

Plateau

Land & Wildlife
Management

Birding Basics for Landowners

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Staff Biologist II

WHAT WE WILL COVER

- What is birding?
- What do I need?
- Birding resources
- Observation
- Where & when to bird
- Plants for birds

The background is a dark green topographic map with white contour lines. A light green grid is overlaid on the map. Various symbols are scattered across the map, including small squares, circles, and crosses. A large, faint, light green 'X' is visible in the upper right quadrant. The text 'What is birding?' is centered in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

What is birding?

WHAT IS BIRDING?

Actively seeking out birds, often specific species of birds, to observe them in their native surroundings.



The background is a dark green topographic map with white contour lines. A light green grid is overlaid on the map. Several small white symbols are scattered across the map, including plus signs, crosses, and clusters of small squares and dots. A large, faint white circle is also visible, centered near the top left.

What do I need?

WHAT DO I NEED?

- **EARS and/or EYES**
- **Good quality Binoculars**
- **Bird books and field guides**
- **Apps and the internet**
- **The right clothes**
- **An adventurous attitude**
- **Passion and desire**





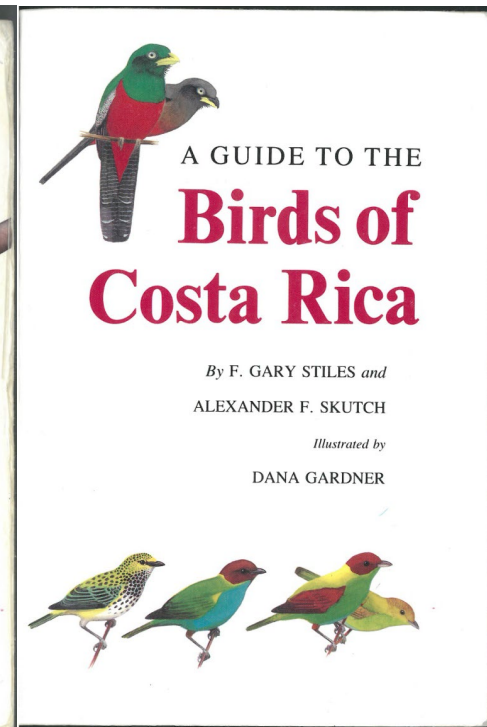
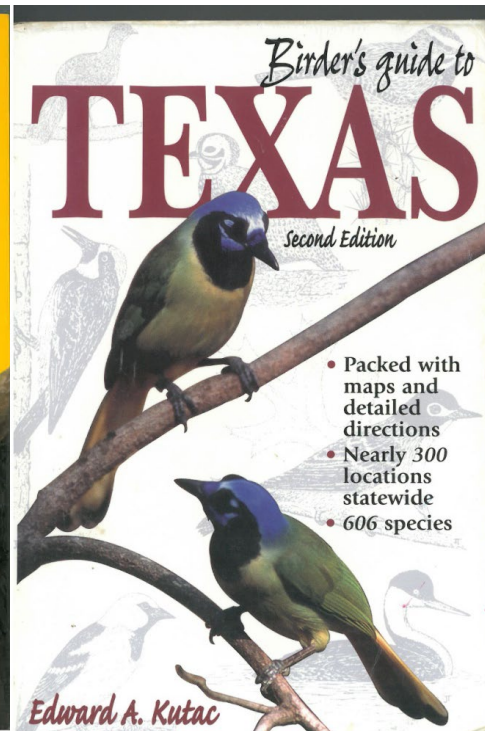
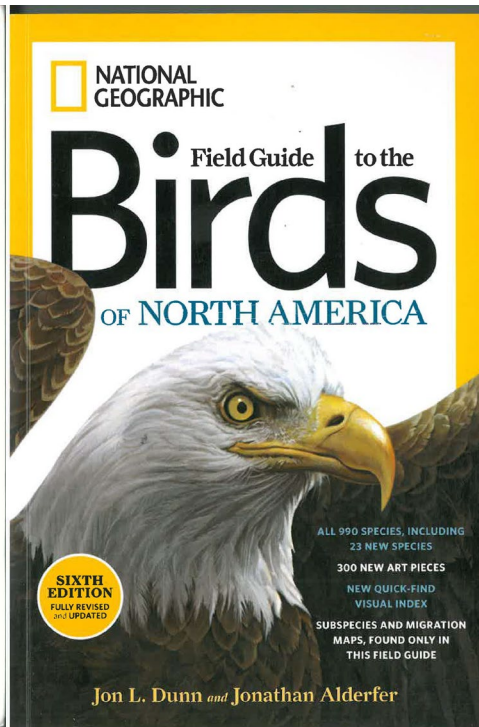
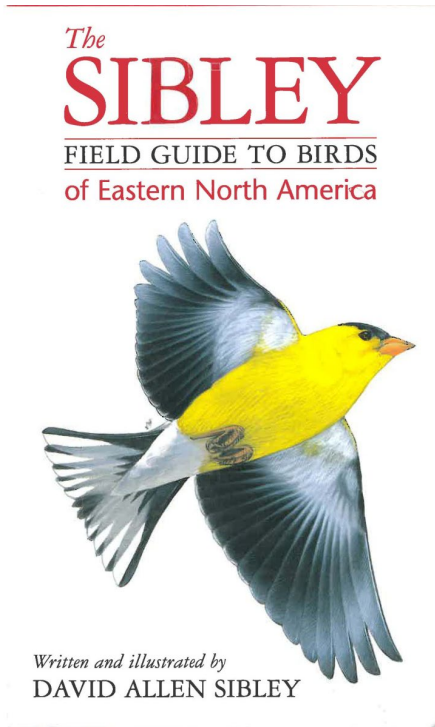
Birding Resources

