

Bird Identification Resources

Bird Identification Field Guides:

A Birder's Guide to Minnesota, Fourth Edition, Kim R. Eckert, 2002, Self published, Distributed by ABA Sales, Colorado Springs, Colorado. Issued as both a soft cover and special edition hard cover, this is *the* book on bird finding in the state. This fourth expanded edition follows the format of the second and third editions, but increases the number of specific locations referenced to over a thousand (including over 200 sewage ponds). Its 258 pages of informative text and over 220 accompanying maps make this most recent guide indispensable for anyone looking to increase his knowledge of Minnesota's birding places.

Birds and Forests, Janet C. Green, 1995, *Birds and Forests: a Management and Conservation Guide*, The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, St. Paul, Minn. This guide brings together what is now known about forest birds in Minnesota, concepts that affect their populations and some ideas for planning and practices to further their conservation. This is a book about birds in Minnesota and how they respond to a changing landscape, providing information and data to understand the relationship between forest birds and forest management.

Birds of Minnesota a Field Guide (2nd ed.) and Audio DVD Set, Stan Tekiela, 2004. Adventure Publications: Cambridge, MN. This easy-to-use, truly pocket-sized guide contains useful identification, behavior, and habitat information accompanied by very nice photographs. Simple, easy-to-use field guide features 111 common species of Minnesota birds and Minnesota range maps. CD icon on each page directs you to the track on the Birds of Minnesota Audio CD's in the set so you can hear the songs and calls of each bird.

Birds of Minnesota and Wisconsin, Robert B. Janssen, Daryl D. Tessen, and Gregory Kennedy, 2003, Lone Pine Publishing, Auburn, WA. Every Minnesota birder will enjoy this illustrated field guide to 322 of the most common or notable species found in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Each account covers habitat, nesting, feeding, voice, best sites for viewing, similar species and includes a range map. A Quick Reference Guide organizes the species into color-coded family groupings. The book also includes a glossary of terms, a checklist and separate indexes for scientific and common names.

A Field Guide to the Birds of Eastern and Central North America, 5th edition, Roger Tory Peterson, 2002. Houghton Mifflin: Boston, MA. This is the classic, and arguably still one of the best, field guide for identifying birds by sight. It focuses on bird identification using detailed drawings with lines pointing to key field marks for each species. A brief description of songs/calls and habitat, as well as range maps are also included. A short introductory section on how to identify birds is especially helpful for the beginning birder.

Focus Guide to the Birds of North America, Kenn Kaufmann. 2000. Houghton Mifflin: Boston, MA. This revolutionary guide differs from existing guides in several ways. Instead of relying on painted depictions of birds or on photographs that may not show all of the bird's field marks, Kaufman has introduced a brand new type of illustration in a field guide - digitalized photographs. More than 2,000 photos of birds have been edited using a computer, correcting the pictures to show consistent color, size, removing shadows, and emphasizing field marks.

National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America, 5th edition, Jon L. Dunn, *National Geographic Society*. A great all-around field guide for North American birds. This field guide covers all of the birds of North America, more than 800 North American birds as well as exotic species. There are multiple illustrations of most birds, from juvenile to adult. There are separate sections that display illustrations of ducks in flight, shorebirds in flight, gulls in flight, and female hawks in flight. 280 full-color illustrations, plus 630 range maps and detailed notes on identification, behavior, habitat, and song.

The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America, David A. Sibley, 2003, Knopf: New York, NY. This field guide has been published in a much smaller and more convenient format than the original oversized Sibley Guide to Birds, which covered all the birds of North America. Because of its visual complexity and extra details, it is not recommended as a first or only field guide; experienced bird watchers, however, may already have a Sibley guide in their collection. *Stokes Field Guide to Birds: Eastern Region* Donald and Lillian Stokes, 1996. Little, Brown: Boston, MA This photographic field guide contains comprehensive information for each species including not only identification marks, but also habitat preferences, vocalizations, feeding and nesting behaviors, and conservation status. Alphabetical and color-tab indexes, as well as a quick guide to common backyard birds, are very helpful.

Bird Song Recordings and DVDs:

Bird Song Ear Training Guide: Who Cooks for Poor Sam Peabody? John Feith, 2004. Writers Collective Caculo.com This Audio CD is designed for anyone who wants to learn how to recognize bird songs. It features the sounds of 189 different bird species found in the Midwest and Northeast States. Each bird song recording is followed by a short description of the sound along with a common mnemonic used to remember it. Easy to use alphabetical track listing of all birds and their mnemonics such as: "Who cooks for you?" for the Barred Owl and "Poor Sam Peabody" for the White-throated Sparrow are included. Following the song and mnemonic, the source of the sound is revealed. By naming the bird at the end of each track, the listener is allowed to wonder and guess at the nature of the sound.

Birding by Ear: Eastern/Central, Richard K. Walton and Robert W. Lawson, 1989. Houghton Mifflin: Boston, MA This audio guide, containing 85 species, teaches you how to recognize and recall bird songs and calls by grouping them by their acoustic similarity. Songs and calls are accompanied by narration explaining what differences to listen for; then they are repeated. This is a companion to the Peterson Field Guide.

