



## Before we begin:

- We want to know who is here! Please introduce yourself in the chat: Name. School.
- Please mute your microphone to reduce background noise.
- We will leave time for Q & A. Please submit your questions via the Google form that will be shared in the chat.
- This presentation, along with the questions and answers, will be posted on the WESO website.



# Feathered Friends Coaches' Meeting

Event Supervisors:  
Jenna Munson  
Danielle Johnson



# What are the goals of Feathered Friends?

- ◉ Students will learn about birds *and show off* what they've learned
- ◉ Have 75% questions most kids will know
- ◉ 15% medium level questions
- ◉ 10% harder questions to determine placement
- ◉ Pick up a hobby!
  - Students learn what it's like to be a birder  
“in the field?”
- ◉ Get outside!

# Feathered Format:

- ◎ 1-2 students per grade
- ◎ Feathered Friends is a multimedia test with familiar question styles
  - (Multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, matching, labeling)
- ◎ Unmarked Field guides (“Sibley East”) are allowed at the test
  - Homemade guides are not allowed, but feel free to make one as a learning tool
- ◎ Misspellings won’t reduce test score
- ◎ Guessing the number of birds in an image or movie will be used as a tiebreaker
- ◎ Highest score wins!

# What to prepare:

Birding is an observational, diagnostic science:  
Learn how to identify birds by SIGHT and SOUND.

- Learn some elementary ornithology
- Learn to ID:
  - The test will not “trick” students with tough juvenile plumage, etc. Questions will be grade appropriate!
- Bring a field guide!
  - Field guides are provided by WESO
  - Diet guides will be provided online and at the event
- Two students will share a written test. Clues are multimedia.

