finch is about the size of a sparrow. The male is a slim, brown-striped bird with a red forehead, eyebrow, and throat. The red coloration, even in the rump, can vary from scarlet to orange. The belly and sides are streaked with brown. The adult female lacks the red and has a very plain unstreaked face.

Voice - It has a melodic long, loud warble shifting quickly between high and low notes, often ending on a down-slurred note that sounds like "zeee". It resembles the familiar canary song as is usually given from a high tree, antenna, or other high post. Males give full songs while females sometimes sing simplified songs. The call note is a sharp "cheet" or "cheet-cheet-cheet-cheet".

Range - It is present year-round in the West from southern British Columbia south through the United States to western Texas and in the East from southeastern Ontario south to Wisconsin and Georgia.

Morsels - House Finches have spread so fast over eastern North America that their range expansion has been called a true population explosion. Formerly restricted to the western United States, House Finches were absent from the East until 1940 when a few birds were introduced to Long Island. After a slow start, this population began to spread. By 1978 House Finches were common all over New England. A mere nine years later the species was common from southern Michigan south to eastern Louisiana and east to the Atlantic states.

Northern Cardinal

Habitat - The Northern Cardinal breeds in old fields, brush, and shrubbery in gardens and parks, and in thorn scrub in deserts.

Identification - This colorful bird is slightly smaller than a robin. The male is our only red bird with a crest. Its body is a brilliant scarlet and its crest and stout bill are red. The face and throat are black. Females are crested with a yellow-brown body with a red wash and a red bill.

Voice - Both male and female sing a series of clear whistles delivered in short repeated phrases. It may sound like "birdy birdy birdy" or "sweet sweet sweet what-cheer what-cheer what-cheer sweet sweet sweet". The call is a metallic "chip".

Range - It is present year-round, in eastern North America, from southeastern North Dakota to New Brunswick, south to the Gulf coast and west to southern Arizona and eastern Colorado.

Morsels - The Northern Cardinals begins courtship in late winter. A pair will engage in countersinging. The female will sing, then the male will repeat her song. She changes her song, then he repeats the new song. Another part of courtship is mate-feeding where the male presents a seed to a female who allows him to place it in her bill. This usually means that there is a nest nearby.

Northern Oriole

Habitat - Both the "Baltimore" and "Bullock's" Oriole breed in tall trees of open country, rangeland, streamside growth, gardens, farmyards and parks as well as the edges of deciduous forests and woodlands.

Identification - There are two race of the Northern Oriole known as the "Baltimore" Oriole and the "Bullock's" Oriole. Both are slightly smaller than a robin. The male of the "Baltimore" race is the only bird in the East with an orange and black body. It is a brilliant orange with a black head, back, and wings. There are two white wing bars. The tail is black with a large orange patch on each side. The male of the "Bullock's" race a brilliant orange with a black throat, eyeline, cap, and back. The wings are black with large white patches. The tail is black with orange sides.

Voice - The cheerful, flute-like song of the male "Baltimore" Oriole is a loud whistle which resembles "sure-ly sure-ly sure-ly sure-ly-the-world-is-bright-and-gay". The song of the "Bullock's" Oriole is faster and more complex and includes more "chatters" and "rattles". It resembles "chuk chuky wheew wheew wheew". Calls include a dry "chatter" for both races, a clear "cleek" note for "Bullock's" Oriole and a one or two syllable whistle for the "Baltimore" Oriole.

Range - The Northern Oriole breeds in wooded country of southern Canada from northeastern British Columbia and northern Alberta south through most of the United States. The "Baltimore" Oriole is common in the East while the "Bullock's" Oriole is found in the West.

Morsels - After the last ice age, the prairies of central North America were treeless and inhospitable to orioles, keeping the Baltimore and Bullock's Oriole separate from one another. As a result there was no overlap in range and or no interbreeding. The two races were well on their way to becoming different species. However, when the West was settled, shade trees and shelter belts were established allowing the two orioles opportunities to spread from east and west, meet, and hybridize freely. Today they are considered the same species because of interbreeding.

Northern Waterthrush

Habitat - The Northern Waterthrush breeds in wet habitats in bogs, thickets, and beside wooded lakeshores, forested swamps, and ponds. It forages on or close to the ground.

Identification - This member of the warbler group is about the size of a sparrow. It appears to be a brown ground thrush that bobs and teeters like a sandpiper. It is brown above with a distinct pale yellow eye-stripe. The underparts are yellowish and heavily streaked with dark brown. The throat and underparts usually have a buffy tinge.

Voice - Although the Northern Waterthrush is fairly shy, it sings a very loud song which starts slow and ends fast and staccato. It has been described as "sweet-sweet-sweet-sweet-wee-wee-chew-chew-chew" or "sweet-sweet-sweet-che-che-che-chew-chew-chew". The call is a loud sharp "chink".

Range - It breeds from northwestern Alaska south to northern Idaho and western Montana, and east to the Atlantic coast.

Morsels - The Northern Waterthrush belongs to a group of three warblers of the genus *Seiurus*. Each one is brown above and white below with brown streaks and walks more than it flies while feeding. Each also has an exceptionally loud song, an adaptation to the noisy forest environment. In order to proclaim its territory and attract a mate, a *Seiurus* warbler has to produce a song that can be heard above the wind in the branches and sometimes above the rushing waters of a wilderness stream.

Orange-crowned Warbler

Habitat - This warbler breeds in open but low, deciduous brushy thickets along the edges of forests, in overgrown clearings and old logging cuts, burns, scrub oak chaparral, and streamside woodlands.

Identification - This bird, the most nondescript of warblers, is the size of a sparrow. Its lack of obvious field marks is a help to identification. The body appears to be a dull greenish with the upperparts olive-green and the underparts olive-yellow. Sometimes, in good light, faint streaks are visible on the breast. It has an orange crown on the top of its head which is seldom visible. Feathers under the tail are always a drab yellow.

Voice - The song is a simple musical "trill" that rises or falls at the end. The call is a high pitched "seep" or a hard "chip".

Range - Breeds from Alaska across Canada, to the limits of the boreal forest, to Labrador and Quebec, and south to southern California, Nevada, and Utah, New Mexico, and eastern Arizona in the western United States.

Morsels - This bird is one of the commonest warblers in western North America. During migration, it is often spotted on ships far at sea. Suddenly, out of nowhere, it may appear hovering around the vessel. Usually exhausted it lands in the rigging or on deck to rest and sleep before continuing its journey northward. Many, however, perish in the ocean. These birds are lost waifs, casualties to inaccurate senses of direction, having overflowed or strayed from their usual migration routes.

Orchard Oriole

Habitat - The Orchard Oriole breeds in farm shelter belts, shade trees around parks and cemeteries and orchards. It is also associated with small groves or belts of trees in otherwise open country.

Identification - This bird is smaller than a robin and is out only dark-looking oriole. The male, in breeding season, has a rich dark chestnut body with a black head, breast, back, wings and tail. Each wing has a single white wing bar.

Voice - The song is a loud rapid warble, somewhat like a robin but is much more complex. It has been transcribed as "look here, what cheer, what cheer whip yo, what cheer, wee-yo". The call is a soft "chuck". The song is sometimes delivered in flight.

Range - It breeds mainly in southeastern North America from southern Canada south through the United States to the Gulf coast and west to southern New Mexico, eastern Montana, and southeastern Saskatchewan.

Morsels - The Orchard Oriole is among the many types of orioles and blackbirds that use a particular feeding strategy called "gaping". The oriole inserts its sharp, long bill into tightly curled leaves or long flowers and then opens its bill, "gaping" or widening the leaf or flower so that the bird can more easily search for insects and other food. This species also occasionally sips nectar from flowers in its wintering grounds in Central and northern South America.

Ovenbird

Habitat - The Ovenbird is a bird of extensive forests, including coniferous, mixed, and purely deciduous forests. It forages on or close to the forest floor.

Identification - This member of the warbler group is the size of a large sparrow. It is a milk chocolate brown above and white below, which is heavily streaked with dark brown. Its eyes are large and dark, bordered by thin white eye rings. Atop its head is a long cap of orange bordered by dark brown.

Voice - The song is a loud, ringing, chanted "teacher-teacher-teacher" or "teach-teach-teach" which grows in volume as the song is delivered. It is given from or close to the forest floor. The call note is a sharp "cheep".

Range - It breeds in central Canada from northeastern British Columbia and northern Alberta east across Canada to Newfoundland and south to the southern Gulf Coast states in the East and in the mid United States from Montana to northeastern Texas.

Morsels - The Ovenbird is so-named because of the odd shape of its nest which it builds by mounding leaf litter over a depression in the ground. It lines the structure with fine grasses. The nest, which is difficult to see, resembles a small Dutch oven. It lays three to six white eggs which require 11 to 14 days of incubation. Occasionally a pair will raise two, or even three, broods in one season, particularly in forests where spruce budworm outbreaks are present.

Purple Finch

Habitat - The Purple Finch breeds along the edges of coniferous forests but will also nest in mixed forests, second-growth alder thickets, well treed parks and suburban gardens. In the eastern United States and southeastern Canada it is a common feeder bird in winter.

Identification - This bird is the size of a sparrow. The adult male has a burgundy red head, throat and chest with grayish white underparts. The back is burgundy red with dark streaks. The color is brightest on the head and rump. The flanks are not streaked with brown as in the House Finch.

Voice - Its song is a hurried warble of paired notes given from a regularly used song perch or during a butterfly-like song flight. The call is a soft dry "pit" which is often given in flight or a rich "cheer-lee".