BOOKS & FIELD GUIDES

Field guides should be:

- Small enough to carry in the field
- Appropriate to the region and birds you are expecting to see
- Drawings rather than photos, with range maps and descriptions on the same page
- Include quick reference pages and identification tips

EXAMPLES FIELD GUIDES



USING A FIELD GUIDE

Inside front and back covers of National Geographic Guides are quick reference indexes.

These help you navigate the guide quickly and efficiently.

VISUAL INDEX TO BIRD FAMILIES



Figures not to scale

Non-Passerines



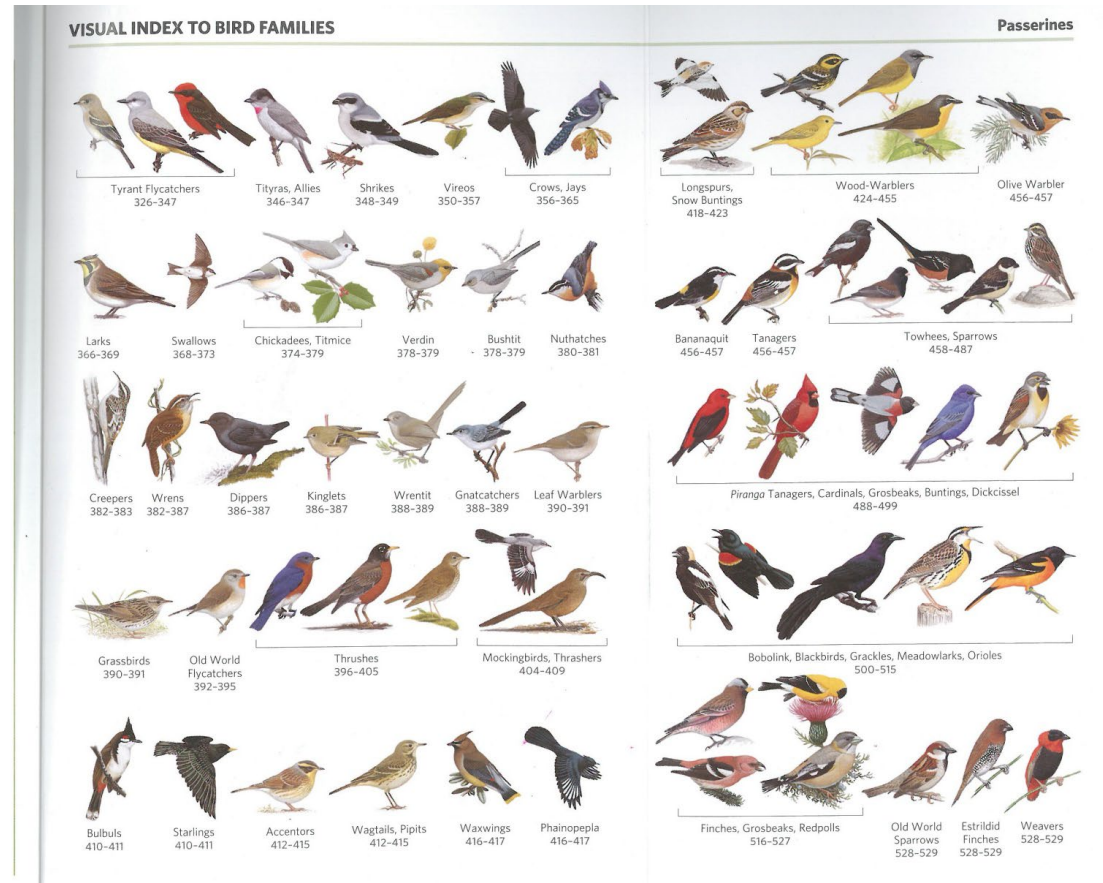
See inside back cover for Passerines

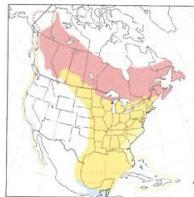
USING A FIELD GUIDE

Guides are arranged in
Taxonomic order.

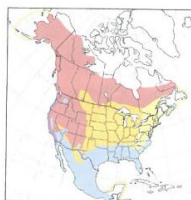
The back half of the guide
and the back cover contain the
Passerines, or perching birds.

These song birds are the
hardest to identify unless
you use your ears as well as
your eyes.



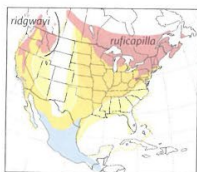


Song
Description



See subspecies map, page 554

Range Map



Tennessee Warbler *Oreothlypis peregrina* L 4¾" (12 cm)

Plump, with short tail and long, straight bill. **Male** in spring is green above with gray crown, bold white eyebrow; white below. **Female** is tinged with yellow or olive overall, especially in fresh fall plumage. Adult male in fall resembles spring adult female but shows more yellow below. Immature also yellowish below; resembles young Orange-crowned, but is greener above and has a shorter tail and usually white undertail coverts. Spring male may be confused with Red-eyed (page 354) and Warbling (page 356) Vireos; note especially Tennessee Warbler's slimmer bill, greener back.

