



Saving Birds and Improving Lives



NPS / EVANS

Are you ready to enter a new world? A world of travel, adventure, and danger? A world existing all around us? Welcome to the world of birds.

Birds are amazing travelers, expert hunters, skilled artists, and dedicated parents. Yet, birds are also in crisis. In the last 50 years...

3 BILLION DEAD

13 SPECIES GONE FOREVER

1 IN 8 SPECIES GLOBALLY THREATENED

By learning more about birds, observing them, and contributing in a project to protect them, you may discover a new sense of wonder and joy.

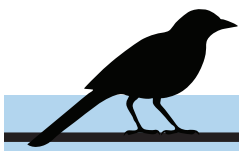


The Journey

Healing Wings is a journey into the amazing world of birds. Along the way, you'll learn about birds, observe them outdoors, and lend a hand to help protect them.

Throughout the journey you can be a part of an effort to restore bird species and we invite you to share it with others.





Learn

about the world of birds

Before flying off to the world of birds, take time to learn about bird species and how you can successfully observe their world.

- ☐ Complete *Birds and Observing Them*
- ☐ Create your birding kit
- ☐ Decide when to go birding

Learn More Want to learn more about birds after completing *Birds and Observing Them*? Here are some great resources to help you discover even more about the wonderful world of birds:

- [NPS Birds & Birding](#)
- [USFWS Migratory Bird Program](#)
- [The Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#)
- [National Audubon Society](#)



Experience

the world of birds

Now it's time to get outside and observe the amazing world of birds. Take the time to look for birds, listen to their calls, and watch their activities. Grab your birding kit and head on out on your birding trip.

Places to Bird You can observe birds just about anywhere. However, as part of the *Healing Wings* experience, we invite you to visit your nearest national park:

- [Find a National Park](#)

- ☐ Participate in a birding experience
- ☐ Write down your observations
 - # of birds seen
 - Location of each bird
 - Activity of each bird
 - Description or sketch of each bird
 - Identification of each bird
- ☐ Share your biggest surprise
- ☐ Share how birding made you feel
- ☐ Select a service project to complete

Once you've observed birds in a national park, continue your observations:

- At home
- Around town
- At a local park
- At a state park
- In a national forest or wildlife refuge



Lend

a helping hand

By lending a hand in your community, you can help save many birds from dying and even give some species a chance to return from the brink of extinction.

- ☐ Participate in a bird-related project
 - What is the goal of the project?
 - How did you assist?
 - What other helping opportunities exist?

Find a Project Now that you are ready to help some birds out, it is time to find a project. Here are some options to explore:

- Ask at your nearby
 - [National Park](#)
 - [National Wildlife Refuge](#)
 - [Audubon chapter](#)
- Check for bird projects on
 - [Birds.cornell.edu](#)
 - [SciStarter.org](#)
 - [NestWatch.org](#)
 - [Zooniverse.org](#)
 - [CelebrateUrbanBirds.org](#)



Share

your experience

Every good experience needs to be shared. Take a moment to share your *Healing Wings* experience with a friend, neighbor, family member, or colleague.

Record Your Experience Help make your journey more memorable by recording each step.

- Start a *Healing Wings* journal
- Take photographs of each step
- Record voice memos when birding
- Sketch or paint birds you observe
- Make a *Healing Wings* video

- ☐ Share your project experience
 - Where did you go?
 - Who did you do the project with?
 - How did you help birds?
 - How did it make you feel?
- ☐ Share a picture of your experience
- ☐ Invite someone to participate in *Healing Wings*

Bonus

- ☐ Go on another birding experience
- ☐ Help with another service project
- ☐ Take a friend with you



