

JUNIOR BIRDER

# JOURNAL

## & ACTIVITY BOOK

CANADA EDITION



LEARN ABOUT BIRDS, HOW TO  
IDENTIFY THEM, AND WHAT YOU  
CAN DO TO PROTECT BIRDS IN  
YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

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[YOUR NAME]

Art © John Muir Laws

# What Is a Bird?

Circle every characteristic of a bird. Mark the one that ONLY birds have with an X.

ANTENNA



BEAK

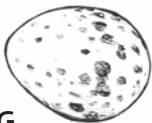


FUR

ANTLER



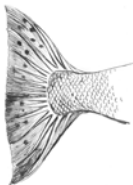
EGG



FEATHER



FIN



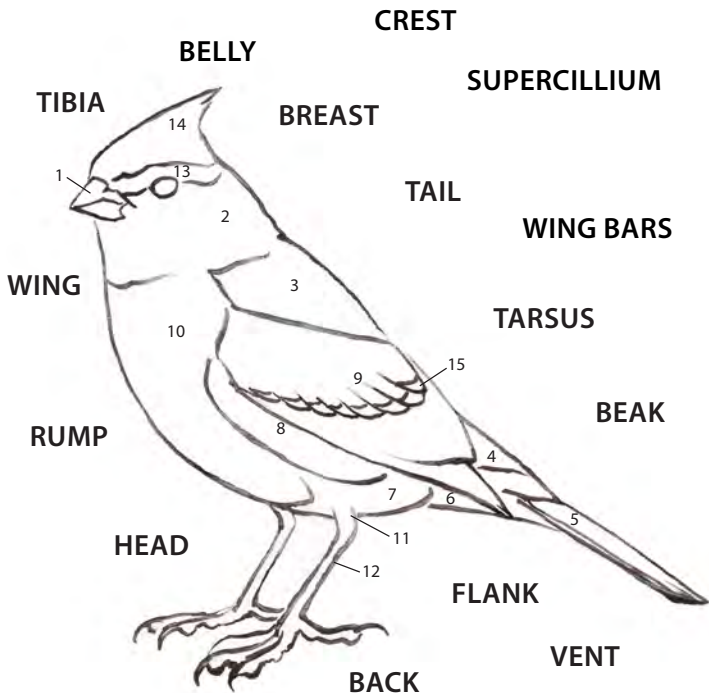
HOLLOW BONE



Birds have hollow bones and beaks and lay eggs. Birds are the only animals with feathers.

# Bird Topography

Knowing the parts of a bird or its "topography" will help you describe a bird. Draw a line from each label to the corresponding part on the bird diagram below.



1: beak, 2: head, 3: back, 4: rump, 5: tail, 6: vent, 7: belly, 8: flank, 9: wing, 10: breast, 11: tibia, 12: tarsus, 13: supercilium, 14: crest, 15: wing bars

# Birdwatcher's Code of Ethics

Birdwatchers must respect wildlife and their environment by following the Birdwatcher's Code of Ethics. When you sign your name below, you agree to observe birds in a way that will not harm them or their habitats.

- 1. I will help to protect birds and their environment.**  
I will not disturb birds, their nests, feeding sites, or other places they need to survive.
- 2. I will ask permission to view birds on private property.**
- 3. I will check my bird feeders and my yard to be sure they are safe for birds.**
- 4. When I am outdoors with others, I will be a role model.**  
I will share my knowledge of birds and ask others to follow this Code of Ethics.

## I PLEDGE TO FOLLOW THE BIRDWATCHER'S CODE OF ETHICS

.....  
[SIGN YOUR NAME HERE]

.....  
[DATE]

# Bird Identification:

## Match the Bird with Its Family

Birds can be identified by observing size, shape, colours, flight patterns, and behaviour. When identifying birds, first try to place them into a bird group or family. Below are silhouettes of five different bird groups. Draw a line from each bird on the right to its silhouette bird family on the left.



