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Put an X in the box by the name of each bird you've seen. Then, go to the page with the drawing of that bird, and, next to the drawing, write the date and place where you saw the bird. Next, describe its behavior and any sounds it made. If you see birds that aren't in this book, you need a bigger bird book!

Bird Detective

A Guide for Identification of
Common Florida Birds



(name)

by Adam M. Kent

A project of the Florida Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Commission



Some of the Usual Suspects ...

Common Birds of Florida



NAME: DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT

habitat: wetlands



GREEN HERON

wetlands



CATTLE EGRET

open areas



NAME: MALLARD ♂

habitat: wetlands



OSPREY

near water



AMERICAN KESTREL ♂

open areas



NAME: RING-BILLED GULL

habitat: beaches, lakes,
open areas,
parking lots



MOURNING DOVE


most land habitats



ROCK DOVE

cities, parks
EXOTIC

♂ is the symbol for a male, ♀ is the symbol for female



Create Your Own Character

Now make up your own bird and draw it below. Be sure to describe its habitat, behavior and song. What does it eat?

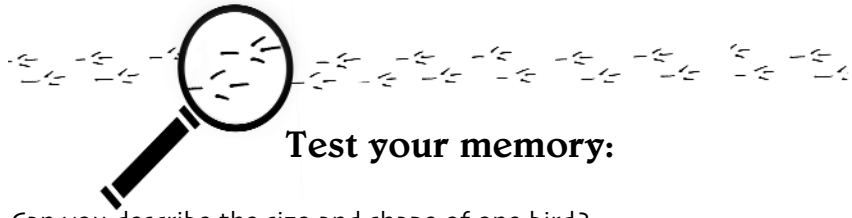
(your bird's name)

habitat: _____

behavior: _____

sound: _____

food: _____



Test your memory:

Can you describe the size and shape of one bird?

Bird name: _____

Size and shape: _____

Can you describe the field marks for one bird?

Bird name: _____

Field Marks: _____

Can you describe one bird's bill and what it eats?

Bird name: _____

Kind of bill: _____

Food: _____

Can you describe one behavior and a bird that does it?

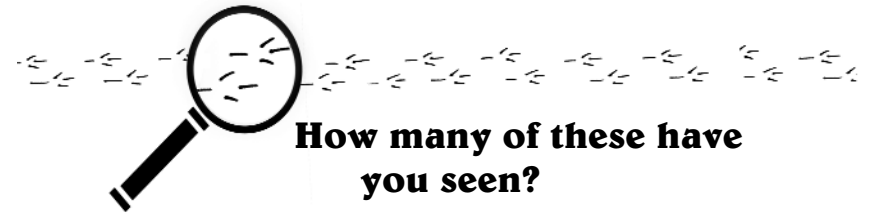
Bird name: _____

Behavior: _____

Can you name one habitat and a bird that lives there?

Bird name: _____

Habitat: _____



How many of these have you seen?



NAME: EASTERN SCREECH OWL
habitat: woods, parks



NAME: DOWNY WOODPECKER
habitat: woods, parks, yards



NAME: BLUE JAY
habitat: woods, parks, yards



NAME: TUFTED TITMOSE
habitat: woods, parks, yards



NAME: CAROLINA CHICKADEE
habitat: woods, parks, yards



NAME: NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD
habitat: woods, parks, yards



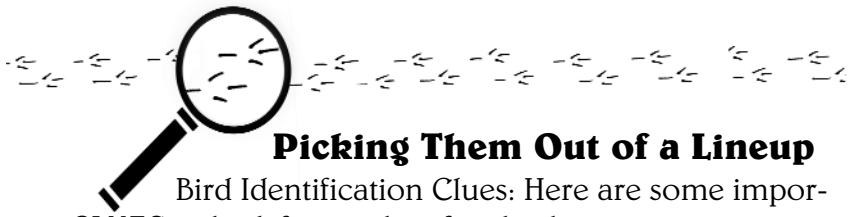
NAME: BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE ♂
habitat: open areas, parking lots



