

# RMSEL Binds

A Neighborhood Guide

by the first graders at  
Rocky Mountain School of  
Expeditionary Learning

2008

## Table of Contents

Birds with Climbing Feet

Birds with killing Feet

Birds with Reaching Feet

Birds with Scratching Feet

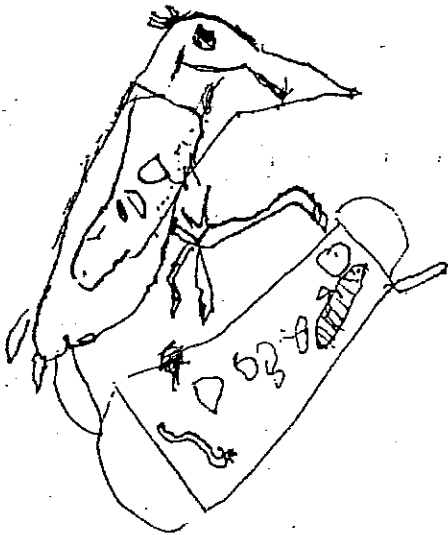
Birds With Swimming Feet

Birds with Wading Feet

Dorothy Woodpecker  
by Nghia

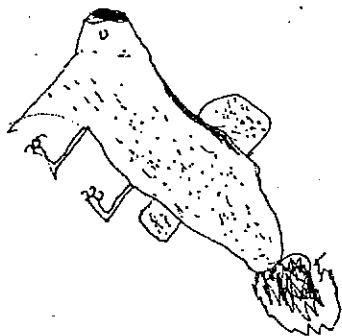
Size and Appearance

A downy woodpecker is 14-17 centimeters long. It is long as my elbow to my wrist. It is shorter than my boot. The wingspan of the downy woodpecker is 25 to 30 centimeters. My wingspan is 20 centimeters. Mine is bigger.



## Voice and Plumage

"Dd d d d d d d d d d d d d d d!" Hear that I think that is a downy woodpecker. My bird has red on his back of his head. The rest is black and white.



## Diet and Body

The downy woodpecker has a sharp beak. Downy woodpeckers peck in trees. It eats insects. The beak is very strong. Look at the beak. It is sharp to peck in wood and to get insects. The downy woodpecker pecks really fast.

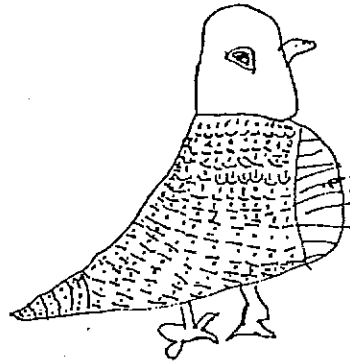
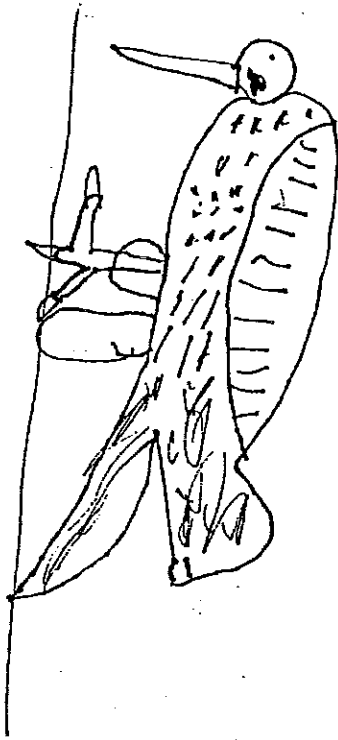
## Habitat and Nesting

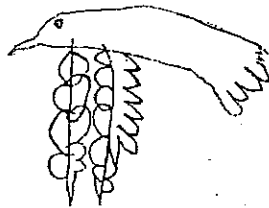
We saw a downy woodpecker in a locust tree in our school yard. I saw it in a cotton wood tree at Cook Park. It was pecking for food.

Northern Flicker  
by Alexander

Size and Appearance

A northern flicker is about 30 centimeters long. That is as long as my arm. The wingspan of the northern flicker is about 50 centimeters. My wingspan is 120 centimeters. That's bigger than a northern flicker's wingspan.





### Voice and Plumage

I'm telling you the sounds of a northern flicker. It is like a drummer and it is like a pecking and like a "a-a-a-a-a!" When it flaps its wing you could see the yellow. When he flies away you could see his white rump.