Range - It breeds mainly in montane coniferous forests across central North America from southern Yukon and British Columbia east to Nova Scotia and south to the Appalachian Mountains. It is present year-round in the rain forests of the southern Pacific coast and widely in the northeastern United States.

Morsels - In some places Purple Finches were once considered a pest because during early spring they would feed upon the buds and flowers of cherry, pear, and other flowering fruits. The finches nibbled the petals, pistils and stamens which were sweet to the taste. Research, however, has shown that damage was not excessive, with the finches eating many insects in the orchards in return for a few buds.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak

Habitat - The Rose-breasted Grosbeak breeds in deciduous and mixed forests and woodlands along streams and where there are tall trees and shrubbery with some open ground. It also occurs in areas with extensive shade trees.

Identification - This bird is smaller than a robin. It is a squat finch with a large pale conical bill. It is black on the head, throat, back, wings and tail, and white on the breast and belly except for a solid red triangle on the chest. The wings have large white patches.

Voice - The song is loud and clear, superficially similar to a robin's but seemingly delivered in a hurry without a pause. It sounds like "Oh what joy. I'm bubbling o'er with bubbling joy". The call is a forceful "ik" or metallic "chink".

Range - It breeds mainly in eastern North America from northeastern British Columbia and southern Yukon across Canada to Nova Scotia and south through the Appalachian Mountains and west to eastern Colorado.

Morsels - Like the Warbling Vireo, the male Rose-breasted Grosbeak sometimes sings from the nest while incubating or brooding. If a pair of grosbeaks nest twice in a season, the male will care for the fledged young while the female builds a new nest. The male loses his flashy black and white plumage early in August. While molting he becomes very quiet. Many other songbirds act the same way during such molts making mid-summer a very quiet time for songbirds.

Rufous-sided Towhee

Habitat - This towhee frequents chaparral, brushy hillsides, forest edges, thickets, woodlands, and shrubby gardens and parkland. In winter, it is a common feeder bird in southern areas.

Identification - This bird, often called ground robin, is the size of a large sparrow. The male's head, back, wings, and tail are black. Western males have white spots on their backs, Eastern males don't. Both forms have white patches in the wing and on the corners of a long tail. The underparts are white except for chestnut sides. The eyes are red. Towhees noisily scratch on the ground, jumping forward and back using both feet at the same time.

Voice - The song of the Rufous-sided Towhee in eastern North America sounds like a loud "drink-your-teaeaeaeae" or "see tow-hee" while the song of western towhees are variable, with some shortened to "teaeaeaeae". The call of western towhees is a cat-like "queee" or "meewww" while eastern birds call "chee-wink".

Range - It is widely distributed and breeds from southern Canada south through most of the United States. It is absent from dense forests and treeless prairie habitats. It is present year-round from southwestern British Columbia to California and across the southern United States.

Morsels - Just like people, some songbirds exhibit different dialects or differences in voices. With the Rufous-sided Towhee one can recognize the basic song no matter where the bird comes from, although there are obvious local differences in their voice. Other species that commonly have dialects include the Winter Wren, Marsh Wren, Bewick's Wren, Song Sparrow, Yellow Warbler, and White-crowned Sparrow.

Red-winged Blackbird

Habitat - The Red-winged Blackbird breeds in brackish and fresh-water marshes, in cattails and reeds along wet ditches, moist thickets, damp brushy fields, blackberry tangles near water and fields and even backyards with large fish ponds. In nonbreeding season it often flocks to farmlands.

Identification - This abundant bird is slightly smaller than a robin. The male is all black with bright-red shoulder-patches. When perched, most of the red may be hidden but a buff border may appear as a pale line across the wing. It often flicks its tail when excited.

Voice - The male's song is a loud "conk-la-ree" or "quonk-la-ree", usually sung from atop a cattail or bulrush. Its call includes a low "check", a high pitched "tee-a", and a metallic "kink" which is often given in flight.

Range - It breeds throughout most of North America south of the Arctic tundra. It is present year-round in southwestern British Columbia and throughout most of the United States

Morsels - This species is the most numerous bird in North America. Males their own small territories at a pond or marsh. If the territory is rich in food more than one female will nest within it, accepting the male's advances. But how does a female know if the male is healthy or not? She probably gets clues from the general condition of his plumage, such as the size and color of the red shoulder-patches, and from the vigor with which he courts her and defends his territory.

Scarlet Tanager

Habitat - The Scarlet Tanager prefers to breed in dense deciduous forests and woodlands including oak, pine-oak and cottonwood-willow forests as well as parks, cemeteries, and suburbs with extensive areas of shade trees.

Identification - This attractive bird is slightly smaller than a robin. The male, in breeding season, is our only scarlet bird with black wings and tail. It has a pale bill.

Voice - It sings a hoarse song of four to five double notes. The song is similar in pattern to a robin's but is less varied and is much rougher in tone. It has been describes as "cheer-up cheerily cheer-up cheer-up". It may sound like the bird is whistling and humming at the same time.

Range - The Scarlet Tanager breeds in southeastern North America from southern Canada south through the United States to the northern Gulf coast states and west to Oklahoma, North and South Dakota, and southern Manitoba.

Morsels - A pair of Scarlet Tanagers will feed in the same territory and yet not compete for food with one another because the female will tend to feed higher in the tree and do more hawking for insects than male. During courtship, the male will spread his wings and display his back to the female as he hops about on a low perch. She watches from a perch above him. The female selects the nest site and incubates up to five eggs.

White-crowned Sparrow

Habitat - The White-crowned Sparrow nests in a variety of habitats including brushy edges to forests and woodlands, as well as forests and clearings, brushy burns, fields, subalpine thickets in western mountains, lowland suburban and rural hedgerows and gardens and parks. Patches of grass and open ground must be nearby for feeding.

Identification - This bird is a large sparrow with a black and white striped crown. The rest of the face and underparts are gray, the back is streaked with brown and the wings have two narrow bars. The tail is brownish and the bill is reddish. The northern, northwestern, and mountain races have different head patterns.

Voice - The song is musical and complex and varies geographically. Generally, it is made up of whistles, some wheezy and drawled. The tone is rather cheerful. It may resemble "pee bee bee chee zee-zee". The alarm note is a diagnostic "pink" or "chink". In far northern areas it may sing all night long while in the Pacific Northwest fewer sing at night.

Range - It breeds across Alaska and Canada south to the northern provinces and south in the western United States to California and New Mexico and east to eastern South Dakota and Nebraska.

Morsels - In many places in North America flocks of White-crowned Sparrow hordes signal that spring has arrived. In many parts of the west, for instance, small flocks crowd roadside thickets and suburban lawns for hundreds of miles. In early autumn the returning birds stick closer to thickets and are mostly brown and tan-colored immatures.

Western Meadowlark

Habitat - The Western Meadowlark frequents open habitat such as prairies, grasslands, fields bordered by brush, and deserts.

Identification - This chunky bird is slightly smaller than a robin. It has mottled brown and buff upperparts and bright yellow underparts. A V-shaped black mark appears on the breast and the outer tail feathers are white. Sexes look alike. Although the Eastern and Western Meadowlark are very similar, the amount of yellow on the throat extends farther into the cheek on the latter species.

Voice - The Western Meadowlark whistles a bubbling, melodious song with two parts, a few clear notes followed by a jumble of rougher notes. It has been described as sounding like "hip, hip, hurrah! boys; three cheers!", "oh, yes, I am a pretty little bird", or "u-tah's a pretty place". The call is a low, sharp "chuck" and usually a rattle call is given in flight.

Range - It breeds in grassland areas from central British Columbia and northeastern Alberta east across southern Ontario to southwestern Quebec and south through the prairies of the western states and east to Louisiana and Ohio.

Morsels - The Western and Eastern Meadowlark are closely related species. They look so much alike that birdwatchers have to rely on their songs to tell them apart. When ranges overlap the Eastern Meadowlark inhabits a slightly moister environment. As well they may choose to ignore each other's songs but they may also learn the other's song - a confusing situation.

Western Tanager

Habitat - The Western Tanager breeds in open coniferous forests, mixed and deciduous forests and woodlands, and sometimes oak or pinon forests. It occurs in gardens and city parks, with tall trees, during migration.

Identification - This bird is slightly smaller than a robin. The breeding male has a bright yellow body, with a brilliant red head and black back, wings, and tail. Each wing has two bars, one yellow and one white. All Western Tanagers have pale bills.

Voice - The Western Tanager sings a robin-like song of two or three syllable phrases with the inflections alternating from the first note to last note and back again. The song is slightly lower and rougher than a robin's. The call is a diagnostic slurred "pit-er-ick".

Range - It breeds in the West from southeastern Alaska and southern Mackenzie south through mountainous country to California, Arizona, and New Mexico.

Morsels - The tanagers comprise a group of 240 species and are among the most beautiful birds in the world. All species but four occur only in the humid jungles of Central and South America. The four species that reach North America are very colorful including the all red Summer Tanager and Hepatic Tanager, the red and black Scarlet Tanager and the red, yellow and black Western Tanager. The Western Tanager feeds mainly on insects in the spring and early summer and berries later in the season.

Wilson's Warbler

Habitat - This warbler breeds in deciduous thickets and shrubs along forest edges, overgrown meadows, burns, patches of dense subalpine willow and fir, willow bogs, and brush along streams and lakes.

Identification - This bird is the size of a small sparrow. It is the only small all-yellow warbler with a noticeable round black cap on top of its head. It is olive green above and bright yellow below. Its wings and tail are unmarked.

Voice - The song is a gentle but rapid series of very similar notes that accelerates in tempo and intensity as it progresses. It has been described as "chee-chee-chee-cheet-cheet-cheet", "chip chip chip chip chip chip chip", or "chi-chi-chi-chip-chip-chip". The call is a hollow sounding "chenk".