# General Ornithology:

## What makes an animal a bird?



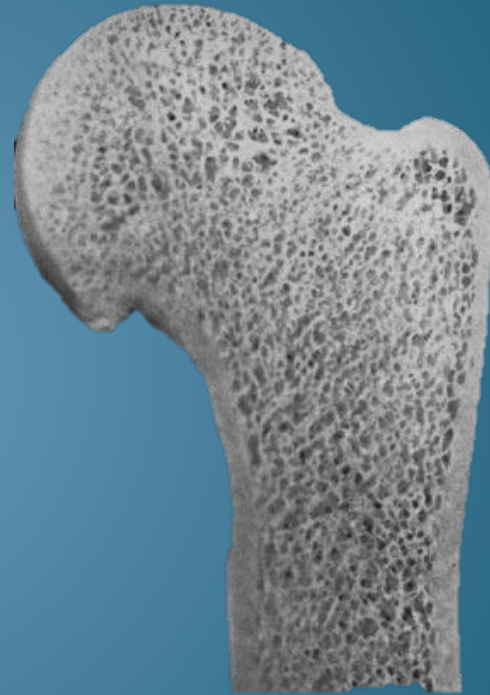
# Lay eggs with hard shells



# Birds are built for flight



Sponge-like,  
hollow bones



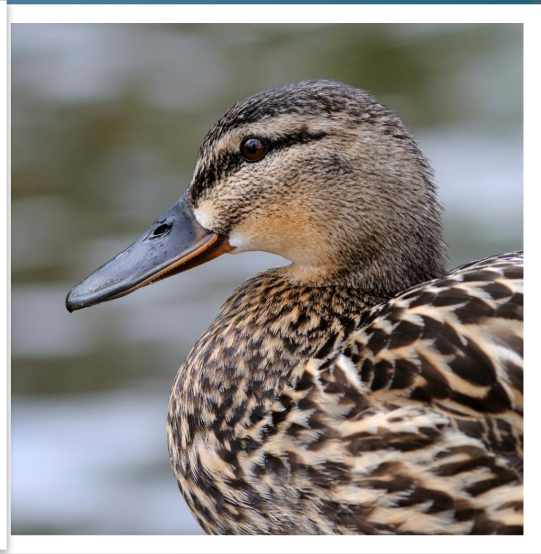
Mammal bone



Covered in feathers:  
a unique feature only to birds



# Birds have Beaks (or bills):





# Bills (Beaks) = Tools

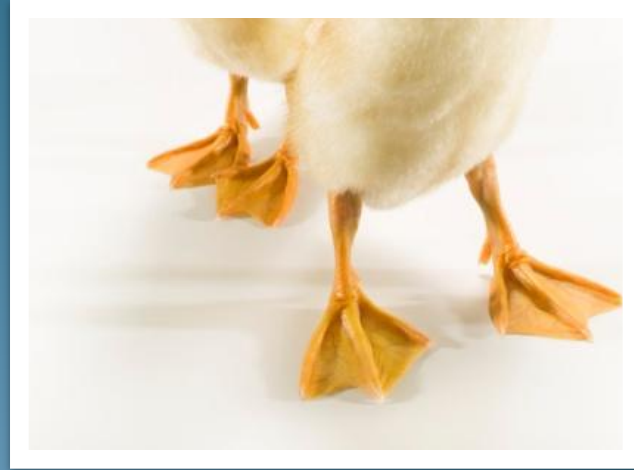
- ◉ used to get food
- ◉ drink water
- ◉ tear or break food
- ◉ gather nesting material
- ◉ preen
- ◉ feed babies and protect them from enemies.





# Two Feet

- Used to walk, stand, hop, perch, carry things, grab prey, swim, wade, and dig.



Some birds (notably owls) that swallow whole prey form pellets



Jim Cumming



ID birds:

Birding  
by S<sub>s</sub>



## Sights:

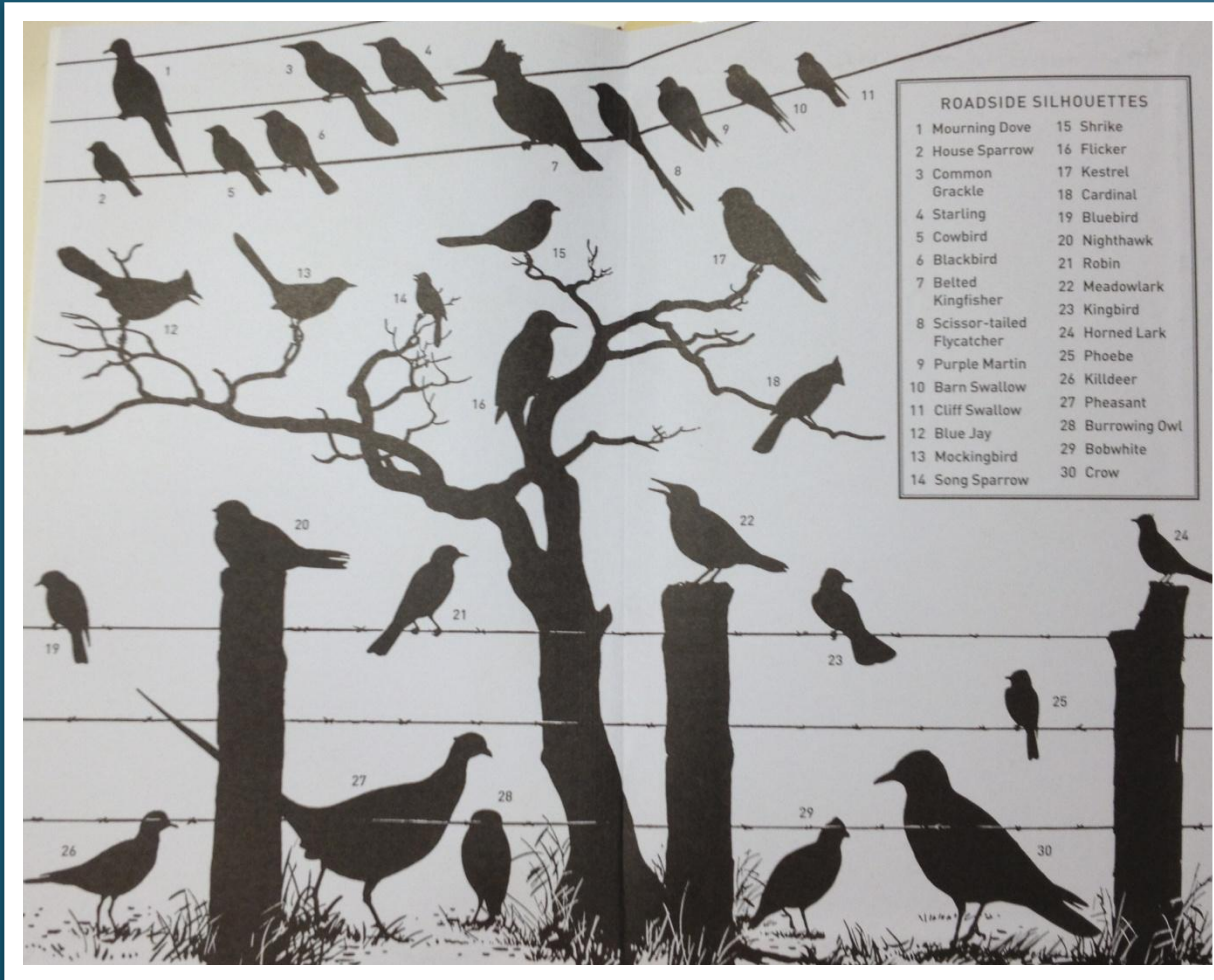
- Shape
- Size
- Shade

## Behavior & History

- ◎ Snack
- ◎ Surroundings
- ◎ Shenanigans
- ◎ Song

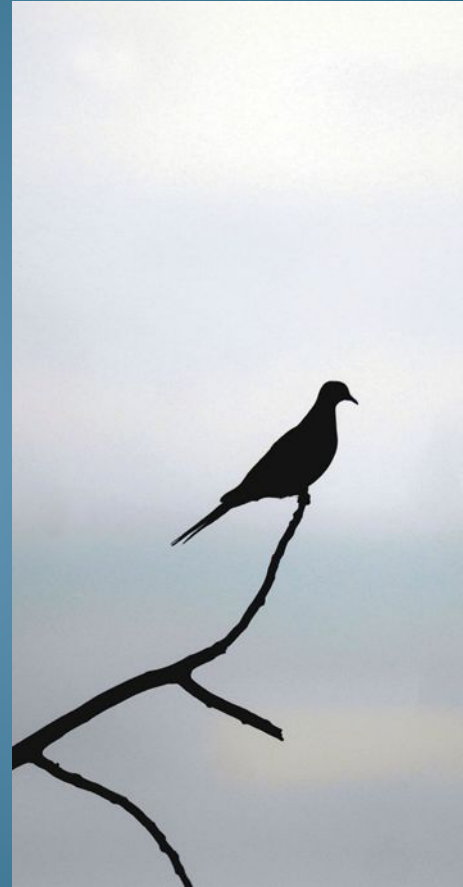


# Shape:



See  
your  
field  
guide

# Shape:





# Shape: can include shape while in-flight



Accipiters



Buteos



Falcons



Harriers



Turkey Vulture



Osprey

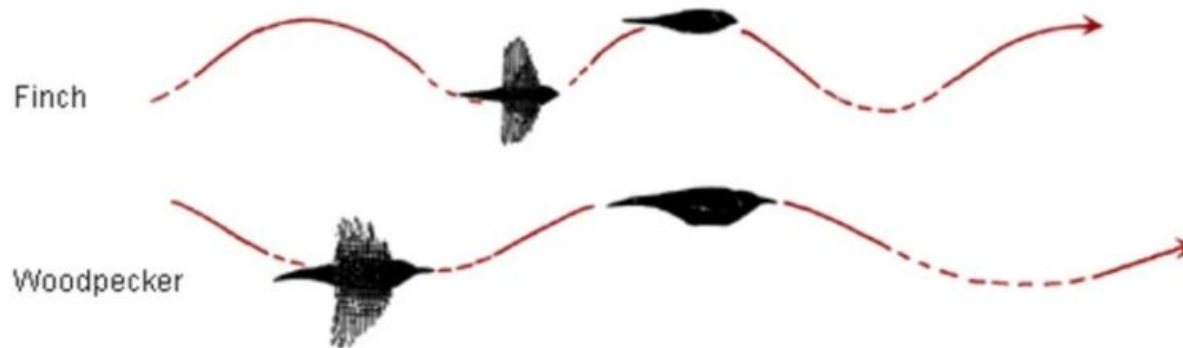


Bald Eagle

# Shape: can include shape while in-flight

## Flight Pattern

Most birds fly in a straight line, flapping in a constant rhythm, but certain bird groups have characteristic flight patterns that can help identify them. Birds of prey may be identified by the characteristic way they hold their wings when viewed flying toward you. Here are some useful identification tips:



### **Up-and-down Flight Pattern**

Finches exhibit a steep, roller-coaster flight, whereas woodpeckers generally fly in a pattern of moderate rises and falls.



# Shape:

When looking at shape be sure not to just note the overall shape of the bird. Look also at the shape of the beak





## Shape of bird and its parts

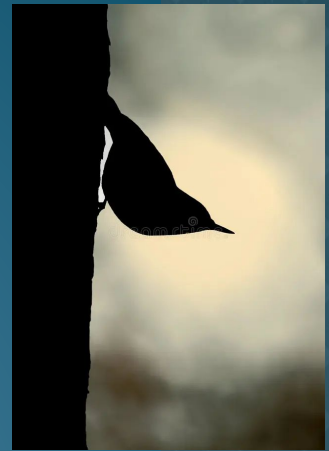
Measure length of beak for difference between hairy and downy woodpeckers



# Shading or Color

Do you see any color in addition to black?

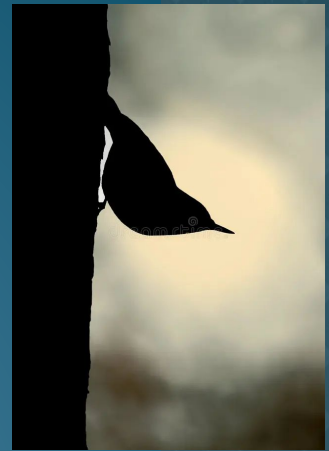




## Shading con't

Eye lines, wing bars, rump patches?