### Diet and Body

A northern flicker eats ants like an anteater. He has a sharp beak and he pecks in the ground and eats ants.

**Habitat and Nesting** We see northern flickers in Denver all winter and summer. We see them on the playground and at Cherry Creek. They peck holes in trees to make a nest. She lays eggs in the tree.

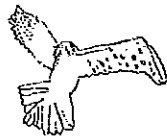
American Kestrel  
by Joshua

Size and Appearance.

A American kestrel is a falcon. It is shaped like a large swallow. A American kestrel is as long as a first grader's head, 22 to 31 centimeters.

A American kestrel's wingspan is 51 to 61 centimeters. My wings are bigger than the American kestrel. Mine are 117 centimeters.





### Voice and Plumage

The American kestrel has a black line across his eye and a blue wing and stripes on his back. His back is also brown and lots of dots on his breast.

### Diet and Body

A American kestrel eats frogs mice, insects. Its bill is good for tearing its prey. It eats rabbits, too. His talons are razor sharp. His beak is sharp, too. It's good for tearing.

### Habitat and Nesting

Kestrels are also known as the sparrow hawk. The kestrel makes its nest inside of dead trees. The American kestrel doesn't migrate. It stays in Colorado all winter.

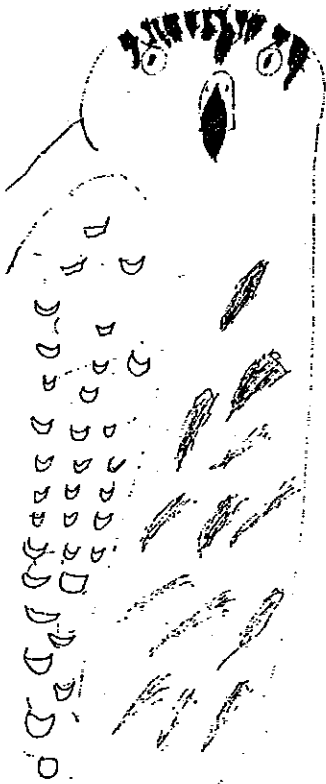




## Cooper's Hawk by Garret

### Size and Appearance

A medium Cooper's hawk is as long as my stomach and a Cooper's hawk can grow about to 39 to 50 centimeters. The wingspan of the Cooper's hawk is 62 to 90 centimeters. My wingspan is 125 centimeters. My wingspan is bigger than the Cooper's hawk.



### Voice and Plumage

Its voice sound like, "Cox!" Its alarm call is like, "Caks".

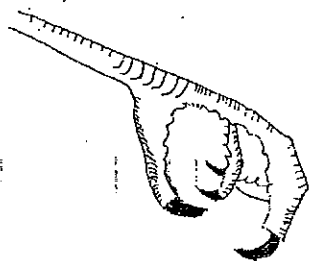
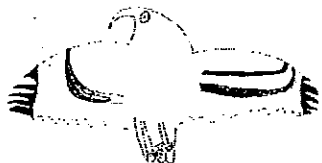
It has red eyes and a rusted colored belly. The colors on the breast of the Cooper's hawk are brownish reddish ridges.

### Diet and Body

It eats small birds and eats fish too. Sometimes it drowns its food. It eats small rodents like mice.

Cooper's hawks sometimes eat fish and the

Cooper's hawk has a very sharp beak for tearing meat. Its feet are very strong for catching fish and small birds and rabbits. Its talons are like the end of a scissors because it needs to kill its prey.



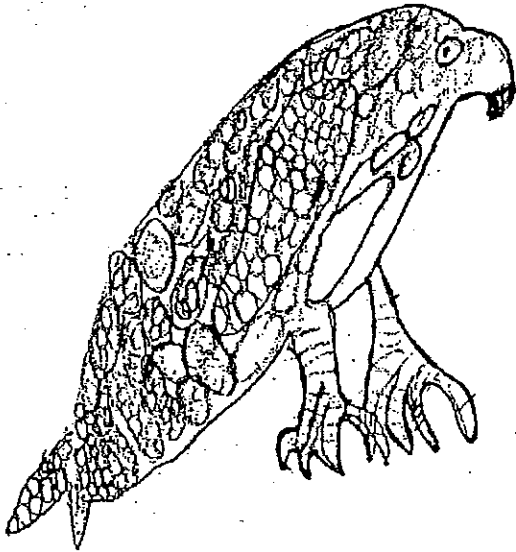
### Habitat and Nesting

The Cooper's hawk lives at RMSEL and eats small birds and mammals like robins and other small creatures. Cooper's hawks migrate to Mexico from Colorado in the winter. The Cooper's hawk are semialtricial. When they hatch they can't move by itself and it has feathers and its eyes are open and it's fed by its mother.