**LONG-LEGGED  
WADERS**



**WATERFOWL**



**RAPTORS**



**SONGBIRDS**



**SHOREBIRDS**



**RUDDY DUCK**



**AMERICAN  
ROBIN**



**RED KNOT**



**OSPREY**



**GREAT BLUE HERON**

# A Closer Look at Birds: Using Binoculars

Binoculars are a helpful birdwatching tool. Make your first pair using two empty toilet paper rolls. Tape them together, add a strap, and decorate them. Using binoculars takes practice. Follow these tips when learning to use yours:



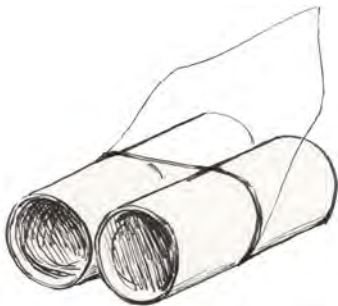
**1. Always put the binocular strap around your neck.**

This will keep them off the ground and save them from being dropped and broken.

**2. Locate birds with your eyes first.**

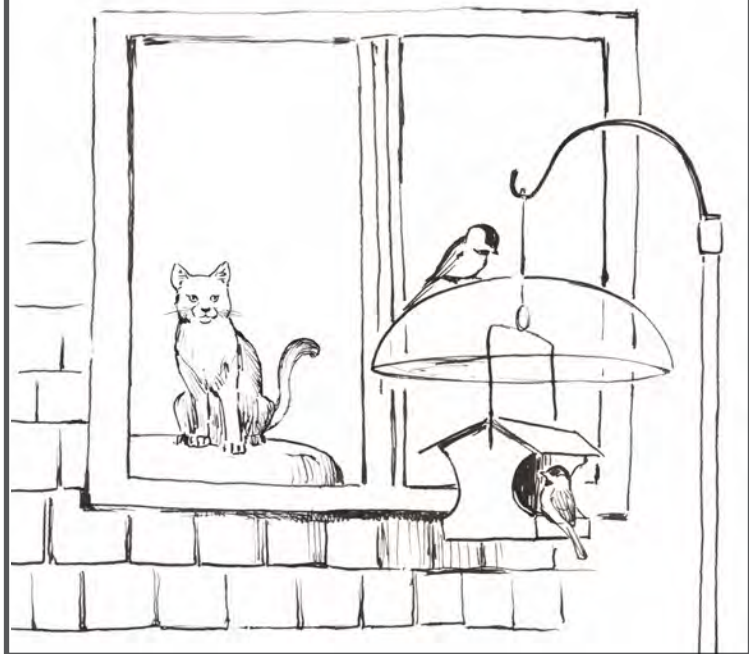
Then raise the binoculars to your eyes without moving your head or eyes. It is hard to spot birds just by using your binoculars.

**3. Do not use your binoculars while walking!**



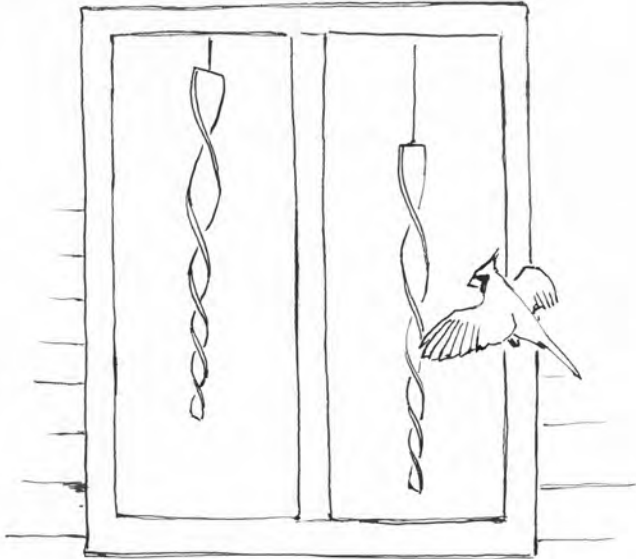
# Take Action for Birds: Keep Cats Indoors

Cats are great pets, but they also hunt birds, killing hundreds of millions every year. If you own a cat, help protect birds by keeping your cat indoors or watching your cat while it is outside to be sure it doesn't hunt birds and other wildlife.