VOICE: Distinctive two- or three-part song; in three-part version, several rapid two-syllable notes are followed by a few higher single notes, usually ending with a staccato trill. Call is a sharp chip; flight call is a thin seet.

RANGE: Fairly common in interior; uncommon along East Coast. Found in coniferous and mixed woodlands in summer, mixed open woodlands and brushy areas during fall migration. Somewhat scarcer in recent decades. Nests on the ground; generally feeds high in trees. Rare migrant in West; very rare in winter in coastal CA.

Orange-crowned Warbler *Oreothlypis celata* L 5" (13 cm)

Olive above, paler below. Yellow undertail coverts and faint, blurred streaks on sides of breast separate Orange-crowned from similar Tennessee Warbler. Note also Orange-crowned's thinner, slightly downcurved bill and longer tail. Plumage varies from the smaller, brighter, yellower birds of western U.S., such as Pacific *lutescens*, to the duller *orestera* (not shown; affinities appear closer to *celata*, including juvenal and immature plumages) of the Great Basin and Rockies; to the duller, *celata*, which breeds across AK and Canada and winters primarily in southeastern U.S.; *celata* is the latest fall migrant of the warblers. Another subspecies, *sordida* (not shown), of the Channel Islands and adjacent mainland in southern CA, is like *lutescens* but darker and more streaked ventrally. Tawny orange crown, absent in some **females** and **immatures**, is seldom discernible in the field. Immature *celata* can be particularly drab; young *celata* is similar to immature Tennessee but shows yellow undertail coverts and grayer upperparts.

VOICE: Song is a high-pitched staccato trill, faster in *lutescens*; quite variable in *sordida*. Call note, a somewhat metallic chip; also a thin seet.

