

# Bird Watching 101

Prepared by Samantha Krause

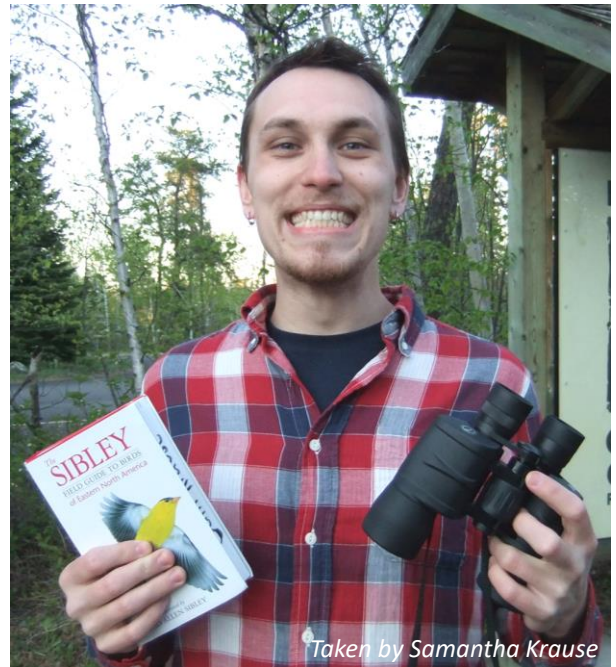
MSc candidate, UofL

June 18, 2019



## Why be a “birder”?

- It’s fun! (and frustrating!)
- Get outside
- Meet people
- Good for your health
- Citizen science projects
- **WARNING!**  
**Highly Addictive!**



## Birding Tools: Binoculars

- Weight
- Magnification
  - 8 x 42
- Field of View
- Light
- Cost (\$-\$\$\$)



- Learn to use them!

## Birding Tools: Binoculars

### Sam's recommended binoculars for new bird watchers

Showing results for *nature dx binoculars 8x42*  
 Search instead for *naturedx binoculars 8x42*

Amazon's Choice



Celestron 71332 Nature DX 8x42 Binocular (Green)

★★★★☆ 85

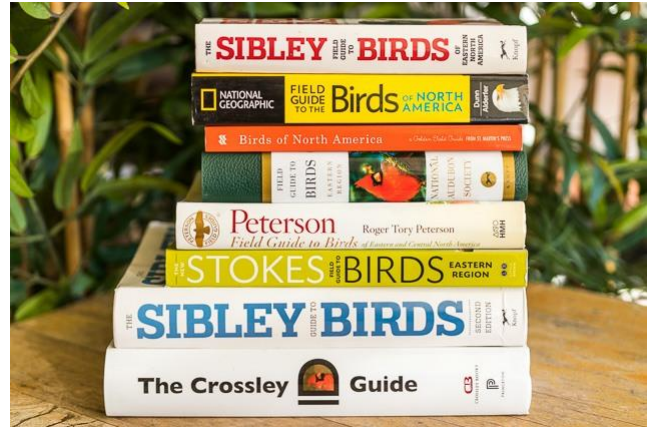
CDN\$ 168.74

✓prime FREE delivery by Thursday, Jun 20

Learn more about binoculars: <https://www.opticsplanet.com/howto/how-to-choose-binoculars.html>

# Birding Tools: Field Guide

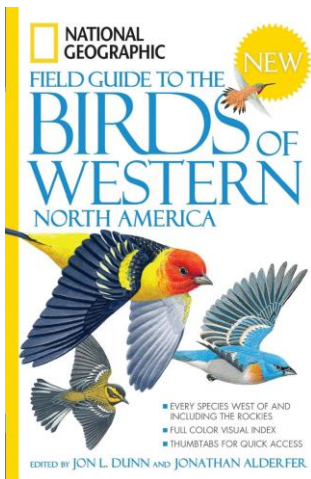
- Photos vs. illustrations
- Range maps
- Region specific
- Read “how to”



# Field Guides: Sibley



# Field Guides: Nat Geo



CARDINALS • ALLIES



**Varied Bunting** *Passerina versicolor* L 511' (14 cm)  
 Breeding season's plumage is colorful as possible, otherwise appears black. In winter, colors are edged with brown. **Female** is plain gray-brown or buffy brown above, slightly paler below, resembles female Indigo Bunting but lacks streaks and has a plainer wing, note also that Varied Bunting's culmen is slightly more curved. Fresh spring male resembles female. Adult males from southwestern NM and TX (eastward) have a darker, less contrasting but more extensive reddish-rufous, also have reddish tinge to throat and pale blue rump. Adult males from southwestern NM and southeastern AZ (eastward) have a smaller but brighter and more contrasting patch of red on rump, also lack reddish tinge to throat, are darker billed, and have on average a more purplish blue rump. Some treat "Milekoff" as a valid subspecies, but the difference from pulchra is slight and variable; if recognized, it likely would comprise the western portion of the U.S. range of Varied Bunting.