## Take Action for Birds: Stop Collisions

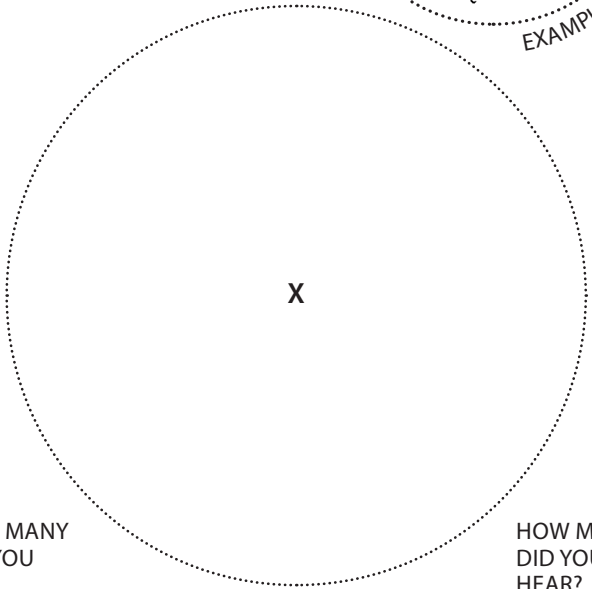
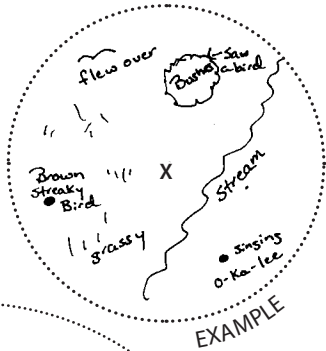
Glass is often invisible to birds, and if it reflects the trees, bushes or sky, a bird may fly into it. Take a walk outside your house, cottage or building. Is it hard to see any of the windows? Make your home safe for birds: hang streamers of shiny ribbon or coloured flagging tape outside problem windows to alert birds by breaking up the reflections they are seeing. Ask your teacher to try this at school!





# Birds Abound Around You

To be done in a quiet, natural setting from April to July: Find a place outdoors and sit for five minutes, imagining a circle around you (you are the X). Use the circle below like a map, and mark the location of each bird and other animal that you see or hear. Be sure to check all sides!



HOW MANY  
DID YOU  
SEE? .....

HOW MANY  
DID YOU  
HEAR? .....

# The Convention for the Protection of Migratory Birds in the United States and Canada

In the late 1800s, some species of birds like the Great Auk and the Labrador Duck became extinct. Then, in 1914, the bird species that was once the most abundant in North America, the Passenger Pigeon, also became extinct.

By the late 1900s, North Americans started to realize that the market demand for birds was driving some species to extinction. Out of this realization grew a bird conservation movement that led to the signing of the Convention for the Protection of Migratory Birds, signed between Canada and the United States in 1916.

A convention is an agreement that is signed between one or more countries. Canada has signed three conventions that help protect birds:

- the Convention for the Protection of Migratory Birds in the United States and Canada (1916)
- the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (1975)
- the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)



**Extinct**



**Extinct**

## The Convention for the Protection of Migratory Birds in the United States and Canada

The birds we enjoy here in Canada travel to many countries during their migration period. Since the Migratory Birds Convention is an agreement that involves only Canada and the United States, this means that birds do not have the same the legal protection as they migrate through other countries, which can make them more vulnerable to hunting, trapping, capture, and other forms of harm.

Scenario: You are the Prime Minister of Canada, and you can choose to add more countries to the Migratory Birds Convention. By looking at the range map on the following page, which countries would you invite to sign the Convention to ensure that the Purple Martin is protected by law throughout its entire migratory journey?

Helpful tip : consult a map or an atlas to find the names of the countries you would like to see added to the Convention!



*Purple Martins in Ottawa, Ontario*

# The Convention for the Protection of Migratory Birds in the United States and Canada

Helpful hint : both the dark grey and medium grey shaded areas are where the Purple Martin visits during its lifetime!

