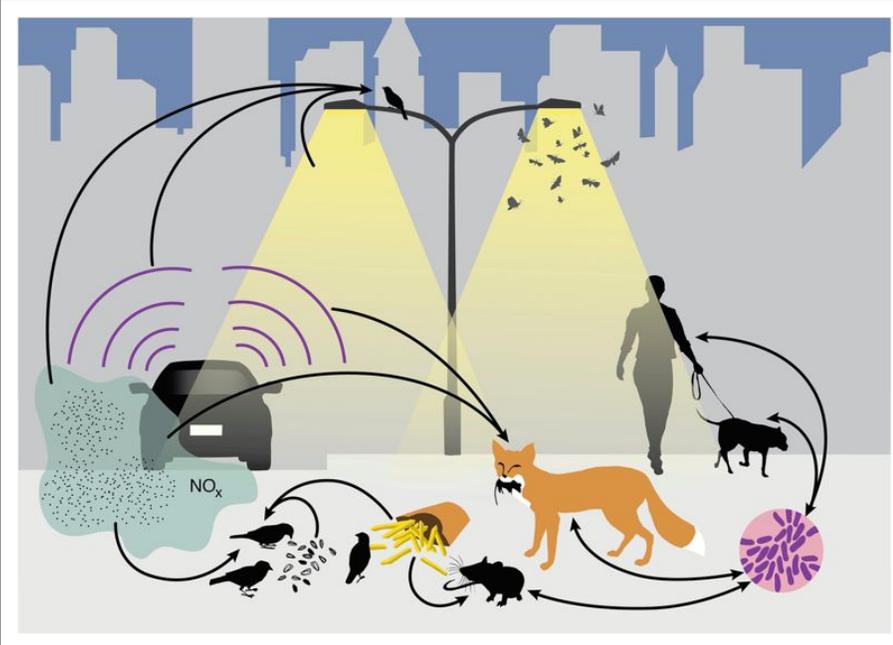


## Birds of the City Extended Learning

Cities may seem like a place with no nature, but in fact there are many birds that call the city home! Of the 10,000 birds species scientists have identified, about 20% can be found in cities. Urban areas actually have a greater abundance of birds than non-urban areas, which means you would find more individual birds in a square kilometer in the city than you would in the forest. However, many bird species don't like the city, so the diversity (the number of species) of birds is lower in the city than in the forest.

There are many threats the city poses to birds. Check out this diagram; how many threats can you find?



Threats:

The diagram illustrates various urban threats to birds. It shows a city skyline at night with streetlights illuminating a park area. A car on the left emits purple waves representing noise and a cloud labeled 'NO<sub>x</sub>' representing air pollution. A person is walking a dog on a leash. A cat is shown near a bird feeder. A black cat is also present. A bird is perched on a streetlight. Arrows point from these elements towards birds in the scene, indicating the threats they pose.

Bird species respond to the city in different ways. Match the characteristic to the correct response.

Urban exploiter

Urban adapter

Urban avoider

More sedentary (they stay in one place)
Most likely to be found at a bird feeder
Feed more on the ground
More insectivorous (insect eating)
More scared of humans
Not dependent on human resources, but happy to use them from time to time

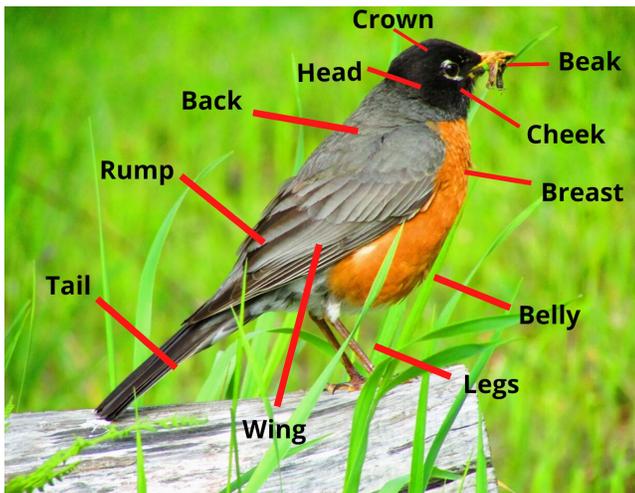
# Identifying Birds

To help identify birds you can use the 5 S's of birding: **Sight, Shape, Size, Sound, Surroundings**

## Sight, Shape, Size

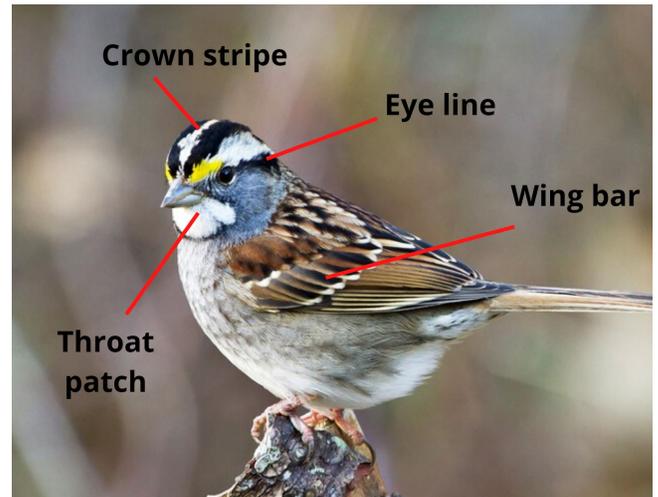
To help us get to know birds through sight, shape and size, we can use **field marks**. Field marks are things which stand out about a bird, such as colours, patterns, stripes and spots. Field marks can give us ways to *describe* different features of birds and give us useful information for IDing birds. To use field marks we first have to learn the basics of bird anatomy (body parts).

