

Discovering the Joy of Sketching Birds



- & About your host
- & Why sketch birds?
- & Tips for sketching in the field
- & Tools & techniques
- & Group sketch-along
- & Resources for further learning



WHAT WE'LL EXPLORE

Fear Not!

Anyone can
gain skills
in sketching!!



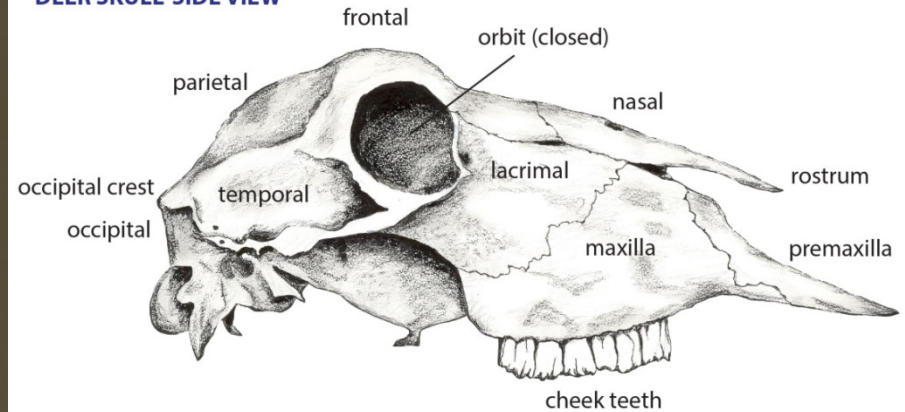


ABOUT YOUR HOST

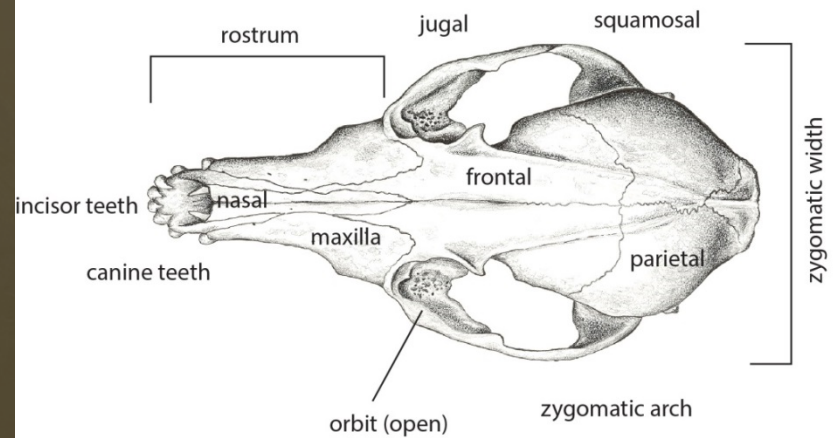
Drawing as a means of understanding

TERMINOLOGY FOR PARTS OF THE SKULL

DEER SKULL-SIDE VIEW



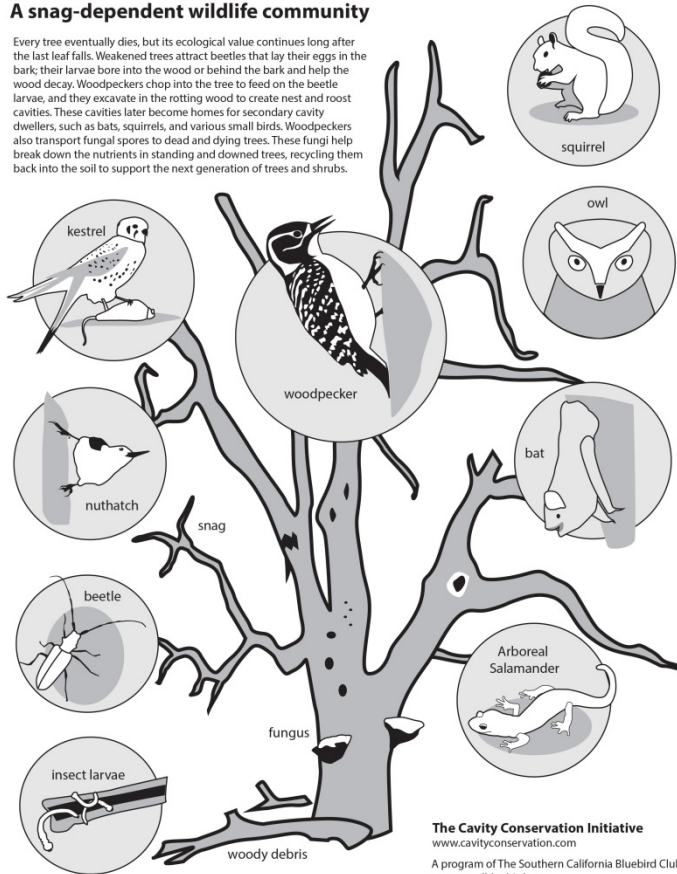
FOX SKULL-TOP VIEW



Design & illustration work

A snag-dependent wildlife community

Every tree eventually dies, but its ecological value continues long after the last leaf falls. Weakened trees attract beetles that lay their eggs in the bark; their larvae bore into the wood or behind the bark and help the wood decay. Woodpeckers chop into the tree to feed on the beetle larvae, and they excavate in the rotting wood to create nest and roost cavities. These cavities later become homes for secondary cavity dwellers, such as bats, squirrels, and various small birds. Woodpeckers also transport fungal spores to dead and dying trees. These fungi help break down the nutrients in standing and downed trees, recycling them back into the soil to support the next generation of trees and shrubs.



The Cavity Conservation Initiative
www.cavityconservation.com
 A program of The Southern California Bluebird Club
www.socalbluebirds.org

Birds Love the Clear Creek Habitat



Riparian is the streamside habitat...

The "riparian" zone is the area along a river or stream typically thick with vegetation and trees. A large percentage of the bird populations along Clear Creek lives in the riparian zone, where they find foraging, nesting, and roosting habitat. The riparian area along the creek provides a safe corridor for wildlife to move along the river system.

Where birds find food and water...

Some Clear Creek riparian areas that were destroyed by past mining operations have been or are currently being restored. Scientists that monitor the return of birds to the restoration, and riparian areas know how important it is to have a variety of vegetation types in the watershed. Each bird species has unique requirements for food, nesting materials, and roosting habitat. The Clear Creek riparian zone now has more grasses along the creek, denser brush for cover, and taller cottonwood and willow trees, all of which improve bird habitat.

Thanks to Clear Creek restoration.

The Clear Creek watershed is also home to several species that are now rare or no longer found along the Sacramento River. These include the yellow-breasted chat, yellow warbler, and song sparrow that all currently breed along Clear Creek. The photos include several bird species that can be seen while enjoying a leisurely outing along the Clear Creek trails.



Workshops & classes



Learn to Sketch Birds

Free Artist Workshop

At the VALLARTA BOTANICAL GARDEN

Friday-Sunday, March 6-8
2-4 pm



Paintings by
Christine Elder

Meet in the Hall of Flowers Ballroom
in the Hacienda de Oro Visitor Center

Participants will learn a quick technique for capturing the essence of a bird on paper and have opportunities to practice under the instruction and coaching of Christine Elder, an experienced bird artist.

Adults and children of all ages and abilities are welcome.

Anyone can learn to draw! Come join the fun!

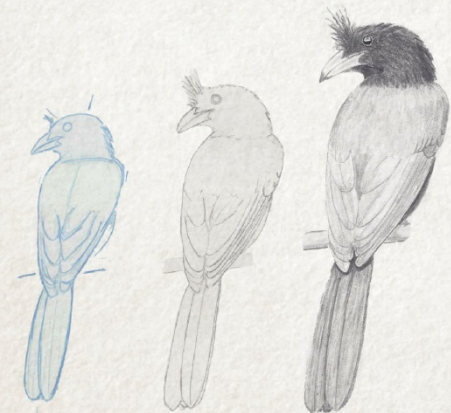
Christine Elder is a professional artist & naturalist living in Oregon. She also co-leads birding tours with Paradise Birding.

**Simply show up with pen/
pencil and paper, and enjoy!**

We have extra pencils and paper.

This event is concurrent with the Vallarta Bird Festival (March 5-8), but participants are not required to register with the Bird Festival.

This workshop is complimentary with regular garden admission of just \$80 MXN per adult or adolescent.