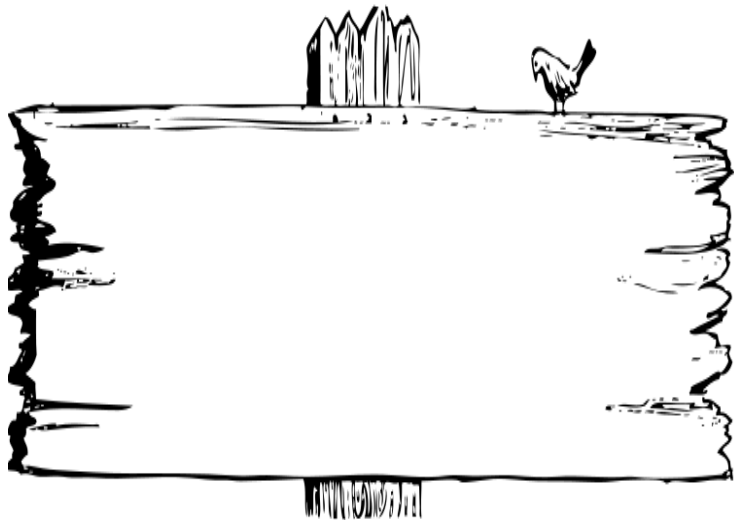
Map courtesy of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology

# The Migratory Birds Convention Act

In Canada, most birds are protected by the government under the Migratory Birds Convention Act, which prohibits handling, hunting, taking eggs or nests, as well as being in possession of migratory birds, whether dead or alive.

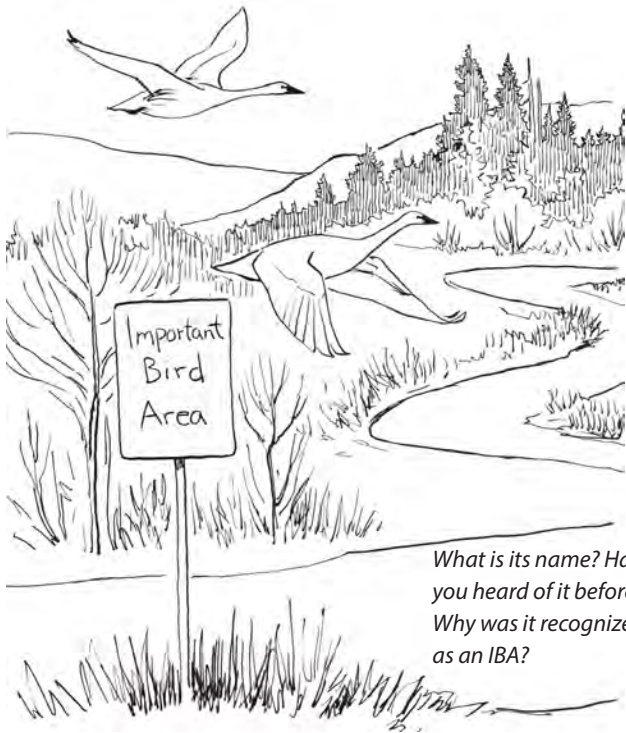
The Act also sets the bag limits for hunting game birds in Canada.

If you had to create a sign for your neighbourhood to let everyone know that it's against the law to harm migratory birds, what would you put on the sign?



# Important Bird Areas and You

Important Bird Areas (IBAs) are the most important places for birds on earth. There are approximately 600 in Canada. Find the one closest to you by using the map viewer on the IBA Canada website ([www.ibacanada.ca](http://www.ibacanada.ca)).



*What is its name? Have you heard of it before? Why was it recognized as an IBA?*

## Bird Behaviours: Foraging

Biologists use the word “forage” to describe the action of a bird that is hunting for food. Most birds spend more time foraging than any other activity. They forage for food for themselves, for their mates, or for their young. Birds also hunt for food in different ways. Some sip at flowers with nectar, some spear fish, while others catch insects in the air. How is this bird foraging? Can you find this bird and watch it forage near your home?

