

Features to Notice when Identifying and Sketching Birds

Use this handout when observing birds and sketching them in your journal

HEAD

- * Overall size, shape, color, ornamentation
- * Bill: size, length, shape, color, nares, bristles
- * Eye: size, iris color, orbital ring
- * Markings: eye rings, mask, stripes, lines

BODY

- * Overall size, shape, feather types
- * Color and overall hue, patterns on feathers
- * Markings: patches, bands, bars, streaks
- * Feather patterns: notched, spotted, barred

WING

- * Overall size, shape, and color
- * Shape and number of feather groups
- * Emargination and notch
- * Primary projection
- * Markings: bars, spots
- * Length relative to tail

TAIL

- * Overall length and shape
- * Number of feathers
- * Shape of feathers
- * Colors and patterns
- * Length and color of coverts

LEG

- * Length and width
- * Feathers and / or scales
- * Shape of scales
- * Color

FOOT

- * Number of toes
- * Arrangement of toes
- * Length of toes
- * Size and shape of nail

BEHAVIOR

- * Body language
- * Perching and flight style
- * Foraging style and diet
- * Vocalizations
- * Courtship, mating, nesting

HABITAT

- * Biome and habitat type
- * Use of microhabitat
- * Weather, season, time