

# Backyard Bird Biodiversity

## One bird, two bird, red bird, blue bird

How do you identify a backyard bird? **Anyone can do it!**

Use *tools* and *observe* what you see.

Hearing – Listen for bird calls. Each bird species sings a special song that you can use to identify it.



The black-capped chickadee sings “*chickadee-dee-dee*”

Sight – If you’re not close enough to use your naked eye, binoculars are a handy tool for looking at birds from far away. Look for size, shape, color pater (plumage), behavior, and habitat.



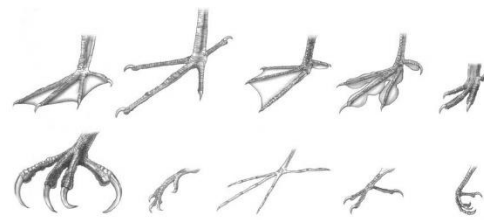
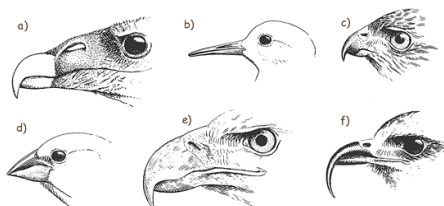
Red-winged blackbirds are *larger than a sparrow and smaller than a robin*, have a *black body and red wings*. They hang out in *flocks* and they are found in *wetland habitats*.

What makes one bird species different from another?

Birds have *adaptations* that are a response to the environment. These usually change the way they look and help them survive.

Beaks – Birds have unique beaks that are adapted to their diet.

Feet – Birds have specialized feet to help them survive in their environment.



# What bird do you see?

Sometimes as a birder you see something you have never seen before! That's when your scientist skills kick in. Let's do an exercise to help guide you through identifying a new bird.

You're walking outside on a cold, **winter** morning in the middle of a forest. You look up and see a **small, black and white** bird. It's definitely smaller than a robin, but about the same size as a sparrow.



You look around more and notice there are a bunch sitting on a branch nearby! They all seem to be making a loud “**dee-dee**” noise. You take out your handy **binoculars** and notice that the bird's **beak** is small and pointy. With these in mind you take out your field guide and try to match the bird you see to a picture in the book. To collect your data, answer the following questions:

1. Season and time of day.
2. What habitat are you in? Describe your surroundings or draw them on the back.
3. Do you hear any bird calls or songs? Describe them.
4. How many birds do you see in total? Can you identify any of them?
5. Do you think your bird is a resident species, or is it migratory?

## Backyard Bird Identification Exercise

A backyard bird is any bird that you see in your yard or at a feeder.

Birds have **adaptations** that change the way they look in response to their environment. Each bird species has unique field marks or characteristics that are key to identifying it.

Think of your favorite backyard bird...what is its common name?

As a biologist, how would you describe the bird's most important features? Does it have unique *plumage*? Is it a large or small bird?

What shape does the bird's *beak* have? List what it *eats* and describe how the beak might be used.

In what *habitats* can your bird be found?

What does the bird's *call* sound like?

Does the bird *migrate* or is it a *resident* species?