*Earthworms are a favourite food of American Robins. A robin will run across a lawn, then stop, look and listen for a worm or signs of a worm. Watch out, earthworm!*



# Your Observations

The best way to remember a bird is to draw it and take notes about what you see. Be sure to record the details below. Your observations are important!

DATE: ..... TIME: ..... LOCATION: .....

WHAT IS THE BIRD DOING? .....

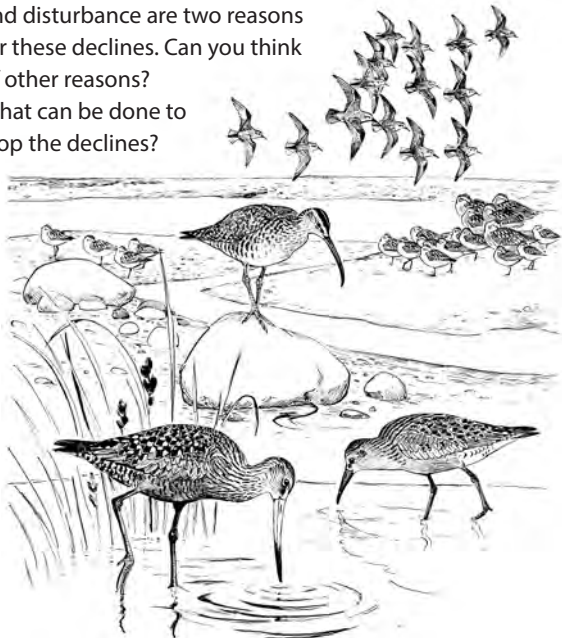
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WHAT KIND OF BIRD IS IT? .....



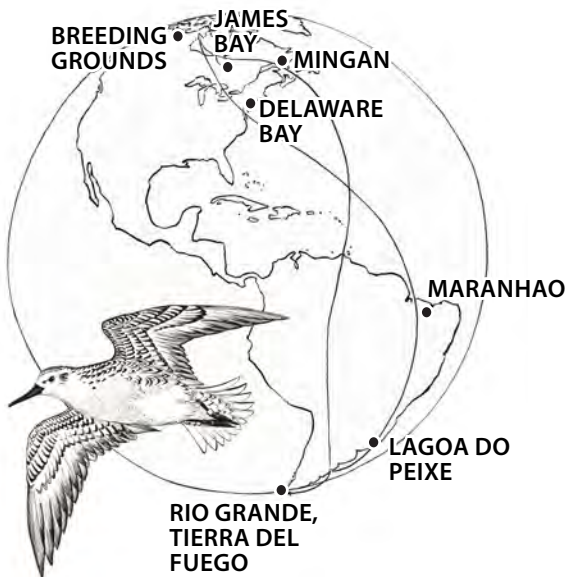
## Adaptations: Shorebirds

Shorebirds are perfectly suited to their shoreline habitat; long beaks to probe deep in mud and sand, long legs to wade into water, long wings for long migratory flights, and flocking behaviour to help detect enemies and find food. Most shorebirds rely on special sites to rest and feed during long migrations. Many shorebird species are declining. Pollution and disturbance are two reasons for these declines. Can you think of other reasons? What can be done to stop the declines?