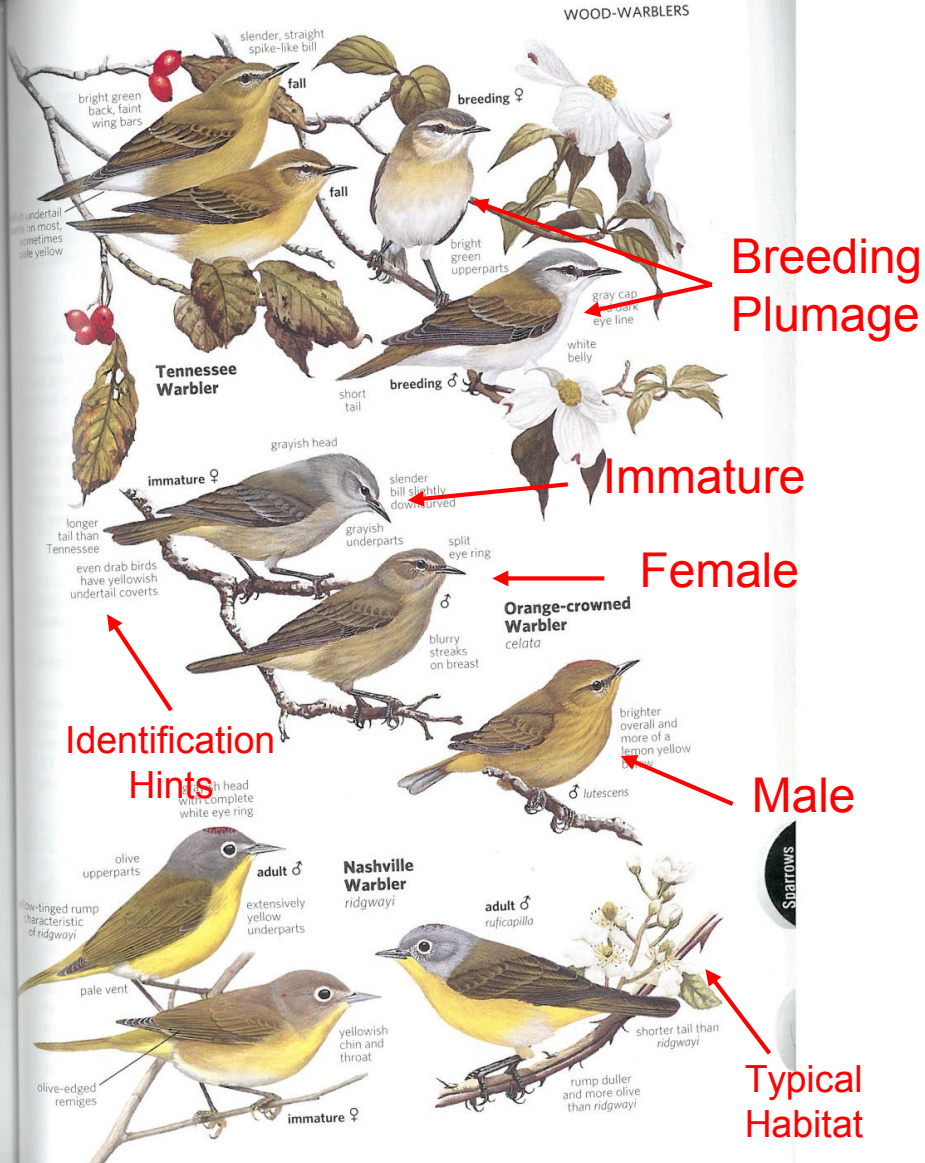
RANGE: Inhabits open, brushy woodlands, forest edges, and thickets. Nests on the ground; generally feeds in low branches, often in dead leaf clumps. Common in the West; rarer in the East, especially scarce on East Coast north of Southeast region.

Nashville Warbler *Oreothlypis ruficapilla* L 4¾" (12 cm)

Bold white eye ring, gray head, olive upperparts, and white area below legs. **Female** is duller than **male**. Rump brighter on longer-tailed western subspecies *ridgwayi*, which more often wags its tail.

VOICE: Song of eastern *ruficapilla* is a series of high see-weet notes and a lower short trill; call, a dull chink. In *ridgwayi*, song is sweeter, call is sharper.