Visit us!
www.vbgardens.com

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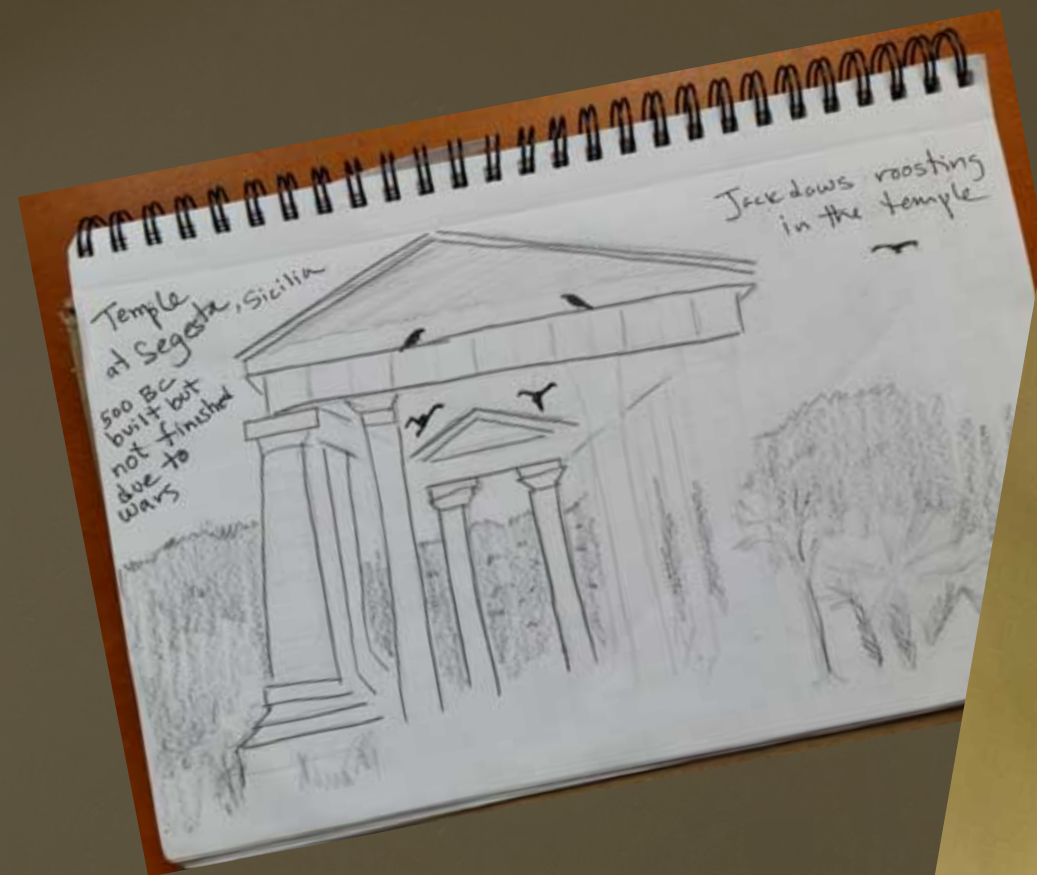