# Migration: The Red Knot

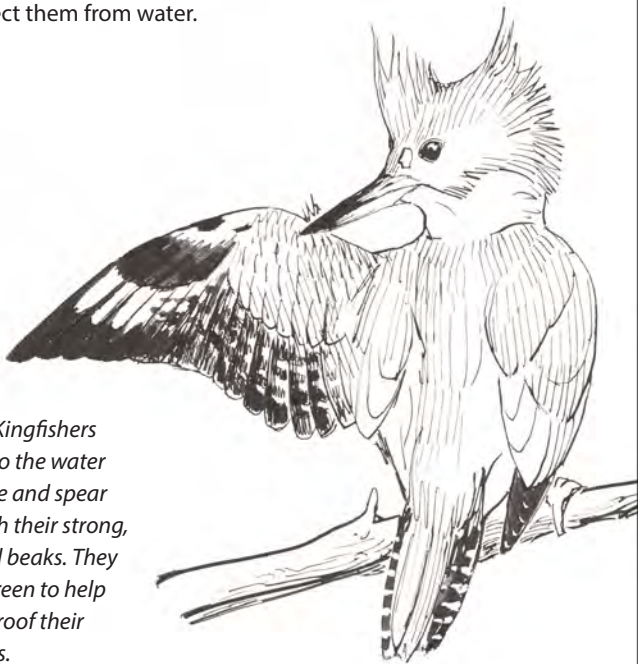
Shorebirds are amazing travelers. Many species annually migrate back and forth between the Canadian Arctic and South America. Moon bird, a superstar Red Knot, also known as B95, lived at least 20 years, and flew over 600,000 kilometres in its lifetime, comparable to going to the Moon and half way back! Shorebird stopover habitats need protection from pollution, and human disturbance.



## Bird Behaviours:

### Preening

Preening is the term used to describe a bird that is taking care of its feathers. Birds must get rid of dust and dirt, remove parasites that harm feathers, and keep their feathers in the correct places. Most birds have a special “preen gland” located on their rumps. A bird will spread the oil produced by this gland on each feather to protect them from water.



*Belted Kingfishers dive into the water to chase and spear fish with their strong, pointed beaks. They must preen to help waterproof their feathers.*

# Your Observations

Sketch a bird behaviour you observe and describe what you see.

DATE: ..... TIME: ..... LOCATION: .....

WHAT IS THE BIRD DOING? .....

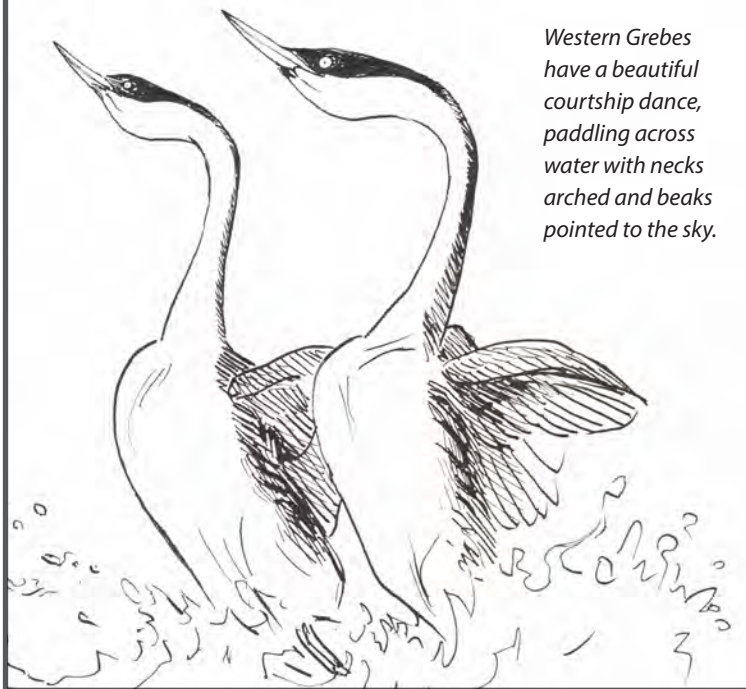
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WHAT KIND OF BIRD IS IT? .....

## Bird Behaviours: Courtship

Birds have fascinating courtship behaviours which can be observed during the breeding season in the spring. Birds use singing, dancing, special flight patterns, and displays of feathers or bare skin to attract a mate.

*Western Grebes have a beautiful courtship dance, paddling across water with necks arched and beaks pointed to the sky.*



# Feed the Birds and Keep Your Feeder Clean!

Learn about the birds that live near your home or school by attracting birds to your yard! Make a bird feeder, fill it with seed, hang it near some shrubs or trees and try to identify your feathered visitors. Don't forget to keep your feeder clean. Compost old seed and wash your bird feeders with hot soapy water every month to keep the birds healthy.