NAME: RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD ♂
habitat: near water



NAME: HOUSE SPARROW ♂
habitat: cities, parking lots
EXOTIC



Picking Them Out of a Lineup

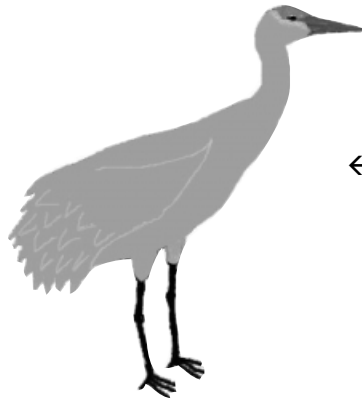
Bird Identification Clues: Here are some important CLUES to look for to identify a bird...

Clue 1: Body Type

SIZE & SHAPE: Often the first thing you will notice.

Things to look at: Overall shape of the bird (fat, thin, tall, short); length of neck, legs, tail, bill; shape of tail, wings, bill, head.

EXAMPLES:



← The Sandhill Crane is tall and thin. It has long legs, a long neck and a short tail.

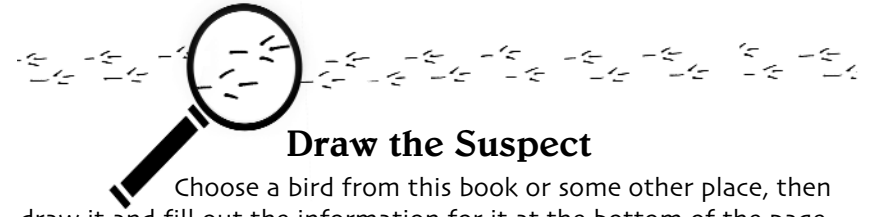
The Carolina Wren → is small with short legs, a short neck, a medium long tail and a medium bill.



Can you think of the sizes and shapes of any other birds?

Bird name: _____

Size and shape: _____



Draw the Suspect

Choose a bird from this book or some other place, then draw it and fill out the information for it at the bottom of the page.

(name of the bird you chose)

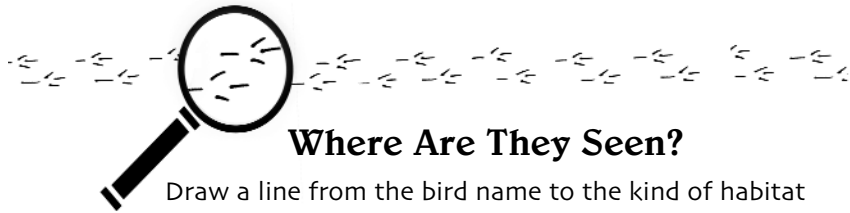
Size and shape: _____

Field Marks: _____

Type of Bill: _____

Habitat: _____

Behavior: _____



Where Are They Seen?

Draw a line from the bird name to the kind of habitat where you'd expect to find it.

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. House Sparrow | on a pond |
| 2. Laughing Gull | wetlands |
| 3. Wood Duck | in the woods |
| 4. Snowy Egret | at the beach |
| 5. Barred Owl | in a parking lot |

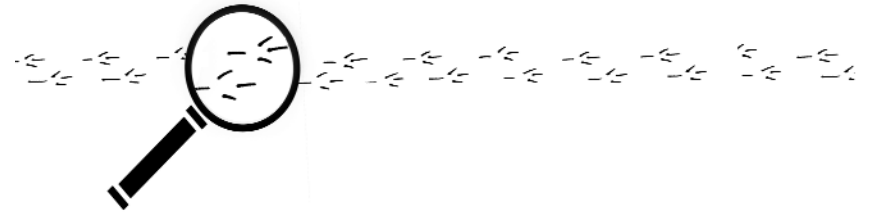
Can you think of any other kinds of birds? See if you can name two birds and the habitats where you might find them.