Birds and Observing Them

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
A Healing Wings Supplement

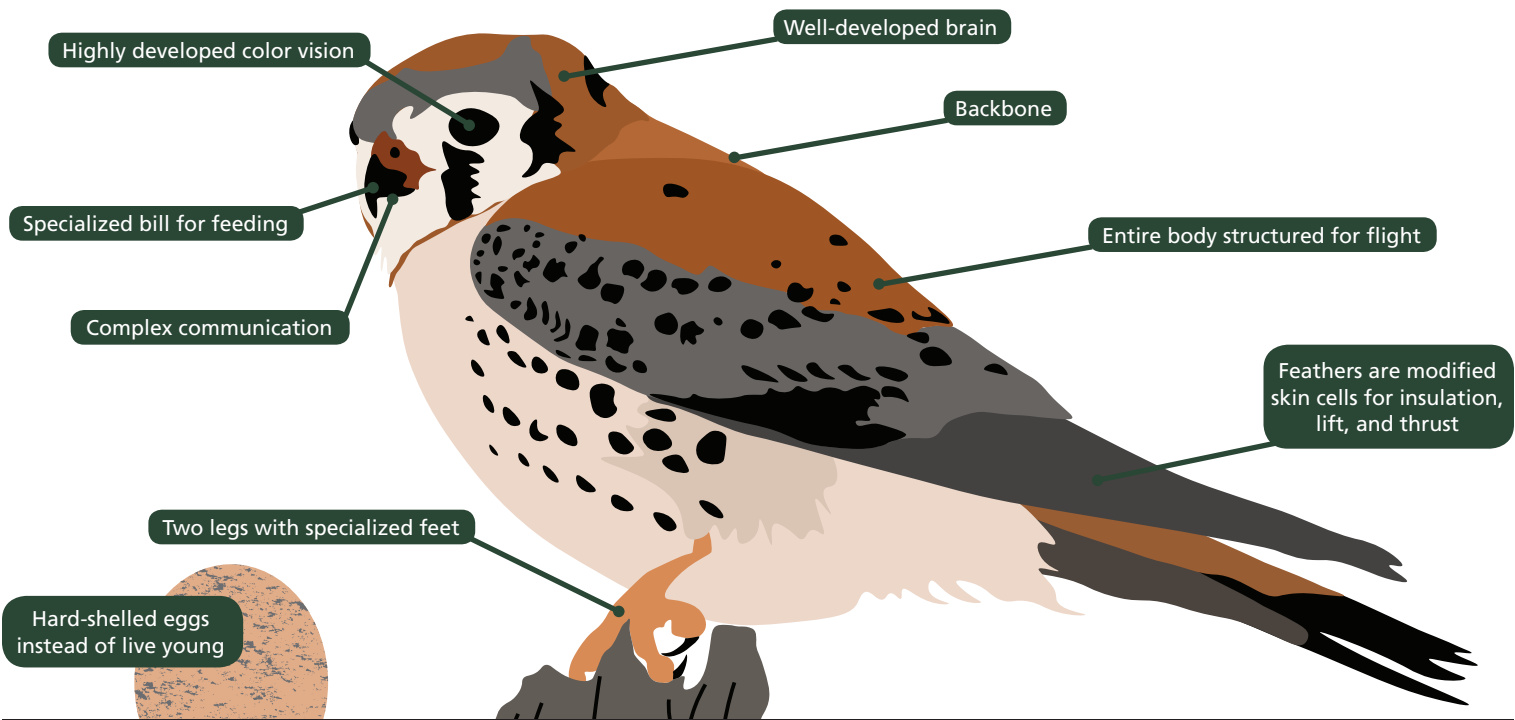


NPS / JIM PEACO

Birds are found just about everywhere. Even when you can't see them, you can often hear them. Bird diversity changes depending on location and season. Birds can be enjoyed in so many different ways: watching their activity, listening to their songs, noting their plumage, or capturing their likeness through art.

What are Birds?

Birds are animals that have these characteristics:



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Bills

You can learn a lot about a bird just by looking at its beak. Eagles, hawks, and owls have strong, hooked beaks for tearing meat. Woodpeckers' chisel-like beaks drill into wood.

A duck's flat beak excels at straining food out of mud, while a great blue heron's works like a fishing spear.



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Nests

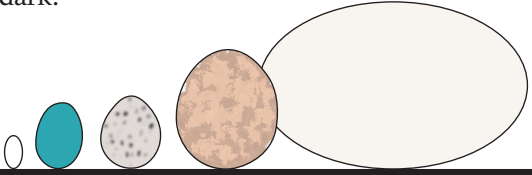
Birds are engineers who build their nests to be invisible, inaccessible, or impenetrable. Thus, they improve the survival of eggs, chicks, and parents. Nests can be more than woven bowls in trees. Kingfishers dig burrows and woodpeckers chisel tree cavities. Some birds even nest together.



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Eggs

Birds are born from protective hard-shelled eggs, which require substantial energy to make. The shell holds and protects the embryo and its nutrients. The mother does not carry her young inside her, so both parents can gather food and protect the nest while they wait for their chicks to hatch.

Egg colors and patterns disguise the egg from predators or help parents see their eggs in the dark.

How to Observe Birds

The most important traits you need for bird-watching is patience. Practicing patience—the ability to wait quietly and mindfully—will improve your bird-watching greatly. You’ll gain the ability to recognize different birds and patience gives you the chance to learn more about these fascinating creatures.

Where to Look Birds can be found just about anywhere, though here are some places to check out:

- **Trees:** Most birds are tree-dwelling
- **Poles or treetops:** Raptors especially perch on high vantage points
- **Water:** Many bird species can be found on or around rivers and lakes
- **Wetlands:** Many birds are at home in marshes and wetlands
- **Beaches:** In summertime, shorebirds raise their young and forage for food

When to Look Many birds migrate to different places throughout the year, wintering in a different location from where they raise their young.

- **Spring:** Nesting birds prepare their nests and lay their eggs

- **Summer:** Adults hunt for food and watch over young
- **Fall:** Migraters depart for winter areas
- **Winter:** Ducks and geese are common along flowing waterways

Tips

- **Wear comfortable clothes**
- **Be still:** find a good place to sit or stand so you don’t scare the birds away
- **Take time to observe birds:** the more you look, the more you’ll notice
 - Their call or song
 - Their silhouette
 - Their flight pattern
 - Their location
 - Their behavior
 - Their size
 - Their coloration (beaks, feet, feathers)
 - Their special markings
 - Their shapes (beak, head, body)

Birding Kit

Observing birds doesn’t require special equipment. Even without binoculars or spotting scopes, you can observe birds and their behaviors or listen to their songs.

Here are some items to consider taking on your expedition:

- ☐ This handout and *Healing Wings*
- ☐ Binoculars

- ☐ Notebook and writing instrument
- ☐ Field guide for identifying birds
- ☐ Bird checklist
- ☐ Birding apps
 - Merlin Bird ID
 - eBird
 - iNaturalist
- ☐ Food and water for yourself
(Please don’t feed birds in the wild)

Activity

Where have you seen birds before?

List as many birds as you can think of.

Watch a bird for five minutes and describe what you observe. Pay attention to:

- Size
- Behavior
- Location
- Feather colors and markings
- Beak and feet shapes and colors
- Tail shape and size
- Flight pattern
- Call or song

What else would you like to learn about birds?