**VOICE:** Song is similar to Painted Bunting. Call is similar to Indigo Bunting, but highly smoother.

**RANGE:** Locally common in thorny thickets in washes and canyons. Accidental to southwestern CA and southern ON.



**Indigo Bunting** *Passerina cyanea* L 511' (14 cm)  
 Breeding male deep blue. Smaller than Blue Grosbeak (page 496), but much smaller field's wing base. In winter plumage, blue is obscured by brown and buff edges. **Female** is brownish, always with diffuse streaking on breast and flanks. Young birds resemble female.

**VOICE:** Song is a series of varied phrases, usually paired. Calls include a chirp or whistle, high call, or dry buzz.

**RANGE:** Common in woodland clearings and borders. Rare but regular to Atlantic, Canada and throughout the West; casual to AK and in winter in Pacific states.

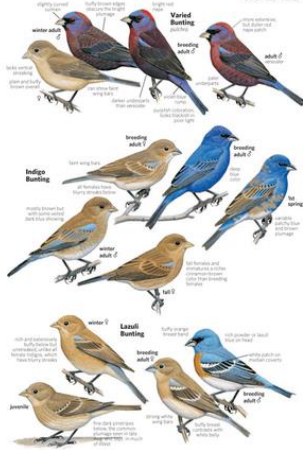


**Lazuli Bunting** *Passerina amoena* L 511' (14 cm)  
 Adult male bright, iridescent above and on throat, common across forest; thick white upper wing bars. **Female** is grayish brown above, tinge of gray blue, which underparts with buffy wash across breast. **Juveniles** resemble female, but have distinct fine streaks across breast, iridescent male is mostly blue by fresh spring. **Winter** adult male's blue color is obscured by brown and buff edges. **Winter** females and immatures have rufous and cinnamon streaks below, which characterize female and immature male Indigo Bunting, which characterize female and immature male Indigo Bunting. Occasionally individuals with Indigo hybrids tend to look largely like Indigo, though blue is paler and belly is white.

**VOICE:** Song is a series of varied phrases, sometimes paired, faster and less so than Indigo Bunting.

**RANGE:** Found in open deciduous or mixed woodlands and chaparral, especially in brushy areas near water. Casual to East, NT, and southwestern AK.

CARDINALS • ALLIES

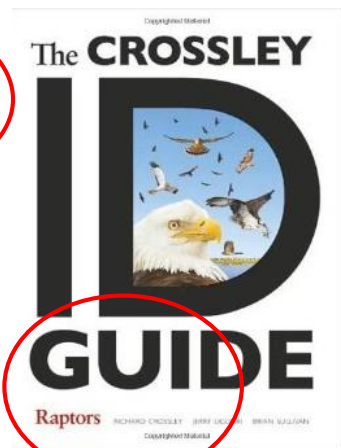
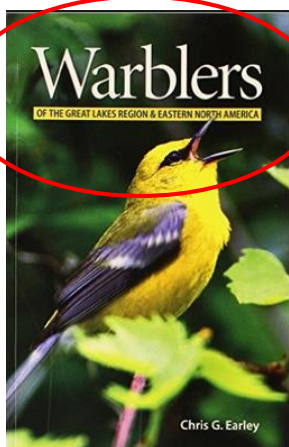


