

Welcome to the Wonderful World of Birding!

Birding Etiquette – Safety of the Birds is Prime Importance

This means do not disturb the birds, especially nesting birds. Please keep in mind that approaching a nest can alert predators to the nest/roost location jeopardizing both adults and young.



To begin you need a **field guide** for your area. Traditionally, a field guide is a book with pictures/photos of birds and tips for identifying them. There are electronic field guides - they sing and play videos - something books can't do. There are many excellent books for new birders. To name a few, National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America, National Geographic Field Guide to Birds of Western North America, Peterson Field Guide to Western Birds, The Sibley Guide to Birds, and Birds of Northern California. You will also want to look at the Kaufman Focus Guide and the Stokes Field Guides. For young birders, there is Peterson First Guides: Birds. Pick a favorite and carry it with you everywhere, take it to bed!



Binoculars are a wonderful way to see birds. But you will soon discover an ironic fact. The best birders have the best binoculars, even though they can identify a bird at a glimpse 100 yards away by its wingbar or outer tail feather! Newcomers with a cheap binocular see a fuzzy ball of feathers and don't have a clue which bird it is. There is an unbelievable difference between a \$60 binocular and a \$1,500 binocular. Buy the best you can afford...you can always buy better later. My first pair, bought about 1966 for \$100, was 7 X 35 Jason and I happily saw many wonderful, beautiful birds with them for a long time.



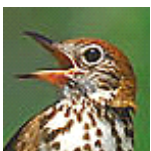
You need to know what to expect in your area. The giant woodpecker you saw in the woods was a Pileated Woodpecker, not an Ivory-billed Woodpecker (Darn!). **Checklists** of birds in your area will tell you this. Many State and National parks have checklists of the birds seen in their areas.



You need to be able to **find the birds**. To do this, you should learn about the habitat each species of bird prefers. Do they like to spend their time at the top of a tree or on the ground or on a lake? To find a bird, you will often hear it first. So, thoroughly learn the songs and behaviors of the birds in your yard (or your office) and apply this knowledge further afield. Later, learn the songs of other birds in your area of the country. Finally, check out web sites about birds and birding locations. <http://birds.cornell.edu>



Join a group of other birders. Birders are very friendly and helpful and, most of all, love birds. They are always willing to share their knowledge because we were all beginners at one time. Start by contacting the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, 22221 McClellan Road, Cupertino (www.scvas.org), Los Gatos Birdwatcher (www.losgatosbirdwatcher.com), or American Birding Association (<http://aba.org>).



Try a **birding field trip**. Local bird trips are advertised in The Avocet, the newsletter of SCV Audubon. These are led by local, experienced Audubon members. The trips may last a morning or most of the day and are usually free of charge. You might also want to join a professional guide on a tour. Tour guides charge for their services but they are worth every penny. Hot Tip! When birding, wear neutral colored clothing, not white or bright neon colors.

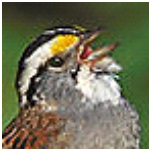


Read about birds! There are many good magazines about birds and birding. For North American birds, [BirdWatching](#), [Bird Watcher's Digest](#), [Birding](#) and [WildBird](#) are magazines you might like. Subscribe to the ones that appeal to you. Fortunately, now there are many books about birds!



Bring the birds to you. You can attract birds to your yard with just a little work. Planting the right flowers will attract hummingbirds and native plant gardens provide shelter and food that our native bird species evolved with. Sunflower seeds in a new feeder will bring lots of new birds to your house. You might even want to build a bluebird house!

(www.nabluebirdsociety.org)



Record your bird sightings. You might want to keep a “diary” or list of the birds you see in your yard. You can also keep a list of birds you see in your town or on your vacation. Birders often keep lists for their county, state or country. They may also keep track of birds seen in one day or one month or one year. This is all terribly easy to do with a computer listing program. Check out <http://ebird.org>



HAVE FUN! ASK LOTS OF QUESTIONS! BE KIND TO BIRDS! SPEAK UP FOR THE BIRDS!