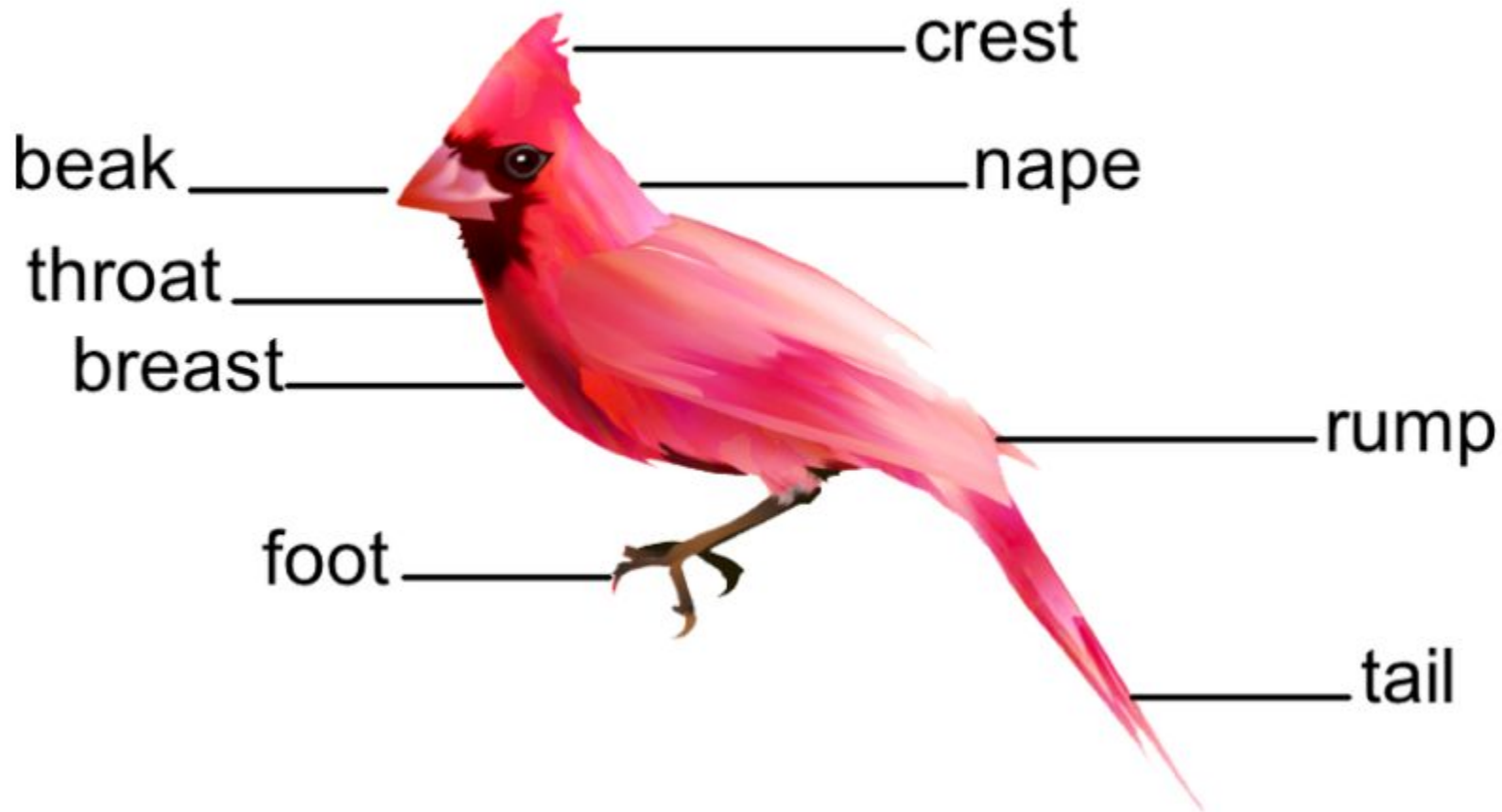




## Shading con't

Where are the dark spots versus light spots?

# HELPS TO KNOW THE LINGO



# Eye Rings



Note the yellow eye ring on the Canada Warbler (left) and the broken eye ring on the Magnolia Warbler (right)

## E LINGO

### Eye Lines and Face Patterns



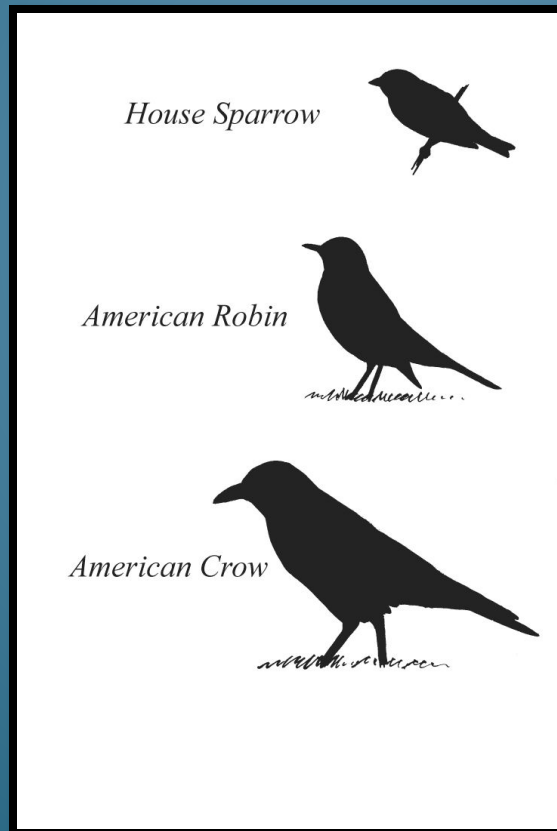
The bird on the left is a White-throated Sparrow, the one on the right is a Chipping Sparrow.



# Size

Study major differences!

Sizes (weights and wingspans) are in guides!





Snack  
what do they  
eat?



# What do I Eat?

If you couldn't see the food you could still guess my snack?





Shaped for ...?



Surroundings  
or  
habitat





Would you find this bird in the same habitat?