Ferruginous Hawk  
by Miles

Size and Appearance

Ferruginous hawks are as long as from my knee to my head and it is about 69 centimeters. The wingspan is about 140 centimeters. My wingspan is about 120 centimeters. My bird's wingspan is bigger than mine. Ferruginous hawks are the longest-soaring hawks in the U.S.

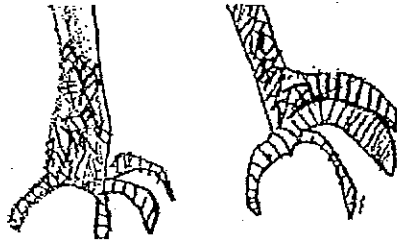


## Voice and Plumage

The voice of the ferruginous hawk is like a girl screaming, but a lot shriller. The ferruginous hawk has a white breast with rust colored spots in a group across its breast. It has black eyes.

## Diet and Body

A ferruginous hawk has a curved beak and it eats rabbits and hares. And the sharp beak it has it to tear meat. And as well as rabbits it eats rodents. The ferruginous hawk does not have a totally yellow beak. It has some black on the tip.



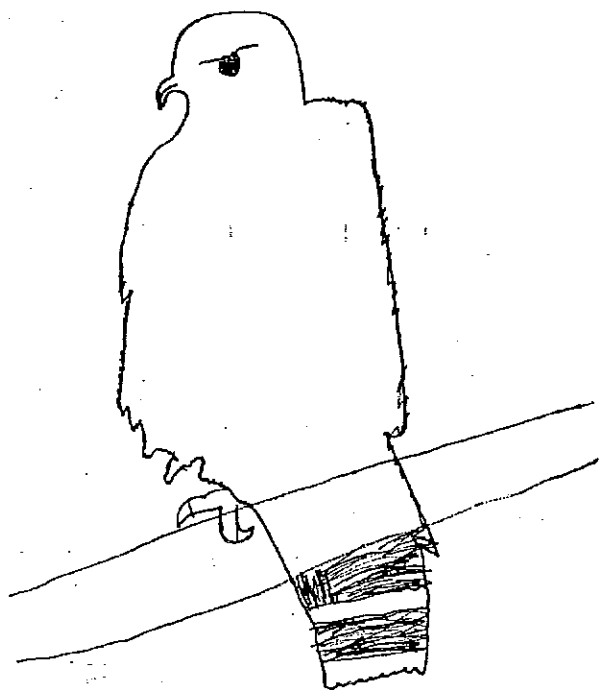
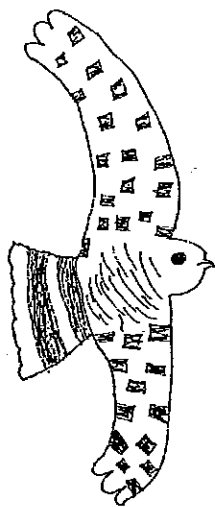
## Habitat and Nesting

The nest of the ferruginous hawk is made out of big sticks. The ferruginous hawk's territory is open country. That means there's hardly any trees. There's lots of meat there, like hares and rabbits so they can eat.

Red-Shouldered Hawk  
by Devon

Size and appearance

Medium red-shouldered hawk is as big as my arm and as long as my belt to my neck. medium red-shouldered hawk is 54 centimeters. A big red-shouldered hawk wingspan is 111 centimeters. My Wingspan is 111 centimeters. that is as long as my bird's



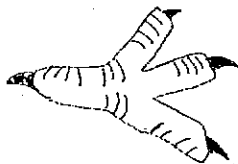
## Voice and plumage

The red-shouldered hawk voice is like this.

"keey-oot!" the red-shouldered hawk has lines on its breast. the red-shouldered hawk male and female look a lot alike except the female has no red on its head.