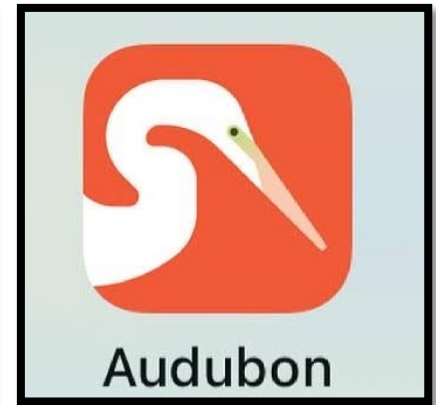
RANGE: Common; found in second-growth woodlands, brushy areas, and spruce bogs. Rare migrant on Great Plains, most likely *ruficapilla*. Accidental in fall on St. Lawrence Island, AK.



Identification Apps

BIRD ID APPS

- Field guides with powerful ID tools
- Many can be used offline
- Data used to help conserve bird populations worldwide
- Several free online resources to identify birds



APPS VS. FIELD GUIDES

Pros:

- Apps are more portable
- Apps have a recording of the song
- Apps are updateable
- It is difficult to compare similar birds with apps
- Apps are hard to see in bright daylight

Cons:

- Unless you know what you are looking for, apps are difficult to search

The background is a dark olive green with a complex pattern of light-colored, wavy topographic contour lines. Overlaid on this is a faint, light-colored grid. Several small, light-colored clusters of dots and squares are scattered across the image, particularly in the upper and lower right areas. A large, bold, white word is centered in the middle of the frame.

Observation

EYES & EARS

SHARPEN YOUR OBSERVATIONAL SKILLS

Where are you seeing the bird and how is it behaving?

- On the ground? ...hiding in grass or strutting in the open?
- In a tree? or bush? ...singing from a perch or skulking?
- In the water? ...floating or wading, diving or dabbling?
- In the air?...flapping or soaring, hovering or diving?



EYES & EARS

SHARPEN YOUR OBSERVATIONAL SKILLS

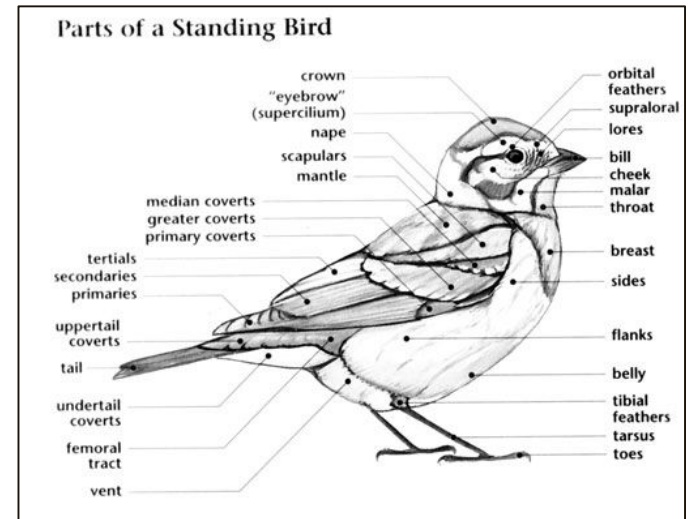
What is the bird feeding on and how is it feeding?

- Chasing insects? ...in the air, on the ground, on leaves or bark?
- Hunting animals?...diving, sneaking or pursuing on the ground?
- Hunting fish or sea life? ...floating or wading, diving or dabbling?
- Eating seeds or fruit?...stripping seeds, chicken-scratching, eating whole berries, seeking nectar?