Bird 1: _____

Habitat: _____

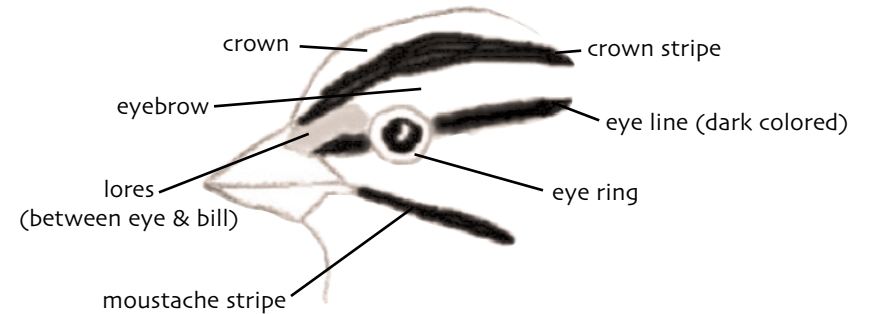
Bird 2: _____

Habitat: _____



Clue 2: Distinctive Marks

COLORS & PATTERNS (a.k.a. Field Marks): Very important for identifying birds that are a similar size and shape. Things to look at: Overall colors; colors of the head, bill, wings, tail, back, chest, belly, legs, feet; patterns on the head (see bird head below), wings, tail, upper and under-parts.



EXAMPLES:

The Red-headed Woodpecker has an all-red head, a white belly, and a black back with some white on its wings and lower back.

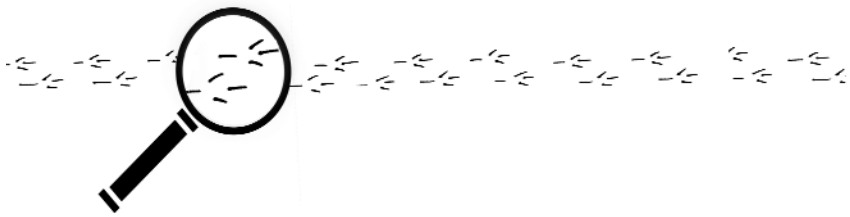


The Red-bellied Woodpecker has red only on the back and top of its head. Its back is black and white striped. It some-times has a little red that is hard to see on its belly.

Can you think of some field marks for any other birds?

Bird name: _____

Field Marks: _____

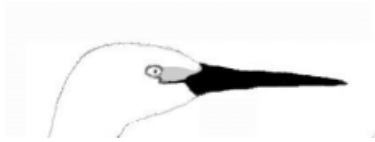


Clue 3: Bill Types

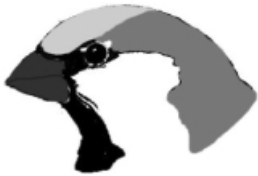
BILLS: ALSO CALLED 'BEAKS.' Often help us know what a bird eats.

EXAMPLES:

This bill is long and pointed like a spear. →
(Good for catching fish)



Snowy Egret



House Sparrow ♂ EXOTIC

← This bill is short, thick and pointed.
(Good for eating seeds)

This bill is small → and mostly flat.
(Good for eating insects and berries)



Eastern Bluebird ♂

← This bill is medium long and medium thick.
(Good for many things)

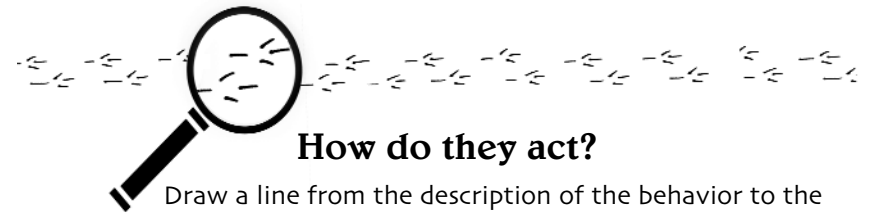


American Crow

Can you think of any other kinds of bills and their uses?