Co-leading birding tours







European Robin, Sicily



Collared Aracari, Honduras



White-necked Jacobin



Red-billed Streamertail, Jamaica

Orange-breasted Bunting, Mexico



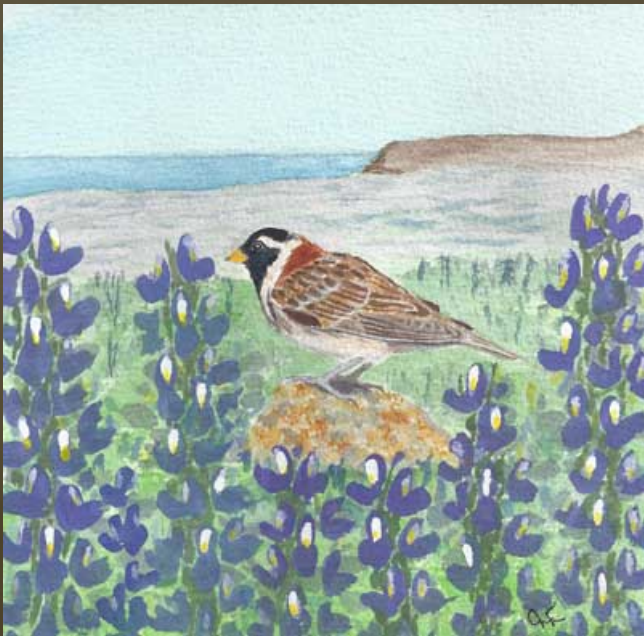
Yellow Grosbeak, Mexico



San Blas Jays



Yellow-winged Cacique

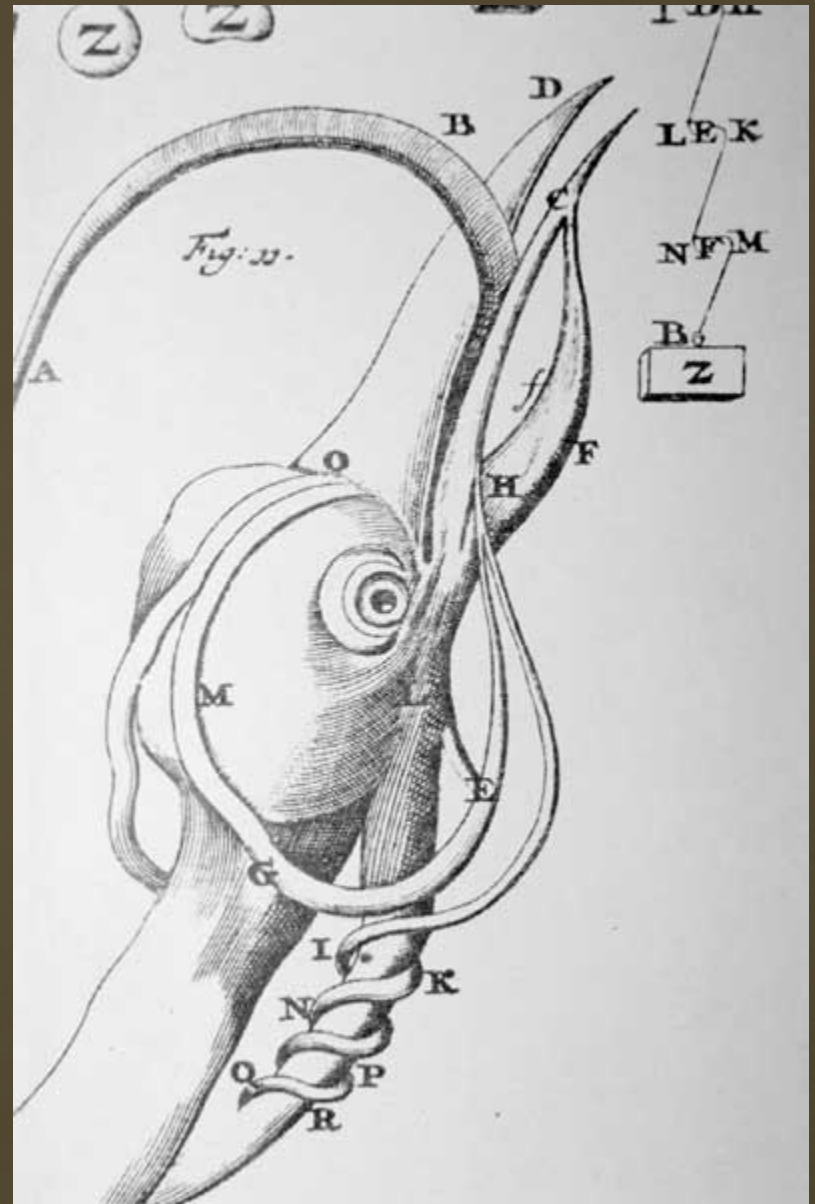


Lapland Longspur, Alaska

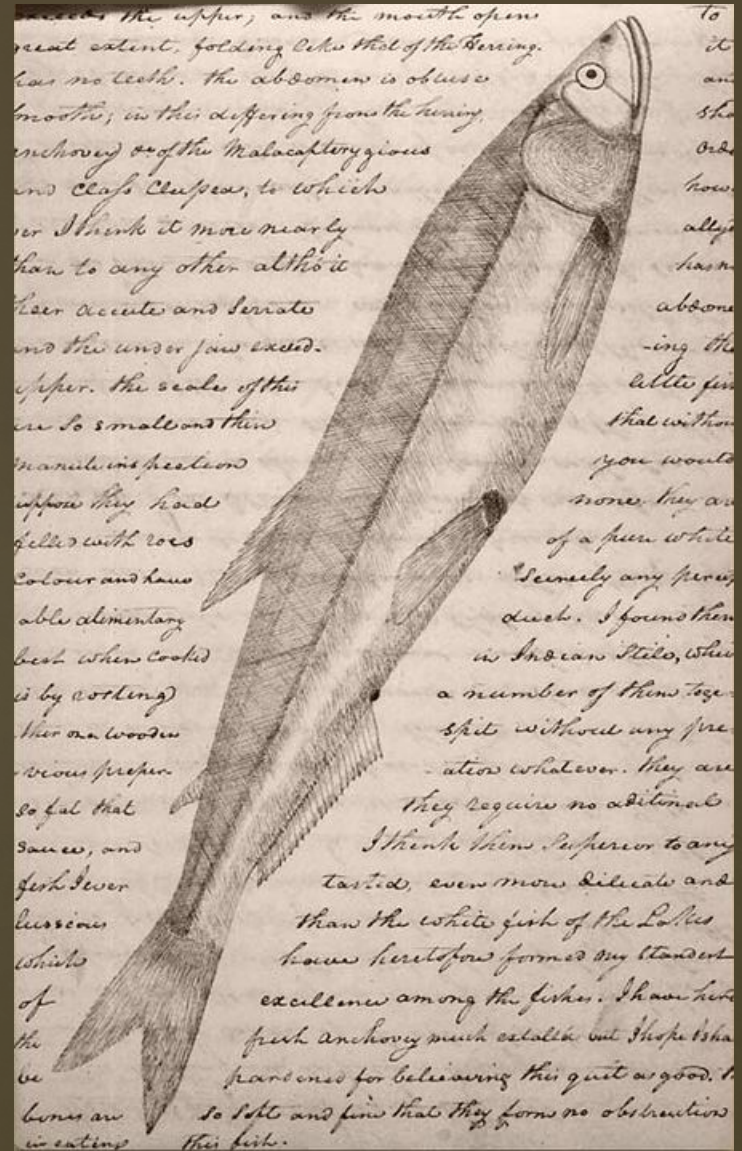


WHY SKETCH BIRDS?

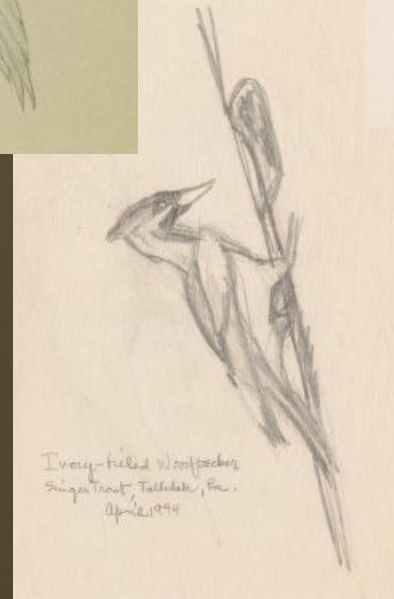
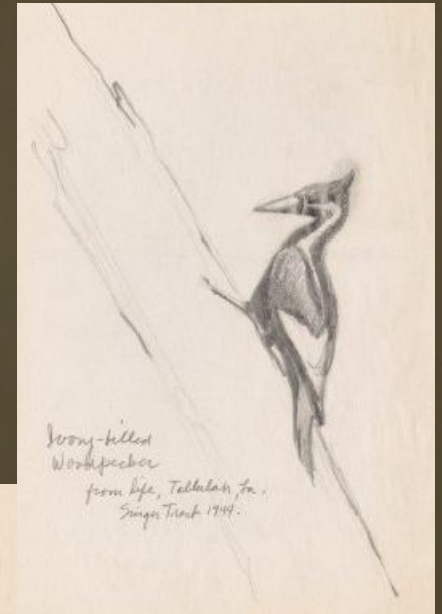
Long history of anatomical studies



Early explorers communicating about new discoveries



Documentation of rare and endangered species



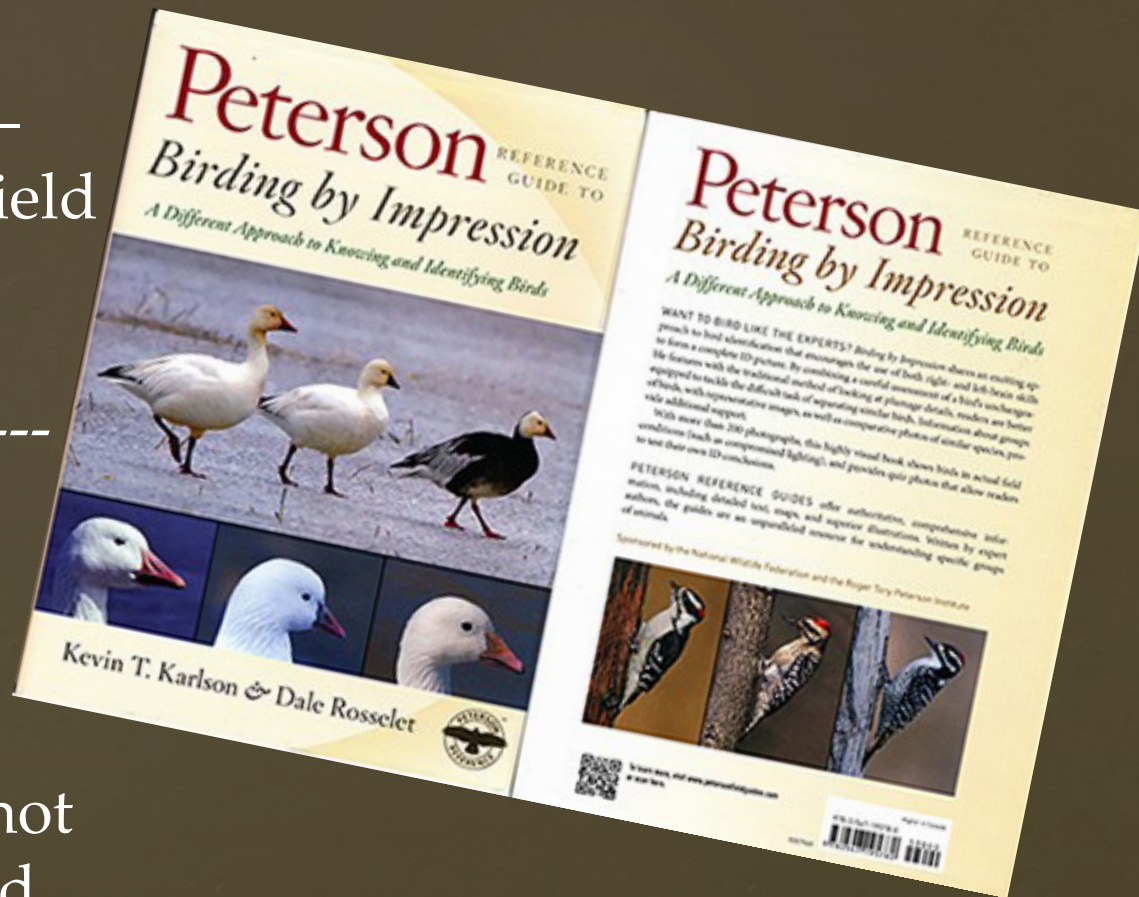


Why YOU should try it...

Aids in Identification

A (new) old way of seeing

Birding by impression – observing not just the field marks but learning the size, shape, overall structure and behavior---gives a more firm foundation than just relying on plumage patterns and feather details that you might not be able to see in the field.



