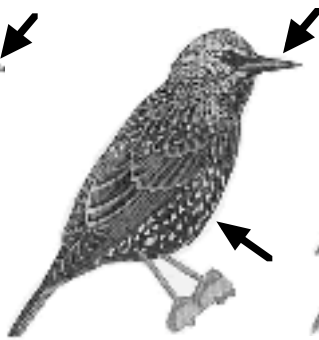


## BLACKBIRDS



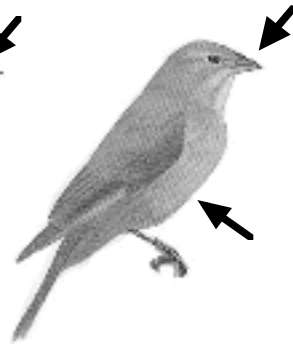
**RED-WINGED  
BLACKBIRD** (fem)

- streaked on belly
- short thin bill
- reddish-brown overall



**EUROPEAN STARLING**  
(non-breeding)

- spotted on belly
- long pointed bill
- blackish overall



**BROWN-HEADED  
COWBIRD** (fem)

- finely streaked belly
- stout bill
- pale brown head



**COMMON GRACKLE** (m)

- pale yellow or white eye
- purple iridescence on head
- greenish back



**BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE** (m)

- dark eye
- blue iridescence on head
- greenish-blue body

Most of the drawings from *The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America*, Alfred A. Knopf, 2003

## BIRD IDENTIFICATION BASICS

Getting to know birds is just like getting to know your human neighbors. When you move into a new neighborhood everyone is a stranger, but soon you recognize people based on their characteristics, such as habits, shape, styles of walking, and the places where you see them.

Paying attention to individual differences can help you identify birds, too. You can recognize many birds simply by noting their shapes, even if seen only in silhouette. Other useful characteristics are a bird's posture, size, flight pattern, and the kind of habitat in which the bird was seen.

*First off:* where NOT to start. Many ID tips focus on very specific details of plumage called field marks - the eye ring of a Ruby-crowned Kinglet; the double breast band of a Killdeer. While these tips are useful, they assume you've already narrowed down your search to just a few similar species.

But these four keys will quickly get you to the right group of species, so you'll know exactly which field marks to look for.

### 1. Size

1. **SMALL:** Is it sparrow sized?
2. **MEDIUM:** Is it robin sized?
3. **LARGE:** Is it crow sized?
4. **X-LARGE:** Is it vulture sized or larger?

### 2. Shape

1. Body (thin, pudgy)?
2. Bill (long, short, pointed, hooked, wide, thin)?
3. Legs (long or short)?
4. Neck (long or short)?
5. Tail (long, short, cocked up, horizontal)?

### 3. Behavior

1. How does it fly (straight, darting, undulating)?
2. How does it walk (walk, stride, hop, strut)?
3. Unusual behaviors (does it flick its tail, bob its head)?

### 4. Habitat

1. Is it high or low in vegetation?
2. Is it around water or more in dry areas?
3. Does it like forested areas, open areas, high grass?

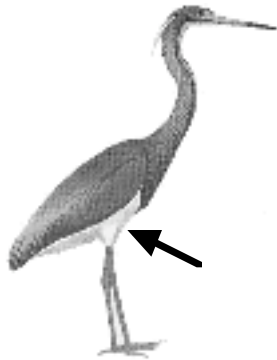
Also listen for sounds (volume, repetition, length), but don't spend a lot of time listening to a CD or tape of sounds. Associate sounds with your sightings rather than trying to memorize recordings.

## SMALL DARK WADERS



### LITTLE BLUE HERON

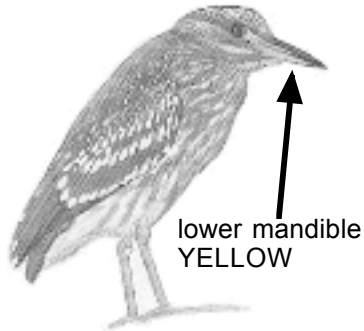
- body all blue
- maroon on neck front
- legs light greenish



### TRI-COLORED HERON

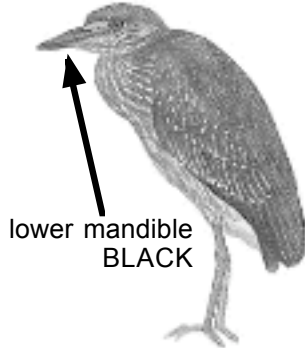
- blue body, white belly
- light streaks on neck front

## NIGHT HERONS



lower mandible  
YELLOW

immature  
**BLACK-CROWNED  
NIGHT HERON**  
adult



lower mandible  
BLACK

immature  
**YELLOW-CROWNED  
NIGHT HERON**  
adult



## ANHINGA-CORMORANT



### ANHIGA

- long straight bill
- long tail



Anhinga  
straight wings



### DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT

- short hooked bill
- short tail



Cormorant  
bowed wings

## VULTURES IN THE AIR



### TURKEY VULTURE

- long tail
- gray all along back of wings

TURKEY  
VULTURE



### BLACK VULTURE

- short tail
- gray only on wing tips

BLACK  
VULTURE

In flight, Turkey Vulture wings are in a V-shape (dihedral);  
In flight, Black Vulture wings are almost flat