**Basic Bird Anatomy**



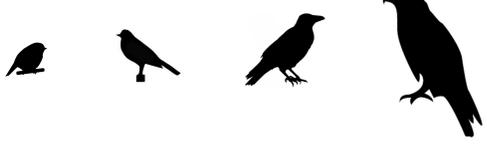
*American Robin*

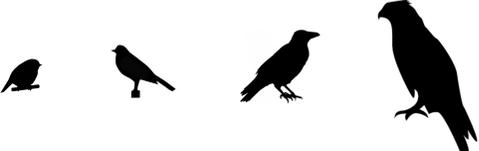
**Examples of field marks**

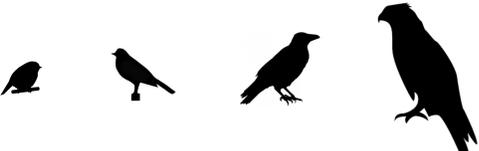


*White-throated Sparrow*

Use the field marks to fill out the following charts:

Bird: House Finch	Write down things that <b>STAND OUT</b> like colour, shape & pattern
	Head _____ Crown _____
	Beak _____ Breast _____
	Tail _____ Back _____
	Legs _____ Wings _____
	Circle the bird you think best represents its size and shape (sparrow, robin, crow, hawk): 

<b>Bird:</b> Cooper's Hawk	<b>Write down things that STAND OUT like colour, shape &amp; pattern</b>
	Head _____ Crown _____ Beak _____ Breast _____ Tail _____ Back _____ Legs _____ Wings _____
	Circle the bird you think best represents its size and shape (sparrow, robin, crow, hawk): 

<b>Bird:</b> Baltimore Oriole	<b>Write down things that STAND OUT like colour, shape &amp; pattern</b>
	Head _____ Crown _____ Beak _____ Breast _____ Tail _____ Back _____ Legs _____ Wings _____
	Circle the bird you think best represents its size and shape (sparrow, robin, crow, hawk): 

**Additional Challenge**

Go to the [Ontario Feeder Watch](#) nest cam to practice IDing birds using bird anatomy and field marks. You can pause the video at any time to get a better look at a bird's features.

- 1) Watch for a few minutes then choose a bird to study at the feeder
- 2) Write down some field marks of your bird
- 3) Practice using the [Merlin](#) app to ID it

**Check out some more bird cams here (these are all nesting birds)**

- Barred owls: [www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/barred-owls/](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/barred-owls/)
- Red-tailed hawks: [www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/red-tailed-hawks/](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/red-tailed-hawks/)
- Ospreys: [www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/savannah-ospreys/](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/savannah-ospreys/)

## Common Birds of the City

Name that bird, and then see if you can spot it! How many points can you get?

10 points	20 points	30 points	40 points
			
			
			
			

American Crow, American Robin, Blue Jay, Canada Goose, Common Grackle, European Starling, House Sparrow, Mourning Dove, Northern Cardinal, Peregrine Falcon, Red-tailed Hawk, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Pigeon

## Sounds

Birds can make many different calls to alert other birds of predators, tell a parent they are hungry, find a mate, or just say hello to each other. Usually bird sounds are divided into calls and songs. Calls are short and simple, while songs are longer and complex.

Here are some birds I've been hearing in my neighbourhood lately. Match the bird with its mnemonic (way to remember it). Click on the link to hear the bird for help. Do you think this is a <sup>1</sup>call or a song?

Bird	Mnemonic	Call or song?
<a href="#">American Goldfinch</a>	chirrup chirrup chirrup	
<a href="#">American Robin</a>	potato chip, potato chip	
<a href="#">Blue Jay</a>	J! J! J! J!	
<a href="#">House Sparrow</a>	sounds like a car alarm	
<a href="#">Mourning Dove</a>	Keeeeeeer!	
<a href="#">Northern Cardinal</a>	who-OOH! who who who	
<a href="#">Red-tailed Hawk</a>	conk-a-REE	
<a href="#">Red-winged blackbird</a>	dear sweet Canada-Canada-Canada	
<a href="#">White-throated Sparrow</a>	Hello! How are you? I'm fine! So great	

## Nature Challenge

Urban exploiters can be found in the heart of the city, but there are many places with lots of green space where you could also find urban adapters or even urban avoiders.

### Try making your own ID guide using Birds Canada!

1. Go to [www.birdscanada.org/apps/checklist](http://www.birdscanada.org/apps/checklist)
2. Scroll to the map and click on the city you live in. You may need to use the plus sign to zoom in first.
3. Enter the date
4. Click "View and Print"
5. Birds Canada will make a list of the most common birds for your city for the date you have specified!
6. Click "Print." You will see the guide as two pages you can print or save as a PDF.

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<sup>1</sup> A bird call is a way that birds check in with each other (typically about non-threatening things) and song is a way they mark their territory (typically male birds sing, but sometimes females do too!).

You can use your guide when you go out for a walk, or if you can see trees from your windows you can even use it without leaving your house. Based on where you spot the birds can you guess whether they are urban exploiters, adapters, or adapters?