Sharpens your observation skills

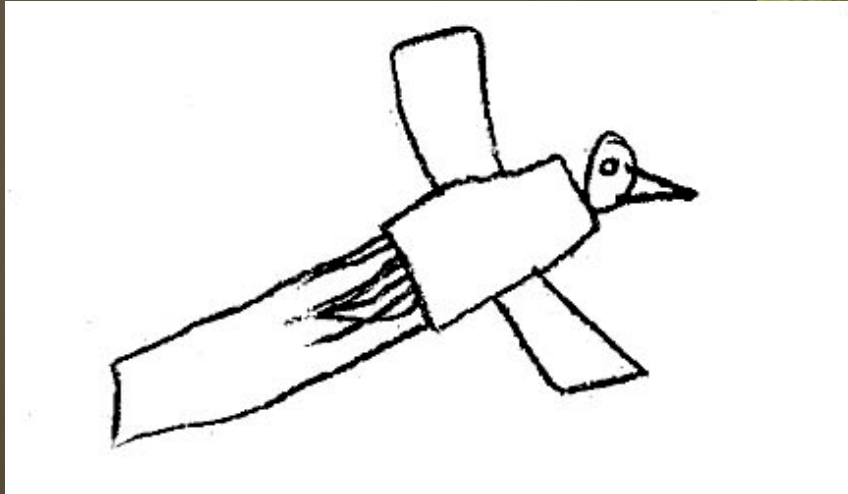


Sketching opens the door to **Learning**

Learning leads to Understanding

Understanding leads to Empathy

Empathy Leads to **Conservation**



A sense of wonder



A hobby you can share

“In the end we will
conserve only what we
love; we will love only
what we understand; and
we will understand only
what we are taught.”
-Baba Dioum



Meditative & stress reducing





Readily Observable

Joys of sketching
and observing
birds in their
natural habitat



Slowing down to really observe





See tip sheet on my website at www.ChristineElder.com/tutorials

TIPS FOR SKETCHING IN THE FIELD

Not field guide, field sketch!





American Robin

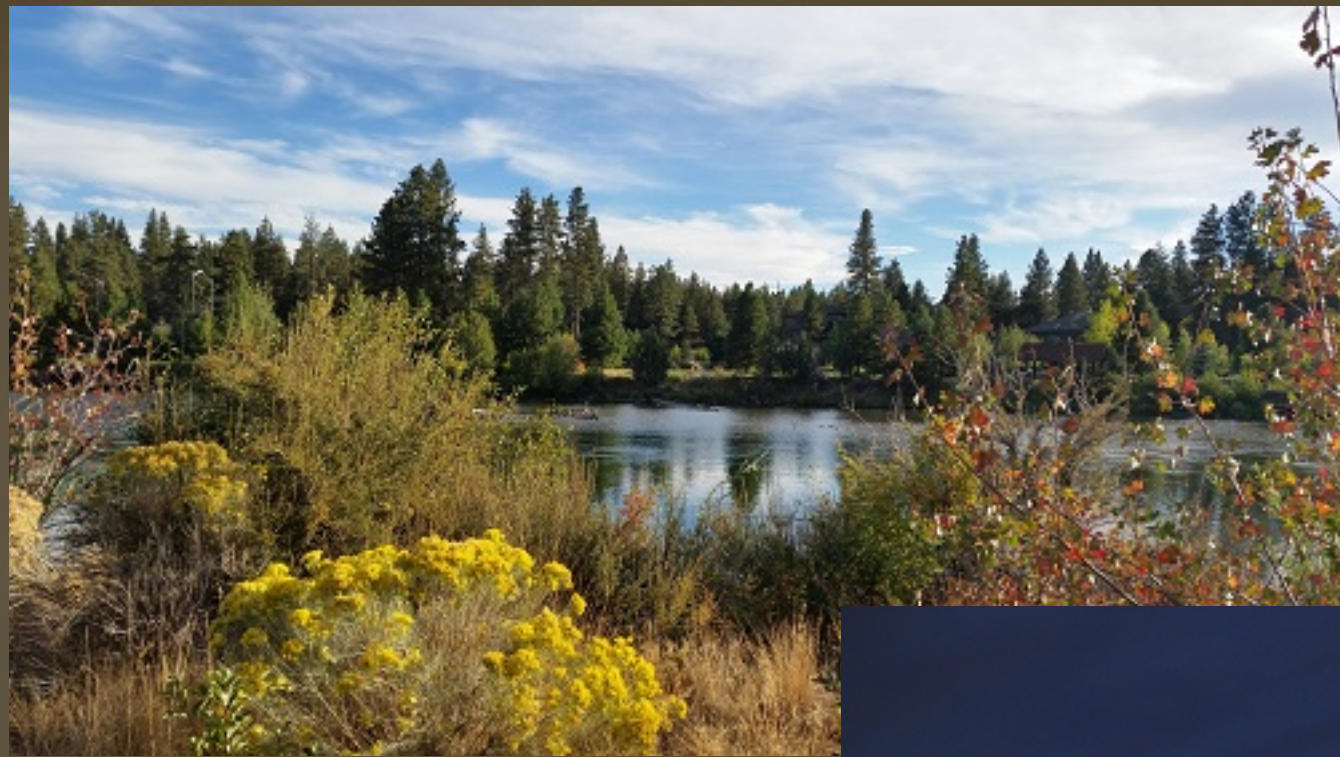


Varied Thrush



Learn habits of local birds





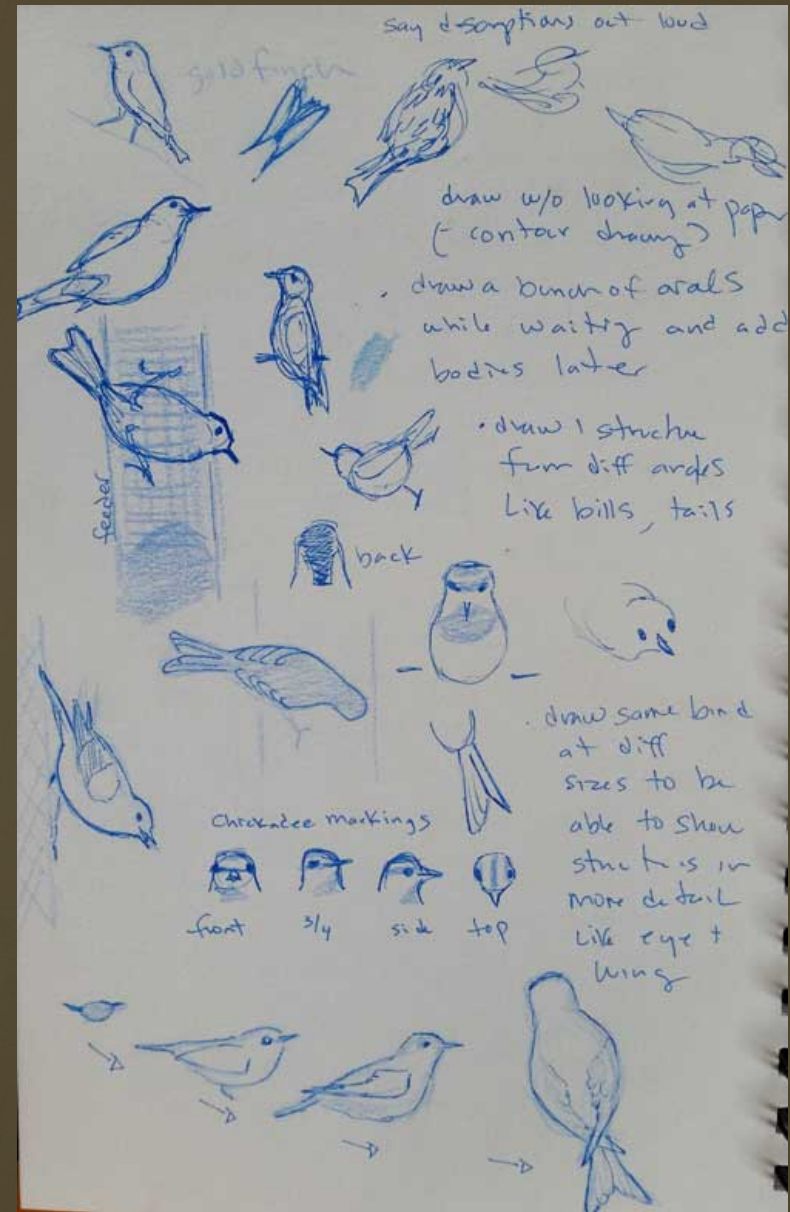
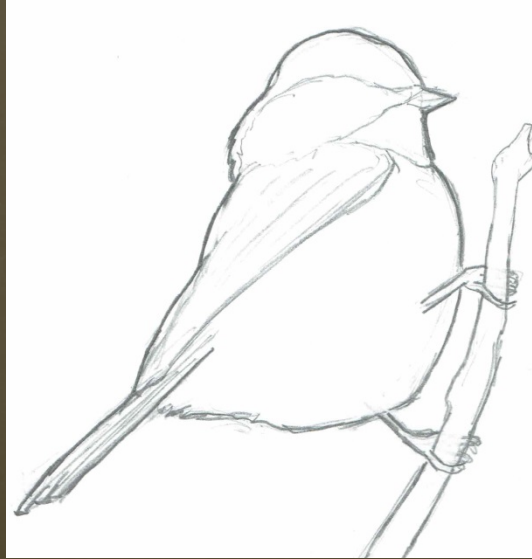
- Always keep your art supplies handy