## Diet and Body

**Red-**shouldered hawks eat like medium sized mammals like mice, groundhogs and rats. The red-shouldered hawk eats small birds and reptiles, frogs and crayfish, snakes, too. The beak is good for tearing meat. It also eats large insects and spiders. His feet are good for grabbing his prey.



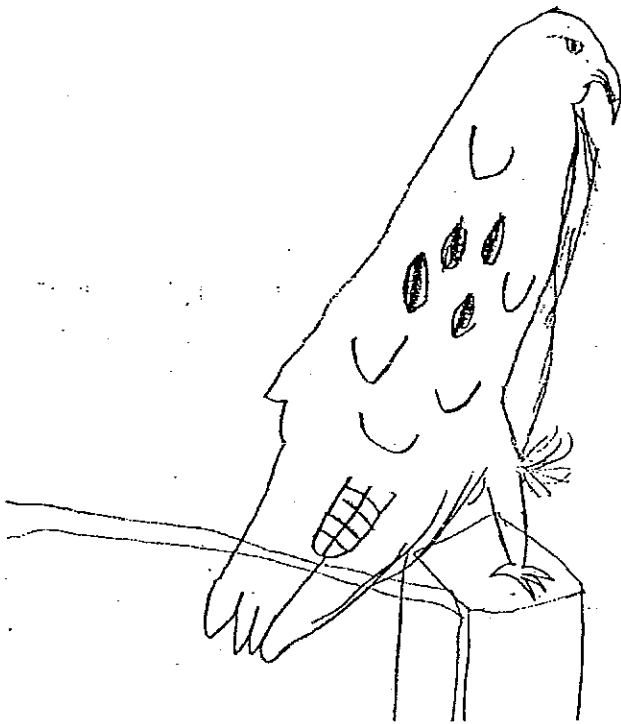
## Habitat and Nesting

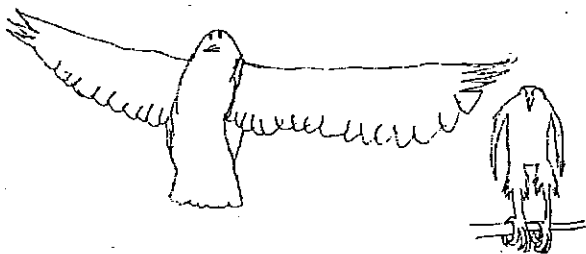
The red-shouldered hawk's nest is pretty big and the nest is made out of twigs and sticks. It does not let other birds on its territory. It's a really good defender. It kind of shows off how good it is at flying to show the other birds how it can fly really good and they'll go away. If a red-shouldered hawk wants the territory that another hawk owns, they have to compete for it.

## Red-Tailed Hawk by Charlie V.

### Size and Appearance

It is a raptor. A medium red-tailed hawk is as big as my arm pits to my fingers, 53 centimeters. The wingspan of the red-tailed hawk is 114 to 133 centimeters. My wingspan is 124 centimeters. Some of them have bigger wingspan than me some have smaller.



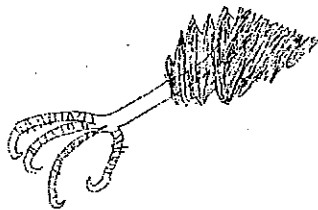


### Voice and Plumage

The red-tailed hawk has a scratchy screaming cry. A red-tailed hawk has polka dots on its back. The red-tailed hawk's tail is not red. It is orangey red.

### Diet and Body

The red-tailed hawk has a curved beak and a sharp claws. It eats small and furry rodents. Its talons are good for getting a good grip on its prey and so it can fly away with its prey.



### Habitat and Nesting

I see the red-tailed hawk at Cherry Creek and Cook Park and at our schoolyard.

Red-tailed hawks like grassy lands and next to farms and on cliffs and fields and forests. You might see them soaring at Cherry Creek or almost anywhere.



American Crow  
By Julia M.

Size and Appearance

The American crow is black everywhere. The American crow size 40 to 53 centimeters. Its as big as my arm. The wingspan of the American crow is 85 to 100 centimeters.

My wingspan is 100 centimeters. My wingspan is a little bit bigger.



### Voice and Plumage

I see a lot of them in the cottonwood trees sometimes.

They make a cawing sound. They said

'Caw! Caw! Caw!'