## RAPTORS IN THE AIR



### COOPER'S HAWK

- rounded tail
- white band at tail tip
- same size as Red-shouldered Hawk



### SHARP-SHINNED HAWK

- squared tail
- small, Crow-sized



### RED-SHOULDERED HAWK

- pale crescents at wing tips
- narrow white bands on tail



### SHORT-TAILED HAWK

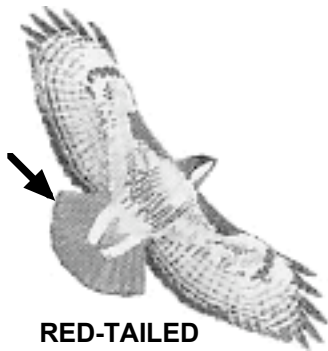
light phase

- white below with dark secondaries



dark phase

- only dark buteo in Florida



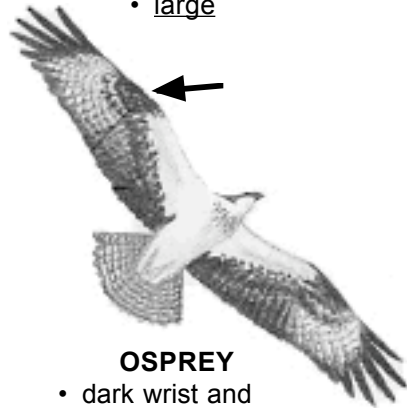
### RED-TAILED HAWK

- reddish tail
- pale breast, dark head
- large



### NORTHERN HARRIER

- white underneath
- black wingtips
- from above, dark with white rump



### OSPREY

- dark wrist and secondaries
- white body
- large

## SMALLER WHITE WADERS (20-24" tall) WITH STRAIGHT BILLS



*immature*

### LITTLE BLUE HERON

- two-tone blueish bill
- greenish legs/feet



*adult*

### SNOWY EGRET

- black bill
- black legs/yellow feet



*adult*

### CATTLE EGRET

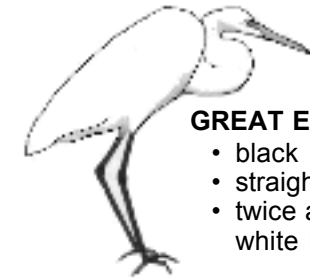
- yellow bill
- dark legs/feet

## LARGER WHITE WADERS



### WOOD STORK

- thick dark bill (juvenile has light, ivory bill)
- bill curves down
- bald black head
- black along entire bottom of wings in flight



### GREAT EGRET

- black legs, feet
- straight yellow bill
- twice as tall as white birds above



### WHITE IBIS

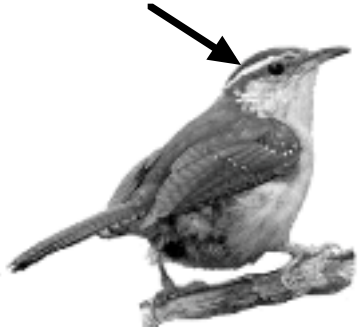
Adult

- white, black wing tips
- pink bill & legs
- bill curves down

Juvenile

- mottled brown body

## WRENS



**CAROLINA WREN**

- long white eyebrow stripe
- white chin and throat
- bright reddish-brown above, buffy-orange below



**HOUSE WREN**

- subdued brown overall
- darker barring on wings and tail

## SMALL WOODPECKERS

- both males have red on back of head
- both females lack red on head



**DOWNY WOODPECKER**

- bill shorter than head is wide
- black spots on outer white tail feathers



**HAIRY WOODPECKER**

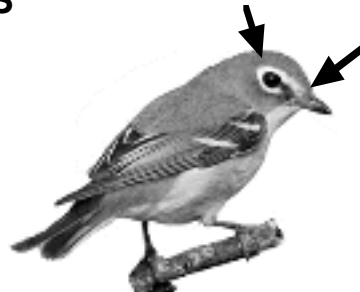
- bill longer than head is wide
- no black spots on outer white tail feathers

## VIREOS



**WHITE-EYED VIREO**

- olive-green above, yellow sides
- yellow spectacles
- two white wing bars
- white eyes
- here all year



**BLUE-HEADED VIREO**

- blue-gray head
- white spectacles
- two white wing bars
- dark eyes
- here mostly fall/winter



**RED-EYED VIREO**

- olive-green above, white below
- white eye brow stripe bordered by black
- no wing bars
- red eyes
- here mostly summer

## SWIMMING BIRDS



**PIED-BILLED GREBE**

- PALE, STOUT BILL with black ring
- brown body
- dives under water



**BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING DUCK**

- RED BILL
- red-brown body
- mostly gray head
- white stripe on wings
- black belly



**COMMON GALLINULE**

- RED BILL, yellow tip
- almost black body
- white stripe on flank
- white under tail



**COOT**

- WHITE BILL
- dark gray body
- black head