



Birding in Iowa

A Beginning Guide

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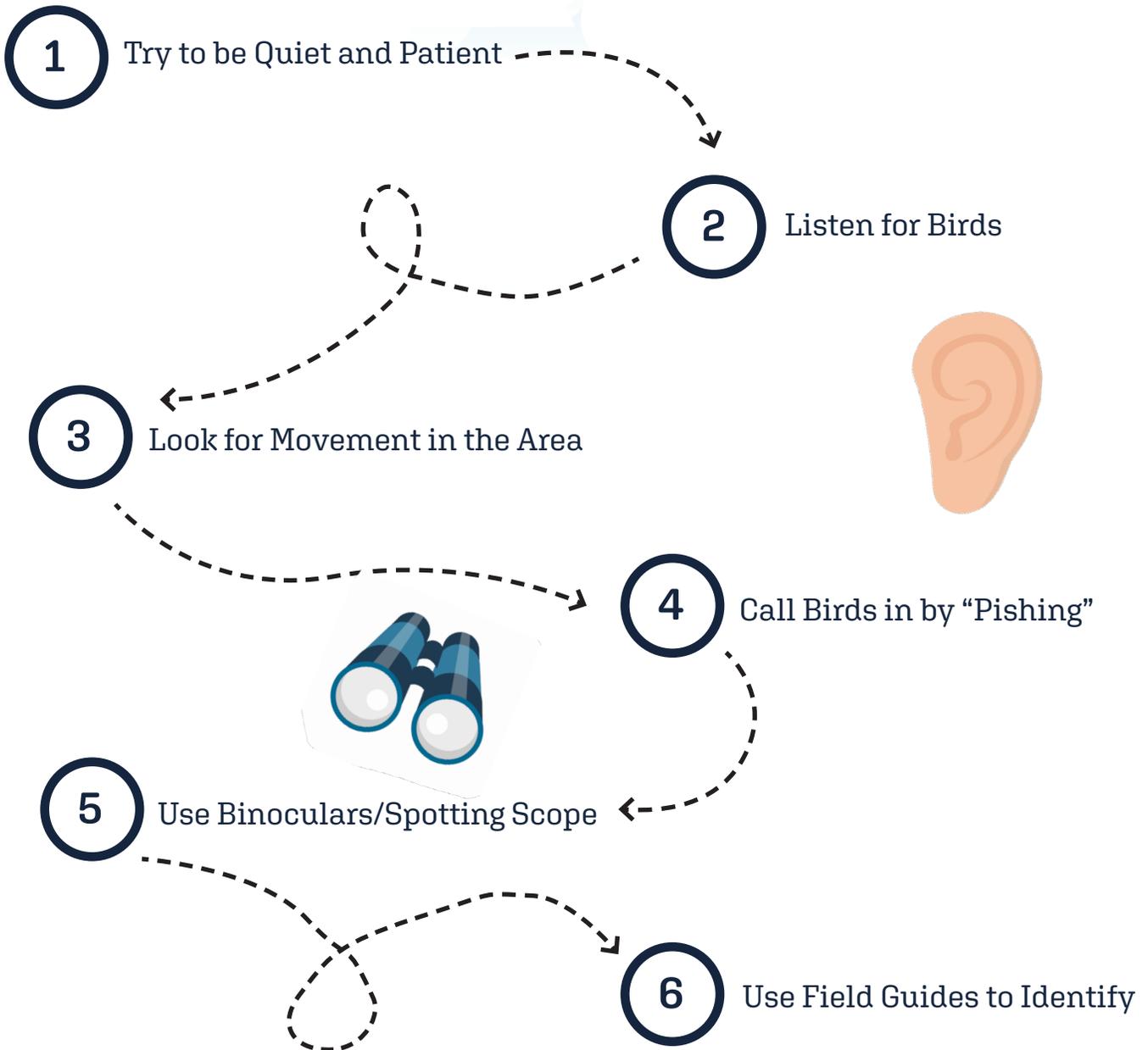
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Birding in Iowa

How to Observe Birds





Birding in Iowa

Bird Identification



Look for Details



Size [Compare to something familiar]



Shape [Body, wings, tail]



Bill/Beak [Narrow, short/wide, curved]



Feet [Webbed, perching, talons]



Color



Field Marks [Things that stand out, like eye stripes, wing bars, crests]



Narrow Down to Group [Woodpeckers, swallows, etc.]