### Diet and Body

The American crow has a sharp beak to eat. American crows are omnivores. That means they eat all different kinds of stuff.

Sometimes I see them on the ground pecking for insects or something cause they're an omnivore. Sometimes I see them flying above my head.



### Habitat and Nesting

The American crow lives all over our country. We see American crows on the playground and at Cherry Creek and at Golden Gate Canyon.

We see a lot of American crows on our hikes even in winter. Some American crows go in the winter to the top of Texas and some stay in Colorado.

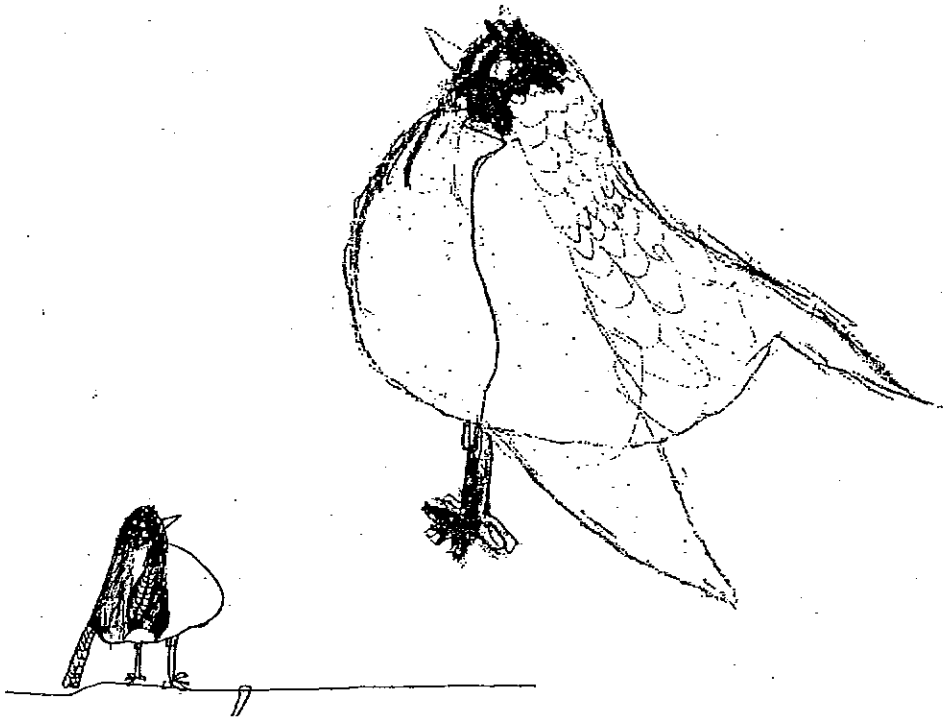
The American crow lays greenish eggs.

American crow is altricial. Altricial means that the baby has its eyes closed. It can't feed itself. It has to be fed by its mom or dad. Also it's naked.

## American Robin by Charlie B.

### Size and Appearance

A American robin is as big as a first grader's arm 20 to 28 centimeters. The wingspan of the American robin is 31 to 40 centimeters. The wingspan of the Charlie Bennett is 129 centimeters. It's bigger than the American robin's wingspan. The American robin is bigger than a blackcapped chickadee and smaller than the red-shouldered hawk.



### Voice and Plumage

The American robin has a call of "Cheerily up cheerio." The colors on a American robin are orange, a little white, and gray and yellow. The American robin has kind of like an orange spike on its neck. It has white lines on the neck and a long wing.

### Diet and Body

A robin's beak is like a squished V. The beak is good for pecking at the ground to get worms. Sometimes it gets grasshoppers. The American robin forages on the ground. In your front yard, you might see a robin run around, stop, turn its head listening to the ground then peck! Maybe pulling up a worm.



That's how a American robin eats worms, grasshoppers, bug, aphids. The American robin is not a bird of prey. It has kind of a long bill. The robin's feet are good for holding onto tree branches. The toes are skinny. There's 3 toes in front and one in back.