Range - It breeds in the boreal forest zone from Alaska across Canada to Newfoundland and south in the West to southern California and north-central New Mexico and in the East to New England.

Morsels - The Wilson's Warbler builds a larger than usual nest for its size. The bulky structure is constructed of dead leaves, mosses, grasses, and is lined with fine grasses and occasionally animal hair. Such a nest must be well insulated, holding in the heat of the incubating parent for night temperatures which in spring can drop near freezing in some subalpine areas.

White-throated Sparrow

Habitat - This sparrow breeds in brushy thickets in and around open forests and woodlands. These may be deciduous, coniferous, or mixed. It is especially fond of aspen groves.

Identification - This plump bird is sparrow-sized with a striped black-and-white head. Some may have black tan stripes. There is a tiny patch of yellow between the eye and bill. The back is streaked with brown, the throat is white, and the underparts are gray. There are two thin wing bars on the brown wings. The bill is dark.

Voice - The song is unmistakable. It is a loud, clear, whistled "O, sweet, Canada, Canada", or "Old Sam Peabody, Peabody" or "I sing plaintively plaintively plaintively". The call is a loud "clink" or a high pitched "seep".

Range - It breeds in central Canada from central British Columbia and southern Yukon east to Newfoundland and south to northeastern North Dakota, northern Michigan, and West Virginia.

Morsels - It is an odd fact that the two different forms of the White-throated Sparrow have different temperaments. The black-and-white striped form is more aggressive than black-and-tan striped form. This riddle has yet to be solved by ornithologists. But they do know that most pairs are comprised of one of each form.

Yellow-breasted Chat

Habitat - The chat breeds in thickets and dense shrubbery at the forest edge usually near water. It likes dense willow thickets and tangles along streams and meadows with tall shrubs or overgrown by blackberry bushes.

Identification - This colorful bird is the size of a sparrow and is North America's largest warbler. It is mostly olive-green above and bright yellow below except for a white belly. It has a stout black bill, white eye-brow and partial eye-ring and a black patch between the bill and eye. The tail is long. It is a skulker and is more often heard than seen.

Voice - The chat sings and calls loud, clear notes. The most common is a high-pitched "tu-tu-tu-tu-tu-tu-", a squeaky "keet" or a musical "whoit". It also rattles and scolds. The call is a short "airr". It sings day and night.

Range - It breeds from coast to coast from extreme southern Canada south through most of the United States.

Morsels - The Yellow-breasted Chat is the oddest member of the North American warblers. Most warblers are tiny, spritely birds with thin musical songs. The chat, however, is a chunky and stolid bird with a thick tanager-like bill and very long tail. Unlike other warblers it hides in thickets but draws attention to itself by singing loudly, even at night. When a full moon fills the sky with light, it sings more loudly! It often imitates other birds, and even frogs.

Yellow Warbler

Habitat - This colorful warbler breeds mainly in willows and other low shrubs along streams, lakes, and bogs. It also nests along the edges of mixed deciduous and coniferous forests and woodlands, in suburban shrubs, shade trees, some orchards, and riverside groves.

Identification - This warbler is the size of a sparrow. It has a uniform bright yellow body with a series of thin chestnut or reddish streaks running down the breast and sides. The upperparts are yellow green with brighter yellow patches in darker wings and tail. Its yellow tail spots are the best field mark year-round.

Voice - The lively song has been described as up to eight quick notes. The first three to four notes are spaced apart followed by faster notes. It may sound like "seat-seat-seat-sitting-sitting-see", "sweet sweet sweet sweeter-than-sweet", "weechee weechee wee", or "sweet-sweet-sweet-sweet-setta-see-see-whew". Its call is a clear, soft "chip".

Range - Breeds from coast to coast from the tree line in northern North America south to southern California and the southern Gulf coast states.

Morsels - All warblers are favorite hosts of the Brown-headed Cowbird. This parasitic bird lays its eggs in their nests and allows the warbler to hatch and raise their young. The baby cowbird hatches earlier and is usually more vigorous than its nest mates. Often the baby warblers starve while the noisy cowbird gets most of the food brought to the nest or the larger cowbird forces them out of the nest. The Yellow Warbler is one of the most common hosts but it often seems to recognize the alien egg for what it is and builds a new nest over top of the old one, burying the cowbird egg so that it never hatches.

Yellow-headed Blackbird

Habitat - This noisy bird prefers to breed in fresh-water marshes, especially where nearby agricultural lands provide foraging areas.

Identification - This bird is about the size of a robin. The male is the only black bird with a bright yellow head. It also has large white wing patches which are very conspicuous in flight.

Voice - The song is loud, startling, and unattractive. It sounds like the loud "squeak" of a rusty gate and resembles a nasal "oka-uee-uee". The song begins with a very harsh "squawk" and ends on a "buzz". The call is a heavy or throaty "crock", "chuck", or "krruk".

Range - It breeds locally throughout the West from central British Columbia and the Canadian prairie provinces south to California, Arizona, and New Mexico and east into the prairie states to Ohio.

Morsels - The Yellow-headed Blackbird male is larger and more aggressive than the male Red-winged Blackbird. Even though male Red-winged Blackbirds arrive earlier at breeding marshes, the Yellow-headed Blackbird drives them away from the reedbeds where the water is deepest and nests will be most secure from predators. The female builds a nest low in the marsh vegetation. If other birds, mammals, or even humans come near the nest, they will be attacked by the male who will not hesitate to strike.

Yellow-rumped Warbler

Habitat - The Yellow-rumped Warbler breeds in variety of open forested habitats including Douglas-fir and pine forests in the western mountains and mixed coniferous/hardwood forests in the East. Stands of alder, maple, and dogwood are also frequented. On the Atlantic coast it favors coastal bayberry thickets in winter, while on the west coast it can be found mostly in brushy environments in winter.

Identification - This bird is the size of a sparrow. There are distinct two forms which used to be separate species. The eastern "Myrtle" Warbler is blue-gray above with a white throat and yellow rump. It also has a broad black mask, an incomplete white eye ring, and a white fringe above the mask. The crown is yellow. The back is black streaked. The wings are gray and black with two white bars. The flanks are white and yellow. The upper chest is banded by black leading to black streaked flanks and a white belly. The western "Audubon's" Warbler is similar but has a darker back, a yellow throat, and a large white wing flash instead of wing bars.

Voice - The "Myrtle" Warbler sings a sweet loud trill that rises or falls at the end. The call note is a hard "check" or "tchep". The "Audubon's" Warbler sings with a slightly richer, but louder trill which rises or falls at the end. The call is a softer "tchip", "chep", or "chip".

Range - The Yellow-rumped Warbler breeds from the limit of the tree line in northern North America through most of Canada south through most of the western United States. It is present year-round in parts of the Pacific coast. The "Audubon's" Warbler breeds mostly in the West while the "Myrtle" Warbler breeds mostly in the boreal forest across North America but is usually only seen in western regions in migrations, and then only rarely. In winter, the Myrtle race winters as far north as the southern Great Lakes .

Morsels - Both forms are among our most vivid and hardiest warblers. They most often sing from high in the forest tree tops. In the East the "Myrtle" Warbler is one of our first spring migrants, coming north just behind the retreating lines of snow and ice. In the West the "Audubon's" Warbler is traditionally one of the first warblers to arrive. In autumn both forms regularly linger in the north far longer than most other warblers.

Song Sparrow

Habitat - In summer, this songster prefers brushy and shrubby thickets, deep grassy areas, edges of woodlands, hedgerows, clearings, and back yard gardens, often situated near water. Fresh-water and salt-water marshes are favorite habitats in northern and eastern parts of its range.

Identification - Sexes are alike in breeding plumage. Colors and sizes are highly variable but all have streaks on the breast which gather into a heavy spot in the center. In addition, a broad grayish eyebrow line and a dark stripe on the edge of a whitish throat are distinctive.

Voice - This sparrow can be heard day or night, in any season. Its highly variable song usually begins with a few clear notes, sweet, sweet, sweet, followed by short notes and trills which drop in pitch. In words some have described the full song as "Maids! Maids! Maids! hang up your teakettle-ettle-ettle". At the height of the breeding season the Song Sparrow may sing its song as many as 300 times an hour!

Range - Breeds across central North America from southern Alaska, and southern Yukon to Newfoundland and south to the southern United States. It is present year-round in the southern half of its breeding range.

Morsels - There are 31 different kinds, or subspecies, of the Song Sparrow in North America. The race that lives in the desert is small and pale while the bird found along the north coast of British Columbia is large and dark. Most subspecies are so similar that only an expert can separate them.

Warbling Vireo

Habitat - This songster breeds in deciduous forests, such as aspen groves, and mixed woodlands. The forests can be mature or associated with low brushy thickets. Tall shade trees are preferred. It also breeds in orchards and in isolated stands of trees such as shelter belts.

Identification - The Warbling Vireo is about the size of a sparrow. It is the palest of the vireos but is still a fairly nondescript bird, being grayish-olive above and white below. In good light, it shows a rather inconspicuous white eye-brow stripe.

Voice - The song is an unbroken musical warble rising at the end. It usually rises slowly in pitch. Eastern Warbling Vireos have songs similar to Purple Finches. Western Warbling Vireos' songs have a more singsong quality. The call is a quarrelsome "chay".

Range - It breeds in wooded regions of North America from north-central Canada south through most of the United States.

Morsels - The Warbling Vireo builds a basket-like nest suspended between the forks of a horizontal limb high in a deciduous tree. The three to five eggs are incubated by both sexes for 14 days. The incubating adult sits very snug on the nest with only its head and tail showing. Occasionally, when the male is incubating, it will sing. The young stay in the nest for about 13 days, then fledge, tended for another few weeks by both parents.