WHAT KEYS TO NOTICE

- **Size, shape and posture**
- **Leg length and color**
- **Bill size, shape and color**
- **Plumage color and pattern**
- **Song and vocalization**
- **Movements and displays**



Where & When to Bird

WHERE TO BIRD

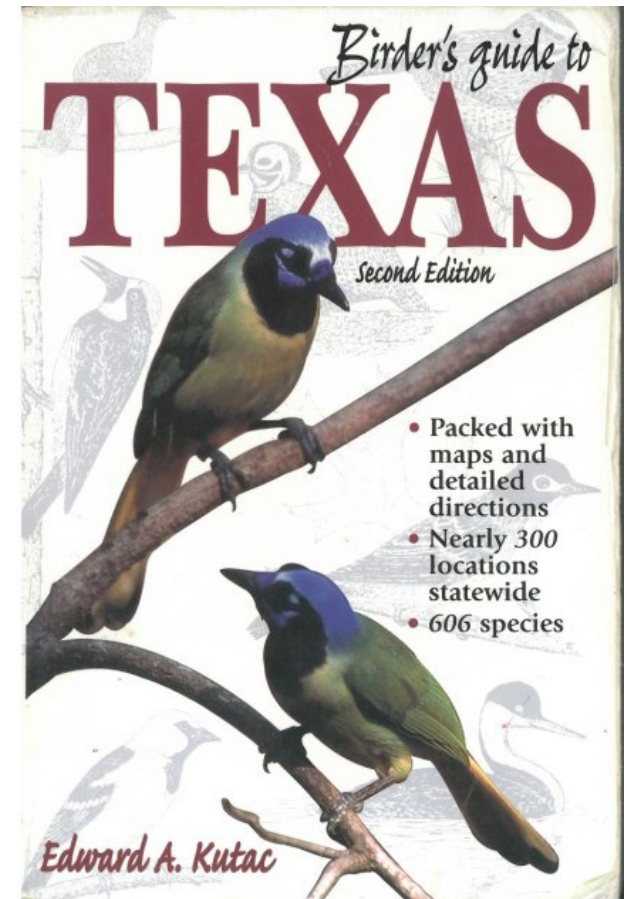
Your yard or property:

- Establish feeders
- Set up water stations
- Plant the plants that attract the birds you want to see
- Restrict disturbances

Parks and Publicly Accessible Areas:

- Beaches and bays
- Federal, State, County and City Parks and Preserves
- Cemeteries
- Roadsides
- Private venues

Use birding guides, magazines, websites and active bird alerts to keep informed.



WHEN TO BIRD

Any time, but especially in the:

Spring

- Birds in migration, more species available
- Birds are singing, easier to find
- Birds are in breeding plumage and displaying

Winter

- Birds move to Texas to escape the cold north
- Birds concentrate at ponds, lakes, bays and seashores





Plants for Birds

PLANTS FOR BIRDS

Why choose native plants:

- Generally require less upkeep
- Essential food sources and shelter for birds

Where to find native plants:

- Already established on your property
- Local nature and wildflower centers
- Audubon Native Plant Database
 - [Audubon.org/PlantsForBirds](https://audubon.org/PlantsForBirds)

Remember to include several types of plants for all seasons.



PLANTS FOR BIRDS

American Beauty-Berry

Callicarpa americana



American Beauty-Berry, or French Mulberry, is a showy, deciduous shrub that grows to a height and width of 3 to 5 feet with long branches that bear yellow-green foliage and small, pink flowers. Beauty-Berry's most distinctive feature is its round clusters of bright, glossy purple fruit at leaf axils that grow during the fall and winter. This plant provides an important food source for wildlife, growing in partial shade and moist, rich soils.

Attributes Shrubs, **Fruit**, **Butterflies**, **Caterpillars**

☐ Add to your plant list

Buy Now

May attract



American Elm

Ulmus americana



Also going by the names White Elm, Soft Elm, Water Elm, or Common Elm, this medium to large deciduous tree typically grows 60 to 80 feet tall with a vase-shaped, broad-rounded crown. This handsome tree serves as a larval host for a number of butterfly species, and both its seeds and leaf buds are eaten by birds. It thrives in full sun to partial shade, and in moist, fertile soils. Once a very common American forest and street tree admired for its stately habit, the vast majority of American Elms were devastated by the introduction of Dutch elm disease in the 1930s. Ask your nursery about disease-resistant American Elm varieties.

Attributes **Trees**, **Fruit**, **Nuts**, **Butterflies**, **Caterpillars**

May attract



FAMILY OF COMPANIES



BRAUN & GRESHAM
ATTORNEYS AT LAW



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THANK YOU!

Plateau Land & Wildlife Management

Less work, more enjoyment.

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Questions?