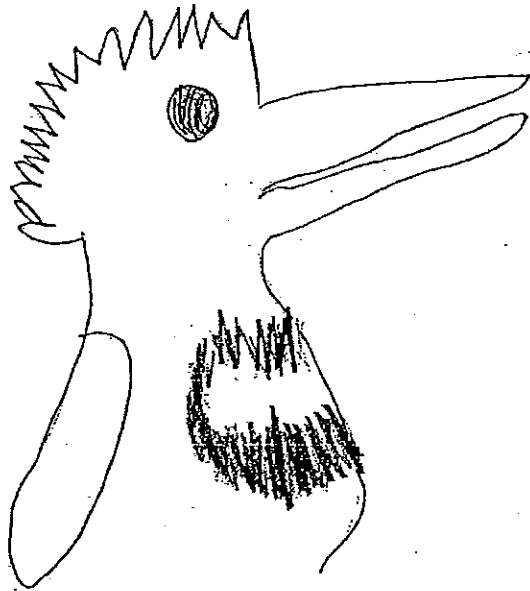
### Habitat and Nesting

A American robin lives in North American Denver area. It is at school and camping and at Cherry Creek. It lives in shrubs. A robin makes a cup shape nest with grass or moss and mud. American robins guard their nest in trees. The male will try to scare it away by flapping its wings.

## Belted kingfisher by Nell

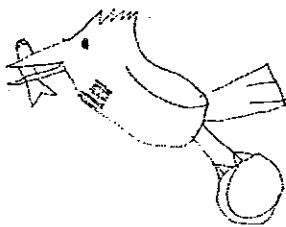
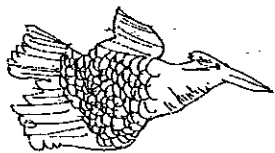
### Size and Appearance

A belted kingfisher is as big as my front part of my waist. A little belted kingfisher is 28 centimeters. A big one is 35 centimeters. The wingspan of the belted kingfisher is 48 to 58 centimeters. My wingspan is 118 centimeters. The belted kingfisher's wingspan is smaller.



### Voice and Plumage

The belted kingfisher has a pointy beak. It is blue gray and white. The female is more colorful than the male. That's kind of rare because most birds, the male is more colorful. Belted kingfishers make a rattle sound when they call. "Rrrrrrr!" said the belted kingfisher.



### Diet and Body

A belted kingfisher's bill is very pointy. They dive in the water to eat fish. The belted kingfisher has a sharp beak so it can hold on to slippery fish.

### Habitat and Nesting

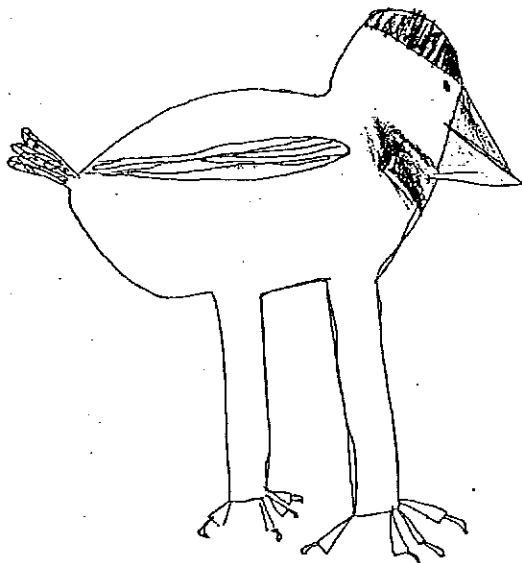
I see belted kingfisher at Cherry Creek and Goldsmith Gulch. The belted kingfisher digs into a cliff to make its nest. When belted kingfishers are born they're altricial. They are naked and they don't move by themselves and they don't have their eyes open and their mother or their father gives them food.

Black capped chickadee  
by Grace

### Size and Appearance

A black-capped chickadee is almost as big as a first grader's hand, 12 to 15 centimeters.

The wingspan of the black-capped chickadee is 16 to 21 centimeters. My wingspan is 111 centimeters. That's bigger than a black-capped chickadee's wingspan.



### Voice and Plumage

The black-capped chickadee has a white stripe across its head. The black-capped chickadee male and female look alike.

**Diet and Body** The black-capped chickadee has a tiny bill. It eats insects in the summer and berries and seeds in winter. It eats spiders and their eggs.

### Habitat and Nesting

If the black-capped chickadee gets disturbed on its nest, it hisses like a snake. The black-capped chickadee nest is in a hole in a tree.





Blue Jay  
by Bryce

Size and Appearance

The bird is as long as my body. That is big from my belly button to my chin 25 to 30 centimeters.

