

What's that Bird?



Molly loves animals, especially birds. One of her favorite things to do is go outside and look and listen for birds. More than 470 species of birds can be found in Alaska — and Molly hopes to see them all! She even created her own Field Guide to Birds.

Use Molly's Field Guide to identify and learn more about birds in your neighborhood. If you find any birds that are not in Molly's Field Guide, create your own pages with information about these birds to add to her field guide. People who look for and identify birds are called *birders*. You can be a birder, too!

Get Started

Take a look at Molly's Field Guide pages for the American Robin, Great Horned Owl, Rock Pigeon, and Canada Goose. What information or images are helpful? How is the information organized? Could you use the information to identify these birds outside? Give it try!

Go Outside

You'll find birds in many places, whether you live in a city, the suburbs, or in the country. You just have to look! Go outside as a family, and be sure to bring Molly's Field Guide with you as well as some blank paper and a pencil.

Once you are outdoors, spend time quietly listening and looking at what's around you. When you spot a bird, look closely at its *identifying features*—details such as its colors, beak shape, and size—to help you determine what kind of bird it is. Then, check in Molly's Field Guide to see if you can find the bird and learn more about it. If you can't find it, take notes or draw pictures to help you remember what you saw.

Read and Research

When you are back home from birding, look at your notes and your drawings of the birds you could not identify. Do some research to learn more about those birds by going to your local library or online. Check out one or more of the field guides listed in the box on this page. Different field guides are organized in different ways, but the identifying features you noted about the birds you saw will help you find them in a field guide.



Field Guides to Birds

National Audubon Society First Field Guide: Birds by Scott Weidensaul

National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America by Jon L. Dunn and Jonathan Alderfer

Peterson Field Guide to Birds of North America by Roger Tory Peterson

The Sibley Guide to Birds by David Sibley

Digital Guides to Birds

Cornell Lab of Ornithology
web: www.allaboutbirds.org
app: Merlin Bird ID

National Audubon Society
web: www.audubon.org/bird-guide
app: Audubon Bird Guide

pbskids.org/molly

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Make Your Own Field Guide

Once you've identified your birds, add them to Molly's Field Guide so other people can identify them later! Use the information from your research and your own observations to create a field guide page for each bird. Follow these steps:

1. Get an empty three-ring binder or paper folder with fasteners.
2. Print out Molly's Field Guide and assemble the pages in this order: cover first, then the numbered pages, and the index last.
3. Use a hole punch to punch holes in all pages except the cover.
4. To add birds that you found in your neighborhood to Molly's Field Guide, use the blank page. This page has the same text features that are on Molly's Field Guide pages. Put the name of the bird at the top of the page and then add the information you want to include, using features such as:
 - pictures
 - captions
 - maps
 - diagrams
5. Add page numbers to each page, and then add the names of your birds and the page numbers to the index.
6. Put all of your pages in order according to their page numbers and put them into your binder or folder. The index goes at the end of the field guide.
7. Tape or glue the cover to the front of the binder or folder. Write your name on the line under Molly's name.
8. You can keep adding pages as you discover new birds in your neighborhood.
9. Take a friend or a family member birding and use your guide to introduce them to great birds!
10. Now that you know how to make a field guide, you can make your very own. It doesn't have to be about birds. It can be about trees, or flowers, or even rocks you find in your neighborhood.



Using Your Eyes and Ears

To identify a bird ask yourself these questions:

- What does it sound like?
- What is its habitat?
Where does it spend its time?
- What is unusual about the way that it looks? Does it have interesting patterns or colors?
- What are its main colors?

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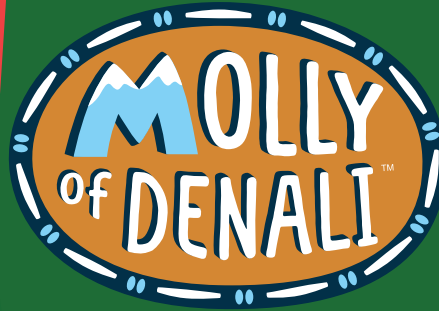


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A Field Guide

to Birds

by Molly Shahnyaa Mabray
and



NAME _____



Great Horned Owl

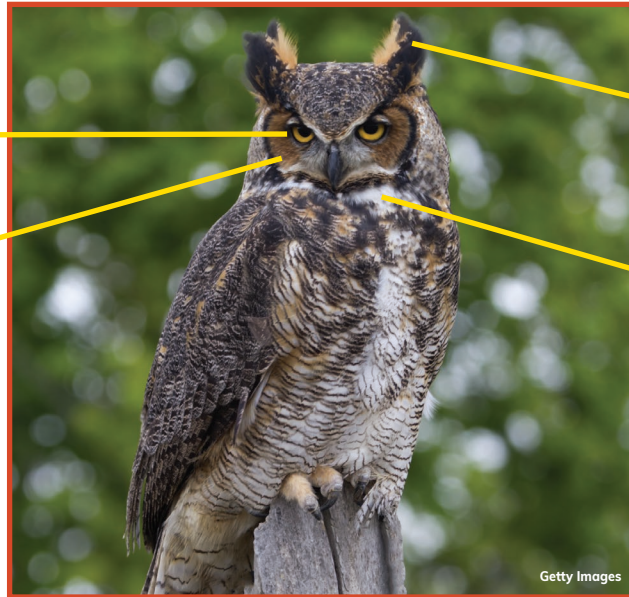


WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Identifying Features:

yellow eyes

cinnamon
or gray
colored face



large, feathered
tufts on head that
look like "horns"

white throat

The Great Horned Owl is a very large owl that can be 25 inches tall. Its scientific name is *Bubo virginianus*.

WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE

Calls and Songs:

- deep hooting voice
- makes four to six hoots in a row
- "hoo-h' HOO-hoo-hoo"
- "hoohooohoo hoohoo"

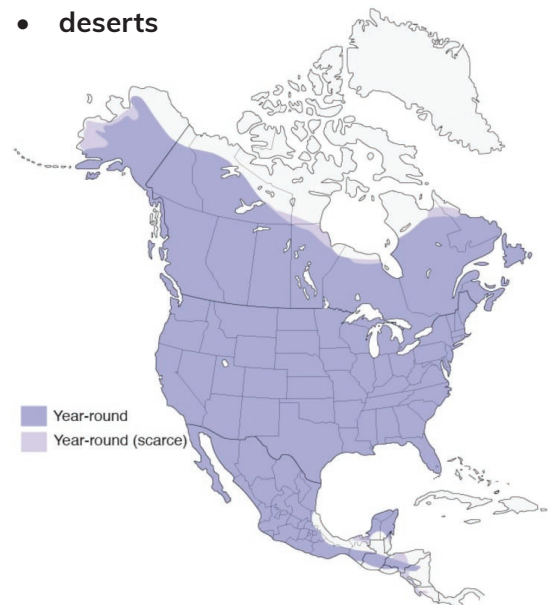
WHERE IT LIVES

Habitat:

- woods, wetlands, grasslands
- backyards, orchards, or farmlands
- cities and abandoned buildings
- deserts

INTERESTING FACTS:

The Great Horned Owl is nocturnal, which means it is active at night when most people are sleeping. An owl has special feathers that allow it to fly quietly at night and eyes that are very good at seeing in the dark.



Map provided by Cornell Lab of Ornithology

American Robin



WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Identifying Features:

bright yellow beak

gray head

gray back
and wings

orange-brown or
red-brown breast

white under tail



The American Robin is a large songbird that is 8 to 11 inches from tip of beak to tip of tail. Its scientific name is *Turdus migratorius*.

WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE

Calls and Songs:

- “tuk,” “pup,” or “chok”
- “yeep” or “teek” as an alarm call
- sings with a clear, lively whistle
- “cheerily, cheer up, cheer up, cheerily, cheer up”

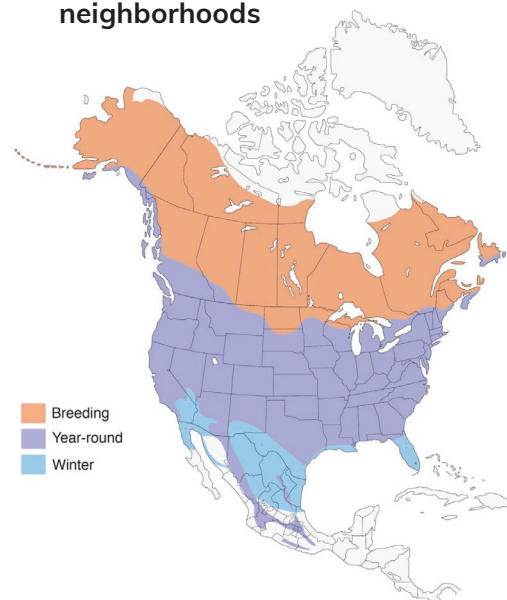
WHERE IT LIVES

Habitat:

- lawns, fields, and parks
- woodlands, forests, mountains
- farmlands, suburbs, and urban neighborhoods

INTERESTING FACTS:

Earthworms are a favorite food of robins. A robin often finds worms by staring at the ground with its head tipped to one side. Robins sometimes try to grab worms that other robins have caught.