House Sparrow

Habitat - In North America this stocky sparrow is associated with human habitations such as urban and residential areas, farmlands, cultivated lands, weedy fields, and forest edges. It is absent from deserts, grasslands, and dense woodlands and forests.

Identification - The breeding male has a brown back with black streaking, a black throat and upper breast often referred to as a "bib", a gray crown, light cheeks, and rich chestnut on the back of the head. The bill is black. In flight, a striking white wing bar is visible.

Voice - Its voice consists of a monotonous variety of "chirps", "cheeps", and "twitters" that are often repeated. Sometimes the full song sounds like "chirrup, chirp, chweep, cheerp, chirrip, cheerup, chee-up, chillip". Its call is often rendered as "wheea, quee, quee".

Range - It is present year-round from central and northeastern British Columbia, southwestern Mackenzie, and northern Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario, to southern Quebec and south throughout Canada and the United States.

It is native and resident in Eurasia but has been successfully introduced to South America, southern Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. It also occurs throughout most of Mexico and locally in Central America.

Morsels - In late 1851 and early 1852 about 100 House Sparrows were transported from Europe and released in Brooklyn, New York. These spread quickly to establish populations in settled areas of the Atlantic seaboard. About 20 years later, birds were released at San Francisco and Salt Lake City which soon colonized much of western North America.

Today, this alien inhabits most areas on the continent where there is human habitation except the far north.

Seacoasts

Seacoasts are regions where the land meets the sea. The land itself may be sandy, muddy, gravelly, or rocky. Cliffs may be present. Some regions may be exposed to pounding surf while others may be protected by the calm waters of inlets, bays, and harbors. Both areas, however, are alternately exposed and submerged by the tides.

When the tide is full the seashore is a water world and at ebb tide it provides a rich feeding area for many land birds. Many colonial nesting birds, like gulls and kittiwakes, raise their young on precipitous cliffs while other species, like the Black Oystercatcher, breed along the upper beaches. Large predators, like eagles and ospreys, build their stick nests in large trees bordering the sea edge.

The songs and calls of many birds inhabiting seacoasts can be heard throughout the year.

There are 14 birds you can easily hear and identify at the Seacoasts. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Oldsquaw
- Osprey
- Bald Eagle
- Killdeer
- Black Oystercatcher
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Laughing Gull
- Herring Gull
- Western Gull
- Glaucous-winged Gull
- Black-legged Kittiwake
- Belted Kingfisher
- Common Raven
- European Starling

Estuaries

Estuaries are places where the fresh water of rivers and streams joins the saltwater of the ocean. The environment here is neither freshwater nor saltwater but due to mixing of waters it serves as an important nursery for marine organisms.

The vegetation is composed mainly of salt tolerant grasses and sedges which, at lower levels, are flooded daily by tides. Salinity is highest during the summer months and lowest during the winter when most geese, ducks, and gulls use Estuaries as feeding and resting areas. Some birds, like, the Song Sparrow, Killdeer, and Spotted Sandpiper breed on the land side of estuaries.

The voices of most birds visiting Estuaries can be heard throughout the year.

There are 17 birds you can easily hear and identify in Estuaries. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Great Blue Heron
- Trumpeter Swan
- Snow Goose
- Canada Goose
- Mallard
- American Wigeon
- Killdeer
- Black Oystercatcher
- American Avocet
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Laughing Gull
- Herring Gull
- Glaucous-winged Gull
- Belted Kingfisher
- American Crow
- Common Raven
- Song Sparrow

Rivers and Streams

Rivers and Streams are flowing fresh waters that begin as outlets of lakes, glaciers, or arise from natural springs. The headwaters, or sources of Rivers and Streams, are small, shallow, swift and cold, and carry highly nutrient waters downstream. Farther downstream the volume of water increases, it becomes deeper, the channel becomes wider, and the flow slower. In lowland areas the flow is slow. No two are exactly alike the habitats within Rivers and Streams is ever-changing.

Rivers and Streams team with life, especially insects and fishes, which provides food for many birds. Some birds, like the American Dipper, feed and sing from perches in the middle of clear, fast-moving streams while many others can be heard from their brushy nest sites along the banks.

There are 27 birds you can easily hear and identify along Rivers and Streams. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Common Loon
- Pied-billed Grebe
- Tundra Swan
- Canada Goose
- Wood Duck
- Mallard
- Northern Pintail
- Osprey
- Bald Eagle
- Killdeer
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Ring-billed Gull
- Herring Gull
- Glaucous-winged Gull
- Belted Kingfisher
- Eastern Phoebe
- Marsh Wren
- American Dipper
- Veery
- Orange-crowned Warbler
- Yellow Warbler
- American Redstart
- Common Yellowthroat
- Wilson's Warbler
- Yellow-breasted Chat
- Fox Sparrow
- Northern Oriole

Lakes and Ponds

Lakes are inland depressions containing standing water, varying in size to thousands of square miles, and in depth from a few feet to over 5,000 feet (1,524 meters). Only a relatively small proportion of the water is in direct contact with the air. Since decomposition of material takes place on the bottom, the oxygen content of lake water is relatively low compared to running water. The energy source of a lake is sunlight, and therefore food production is greatest in Lakes that are relatively shallow and rich in organic matter.

Ponds are small, relatively shallow bodies of water that have uniform temperatures and rooted plants can grow over most of the bottom. Like Lakes they are doomed to disappear, and become marshes. Each pond is a self-contained miniature world harboring its own distinctive population of plant and animal life. No two Ponds are ever alike, and no one pond remains the same for very long. There are millions of Ponds in North America, many of which are human-made south of the Arctic. Prairie potholes and sloughs are also Ponds. In the United States, there are estimated to be two million acres (4.9 million hectares) of Ponds, a major aquatic habitat. Early Ponds were glacial Ponds, potholes, beaver Ponds and kettles. Today, most Ponds are made by human activity such as ditches, canals, small reservoirs, millponds, quarry ponds, fishponds, and watering holes for domestic stock.

Ponds are greatly affected by the seasons, with their varying temperatures, light, and rainfall. They may dry up in the summer, or freeze in the winter. Most Ponds are smaller than an acre (2.5 hectares), and the energy source is usually high. Many Ponds are barren in winter.

Lakes and Ponds may be surrounded by trees, or if situated in open country, by shrubs and tall plants like reeds. Some have a blanket on pond lilies that choke the surface. Birds such as the Common Yellowthroat, Northern Waterthrush, Red-winged and Yellow-headed Blackbird may breed and sing from these damp areas. Shorebirds, like the American Avocet, Killdeer, and Spotted Sandpiper call from the shores. And Mallards, Pied-billed Grebes, and Common Loons can be heard on the water.

There are 32 birds you can easily hear and identify in and around Lakes and Ponds. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Common Loon
- Pied-billed Grebe
- American Bittern
- Great Blue Heron
- Tundra Swan
- Trumpeter Swan
- Canada Goose
- Wood Duck
- Mallard
- Northern Pintail
- American Wigeon
- Oldsquaw
- Osprey
- Bald Eagle
- Virginia Rail
- Sora
- Killdeer
- American Avocet
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Franklin's Gull
- Ring-billed Gull
- Herring Gull

Barred Owl
Common Nighthawk
Belted Kingfisher
American Dipper
Veery
Swainson's Thrush
Northern Waterthrush
Common Yellowthroat
Red-winged Blackbird
Yellow-headed Blackbird

Swamps

Swamps are wooded and found mainly east of the Mississippi River, such as the mangrove swamps of the southwest coast of Florida. Here, swamps replace tidal marshes. The vegetation of these wetlands is influenced by salinity and the tides. The pioneering red mangrove is the dominant tree and shows the familiar tangle of roots that extends downward like stilts from the trunks and branches. Falling leaves and droppings of birds help build the soils to high-tide level. Vines and shrubs are always associated with mangrove swamps. The Barred Owl can be heard calling from deep within these areas and the Wood Duck can be heard flying through the maze of trees.

In northern areas swamps are typically small bodies of standing fresh-water, usually covered with at least one foot (0.3 meters) of water. They may have shrubs and often dead trees. Typical plants may include alder, willow, dogwoods, buttonbush, tamarack, arborvitae, spruce, red maple, and silver maple. In southern areas water oak, overcup oak, tupelo, and swamp black gum may be the dominant vegetation. Usually drainage is poor and water is present throughout the year. Most northern swamps freeze solid in winter.

These provide perches for the noisy Belted Kingfisher, nesting sites for the Wood Duck and Common Grackle, and hunting areas for the Barred Owl.

There are 13 birds you can easily hear and identify in Swamps. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Wood Duck
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Common Snipe
- Barred Owl
- Belted Kingfisher
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- Veery
- Swainson's Thrush
- Wood Thrush
- Northern Waterthrush
- Common Yellowthroat
- Fox Sparrow
- Common Grackle

Marshes

As lakes accumulate dead material, they become shallower and turn into Marshes, which are the most abundant of all wetlands and also the most widely and evenly distributed.

These wetlands may be found inland or along the coast. Both are shallow, usually between six inches (15 centimeters) and three feet (0.9 meters) deep. In the interior of the continent productive marshes have grasses, bulrushes, spike rushes, cattails, arrowheads, smartweeds, and pickerelweeds. These are principal duck breeding habitats. Northern marshes freeze solid in winter but in the south they are alive with the sounds of birds, especially waterfowl.

Along the coast, tides affect plant growth but important vegetation includes cattails, wild rice, and giant cutgrass. Activity here is noticeable year-round.