Birds, Birds, Birds! An Indoor Birdwatching Field Trip. John Feith, 2005. Writers Collective Caculo.com. This DVD presents a mix of photos, audio, and video that provide clues to the identification of each species. The best part is that the species is not identified until the viewer has a chance to make their own determination, a great learning device. Developed in Wisconsin, the birds are pictured in Midwestern habitat. A great resource for novice and intermediate birders.

Know Your Bird Sounds, vol. 1—Yard, Garden, and City Birds; vol. 2—Birds of the Countryside Lang Elliott, 2004. Stackpole Books: Mechanicsburg, PA, A premier bird photographer and song recordist, Lang Elliott, has compiled an exceptional collection of field recordings, enabling both amateur and experienced birders to learn to identify species by sound. Each volume consists of a book and CD, providing an introduction to the sound repertoire of 35 species (70 in all) of common birds found in eastern and central North America. Vol. 1 covers residential settings, city parks, and urban areas; vol. 2 includes meadow, woodland, marsh, and seashore habitats.

Stokes Field Guide to Bird Songs: Eastern Region Lang Elliott with Donald and Lillian Stokes, 1997. Little, Brown & Co.: New York, NY This audio companion to the *Stokes Field Guide to Birds* contains an excellent variety of vocalizations for 372 Eastern birds; it includes an informative booklet that describes the various songs and calls.

Websites

All About Birds <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/> Just about everything you need to know about birds and birding in one place: expert identification tips; detailed species accounts illustrated with color photographs, maps, audio and video clips; expert advice on binoculars and scopes; how to attract more birds, up-to-date bird conservation efforts and results, and more. Check out Birding Basics / Bird ID Skills and watch their Inside Birding Videos for bird identification tips.

Audubon Birds <http://audubonbirds.org/> A species identification site that allows the user to start a species search by silhouette, family, common name or combination of characteristics. Species information includes a visual description and photos, range map, links to audio recordings of songs and calls, and notes on behavior. Introductory information is available that describes plumage and molt, parts of a bird, classification of birds, bird families, and the natural history of birds.

Birds of North America <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna/> The Birds of North America is the online version of an 18 volume series of books compiled as a joint project by the American Ornithologists' Union, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and the Academy of Natural Sciences completed in 2002. This is a subscription site (\$42 annually) but if you are interested in easily accessed, research-based information about all aspects of a species, it is worth the price. Each species account is written by an expert and includes information about distinguishing characteristics, migration, habitat, food habits, sounds, breeding behaviors, demography and more, plus galleries of photos, audio, videos and a bibliography of related research.

Life Histories of Familiar North American Birds <http://birdsbybent.net/firms.com/index.html> A web-based version of the classic *Life Histories of North American Birds* by Arthur Cleveland Bent and many collaborators, published in a twenty-one volume series from 1919-1968. Contents link lists species in taxonomic order according to the 7th edition of the A.O.U. Check-list, and the index link provides a combined alphabetical list of scientific and common names. The narrative species accounts gives information about courtship, nesting, eggs, young, plumages, food, behavior, voice, etc. The information found here more than makes up for the lack of illustrations, making it the perfect supplement to use with a field guide.

The Minnesota Ornithologists' Union <http://moumn.org/> The MOU website has a wonderful array of birding information including occurrence maps, a photo gallery, as well as state and county checklists. There is a special focus on unusual sightings in the state and MOU supports a great communication network for finding current occurrences. MOU is an organization of both professionals and amateurs interested in the study and conservation of birds and promote their goals through field trips, education, and publishing *The Loon*, which reports species sightings and records, and *Minnesota Birding*, a magazine with current information of interest to birders.

Patuxent Bird Identification Info Center <http://www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/id/framlst/infocenter.html> This government site is part of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and contains photographs, songs, videos, identification tips, maps, and life history information for all North American birds. Species are arranged by common family names allowing the user to quickly find a certain species. Once found, links are provided for specific information. References and additional online resources are also included.

Other fun websites!

Avian Sleuth <http://www.whatbird.com/game/game.aspx>. This game comes from the *What Bird* website <http://www.whatbird.com> (described above). It allows you to identify birds in three different habitats with the aid of binoculars and hints. Three levels of difficulty make this fun for all ages!

The Patuxent Bird Quiz <http://www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/trend/birdquiz3.html>. The Patuxent (Wildlife Research Center) Bird Quiz lets you test your knowledge of North American bird identification, distribution in winter and summer, and song. Try it out and see how much you know about birds!

Internet Mapping Resources

Google Maps: <http://maps.google.com/>

NorthStar: <http://www.lmic.state.mn.us/chouse/northstarmapper.html>

USGS Topos: free downloadable topo maps are available from the USGS website. From <http://www.usgs.gov/>, go to 'Maps, Imagery, and Publications', then 'USGS Store', then click on 'Download digital scans of topo maps' and select 'Map Locator' - or just browse around.

Windows Live Local: <http://maps.live.com/>

If you have other recommendations of resources you found helpful or updates to these resources, please submit them to Bonnie Sample, bsample@audubon.org. Thanks!