Would you find it in any other habitats?



# All About Birds

## Red-winged Blackbird

[Overview](#)[ID info](#)[Life History](#)[Maps](#)[Sounds](#)[Listen](#)[ID Info](#)

Breeding male (Red-winged)



Female (Red-winged)



Breeding male (Red-winged)

# All About Birds

## Red-winged Blackbird

### Life History

★  
Overview

📖  
ID info

📖  
Life History

🗺️  
Maps

🔊  
Sounds

Habitat

Food

Nesting

Behavior

Conservation

Backyard Tips

Credits

Explore Birds of North America to learn more.



Habitat  
Marshes



Food  
Insects



Nesting  
Shrub



Behavior  
Ground Forager



Conservation  
Low Concern

### Habitat



Red-winged Blackbirds spend the breeding season in wet places like fresh or saltwater marshes and rice paddies. You may also find them breeding in drier places like sedge meadows, alfalfa fields, and fallow fields. Occasionally, Red-winged Blackbirds nest in wooded areas along waterways. In fall and winter, they congregate in agricultural fields, feedlots, pastures, and grassland.

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### Food



Red-winged Blackbirds eat mainly insects in the summer and seeds, including corn and wheat, in the winter. Sometimes they feed by probing at the bases of aquatic plants with their slender bills, prying them open to get at insects hidden inside. In fall and winter they eat weedy seeds such as ragweed and cocklebur as well as native sunflowers and waste grains.

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### Nesting

#### NEST PLACEMENT



Red-winged Blackbirds build their nests low among vertical shoots of marsh vegetation, shrubs, or trees. Females choose the nest site with some input from the male. Typically, she puts the nest near the ground (or water surface in a marsh), in dense, grass-like vegetation such as cattails, bulrushes, sedges, and *Phragmites* in wetlands; goldenrod, blackberry, or willow and alder trees in uplands; and wheat, barley, alfalfa, and rice plants.

#### NEST DESCRIPTION

Females build the nests by winding stringy plant material around several close, upright stems and

# Some surroundings change based on the season!



Should be able to read a migration map for Michigan birds (although not necessarily when they are in Michigan)  
\*let me know about any students who have trouble identifying colors





# Sound And vocalization



# Song

## Name callers

Jay  
Jay  
Jay

00:58

© Jay McGowan  
New York, Nov

▶ Calls -0:22

New York, June 23, 2013  
[Recorded by Matthew D. Medler / Macaulay Library](#)





# Song

## Name callers

Chickadee dee dee

Recorded by Brad Walker / Macaulay Library.



Calls

-0:08

New York, May 13, 2010

Recorded by Bob McGuire / Macaulay Library.





# Shenanigans or behavior

General quirks!

# Can include nesting behavior



For example, great blue herons and sandhill cranes look a bit similar at first, but have very different nesting behaviors

\*students do not need to memorize what colors eggs are, but may see eggs in a nest and should know general nesting behavior which can include nesting materials, location, etc..., as well a number of eggs laid (again, don't need to memorize exact numbers, but eagles versus ducks lay very different numbers of eggs)  
allaboutbirds.com is a great resource - they have a **nesting** section for each bird







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# Resources

- Workshops on one of the pre-scheduled training days (advanced registration is required)
- Leslie science center raptors
- Provided field guide: *Sibley East*

Learn more about area birds at: [www.washtenawaudubon.org](http://www.washtenawaudubon.org)

Find birds in your area with eBird: [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)

Chirp Bird Songs & Calls USA (iPhone app)



# QUESTIONS NOW?

- Please submit your questions now using the Google form that was shared with you in the chat.
- We will answer live and post all questions and written answers to the website following the meeting.



# Questions after tonight?

## New for 2025!



### WESO Discord Server

- Every WESO event will have its own channel
- Join the WESO server to submit your questions in the event chat
- Event supervisors or WESO board members will monitor the discussion and answer questions
- Event coaches can use the chat to exchange coaching ideas
- **Go to [wesoscience.org/events/](https://wesoscience.org/events/) for details on how to join the WESO server and guidelines for its use**