There are 26 birds you can easily hear and identify in or around Marshes. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Pied-billed Grebe
- American Bittern
- Trumpeter Swan
- Snow Goose
- Canada Goose
- Wood Duck
- Mallard
- Northern Pintail
- American Wigeon
- Osprey
- Virginia Rail
- Sora
- Sandhill Crane
- American Avocet
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Common Snipe
- Laughing Gull
- Franklin's Gull
- Barred Owl
- Common Nighthawk
- Sedge Wren
- Marsh Wren
- Common Yellowthroat
- Song Sparrow
- Red-winged Blackbird
- Yellow-headed Blackbird

Arctic Tundra

The Arctic Tundra extends beyond the tree line in the far northern regions of North America. It is characterized by low temperatures, low precipitation, and a short growing season. Plant growth form here is low and growth is slow. Typical vegetation is cotton grass, sedges, dwarf heaths, and small willows.

The Common Raven is the only bird that can be heard year-round. In summer the Oldsquaw, Snow Goose, and Willow Ptarmigan are the main birds heard.

There are eight birds you can easily hear and identify on the Arctic Tundra. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Tundra Swan
- Snow Goose
- Canada Goose
- Northern Pintail
- Oldsquaw
- Willow Ptarmigan
- Sandhill Crane
- Common Raven

Alpine Tundra

The Alpine Tundra of the high mountains occurs at lower latitudes than the Arctic Tundra, but both have low temperatures, low precipitation, and a short growing season. Also, a frost-molded landscape is common to both as is a low growth form of plants. The main difference between the two harsh environments, however, is the absence of a permafrost layer in Alpine Tundra regions. Also, the latter area may possess stunted and wind blown patches of conifers. Grassy meadows with wildflowers are a feature of this landscape. The Arctic Tundra is circumpolar in distribution whereas the Alpine Tundra in North America is restricted to western regions.

The Alpine Tundra contains few characteristic species, and only ptarmigan are present year-round. Most songbird activity occurs from June through August.

There are 12 birds you can easily hear and identify on Alpine Tundra. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Northern Flicker
- Gray Jay
- Clark's Nutcracker
- Common Raven
- Rock Wren
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- Hermit Thrush
- American Robin
- Wilson's Warbler
- Chipping Sparrow
- Fox Sparrow
- White-crowned Sparrow

Coniferous Forests

These types of forests occurs across the continent as a wide belt extending from New England and southern Canada northward to the Arctic Tundra, westward to the Pacific coast, and southward through the Rocky and Sierra mountains. In some areas a single conifer, such as ponderosa pine, dominates the vegetation. Coniferous Forests may be composed of pines in the east, black spruce in the north, redwoods in the southwest, or Sitka spruce in the west.

Within the Coniferous Forest belt occurs large stands of mixed conifers. On the Pacific coast these may include associations of Douglas-fir, western redcedar, and western hemlock while in the north firs and spruces may be found together. As a rule, these kinds of forests support a greater variety of birds than do pure coniferous forests.

Most singing activity occurs during the breeding season which may extend from February in the south to August in the north. Some birds, like the Winter Wren, Pileated Woodpecker, and Common Raven can be heard throughout the year in this habitat

There are 37 birds you can easily hear and identify in Coniferous Forests. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Great Blue Heron
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Ruffed Grouse
- Great Horned Owl
- Barred Owl
- Common Poorwill
- Whip-poor-will
- Northern Flicker
- Pileated Woodpecker
- Olive-sided Flycatcher
- Gray Jay
- Steller's Jay
- Clark's Nutcracker
- Common Raven
- Chestnut-backed Chickadee
- Red-breasted Nuthatch
- Bewick's Wren
- House Wren
- Winter Wren
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- Golden-crowned Kinglet
- Swainson's Thrush
- Hermit Thrush
- American Robin
- Varied Thrush
- Yellow Warbler
- Yellow-rumped Warbler
- Ovenbird
- Western Tanager
- Chipping Sparrow
- Fox Sparrow
- White-throated Sparrow
- Dark-eyed Junco
- Purple Finch
- House Finch
- American Goldfinch

Evening Grosbeak

Deciduous Forests

North America is rich in Deciduous or Hardwood Forests. Most are found in regions with moderate rainfall and mild temperatures which are requirements for the spring growing season. These forests are usually dominated by a single tree species like sugar maple, alder, trembling aspen, magnolia, yellow poplar, black cottonwood, or an oak.

Most birds use this habitat during the spring and summer breeding seasons when leaves provide cover for nesting. Food, in the form of insects and seeds, is abundant. Some of the most colorful and beautiful songsters are found in this habitat.

There are 56 birds you can easily hear and identify in Deciduous Forests. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

Great Blue Heron
Red-tailed Hawk
Ruffed Grouse
Wild Turkey
Northern Bobwhite
Mourning Dove
Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Great Horned Owl
Barred Owl
Common Poorwill
Whip-poor-will
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
Olive-sided Flycatcher
Eastern Phoebe
Blue Jay
Scrub Jay
Black-billed Magpie
American Crow
Common Raven
Black-capped Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
Red-breasted Nuthatch
Carolina Wren
Bewick's Wren
House Wren
Veery
Swainson's Thrush
Wood Thrush
American Robin
Varied Thrush
Gray Catbird
Northern Mockingbird
Brown Thrasher
European Starling
Warbling Vireo
Red-eyed Vireo
Yellow Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
American Redstart
Ovenbird

Northern Waterthrush
Scarlet Tanager
Western Tanager
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Rufous-sided Towhee
Chipping Sparrow
Song Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Orchard Oriole
Northern Oriole
Purple Finch
American Goldfinch
Evening Grosbeak

Mixed Forests

These forests, which include mixtures of different kinds of deciduous, coniferous, or deciduous/coniferous trees occur mainly on glaciated land which has deep, rich layers of soil. Usually two or more kinds of deciduous trees dominate the area. These might include associations of beech-sugar maple or sugar maple-basswood typical in the East or black cottonwood-red alder and birch-poplar-cottonwood in the West.

These forest are the most diverse in animal life because they provide the greatest range of food, cover, and protection. For example, trembling aspen, which is the most widespread tree in North America, when interspersed in coniferous trees, provides homes for such animals as deer, grouse, bear, snowshoe hare, and beaver. Some northern forests contain mixtures of pine, hemlock, and an assortment of hardwoods.

Although evergreen provide cover and food for some birds year-round, most species found in this habitat are summer visitors. The Western Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and Northern Oriole are a few of the summer songsters.

There are 57 birds you can easily hear and identify in Mixed Forests. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Great Blue Heron
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Ruffed Grouse
- Wild Turkey
- Mourning Dove
- Great Horned Owl
- Barred Owl
- Whip-poor-will
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- Northern Flicker
- Pileated Woodpecker
- Olive-sided Flycatcher
- Gray Jay
- Steller's Jay
- Blue Jay
- Scrub Jay
- Clark's Nutcracker
- Black-billed Magpie
- American Crow
- Common Raven
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Chestnut-backed Chickadee
- Tufted Titmouse
- Red-breasted Nuthatch
- Carolina Wren
- Bewick's Wren
- House Wren
- Winter Wren
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- Swainson's Thrush
- Hermit Thrush
- Wood Thrush
- American Robin
- Varied Thrush
- Brown Thrasher
- European Starling

Red-eyed Vireo
Yellow Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
American Redstart
Ovenbird
Northern Waterthrush
Scarlet Tanager
Western Tanager
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Rufous-sided Towhee
Chipping Sparrow
Fox Sparrow
Song Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Orchard Oriole
Northern Oriole
Purple Finch
House Finch
American Goldfinch
Evening Grosbeak

Shrubs and Thickets

Shrublands are a stage in the land's progress back to a forest environment. They rarely cover the land entirely but appear as scattered plants or clumps of brush situated in grasslands, on the sides of hills, along streams, around lakes, and in wet areas. In some places they form dense thickets of shrubs, trees, or weeds. Typical shrubs and thickets include hazelnut, sumac, some dogwoods and willows, chokecherry, alder, red-osier dogwood, and hawthorne.

This habitat is used primarily during the spring and summer months by migrants. Some birds, like the Ring-necked Pheasant and California Quail may be found here year-round.

There are 42 birds you can easily hear and identify in Shrubs and Thickets. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Ring-necked Pheasant
- Willow Ptarmigan
- Northern Bobwhite
- California Quail
- Mourning Dove
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo
- Scrub Jay
- Black-billed Magpie
- American Crow
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Carolina Wren
- Bewick's Wren
- House Wren
- Winter Wren
- Veery
- Swainson's Thrush
- Hermit Thrush
- American Robin
- Gray Catbird
- Northern Mockingbird
- Brown Thrasher
- Warbling Vireo
- Orange-crowned Warbler
- Yellow Warbler
- Yellow-rumped Warbler
- American Redstart
- Northern Waterthrush
- Common Yellowthroat
- Wilson's Warbler
- Yellow-breasted Chat
- Northern Cardinal
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- Rufous-sided Towhee
- Fox Sparrow
- Song Sparrow
- White-throated Sparrow
- White-crowned Sparrow
- Dark-eyed Junco
- Red-winged Blackbird
- Common Grackle

Purple Finch
American Goldfinch

Prairies and Grasslands

Prairies and Grasslands, which once covered large areas of the mid-continent of North America, have shrunk greatly due to man's needs for agricultural and grazing lands. There are very few remaining natural grasslands and prairies. What is left consists of bunch grasses and sod formers which provide nesting sites for many birds. These open lands may contain patches of isolated trees such as aspen. Insects and small mammals occur in great abundance. The prairie dog is one of the common burrowing mammals.