Bird: _____ Bill: _____

Use: _____



How do they act?

Draw a line from the description of the behavior to the drawing of the bird that does it, then from the drawing to the bird's name.

1. Pecking on the side of a tree



Brown Pelican

2. diving into the water



Barred Owl

3. calling at night



Downy Woodpecker

4. standing in water



Pied-billed Grebe

5. flying without flapping

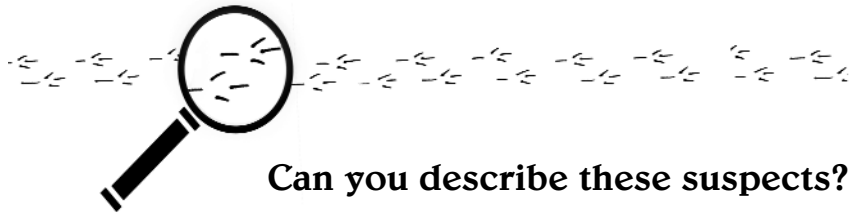


Great Egret

6. swimming on the water









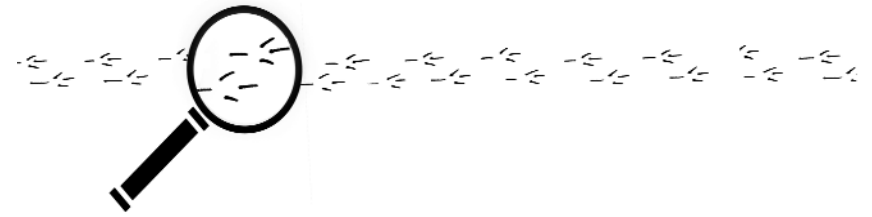
Turkey Vulture



Can you describe these suspects?

FACIAL FEATURES: Draw a line from the drawing of the bird's head to the description of its bill, then draw a line from the description to the bird's name.

- | | | | |
|----|---|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. |  | short, thick & pointed | Red-winged Blackbird |
| 2. |  | long & thin, like a needle | Northern Cardinal ♂ |
| 3. |  | medium long, medium thick, pointed | Ruby-throated Hummingbird ♂ |
| 4. |  | short, thin & pointed | Bald Eagle |
| 5. |  | long & pointed, thicker at the base, very thin at the tip | Fish Crow |
| 6. |  | big, strong & hooked | Green Heron |



Clue 4: How Do They Act?

Does the bird walk or hop? Does it stand in the water, on a branch, or hold onto the side of a tree? Does it flap its wings a lot, a little or almost never? Does it move its head, wings or tail in an unusual way? Does it swim with most of its body out of the water or under the water? Does it dive into the water with its head or feet first? How does it get its food? Is it found in a group, a pair or alone?

EXAMPLES:

The Anhinga often swims with just its head out of the water. It also sits in the sun with its wings spread (see p. 9) →



The Common Moorhen swims on top of the water or walks on shore, often moving its head forward and backward. →



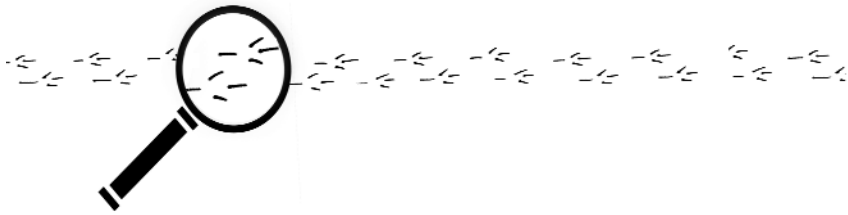
The Pied-billed Grebe swims in the water. It frequently goes under water to look for food. It is rarely seen on land. →



Can you think of another kind of behavior and why a bird does it?

Bird name: _____ Behavior: _____

Why do you think the bird does the behavior? _____



Clue 5: Where Are They Seen?