Consider if it Makes Sense for the Species to be in that Area/Habitat



Common Birds of Walnut Woods



American Goldfinch

Summer male bright yellow with black wings/tail/forehead. Summer female duller yellow-green. Winter plumage yellowish brown/gray. Seed-eater common to woodland edges.



American Robin

Brick red chest and gray back (male usually darker than female.) Common in yards/gardens. Feeds on worms, insects, berries and fruit.



Baltimore Oriole

Flame orange and black pattern with black head (male). Females dull greenish above, yellowish below. Melodic song. Weaves a hanging basket nest.



Black-capped Chickadee

Small bird with a black cap, black bib and white cheeks. Male and female look the same. Call is "Chick-a-dee-dee-dee."



Blue Jay

Large bright blue bird, whitish below, with black necklace, wing-bars, and a crest. Calls out "Jay, Jay, Jay."



Downy Woodpecker

Small, with white back, striped face white spots on black wings, a very short bill. Male has red spot on back of head.



Eastern Bluebird

Blue back, reddish chest, white belly. Female paler. Forest edge/roadside habitat, nest boxes.

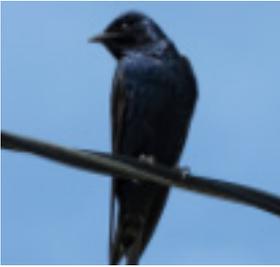


Northern Cardinal

Red with head crest (female duller) Large orange beak (black in juvenile). Song "What cheer, what cheer birdy, birdy birdy."



Common Birds of Walnut Woods



Purple Martin

Large swallow with pointed wings and forked tail. Male is glossy blue-black all over, female gray below, with white belly. Colony nesters that eat flying insects.



Red-bellied Woodpecker

Large, black and white bars on back/wings, red stripe on head/neck (male) neck (female), reddish belly.



Red-tailed Hawk

Large, broad-winged hawk white breast, streaked belly band, reddish tail. Color variations.



Red-winged Blackbird

Black with red and yellow shoulder patches, which can be hidden (male). Female resembles sparrow.]



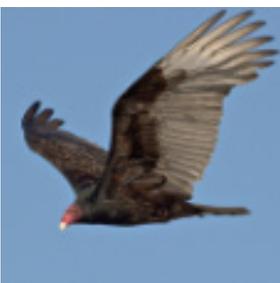
Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Tiny, with green back and bright red throat (male). Female duller. Long, narrow bill. Hovers when feeding on nectar from flowers.



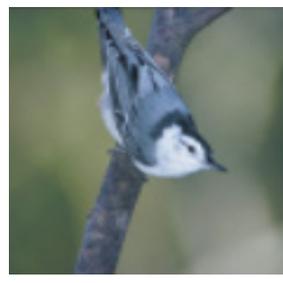
Tree Swallow

Glossy blue-green above with bright white below. Glides in circles when flying. Often found nesting in Bluebird boxes.



Turkey Vulture

Very large, dark bird with red, featherless head. Six-foot wingspan. Soars with wings held in a "V". Eats carrion, often along the roadside.



White-breasted Nuthatch

Blue-gray with dark cap (black in male, charcoal gray in female), white underside. Long straight bill. Walks down tree head-first. Call a nasal "Yank, yank, yank."



Birding in Iowa

Keeping Records

- Field Checklist
- Keep a Life List of Species You Observe
 - Location
 - Date
 - Time
 - Gender
- Journal
- Use Words and Sketches to Describe and Document your Experience
 - Appearance
 - Call/Song
 - Surroundings