# Field Guides: Crossley (raptors)



## Field Guides

Looking at **specific species**

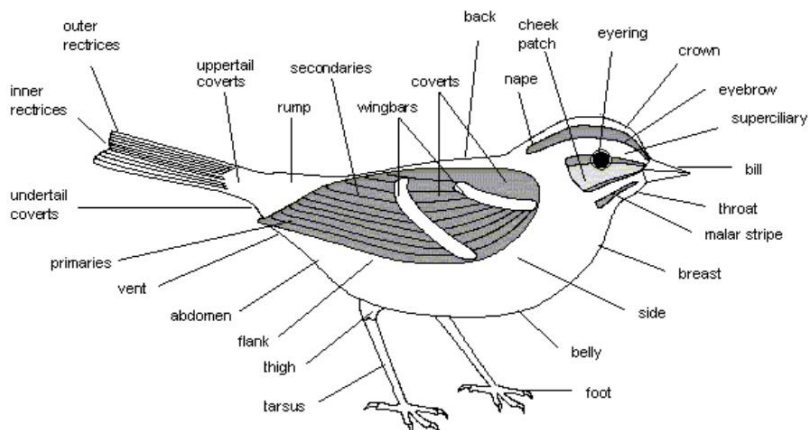


Looking at other **aspects** of birds

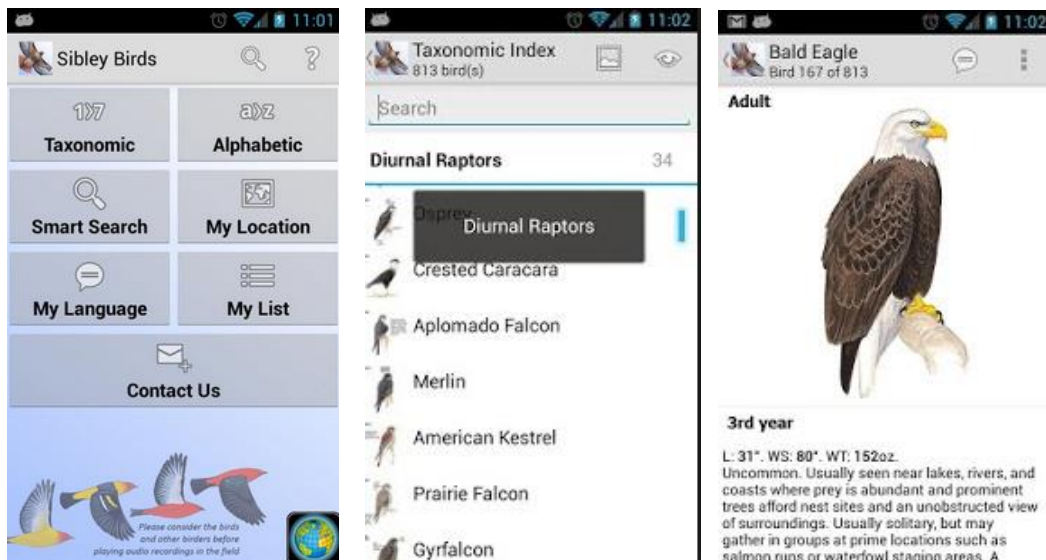


## Field Guide Notes

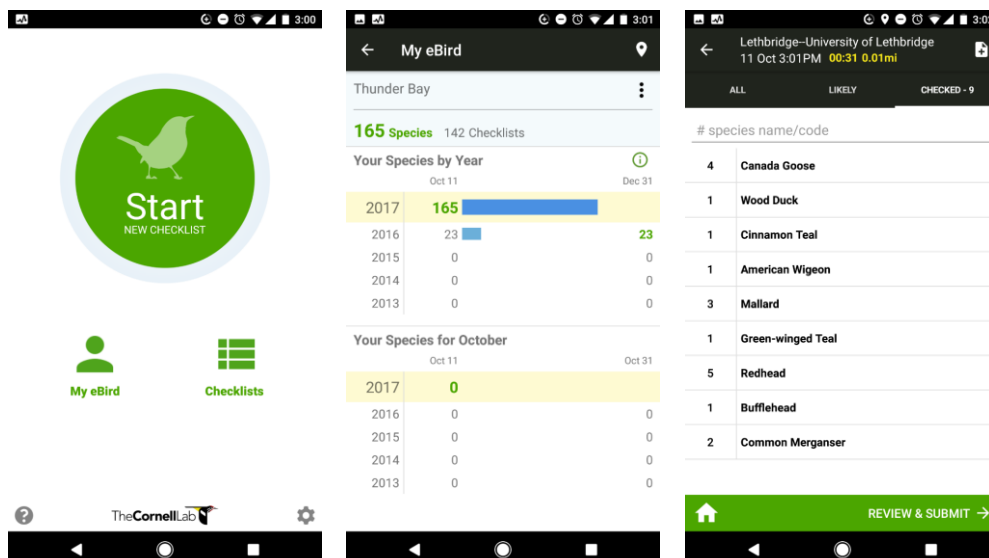
- Taxonomy
- Plumage types
  - Location
  - Age
  - Season
- Dimorphism
- Morphology