A Habitat is where an animal is usually found. Did you see the bird in the woods, in a field, in a park, in a city, or in your yard?

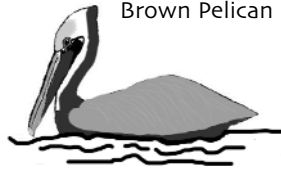
EXAMPLES:

Beach

Laughing Gull



Brown Pelican



Wetlands (includes lakes, ponds, swamps and rivers)

Great Egret



Belted Kingfisher ♂



Woods

Red-headed Woodpecker



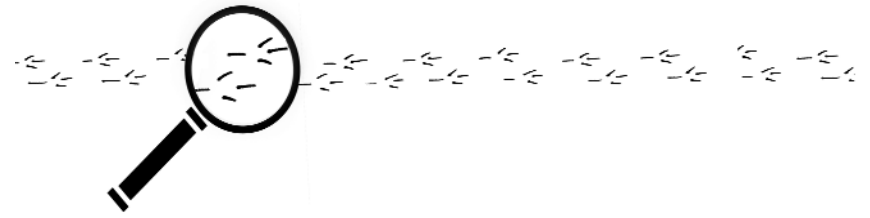
Barred Owl



Some birds are found in more than one habitat. For example, crows can be found in the woods and in cities. Can you think of another habitat and some birds that live there?

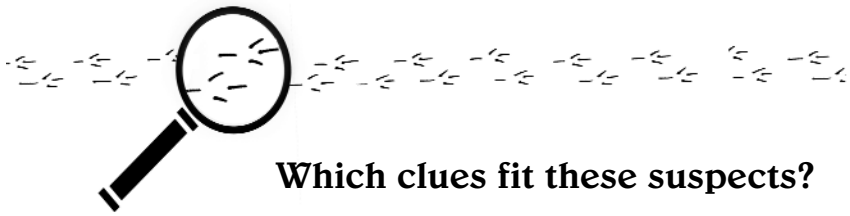
Habitat: _____

Birds: _____










DISTINCTIVE MARKS: Match the bird with the best description of its field marks. You can use the index to look up birds you don't know.

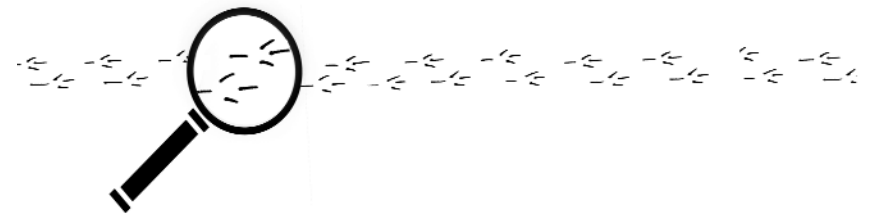
- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. Red-winged Blackbird | red body, black face & throat |
| 2. Northern Mockingbird | black, with red on wings |
| 3. Carolina Chickadee | white body, black legs & yellow bill |
| 4. Eastern Bluebird | all black |
| 5. Northern Cardinal | gray body, black lores, white wingbars |
| 6. Great Egret | crown & throat black, cheeks white |
| 7. American Crow | dark brown body white head & tail |
| 8. Bald Eagle | mostly blue |



Which clues fit these suspects?




BODY TYPE: Draw a line from the drawing of the bird to its description, and then draw a line from the description to its name. Use different colored lines if you can.

- | | | | |
|----|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. |  | big, with feathers like ears | Tufted Titmouse |
| 2. |  | short neck, short legs, long tail | Pileated Woodpecker |
| 3. |  | small, with a crest & short bill | Great-horned Owl |
| 4. |  | tall, with long neck | Boat-tailed  Grackle |
| 5. |  | medium size, with crest and long bill | Bald Eagle |
| 6. |  | big, with large, hooked bill | Little Blue Heron |





Clue 6: What kind of voice does it have?

