Ornithology Lab 2011

TA: Andrew Crosby
Basic Bird ID

“You can observe a lot by just watching”

- Yogi Berra
The 4 basics of bird identification


- Size and Shape
- Color Pattern
- Behavior
- Habitat

©2007 Richard N Allen
Size and Shape

http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/browse
Size and Shape – similar passerines

• General shape
• Bill Size
• Bill Shape
• Posture

http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/browse
Example – check-down list

• Short, fat and brown
• Bill – short and thick
• Streaked breast? – no
• Rusty cap? – yes
• Facial markings? – eye ring
• Conclusion –

Field sparrow

© 2007 Mike McDowell
Other clues

- Wing bars
- Tail pattern
- Breast color
- Eye line
- Eyebrow stripe
- Mustache stripe
- Wing Pattern
Wing Bars

Yellow-rumped Warbler (winter)  Orange-crowned Warbler (winter)
Tail Pattern
Breast and Throat Color
Eyeline
Eyebrow Stripe
Mustache Stripe
Behavior

• Posture
• Movement
• Flight Pattern
• Feeding Style
• Flocking
Posture
Example: Flocking Behavior

American Robin
• Very loose flocks

Brewer’s Blackbird
• Tighter flocks

Cedar Waxwing
• Very tight flocks – like schools of fish
Habitat

- Woods
- Shrubs
- Fields
- Water
- Urban

- By paying attention to habitat, you can know what to expect, or what you “probably” won’t see.
Quick Quiz – name the group

http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/browse?shape=35,14
What are the differences?
What is the same?
Field Marks

Distinctive stripes, spots, patterns, colors, and highlights
5 birds that you see every day

- **Corvidae**
  - Cardinaidae
  - Cardinalidae
  - Turdidae

- **Mimidae**
American Robin

What are the field marks?

Habitat-urban/feeder

Feeding

Nesting – tree or shrub
Northern Cardinal

What are the field marks?

Range Map

Habitat-urban/feeder

Feeding

Nesting - shrub
Blue Jay

What are the field marks?

Range Map

Habitat - urban/feeder

Feeding

Nesting – tree or shrub
Northern Mockingbird

What are the field marks?

Habitat-urban/feeder

Feeding

Nesting - shrub

Range Map

**Northern Mockingbird**

*Mimus polyglottos*

Legend:
- Violet: Year Round
- Orange: Summer (breeding)
- Blue: Winter (non-breeding)
- Gold: Migration

Map by Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Range data by NatureServe
House Sparrow

What are the field marks?

Range Map

Habitat-urban/feeder

Feeding

Nesting - cavity

LEGEND

- Year Round
- Summer (breeding)
- Winter (non-breeding)
- Migration

Map by Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Range data by NatureServe
Canada Goose

What are the field marks?

Range Map

Habitat-urban/feeder

Feeding

Nesting – ground
Mallard

What are the field marks?

Range Map

Habitat-water

Feeding

Nesting - ground
Red-tailed Hawk

What are the field marks?

Range Map

Habitat-generalist

Feeding

Nesting – tree or cliff
Red-shouldered Hawk

What are the field marks?

Range Map

Red-shouldered Hawk
*Buteo lineatus*

Habitat - forest

Feeding

Nesting - tree
Northern Harrier

What are the field marks?

Habitat - grassland/field

Feeding

Nesting - ground

Range Map

Northern Harrier
*Circus cyaneus*

Legend:
- Year Round
- Summer (breeding)
- Winter (non-breeding)
- Migration

Map by Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Range data by NatureServe
American Kestrel

What are the field marks?

Habitat - grassland/field

Feeding

Nesting – cavity

Range Map

American Kestrel
Falco sparverius

LEGEND
- Year Round
- Summer (breeding)
- Winter (non-breeding)
- Migration

Map by Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Range data by NatureServe
Mourning Dove

What are the field marks?

Habitat: urban/feeder

Feeding

Nesting – tree or shrub

Range Map

Mourning Dove
Zenaida macroura

LEGEND
- Year Round
- Summer (breeding)
- Winter (non-breeding)
- Migration

Map by Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Range data by NatureServe
Downy Woodpecker

What are the field marks?

Range Map

Habitat-urban/feeder

Feeding

Nesting – cavity
American Crow

What are the field marks?

Range Map

Habitat-urban/feeder

Feeding

Nesting – tree

LEGEND
- Year Round
- Summer (breeding)
- Winter (non-breeding)
- Migration

Map by Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Range data by NatureServe
Carolina Chickadee

What are the field marks?

Range Map

Habitat-forest

Feeding

Nesting – cavity
Tufted Titmouse

What are the field marks?

Habitat - forest

Feeding

Nesting - cavity

Range Map

**Tufted Titmouse**

*Baëolophus bicolor*

**LEGEND**
- Year Round
- Summer (breeding)
- Winter (non-breeding)
- Migration

Map by Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Range data by NatureServe
White-breasted Nuthatch

What are the field marks?

Habitat - forest

Feeding

Nesting – cavity

Range Map

White-breasted Nuthatch
Sitta carolinensis

LEGEND
- Year Round
- Summer (breeding)
- Winter (non-breeding)
- Migration

Map by Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Range data by NatureServe
Carolina Wren

What are the field marks?

Habitat: urban/feeder

Feeding

Nesting - cavity

Range Map

Carolina Wren

Habitat:

- Urban/feeder

- Nesting - cavity

Map by Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Range data by NatureServe
Eastern Bluebird

What are the field marks?

Habitat - grassland/field

Feeding

Nesting - cavity

Range Map

Eastern Bluebird
Sialia sialis

Legend:
- Year Round
- Summer (breeding)
- Winter (non-breeding)
- Migration

Map by Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Range data by NatureServe
Field Sparrow

What are the field marks?

Habitat-grassland/field

Feeding

Nesting – ground or shrub
White-crowned Sparrow

What are the field marks?

Range Map

Habitat - shrubland

Feeding

Nesting – ground
Dark-eyed Junco

What are the field marks?

Habitat-urban/feeder

Feeding

Nesting – ground

Range Map

Dark-eyed Junco

Junco hyemalis

LEGEND
- Year Round
- Summer (breeding)
- Winter (non-breeding)
- Migration

Map by Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Range data by NatureServe
Eastern Meadowlark

What are the field marks?

Habitat - grassland/field

Feeding

Nesting - ground
House Finch

What are the field marks?

Habitat: urban/feeder

Feeding

Nesting – trees

Range Map

House Finch
Carpodacus mexicanus

LEGEND
- Year Round
- Summer (breeding)
- Winter (non-breeding)
- Migration

Map by Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Range data by NatureServe
American Goldfinch

What are the field marks?

Habitat-urban/feeder

Feeding

Nesting – trees

Range Map

American Goldfinch
*Spinus tristis*

**LEGEND**
- Year Round
- Summer (breeding)
- Winter (non-breeding)
- Migration

Map by Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Range data by NatureServe