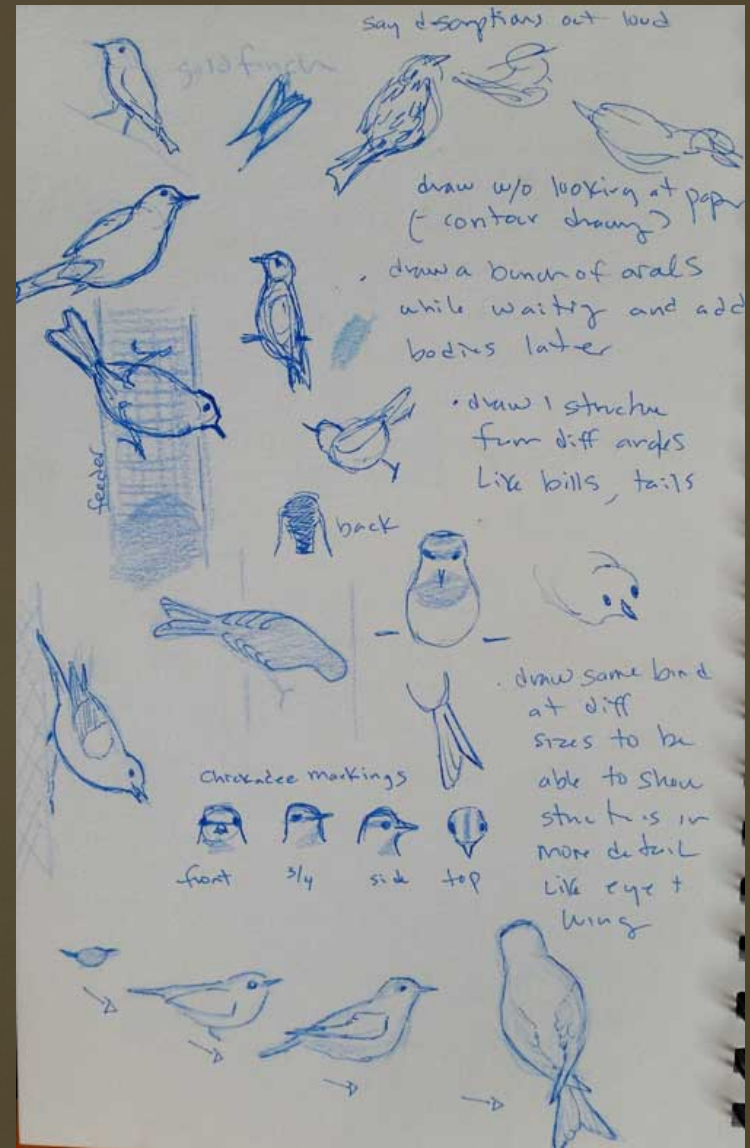
Sit patiently



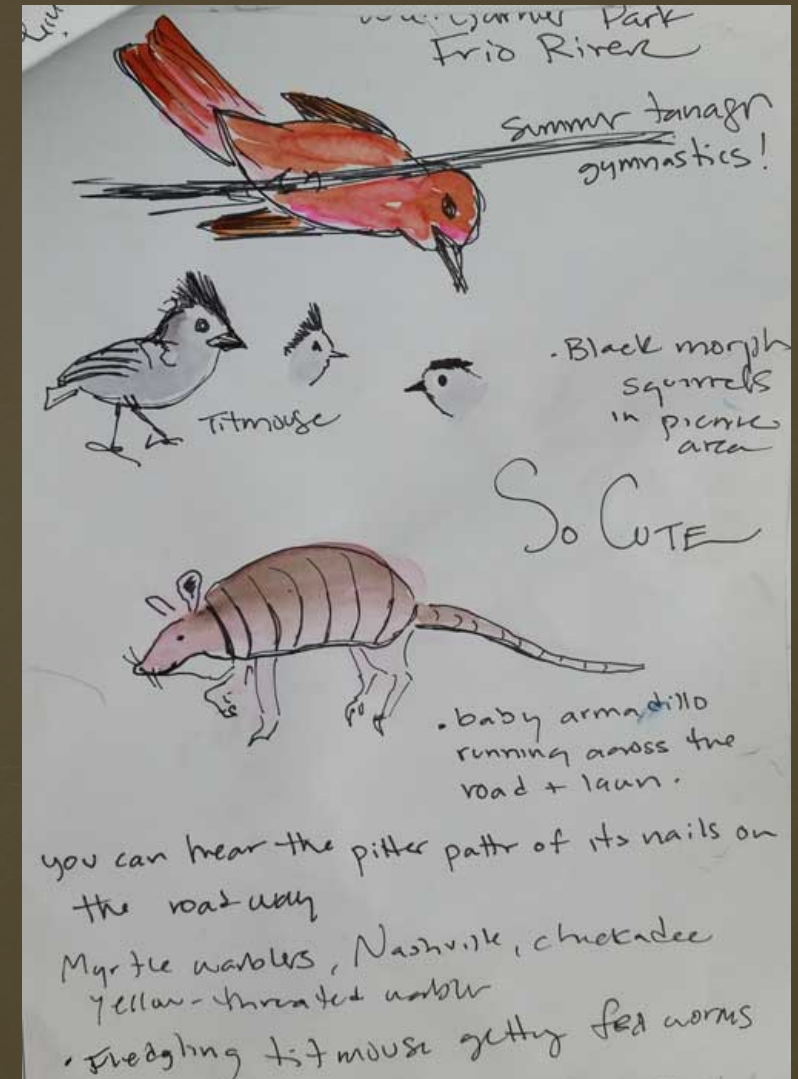
Gestures/thumbnails



Draw smaller as
birds move
faster



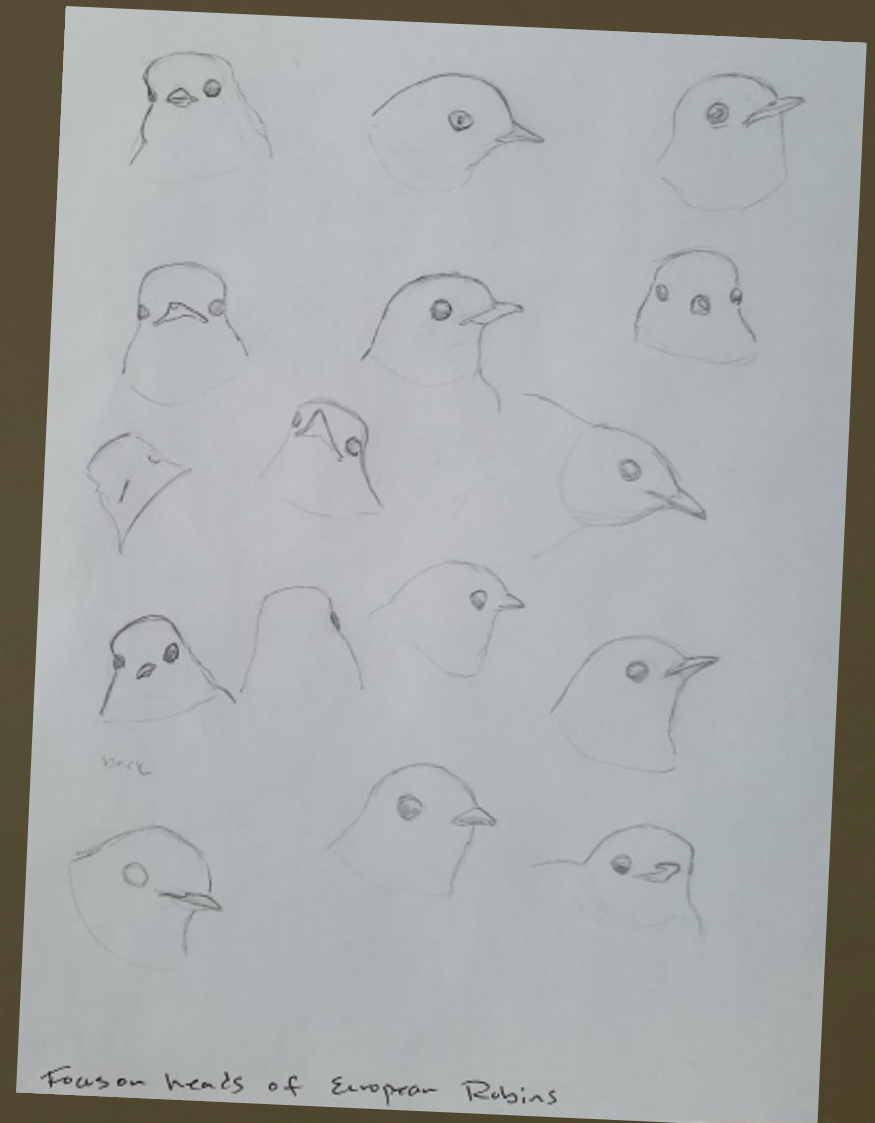
Focus on process over product



Sketch birds at varying distances

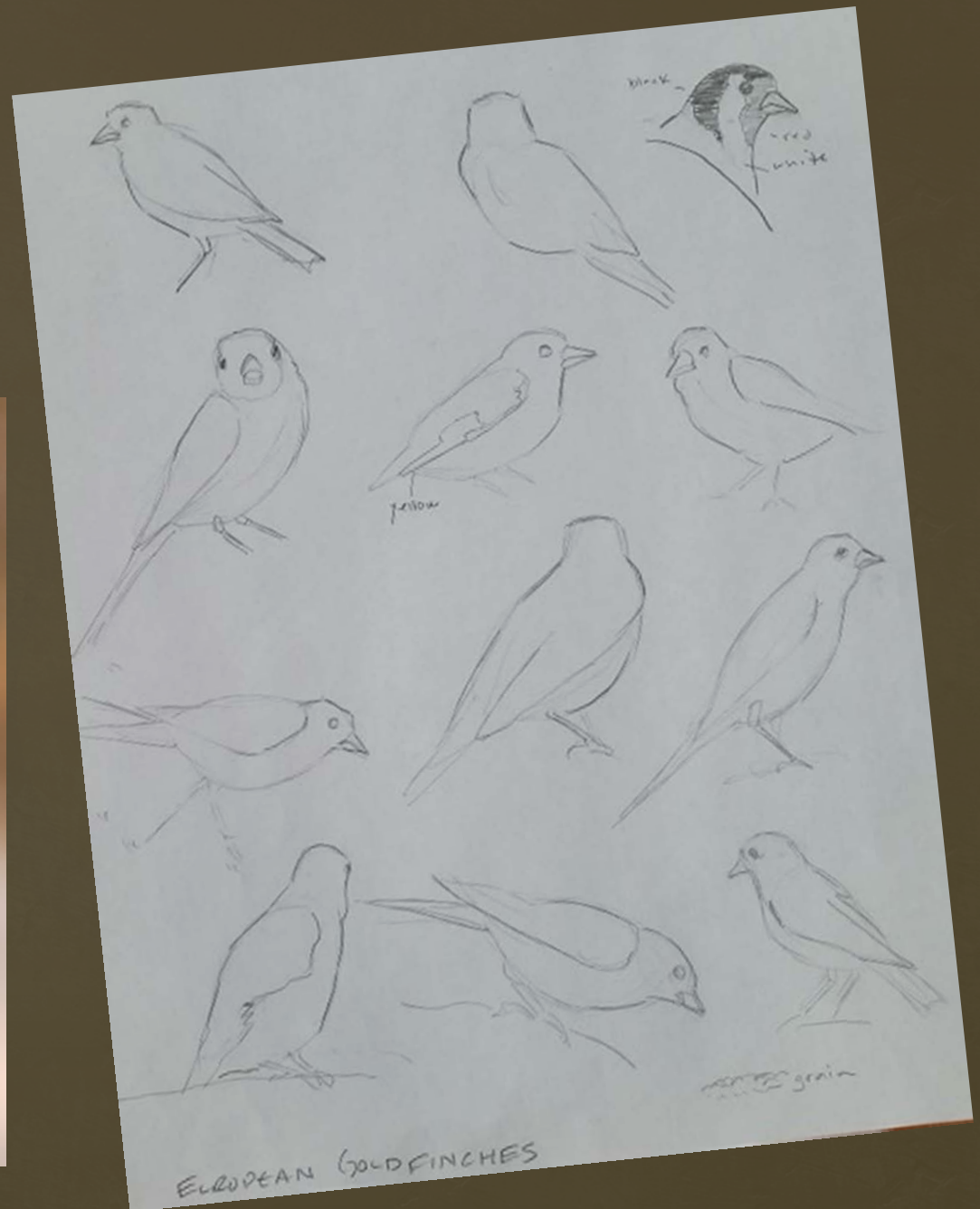


Focus on one part of the anatomy

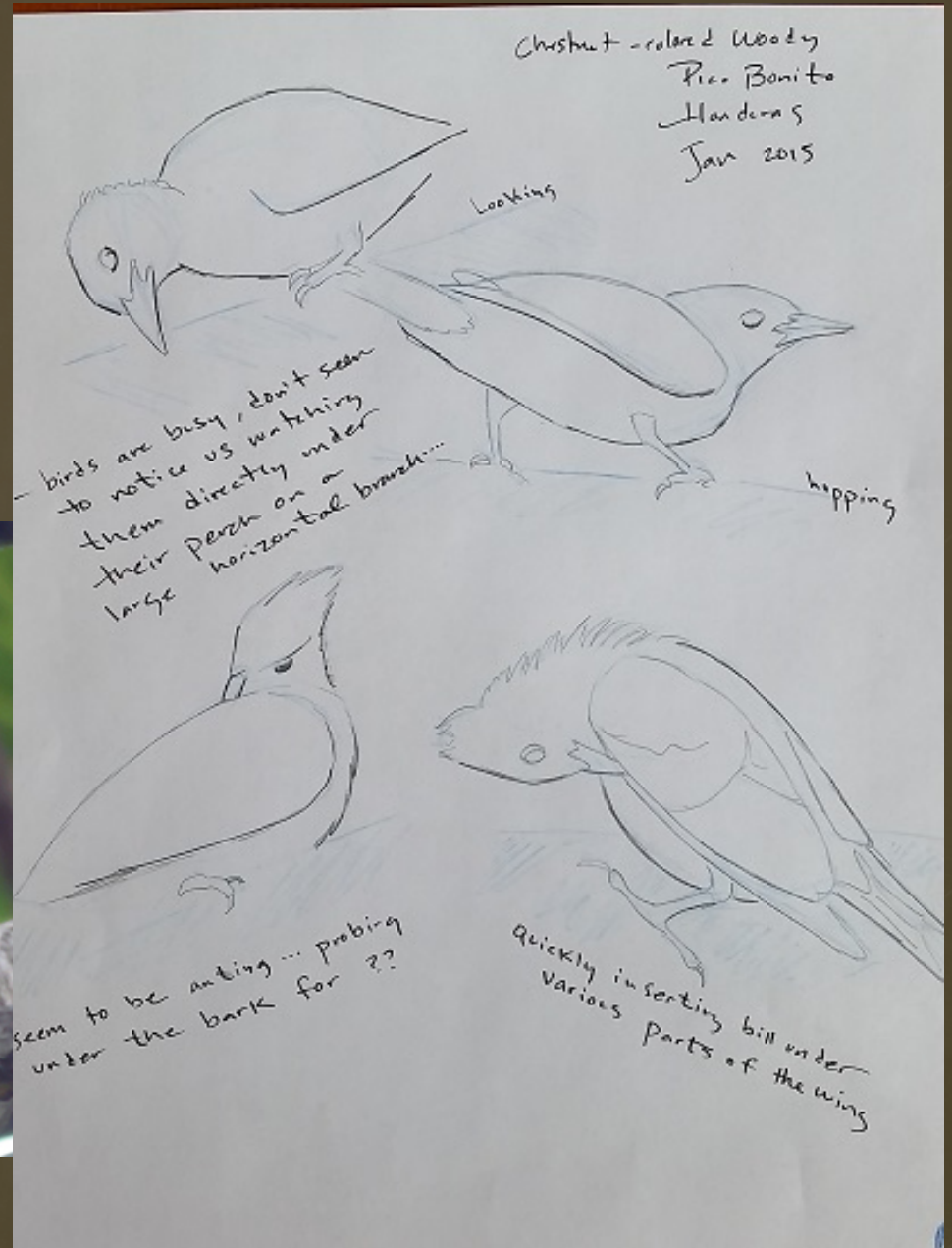


Focus on heads of European Robins

- Focus on one species



Take field notes



TIPS FOR SKETCHING AT HOME



🔗 relaxing bird songs to listen to while sketching at home: Favorite European birds channel - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHWhebFt_r0

🔗 Favorite tropical bird songs to sketch to in my studio: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwM47_bbw84



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Condor Nest**

Bird Cams

**The Condor Cam is
Live!**

Meet our newest addition:
#93, a 5-month old
California Condor nestling
in a cliffside cavity.