## DIRECTIONS FOR A SIMPLE FEEDER:

1. Cut out two sides of empty 1-litre milk carton, leaving 5 cm at bottom.
2. Punch two holes in top of carton.
3. Add unsalted sunflower seeds and hang in safe place near tree or shrubs.

Turn your observations of birds at your feeder into citizen science by joining Project FeederWatch! See Resources on page 31.

# Why Stop at Feeders?

## Make Your Yard Bird-Friendly

**WATER** – A bird bath is great, but a simple clear plastic container attached to a pole or tree works just fine. Change water weekly to keep it clean, and top it up regularly.

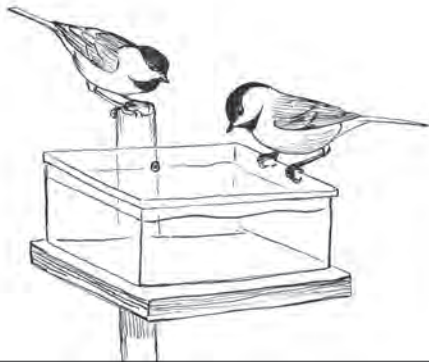
**NESTING BOXES** – Some birds, including Chickadees, will use nest boxes for raising their families and as a winter roost. Make sure the hole is small enough to keep out unwanted visitors like squirrels or raccoons.

**LAWN** – Leave leaves on the ground beneath trees and shrubs in fall. They hide food for migrating birds.

**WILDFLOWERS** – Plant native wildflowers. Birds will feed on the nectar in summer and eat the seeds in winter.

**SHRUBS** – Plant shrubs. They provide shelter for birds.

**PETS** – Keep your pets from hurting wildlife.



## Bird Behaviours: Nest Building

Not all birds build nests, but those that do may use all kinds of materials, such as sticks, mud, grass, and moss. Nests come in all shapes and sizes and may be on the ground, in a burrow, or high in a tree. Because bird species build their nests differently, you will need to watch closely to know when a bird is nest building.

*The male Great Blue Heron gathers sticks, which the female uses to build a nest, usually high in a tree. The nest is lined with bark and twigs.*





# Bird Song: Nature's Symphony

In 1832, the English poet John Clare heard a bird singing and wrote down its song. This is what he heard:

**CHEW CHEW CHEE CHEW CHEE CHEW**  
**CHEER CHEER CHEER**  
**CHEW CHEW CHEW CHEE**  
**UP CHEER UP CHEER UP**  
**TWEET TWEET TWEET JUG JUG JUG**

Now it's your turn! Listen to a bird singing and write what its song sounds like to you:

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# Your Observations

Now that you have learned a lot about birds, add some notes about the bird you sketch below. How big is it? What markings does it have, such as stripes or patches of colour? Does it have any special field marks such as wing bars, breast streaks, or a supercillium?

DATE: ..... TIME: ..... LOCATION: .....

WHAT IS THE BIRD DOING? .....

.....

WHAT KIND OF BIRD IS IT? .....

## Bird Behaviours: Nest Defense

Birds are very protective of their nests, especially when they have eggs or young birds. Some birds will attack predators, while others will fly in a nervous way or make short, repeated calls. Please be aware of nesting birds and bird watch with caution during the breeding season!