Many birds found here are ground-nesting species that sing while in flight. The Long-billed Curlew and Bobolink are two good examples.

There are 19 birds you can easily hear and identify on Prairies and Grasslands. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Red-tailed Hawk
- Ring-necked Pheasant
- Northern Bobwhite
- Sandhill Crane
- Long-billed Curlew
- Common Nighthawk
- Common Poorwill
- Northern Flicker
- Black-billed Magpie
- Common Raven
- Rock Wren
- Red-eyed Vireo
- White-crowned Sparrow
- Bobolink
- Eastern Meadowlark
- Western Meadowlark
- Orchard Oriole
- House Finch
- House Sparrow

Deserts

Deserts are harsh environments that are arid with high temperatures. Shrubs and cacti dominate desert plant life. Two kinds of Desert occur in North America. In the cool deserts of the Great Basin sagebrush dominates the land, while in the hot southwest creosote bush, cholla, and cacti dominate the landscape.

A surprising number of birds occur in this habitat including the melodious Eastern and Western Meadowlark and Cactus Wren

There are 15 birds you can easily hear and identify in Deserts. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Red-tailed Hawk
- California Quail
- Mourning Dove
- Great Horned Owl
- Common Nighthawk
- Common Poorwill
- Common Raven
- Cactus Wren
- Rock Wren
- Northern Mockingbird
- European Starling
- Northern Cardinal
- Eastern Meadowlark
- Western Meadowlark
- House Finch

Cliffs and Screens

These habitats occur mainly in the West and include rocky mountain cliffs, large boulder screes, canyon walls, cliffs bordering rivers, old gravel quarries, and bare rock faces with ledges. The sites appear inhospitable and have little or no vegetation.

Nesting sites are inaccessible to most predators and some birds, like the Canyon Wren and Rock Wren, primarily live here.

There are 11 birds you can easily hear and identify along Cliffs and Screens. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Bald Eagle
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Glaucous-winged Gull
- Black-legged Kittiwake
- Rock Dove
- Great Horned Owl
- Common Raven
- Rock Wren
- Canyon Wren
- European Starling
- House Sparrow

Agricultural Lands

Clearing of the forest and planting crops in managed land is a habitat that many species of birds have recently been able to successfully invade. This environment can be flooded or dry, hot or cool. Agricultural fields may contain grain crops of wheat, oats, barley, or alfalfa or root crops such as beet and potato. Short grass hayfields provide food and cover for many small mammals, such as voles and mice, as well as insects, worms, and grubs.

Some birds sing and nest in shrubby areas bordering agricultural lands, like the Chipping Sparrow and Orchard Oriole. Others nest on the ground and call from the air like the Common Nighthawk, while the House Wren is content to carry out its breeding activities near buildings.

There are 47 birds you can easily hear and identify on Agricultural Lands. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Trumpeter Swan
- Snow Goose
- Canada Goose
- Mallard
- Northern Pintail
- American Wigeon
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Ring-necked Pheasant
- Northern Bobwhite
- California Quail
- Killdeer
- Long-billed Curlew
- Common Snipe
- Franklin's Gull
- Ring-billed Gull
- Glaucous-winged Gull
- Rock Dove
- Mourning Dove
- Common Nighthawk
- Common Poorwill
- Northern Flicker
- Eastern Phoebe
- Black-billed Magpie
- American Crow
- Common Raven
- Rock Wren
- Bewick's Wren
- House Wren
- American Robin
- Northern Mockingbird
- European Starling
- Warbling Vireo
- Common Yellowthroat
- Northern Cardinal
- Chipping Sparrow
- White-crowned Sparrow
- Dark-eyed Junco
- Bobolink
- Red-winged Blackbird

Eastern Meadowlark
Western Meadowlark
Yellow-headed Blackbird
Common Grackle
Orchard Oriole
Northern Oriole
House Finch
House Sparrow

Urban and Residential

These human-made habitats, that have greatly expanded over the past century, include cities and suburban areas. While food and shelter may appear to be lacking, more species of birds occur in this habitat than anywhere else. In cities, the House Sparrow, Rock Dove, European Starling, crow, and seagull are known to everyone. In residential areas, birds are attracted to feeders where the Blue Jay, Dark-eyed Junco, House Finch, and Black-capped Chickadee are familiar birds.

There are 52 birds you can easily hear and identify in Urban and Residential Areas. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- American Wigeon
- California Quail
- Killdeer
- Ring-billed Gull
- Herring Gull
- Western Gull
- Glaucous-winged Gull
- Rock Dove
- Mourning Dove
- Great Horned Owl
- Common Nighthawk
- Northern Flicker
- Pileated Woodpecker
- Steller's Jay
- Blue Jay
- Scrub Jay
- Black-billed Magpie
- American Crow
- Common Raven
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Chestnut-backed Chickadee
- Tufted Titmouse
- Red-breasted Nuthatch
- Cactus Wren
- Canyon Wren
- Carolina Wren
- Bewick's Wren
- House Wren
- American Robin
- Varied Thrush
- Gray Catbird
- Northern Mockingbird
- Brown Thrasher
- European Starling
- Red-eyed Vireo
- Yellow Warbler
- Scarlet Tanager
- Western Tanager
- Northern Cardinal
- Rufous-sided Towhee
- Chipping Sparrow
- Song Sparrow
- White-crowned Sparrow

Dark-eyed Junco
Common Grackle
Orchard Oriole
Northern Oriole
Purple Finch
House Finch
American Goldfinch
Evening Grosbeak
House Sparrow

Northwest Pacific

The Northwest Pacific region includes most of Alaska, Yukon, and British Columbia, all of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, and the western portion of Montana.

The region is well known for its mountainous terrain and evergreen forests. In northern areas, a band of coniferous trees, known as the boreal forest, dominates the landscape. The main trees are firs, spruces, and larches. In the West, humid coniferous forests of Douglas-fir, western redcedar, western hemlock, Sitka spruce, and lodgepole pine are characteristic trees. Higher up, on steep mountain slopes, stunted and wind-blown pine, spruce, and fir forests can be found.

Rivers and Streams cut through the mountains. Estuaries meet the varied habitats of the Seacoast. Infertile areas, Agricultural Lands and recently Urban and Residential developments encompass much of the landscape. In the interior, there are areas of dry deciduous forests, cool deserts, large deep lakes, and grasslands.

There are 101 birds you can easily hear and identify in the Northwest Pacific region. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Common Loon
- Pied-billed Grebe
- American Bittern
- Great Blue Heron
- Tundra Swan
- Trumpeter Swan
- Snow Goose
- Canada Goose
- Wood Duck
- Mallard
- Northern Pintail
- American Wigeon
- Oldsquaw
- Osprey
- Bald Eagle
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Ring-necked Pheasant
- Willow Ptarmigan
- Ruffed Grouse
- Wild Turkey
- California Quail
- Virginia Rail
- Sora
- Sandhill Crane
- Killdeer
- Black Oystercatcher
- American Avocet
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Long-billed Curlew
- Common Snipe
- Franklin's Gull
- Ring-billed Gull
- Herring Gull
- Western Gull
- Glaucous-winged Gull
- Black-legged Kittiwake
- Rock Dove

Mourning Dove
Great Horned Owl
Barred Owl
Common Nighthawk
Common Poorwill
Belted Kingfisher
Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
Olive-sided Flycatcher
Gray Jay
Steller's Jay
Scrub Jay
Clark's Nutcracker
Black-billed Magpie
American Crow
Common Raven
Black-capped Chickadee
Chestnut-backed Chickadee
Red-breasted Nuthatch
Rock Wren
Canyon Wren
Bewick's Wren
House Wren
Winter Wren
Marsh Wren
American Dipper
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Veery
Swainson's Thrush
Hermit Thrush
American Robin
Varied Thrush
Gray Catbird
Northern Mockingbird
European Starling
Warbling Vireo
Red-eyed Vireo
Orange-crowned Warbler
Yellow Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
American Redstart
Northern Waterthrush
Common Yellowthroat
Wilson's Warbler
Yellow-breasted Chat
Western Tanager
Rufous-sided Towhee
Chipping Sparrow
Fox Sparrow
Song Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Bobolink

Red-winged Blackbird
Western Meadowlark
Yellow-headed Blackbird
Northern Oriole
Purple Finch
House Finch
American Goldfinch
Evening Grosbeak
House Sparrow

Southwest Pacific

The Southwest Pacific region includes the states of California, Nevada, Utah, and Arizona.

It is an area of dry western woodlands, dense streamside forests, chaparral thickets, desert and sagebrush plains, mountain cliffs, mesas, and bare rocky slopes. Large urban and residential areas are found here, mostly along the coast.

Rocky shores, cliffs, and extensive beaches are the main features of the Seacoast of California, while in the central portion of the state extensive fresh-water marshes provide important summer and winter homes for many birds. Some of the coniferous forest here are drier and more open and consist of pine, oak, pinyon, juniper, or redwood forests.