Map provided by Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Canada Goose

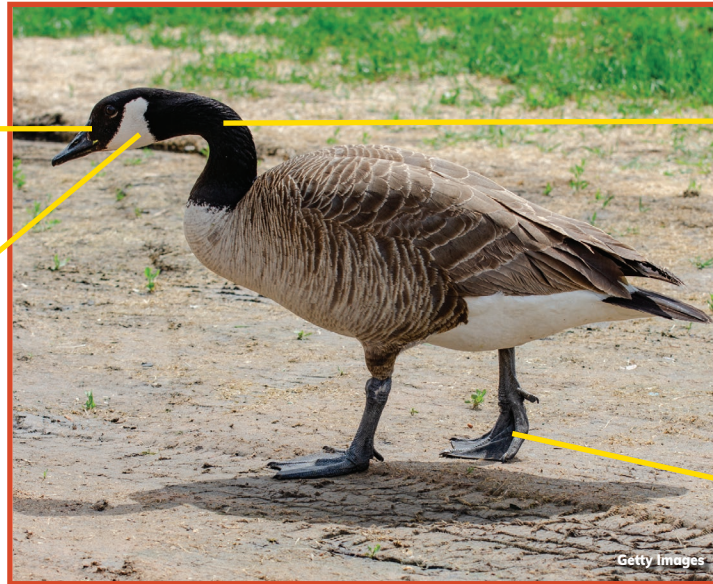


WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Identifying Features:

wide, flat beak
with jagged
edges

white cheeks
and chin



black head and
long black neck

large webbed
feet

The Canada Goose is a large water bird that is 30 to 43 inches from tip of beak to tip of tail. Its scientific name is *Branta canadensis*.

WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE

Calls and Songs:

- loud honks
- often honks when flying
- female gives a shorter, higher “hrink” call; male gives low “ahonk” call
- defensive “hiss”

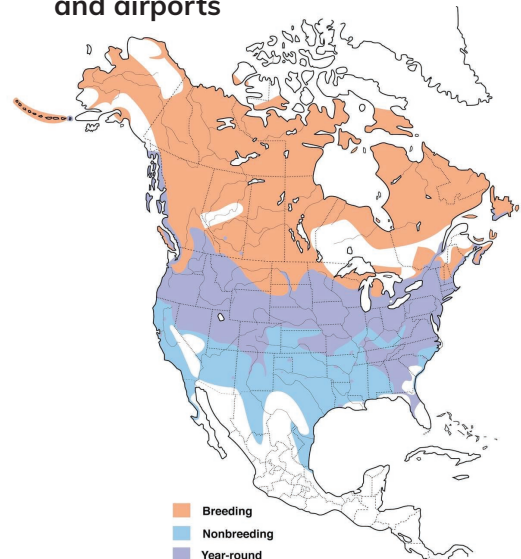
INTERESTING FACTS:

Most Canada Geese migrate. That means they move from one place to another as the seasons change. When Canada Geese fly south for the winter, they fly as a flock. One goose leads the way and the rest follow behind in a distinctive “V” formation. You’ll hear them honking as they fly overhead.

WHERE IT LIVES

Habitat:

- near lakes, rivers, ponds, or other bodies of water
- lawns, parks, golf courses, and fields
- farmlands, suburbs, urban areas, and airports



Map provided by Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Rock Pigeon



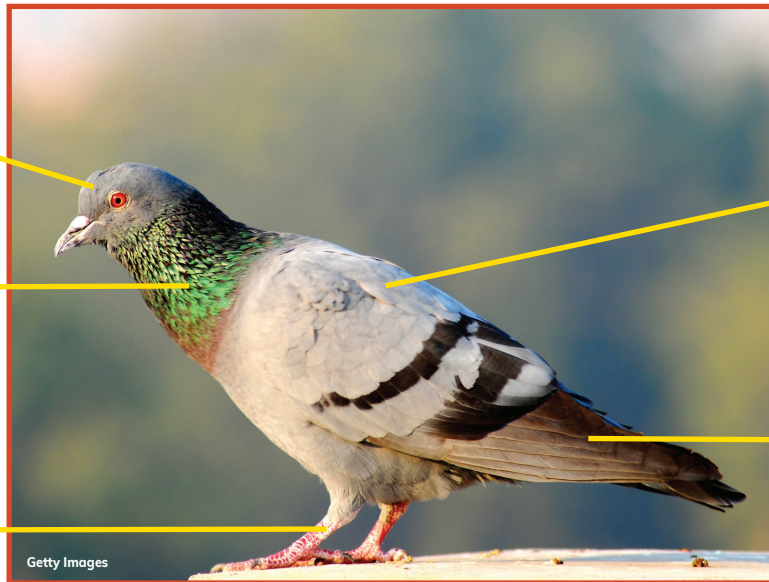
WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Identifying Features:

small head

iridescent
throat
feathers

short legs



most have
gray or
bluish-gray
bodies

wide,
rounded tail

The Rock Pigeon is a medium-sized bird that is 12 to 14 inches from tip of beak to tip of tail. Its scientific name is *Columba livia*.

WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE

Calls and Songs:

- soft coo
- short grunt as an alarm call
- song of rolling cooing
- “coo-cuk-cuk-cuk-cooo”

WHERE IT LIVES

Habitat:

- cities and suburbs
- farmlands, fields, and parks
- rocky cliffs

INTERESTING FACTS:

Rock Pigeons like to nest on sheltered cliff ledges. Rock Pigeons that live in cities often build nests on window ledges, because they are a lot like cliff ledges.



Map provided by Cornell Lab of Ornithology



Name of bird

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Identifying Features:



WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE

Calls and Songs:

WHERE IT LIVES

Habitat:

INTERESTING FACTS:



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