Watch Cam

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Barn Owls Texas



Cornell Lab FeederWatch Ithaca, NY



California Condor Sespe Condor Sanctuary

Latest News

Preserved
specimens
and
study skins







TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

What to depict in your sketches

⌘ **Most important:**

- ∅ 1st: Shape (silhouette)

- ∅ 2nd: Color patterns /field marks

- ∅ 3rd: Notes on behavior, questions

⌘ **Nice to have if time allows:**

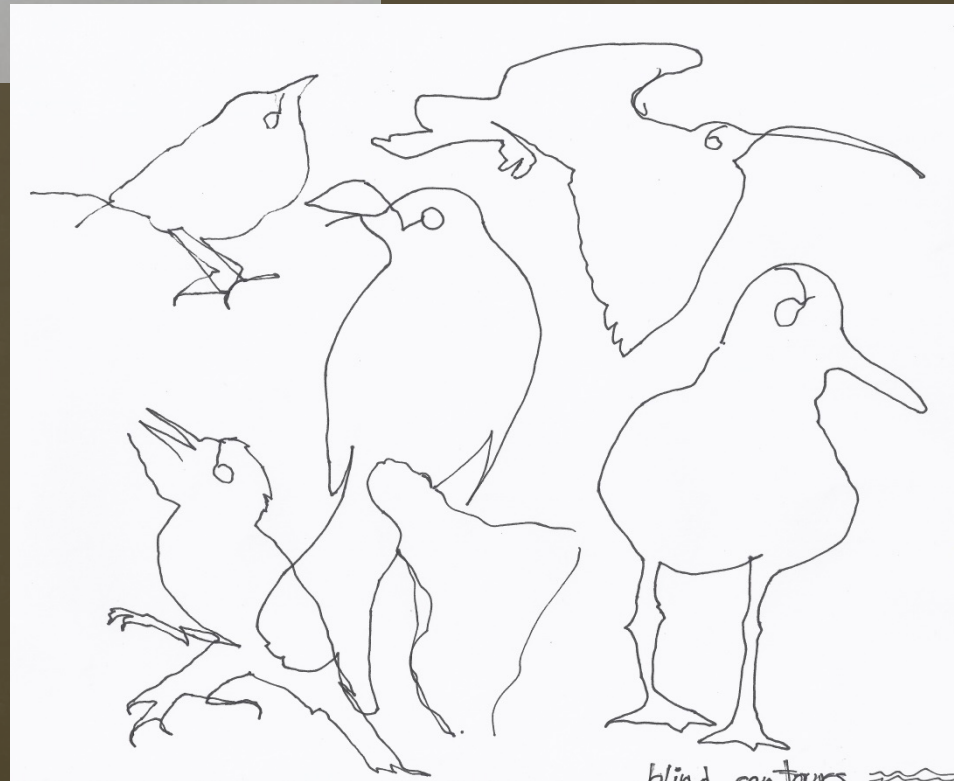
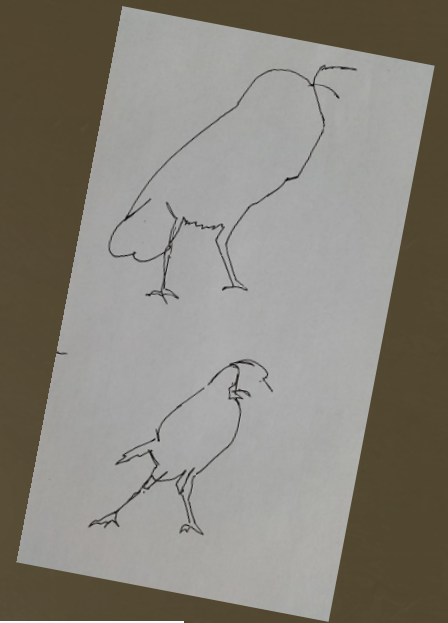
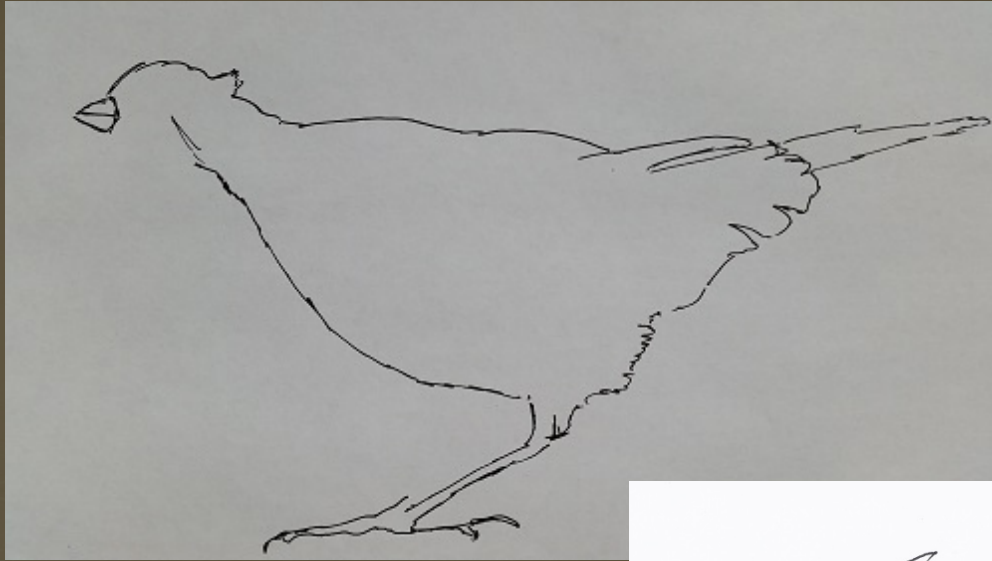
- ∅ Three dimensional form