There are 84 birds you can easily hear and identify in the Southwest Pacific region. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

Pied-billed Grebe
American Bittern
Great Blue Heron
Tundra Swan
Snow Goose
Canada Goose
Wood Duck
Mallard
Northern Pintail
American Wigeon
Bald Eagle
Red-tailed Hawk
Ring-necked Pheasant
Wild Turkey
California Quail
Virginia Rail
Sora
Killdeer
Black Oystercatcher
American Avocet
Spotted Sandpiper
Long-billed Curlew
Common Snipe
Herring Gull
Western Gull
Glaucous-winged Gull
Rock Dove
Mourning Dove
Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Great Horned Owl
Common Nighthawk
Common Poorwill
Whip-poor-will
Belted Kingfisher
Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
Olive-sided Flycatcher
Steller's Jay
Scrub Jay
Clark's Nutcracker

Black-billed Magpie
American Crow
Common Raven
Chestnut-backed Chickadee
Red-breasted Nuthatch
Cactus Wren
Rock Wren
Canyon Wren
Bewick's Wren
House Wren
Winter Wren
Marsh Wren
American Dipper
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Veery
Swainson's Thrush
Hermit Thrush
American Robin
Northern Mockingbird
European Starling
Warbling Vireo
Orange-crowned Warbler
Yellow Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Common Yellowthroat
Wilson's Warbler
Yellow-breasted Chat
Western Tanager
Rufous-sided Towhee
Chipping Sparrow
Fox Sparrow
Song Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Red-winged Blackbird
Western Meadowlark
Yellow-headed Blackbird
Northern Oriole
Purple Finch
House Finch
American Goldfinch
Evening Grosbeak
House Sparrow

North Central

The North Central region includes the forested portion of the Northwest Territories, northeastern British Columbia, northern Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba except for a small section of the Arctic in northeastern Manitoba.

Coniferous forests, often referred to as the boreal forest, and large lakes are a common feature of this region. Within parts of this forest belt are naturally flooded bogs and swamps of older maple and spruce. Rivers and Streams commonly occur here as do large woodlands of deciduous trees like trembling aspen. Ponds and some Marshes also dot the landscape.

There are 77 birds you can easily hear and identify in the North Central region. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Common Loon
- Pied-billed Grebe
- American Bittern
- Great Blue Heron
- Trumpeter Swan
- Canada Goose
- Mallard
- Northern Pintail
- American Wigeon
- Osprey
- Bald Eagle
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Willow Ptarmigan
- Ruffed Grouse
- Virginia Rail
- Sora
- Sandhill Crane
- Killdeer
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Common Snipe
- Franklin's Gull
- Ring-billed Gull
- Herring Gull
- Great Horned Owl
- Barred Owl
- Common Nighthawk
- Common Poorwill
- Belted Kingfisher
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- Northern Flicker
- Pileated Woodpecker
- Olive-sided Flycatcher
- Eastern Phoebe
- Gray Jay
- Blue Jay
- Black-billed Magpie
- American Crow
- Common Raven
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Red-breasted Nuthatch
- House Wren

Winter Wren
Sedge Wren
Marsh Wren
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Swainson's Thrush
Hermit Thrush
American Robin
Varied Thrush
Brown Thrasher
European Starling
Warbling Vireo
Red-eyed Vireo
Orange-crowned Warbler
Yellow Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
American Redstart
Ovenbird
Northern Waterthrush
Common Yellowthroat
Wilson's Warbler
Western Tanager
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Chipping Sparrow
Fox Sparrow
Song Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Red-winged Blackbird
Yellow-headed Blackbird
Common Grackle
Northern Oriole
Purple Finch
Evening Grosbeak
House Sparrow

Mid Central

The Mid Central region includes the southern prairie provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, most of Montana, Minnesota and Nebraska and all of North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Iowa and only the northern portion of New Mexico.

This mid-continent region is known as the North American prairie and plains. The terrain is rolling-to-flat. Characteristic animal life is dominated by grazing and burrowing species. Today, there are only remnants of native grasslands, as most is under cultivation or used as open range for domestic stock. Ponds and pot-holes are numerous throughout the region. Overgrown weedy and brushy areas with scattered groves of deciduous trees are commonly found here.

There are 96 birds you can easily hear and identify in the Mid Central region. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Pied-billed Grebe
- American Bittern
- Great Blue Heron
- Trumpeter Swan
- Canada Goose
- Wood Duck
- Mallard
- Northern Pintail
- American Wigeon
- Osprey
- Bald Eagle
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Ring-necked Pheasant
- Wild Turkey
- Northern Bobwhite
- Virginia Rail
- Sora
- Killdeer
- American Avocet
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Long-billed Curlew
- Common Snipe
- Franklin's Gull
- Ring-billed Gull
- Herring Gull
- Rock Dove
- Mourning Dove
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo
- Great Horned Owl
- Barred Owl
- Common Nighthawk
- Common Poorwill
- Belted Kingfisher
- Northern Flicker
- Olive-sided Flycatcher
- Eastern Phoebe
- Steller's Jay
- Blue Jay
- Scrub Jay
- Clark's Nutcracker

Black-billed Magpie
American Crow
Common Raven
Black-capped Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
Red-breasted Nuthatch
Rock Wren
Canyon Wren
House Wren
Winter Wren
Sedge Wren
Marsh Wren
American Dipper
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Veery
Swainson's Thrush
Hermit Thrush
Wood Thrush
American Robin
Gray Catbird
Northern Mockingbird
Brown Thrasher
European Starling
Warbling Vireo
Red-eyed Vireo
Orange-crowned Warbler
Yellow Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
American Redstart
Ovenbird
Common Yellowthroat
Wilson's Warbler
Yellow-breasted Chat
Scarlet Tanager
Western Tanager
Northern Cardinal
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Rufous-sided Towhee
Chipping Sparrow
Fox Sparrow
Song Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Bobolink
Red-winged Blackbird
Eastern Meadowlark
Western Meadowlark
Yellow-headed Blackbird
Common Grackle
Orchard Oriole
Northern Oriole
House Finch
American Goldfinch
Evening Grosbeak

House Sparrow

South Central

The South Central region includes the southern portion of Nebraska, most of Kansas, Oklahoma, and most of New Mexico and Texas which border Mexico.

This region has a variety of habitats associated with four main types. Urban and Residential environments are common but scattered. Wetlands include freshwater marshes, frequently with surface areas choked with plant growth. Open country includes Agricultural Lands, mesquite grasslands, and, near the sea, coastal prairie. Above the high-tide line coastal dunes are prominent, and bays and harbors are found along the Seacoast. Streamside thickets and deciduous forests and woodlands are not uncommon.

There are 77 birds you can easily hear and identify in the South Central region. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Pied-billed Grebe
- American Bittern
- Great Blue Heron
- Tundra Swan
- Snow Goose
- Canada Goose
- Wood Duck
- Mallard
- Northern Pintail
- American Wigeon
- Bald Eagle
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Wild Turkey
- Northern Bobwhite
- Killdeer
- American Avocet
- Common Snipe
- Laughing Gull
- Herring Gull
- Rock Dove
- Mourning Dove
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo
- Great Horned Owl
- Barred Owl
- Common Nighthawk
- Common Poorwill
- Whip-poor-will
- Belted Kingfisher
- Northern Flicker
- Pileated Woodpecker
- Eastern Phoebe
- Gray Jay
- Steller's Jay
- Blue Jay
- Scrub Jay
- Clark's Nutcracker
- Black-billed Magpie
- American Crow
- Common Raven
- Tufted Titmouse
- Red-breasted Nuthatch

Cactus Wren
Rock Wren
Canyon Wren
Carolina Wren
Bewick's Wren
House Wren
Winter Wren
American Dipper
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Hermit Thrush
Wood Thrush
American Robin
Gray Catbird
Northern Mockingbird
Brown Thrasher
European Starling
Warbling Vireo
Red-eyed Vireo
Yellow Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Common Yellowthroat
Yellow-breasted Chat
Western Tanager
Northern Cardinal
Rufous-sided Towhee
Chipping Sparrow
Red-winged Blackbird
Eastern Meadowlark
Western Meadowlark
Common Grackle
Orchard Oriole
Northern Oriole
House Finch
Evening Grosbeak
House Sparrow

Northeast Atlantic

The Northwest Atlantic region includes the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Quebec, except for tundra areas and all of the Maritimes as well as the northeastern United States which includes New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.

The eastern end of the boreal forest of coniferous trees extends across the Canadian provinces to Newfoundland. At the international border hardwood forests take over. Much of the Northeast Atlantic region is comprised of Residential and Urban habitats and some of the largest cities in North America are found here. Still, there are a variety of upland and bottomland deciduous forests and woodlands, thickets, sandy barrens of pine and oak trees, saltwater bays and marshes estuaries, lakes, swamps, and barrier beaches.

There are 89 birds you can easily hear and identify in the Northeast Atlantic region. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Common Loon
- Pied-billed Grebe
- American Bittern
- Great Blue Heron
- Canada Goose
- Wood Duck
- Mallard
- Northern Pintail
- American Wigeon
- Oldsquaw
- Osprey
- Bald Eagle
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Willow Ptarmigan
- Ruffed Grouse
- Virginia Rail
- Sora
- Sandhill Crane
- Killdeer
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Common Snipe
- Laughing Gull
- Ring-billed Gull
- Herring Gull
- Black-legged Kittiwake
- Rock Dove
- Mourning Dove
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo
- Great Horned Owl
- Barred Owl
- Common Nighthawk
- Whip-poor-will
- Belted Kingfisher
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- Northern Flicker
- Pileated Woodpecker
- Olive-sided Flycatcher
- Eastern Phoebe
- Gray Jay

Blue Jay
American Crow
Common Raven
Black-capped Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
Red-breasted Nuthatch
House Wren
Winter Wren
Sedge Wren
Marsh Wren
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Veery
Swainson's Thrush
Hermit Thrush
Wood Thrush
American Robin
Gray Catbird
Northern Mockingbird
Brown Thrasher
European Starling
Warbling Vireo
Red-eyed Vireo
Orange-crowned Warbler
Yellow Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
American Redstart
Ovenbird
Northern Waterthrush
Common Yellowthroat
Wilson's Warbler
Scarlet Tanager
Northern Cardinal
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Rufous-sided Towhee
Chipping Sparrow
Fox Sparrow
Song Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Bobolink
Red-winged Blackbird
Eastern Meadowlark
Common Grackle
Northern Oriole
Purple Finch
American Goldfinch
vening Grosbeak
House Sparrow

Southeast Atlantic

The Southeast Atlantic region encompasses most of the southeastern United States from the Great Lakes, Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey in the north, south to the Gulf of Mexico and West to the states of Mississippi, Missouri, Arkansas, and eastern Texas.