Birds can make many different sounds. In some habitats, you may hear some birds, but not see any. Some birds sound a little bit like they are saying something in English.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| The Barred Owl hoots 'Who cooks for you?': → |  | Who Cooks for YOU?
Who Cooks for YOU ALL? |
| The Northern Bobwhite whistles its name 'bob-WHITE!': → |  | bob-WHITE!
bob-WHITE! |
| The Killdeer usually whistles 'k'deeee' but sometimes whistles → its name, 'kill-deer': |  | k'deeeee k'deeeee
k'deeeee k'deeeee |

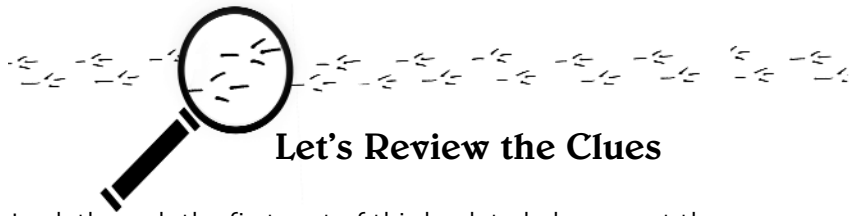
The two kinds of crow in Florida look so similar that the best way to tell them apart is by sound. The American Crow usually says 'caw-caw' but the Fish Crow says 'ca-ha.' But be careful! Both crows can make many noises.

No matter what birds say, it is important to listen to their sounds. You'll soon find that you can recognize birds just by the sounds they make.

Dressed like a Boy or Girl? Male and female birds sometimes look different. The symbol  is used for male birds and  is used for female birds. Can you find a male and a female of the same kind of bird somewhere in this book (there are two) and describe the differences?

Bird name: _____





Differences: _____






Let's Review the Clues

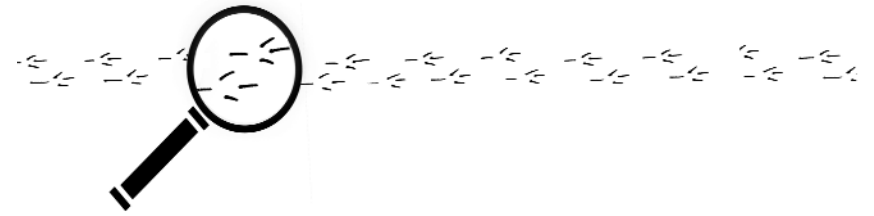
Look through the first part of this book to help you get the information you need for these games.

BODY TYPE: Circle the word or words under the bird that best describes its size and shape.





White Ibis	Northern Cardinal ♂	Black Vulture	Anhinga ♀
			
fat short legs long bill	long legs long neck crest on head	short tail thin body big head	_____ _____ (your words)

DISTINCTIVE MARKS: Cross out the word or words under the bird that **are not** good field marks.

Tricolored Heron	Snowy Egret	Great Egret
		
white wings white belly dark back	yellow bill black legs light-colored feet	white body light-colored bill light-colored legs



FACIAL FEATURES: What kind of food do you think a bird with a bill like this would eat? Circle your answer.

Northern Mockingbird	Wood Duck ♂	Red-shouldered Hawk	Great-blue Heron
			
insects fish	water plants meat	meat seeds	_____ (your words)

HOW DO THEY ACT? Circle the best description of the behavior under the drawing of each bird.

Sandhill Crane	House Sparrow EXOTIC ♀	Red-bellied Woodpecker ♂
		
on side of tree walking on ground diving under water	standing in water flying high in air hopping on ground	_____ (your words)

WHERE ARE THEY SEEN? Cross out the name of the bird that does not belong in each habitat:

BEACH	WOODS	WETLANDS
Brown Pelican Blue Jay Ring-billed Gull	Screech Owl Carolina Wren Anhinga	Great Egret Wood Duck Rock Dove