- ∅ Add color with pencils/ paints

Silhouettes



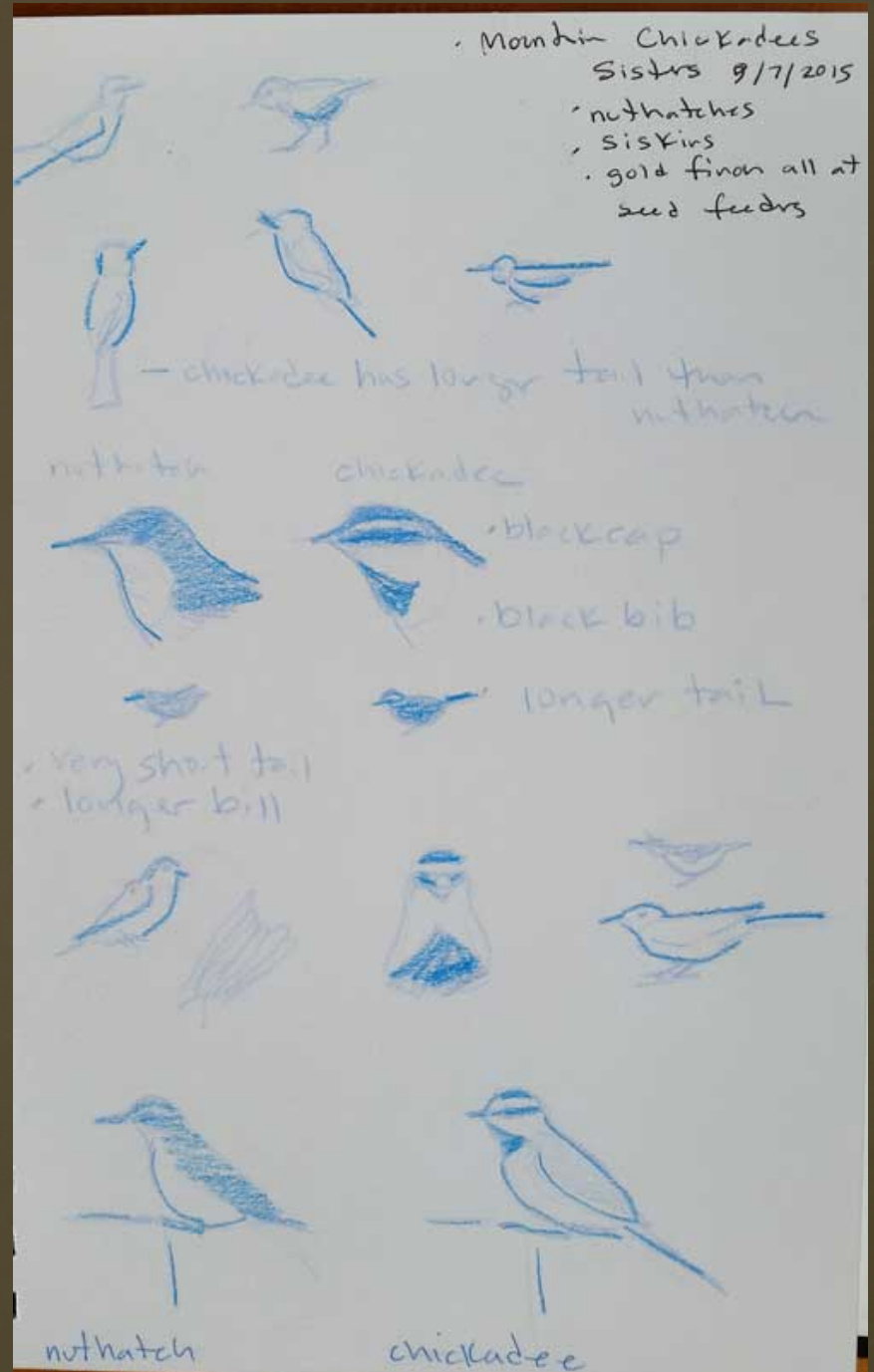
Blind Contours



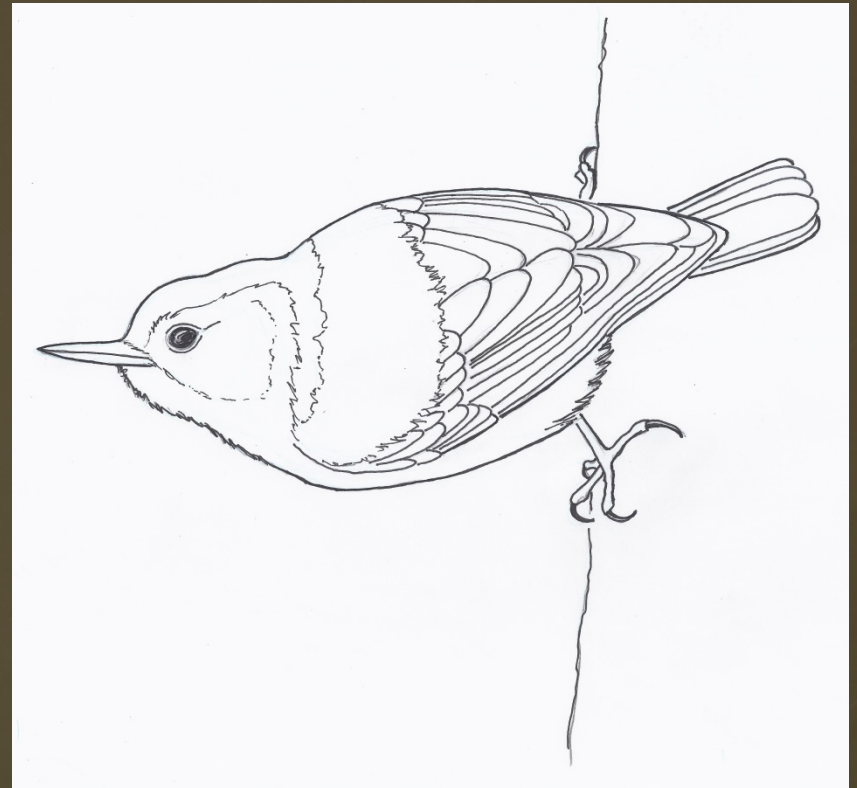
Graphite pencil



Colored Pencil



Pen



More
examples
of
Fun
techniques
to
experiment
with...





Toned paper



Gouache



Watercolor

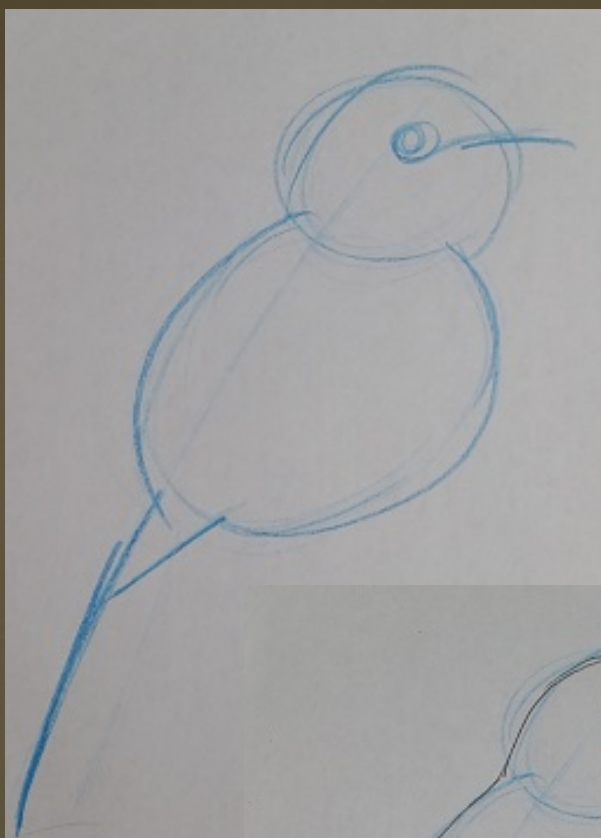


Rosy Thrush-Tanager, Mexico

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!

STEPS IN A BASIC SKETCH

- ⌘ 1st line to represent overall body posture
- ⌘ 2nd shapes for body, head, wings, tail
- ⌘ Double check relative proportions and comparative lengths and alignments
- ⌘ Notice negative shapes and angles
- ⌘ Evaluate and correct, firm up best lines
- ⌘ Less is more. Leave some to imagination
- ⌘ Vary line thickness, avoid heavy outline





RESOURCES



Christine Elder Illustration & Design

Serving the Environmental Community Since 1996

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You'll fit right in my tribe if you:

- Would rather spend a day out hiking or skinny dipping than go to a mall.
- Believe getting stung by a jellyfish is a small price to pay for diving a coral reef.
- Think insects and snakes aren't creepy crawlies but wickedly fascinating.
- Believe children have the right to experience nature and adults have the responsibility to get them there.
- Would spend your lottery money on traveling instead of stuff.
- Wouldn't think I'm a nut job if I told you I did surgery on a bumblebee, went swimming with sharks, kept a black widow as a pet and love collecting skulls!

Take a moment to watch my video to learn more about me and my invitation for you to join my *Nature Notes* newsletter.



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Quick & easy tips to have you sketching outdoors TODAY!



Created by naturalist and visual artist Christine Elder

www.ChristineElder.com

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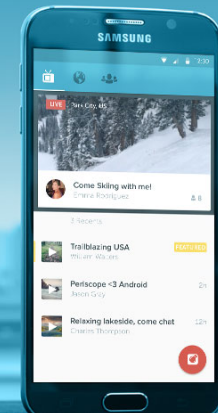
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Christine Elder sketching on the Pribilofs in the Bering Sea

 Periscope

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