This region includes the largest lakes on the continent and some of the most important saltwater marshes, many of which are protected by barrier islands. Estuaries are important habitats especially between Maryland and North Carolina. Beaches and coastal sand dunes are a familiar sight. Lakes are present, and in Pennsylvania and West Virginia the landscape is dotted with human-made lakes.

It is also a land of wooded cypress and hardwood swamps and mangroves, thickets, bogs, rivers, deciduous forests of oak, beech, maple, birch, oak hickory, and pine forests that stretch from Delaware along the coastal Florida and west to Texas. Some mountainous country, not as extensive or high as found in the west, forms a north-south band throughout much of this region.

There are 91 birds you can easily hear and identify in the Southeast Atlantic region. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Common Loon
- Pied-billed Grebe
- American Bittern
- Great Blue Heron
- Tundra Swan
- Snow Goose
- Canada Goose
- Wood Duck
- Mallard
- Northern Pintail
- American Wigeon
- Oldsquaw
- Osprey
- Bald Eagle
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Ring-necked Pheasant
- Ruffed Grouse
- Wild Turkey
- Northern Bobwhite
- Virginia Rail
- Sora
- Sandhill Crane
- Killdeer
- American Avocet
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Common Snipe
- Laughing Gull
- Ring-billed Gull
- Herring Gull
- Rock Dove
- Mourning Dove
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo
- Great Horned Owl
- Barred Owl
- Common Nighthawk

Whip-poor-will
Belted Kingfisher
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
Olive-sided Flycatcher
Eastern Phoebe
Blue Jay
American Crow
Black-capped Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
Red-breasted Nuthatch
Carolina Wren
Bewick's Wren
House Wren
Winter Wren
Sedge Wren
Marsh Wren
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Veery
Swainson's Thrush
Hermit Thrush
Wood Thrush
American Robin
Gray Catbird
Northern Mockingbird
Brown Thrasher
European Starling
Warbling Vireo
Red-eyed Vireo
Yellow Warbler
American Redstart
Ovenbird
Northern Waterthrush
Common Yellowthroat
Yellow-breasted Chat
Scarlet Tanager
Northern Cardinal
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Rufous-sided Towhee
Chipping Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Bobolink
Red-winged Blackbird
Eastern Meadowlark
Western Meadowlark
Yellow-headed Blackbird
Common Grackle
Orchard Oriole
Northern Oriole
Purple Finch
House Finch
American Goldfinch
Evening Grosbeak

House Sparrow

Arctic

The Arctic region occurs across northern North America above the coniferous forest belt. It includes the north coastal plain of Alaska and Yukon, much of the Northwest Territories, small parts of Manitoba and Ontario bordering southern Hudson Bay, and northern Labrador.

It is a frozen, treeless plain but has a surprising variety of habitats. These include rugged and broad Seacoasts, Estuaries, fast and slow-moving rivers and streams, ponds, Arctic Tundra, shrubs and thickets, cliffs and screes.

There are 13 birds you can easily hear and identify in the Arctic region. The following is a list, in the American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Common Loon
- Tundra Swan
- Snow Goose
- Canada Goose
- Mallard
- Northern Pintail
- Oldsquaw
- Willow Ptarmigan
- Herring Gull
- Black-legged Kittiwake
- Common Raven
- American Robin
- White-crowned Sparrow

Sings its Name

These are birds which have been given names that sound similar to their songs, birds which are well known in popular culture and folklore. Examples that come readily to mind are the Whip-poor-will, Eastern Phoebe, Black-capped Chickadee, Killdeer, and Bobolink. Many of these were named by early pioneers well before more formal species names were assigned such as Yellow Warbler and Song Sparrow, and many of these names have withstood the test of time.

There are ten birds you can easily hear and identify who sing their name. The following is a list, in American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Northern Bobwhite
- Killdeer
- Long-billed Curlew
- Black-legged Kittiwake
- Common Poorwill
- Whip-poor-will
- Eastern Phoebe
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Chestnut-backed Chickadee
- Bobolink

Familiar Birds

Birds common to the city, town and countryside provide us with a rich background of melody and songs. Some of these are instantly recognizable to almost everyone, such as the American Robin, Canada Goose, Northern Cardinal, and American Crow. Others are so universally present that we don't hear them consciously any more, such as the House Sparrow, European Starling, and Rock Dove. Still other bird songs are ones we have heard often but have not yet identified...one day, we'll really walk into those backwoods and track down that bird. These might be birds such as the Hermit Thrush, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, White-throated Sparrow, Sora, and Barred Owl.

There are 19 birds you can easily hear and identify who are considered Familiar Birds. The following is a list, in American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Common Loon
- Canada Goose
- Mallard
- Bald Eagle
- Ring-necked Pheasant
- Ruffed Grouse
- Wild Turkey
- Killdeer
- Rock Dove
- Great Horned Owl
- Blue Jay
- American Crow
- Common Raven
- Black-capped Chickadee
- American Robin
- European Starling
- Northern Cardinal
- Red-winged Blackbird
- House Sparrow

Songs with Words

There are a number of bird songs whose melodic phrases seem to fit remarkably well to English words, such as the "Teacher, teacher, teacher" of the Ovenbird and the "Quick three beers" of the Olive-sided Flycatcher. These words, whose rhythmic cadence fits the song, help us to distinguish and remember these bird songs.

The attempt to create phrases for all bird song has not been successful in most cases, and have given us constructions like "per-chick-o-ree", which in itself may be harder to remember than the song, and certainly seems to defy identification of the bird before being told that it's an American Goldfinch.

Nevertheless, authors over the years have proposed many phrases to describe the songs of almost all the birds of North America. For the birds in this CD-ROM, these can be found in the topic "The Common Birds that Sing", under the Aspect "Song".

The birds in this category include only those who sing phrases which are in English words and seem to have universal agreement in terms of the fit to the bird song.

There are 20 birds you can easily hear and identify who have Songs with Words. The following is a list, in American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Willow Ptarmigan
- California Quail
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo
- Barred Owl
- Olive-sided Flycatcher
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- Swainson's Thrush
- Red-eyed Vireo
- Yellow Warbler
- Ovenbird
- Common Yellowthroat
- Scarlet Tanager
- Northern Cardinal
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- Rufous-sided Towhee
- Fox Sparrow
- Song Sparrow
- White-throated Sparrow
- Eastern Meadowlark
- Western Meadowlark
- Northern Oriole

Musical Songs

Some birds seem to fill the air with music and melody. Their songs may be joyful, ecstatic, mournful, bubbly, plaintive, eerie or scolding, but most of these can be whistled or sung in imitation. They include simple songs like that of the Eastern Phoebe, complex ones like the Brown Thrasher's, and evocative ones like those of the Common Loon and Red-winged Blackbird.

There are 46 birds you can easily hear and identify who have Musical Songs. The following is a list, in American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Common Loon
- Northern Bobwhite
- California Quail
- Sora
- Whip-poor-will
- Olive-sided Flycatcher
- Eastern Phoebe
- Cactus Wren
- Rock Wren
- Canyon Wren
- Bewick's Wren
- House Wren
- Winter Wren
- American Dipper
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- Veery
- Swainson's Thrush
- Hermit Thrush
- Wood Thrush
- American Robin
- Varied Thrush
- Gray Catbird
- Northern Mockingbird
- Brown Thrasher
- Warbling Vireo
- Red-eyed Vireo
- Yellow-rumped Warbler
- American Redstart
- Northern Waterthrush
- Scarlet Tanager
- Western Tanager
- Northern Cardinal
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- Fox Sparrow
- Song Sparrow
- White-throated Sparrow
- White-crowned Sparrow
- Bobolink
- Red-winged Blackbird
- Eastern Meadowlark
- Western Meadowlark
- Orchard Oriole
- Northern Oriole

Purple Finch
House Finch
American Goldfinch

Screams

The songs included in this topic are high-pitched, drawn-out notes that are aptly described as screams. It is thought that the characteristics of these sounds are adaptations to environments. For instance, the high-pitched, loud screams of the Bald Eagle and Red-tailed Hawk carry well directionally over long distances in their open habitats.

There are 12 birds you can easily hear and identify who have Screams. The following is a list, in American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Wood Duck
- Osprey
- Bald Eagle
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Black Oystercatcher
- Laughing Gull
- Franklin's Gull
- Ring-billed Gull
- Herring Gull
- Western Gull
- Glaucous-winged Gull
- Black-legged Kittiwake

Croaks and Squawks

Many marsh birds like the American Bittern and the Great Blue Heron have songs which are low and harsh. Members of the crow family, like the Common Raven, Black-billed Magpie, and American Crow, also have low harsh voices. Perhaps the non-directional quality of low-pitched sounds are advantageous in marshes where there are many high-pitched insect and amphibian sounds, as well as predators. Do we know why crows caw? Quoth the raven: "Nevermore".

There are 12 birds you can easily hear and identify who have Croaks and Squawks. The following is a list, in American Ornithologists' Union order, of these birds:

- Pied-billed Grebe
- American Bittern
- Great Blue Heron
- Bald Eagle
- Sandhill Crane
- Clark's Nutcracker
- Black-billed Magpie
- American Crow
- Common Raven
- European Starling
- Yellow-headed Blackbird
- Common Grackle