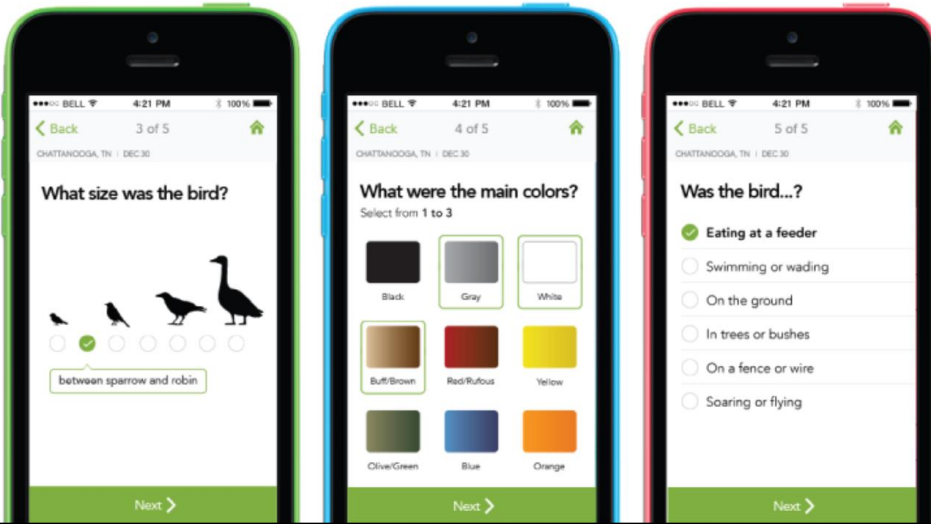
# Apps: Sibley



# Apps: ebird



## Apps: MerlinID



## Apps and playbacks

- Be mindful when using audio in the field
  - Avoid in high density
  - Avoid in breeding season
  - Hold to your ear




*Taken by Rob Swainson*

## Websites

English | Français | Español

Environment and Climate Change Canada / Environnement et Changement climatique Canada / Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad

**DENDROICA**  
Dendroica: An aid to identifying Western Hemisphere birds




Sign in to use all features

First-time users  
Register

Returning users  
Sign In

Guest Version  
Choose country to begin:

Canada  
U.S.A.  
Mexico  
Caribbean



**eBird**

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Welcome to eBird  
*Birding in the 21st Century.*

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Audubon

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**News and Features**  
[Blue-eyed Ground-Dove rediscovered in Brazil](#)  
25 May 2016

São Paulo, May 23rd 2016 – A group of researchers, supported by Observatório de Aves – Instituto Butantan (Butantan Bird Observatory) and Sociedade para a Conservação das Aves do



eBird: <http://ebird.org/content/ebird/>

Natureinstruct:  
<http://www.natureinstruct.org/dendroica/>

## Birding Tools: Camera

- Pros
  - Photo now, ID later
  - Less field knowledge req.
- Cons
  - Tough to get photo
  - “disconnected” from birds





## Birding Tools: Birders!

- Slightly crazy
- Learn faster
- “tips & tricks”



## Identifying birds

- Sight
- Sound
- Behaviour
- Habitat
- Time of year





## Identifying Birds: Sight

- Colours
- Patterns
- (Terminology)
- NB: colours can vary!



Chipping Sparrow

## Identifying birds

- Sight
- Sound



Least flycatcher



Alder flycatcher

## Identifying birds

- Sight
- Sound
- **Behaviour**

For spotted sandpiper bobbing behaviour:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ngsfd7CkEzE>



Brown creeper



Red-breasted nuthatch

## Identifying birds

- Sight
- Sound
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- **Habitat**



## Identifying birds

- Sight
- Sound
- Behaviour
- Habitat
- **Time of year**



Breeding plumage



Non-breeding plumage

Chestnut-sided warbler

## ...So you've got the birding stuff...

- Browse your field guide
- Practice with binoculars
- Find local "hotspots"
- Start IDing common birds
- LOOK at birds
  - Backyard
  - Winter



The Elizabeth Hall Wetlands are a great hotspot!

## ...So you've got the birding stuff...

- Don't be a "bird plow"
  - Stick to the shadows
  - Walk slowly and quietly
  - Find a "sit spot"
- 
- Learn the lingo...  
(Sh\*t birders say)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NaX7i1Q7-Rw>



*Taken by Samantha Krause*

## Interested in learning more about birds?

- Campus bird walks
- Backyard birding (pres.)
- Winter birding (pres.)
- Working in Puerto Rico (pres.)
- Campus birding E-mail list

E-mail me anytime!:

**samantha.krause@uleth.ca**



*Taken by Rob Swainson*

## Photo note:

While some of the photos used in this presentation were my own, many were borrowed from friends or from google. Please contact me if you wish to use any of the photos.