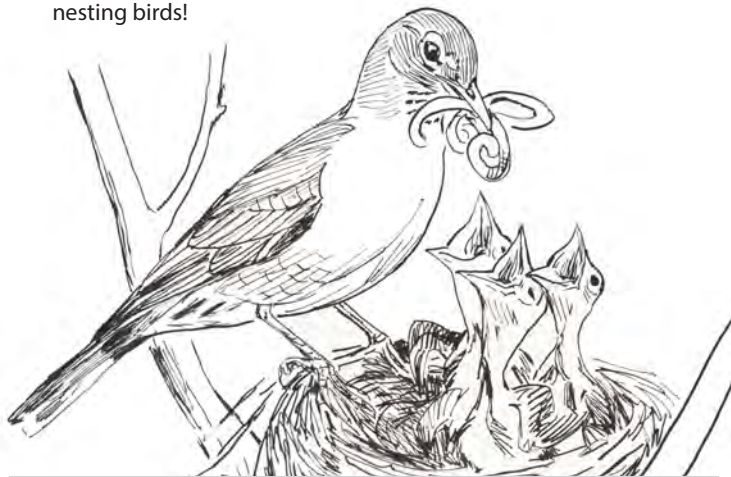


*An interesting nest defense behavior is the Killdeer's "broken wing act." If a predator comes close to a Killdeer's nest, the bird will first threaten with both wings raised. Then, if the threat continues, the bird will drop one wing to the ground and walk away from its nest, acting hurt and making distress calls.*

Learn more about bird nesting behaviours through citizen science by participating in Project NestWatch! See Resources on page 31.

## Bird Behaviours: Feeding Young

Feeding nestlings keeps adult birds busy! Not only must they find food for themselves, but they have to forage for food for their young. Remember the American Robin? Robin chicks will stay in the nest for about 13 days. Sometimes, they are fed as many as 100 times in a day. Be sure to keep your distance from nesting birds!



Leave baby birds where you find them. Fledglings may spend several days on the ground after they leave the nest and before they can fly. Help them by keeping people and pets away, so their parents can care for them. If you think a bird is truly an orphan, call a wildlife rehabilitation centre for advice.

# My Bird List

Date ..... Weather Details .....

**Birds Observed:** .....

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# My Bird List

Date ..... Weather Details .....

**Birds Observed:** .....

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## RESOURCES

**World Migratory Bird Day in Canada:** [birdday.ca](http://birdday.ca)

Find a local event and learn more about how you can help welcome birds back to Canada.

**World Migratory Bird Day Headquarters:** [birdday.org](http://birdday.org)

This site is a treasure trove of resources.

**Bird Studies Canada:** [birdscanada.org](http://birdscanada.org)

Many citizen science programs for bird enthusiasts, including:

- **Project FeederWatch:** [birdscanada.org/volunteer/pfw](http://birdscanada.org/volunteer/pfw)
- **Project NestWatch:** [birdscanada.org/volunteer/pnw](http://birdscanada.org/volunteer/pnw)
- **Great Backyard Bird Count:** [birdcount.ca](http://birdcount.ca)
- **Christmas Bird Count:** [birdscanada.org/volunteer/cbc](http://birdscanada.org/volunteer/cbc)
- **eBird Canada:** [ebird.ca](http://ebird.ca)

**Nature Watch:** [naturewatch.ca](http://naturewatch.ca)

Have fun outdoors and make observations that help scientists better understand climate change.

**Local junior naturalist club:**

[naturecanada.ca/naturenetwork](http://naturecanada.ca/naturenetwork)

Local clubs offer outings all year.

**NatureInstruct – Dendroica:** [natureinstruct.org/dendroica](http://natureinstruct.org/dendroica)

An online source for images and sounds of Canadian birds.

**Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's All About Birds:**

[allaboutbirds.org/guide/search](http://allaboutbirds.org/guide/search)

Comprehensive information on North American bird species.

**Quebec Oiseaux:** [quebecoiseaux.org](http://quebecoiseaux.org)

This organization can send a birder into your classroom.

Explore Nearby Nature in your NatureHood: [naturecanada.ca/naturehood](http://naturecanada.ca/naturehood)

## The Junior Birder Journal and Activity Book is published in Canada by



Nature Canada is Canada's oldest national charitable organization devoted to nature conservation. Our mission is to protect wildlife and habitats through public outreach and nature advocacy.

For more information, or to download this booklet, visit [www.naturecanada.ca](http://www.naturecanada.ca).

## Partners



Nature Canada works in partnership with **Environment for the Americas** (EFTA) to promote International Migratory Bird Day in Canada.

We are grateful to EFTA and its US partners for their support in helping us adapt their resources to Canadians.

Learn more about EFTA at [birdday.org](http://birdday.org)

**Environment**  
for the **Americas**



**BIRD STUDIES**  
**ÉTUDES D'OISEAUX** **CANADA**



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