The wingspan of The blue jay is 34 to 43 centimeters

My wingspan is 119 centimeters. My wingspan is bigger.



### Voice and Plumage

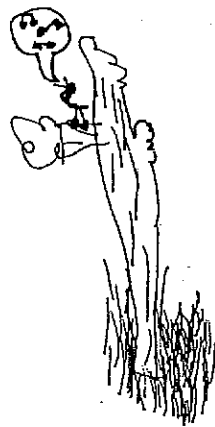
The jay says its name. The plumage is blue and white and gray and black. The blue jay has a crest on The head.

### Diet and Body

Blue jay has a sharp and black beak. Its good for picking at stuff like cracking eggs. It eats seeds and nuts and eggs of other birds. They do not do it all The Time. A blue jay eats eggs. The blue jay hogs The feeder. It has striped toes. The black toes are white striped.

### Habitat and Nesting

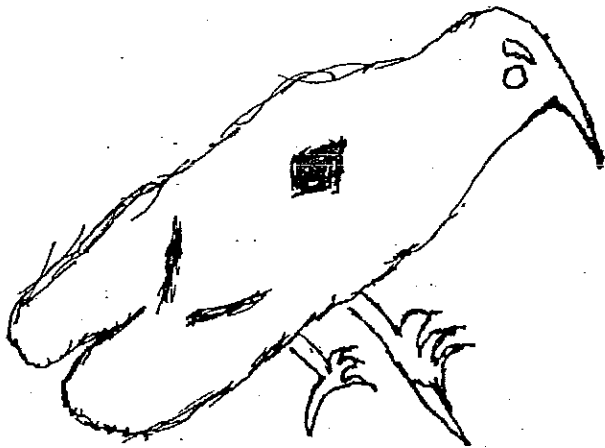
The blue jay stays in Denver all year long, even in The winter. The blue jay likes The trees in Cherry Creek.



## Brown Creeper by Ben

### Size and Appearance

A brown creeper is as long from my pinky to my thumb. That is 14 centimeters, also a span. The wingspan of the brown creeper is 17 to 20 centimeters. My wingspan is 128 centimeters. That's a lot bigger than a brown creeper's



### Voice and Plumage

Brown creepers are really musical. The brown creeper has a curve in its bill. It has lines on its tail. I've seen the brown creeper only at Barr Lake. It was in a birders hand. Her name is Starr. The brown creeper is sooo hard to see because they camouflage with the bark.

### Diet and Body

The brown creeper has a long curved bill. It has a diet of bugs (insects) peanut butter and suet. It spirals up trees looking for insects.



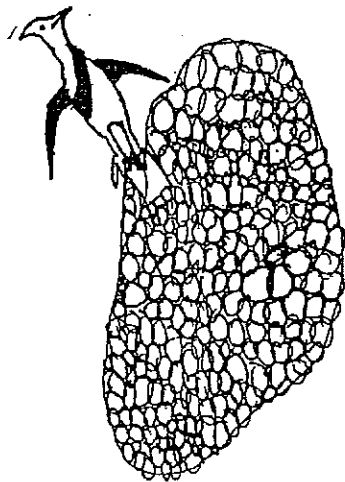
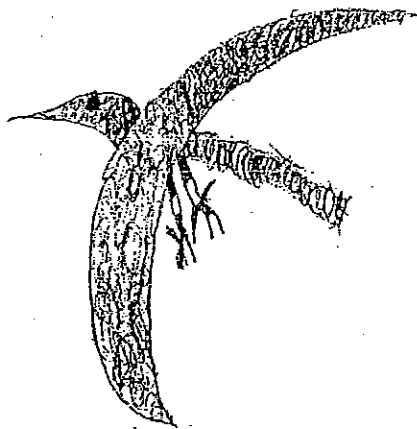
### Habitat and nesting

The habitat of the brown creeper is forests and swamps. Brown creepers fly south for the winter with flocks of kinglets and nuthatches and titmice.

Cliff Swallow  
by MacLaren

Size and Appearance

A cliff swallow is 13 centimeters long. That's the size of my hand. The wingspan of the cliff swallow is 28 to 30 centimeters. My wingspan is 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> centimeters. That's bigger than a cliff swallow's wingspan. The cliff swallow's wingbeats are faster than you can count.



### Voice and Plumage

The cliff swallow's song is a kind of a twitter. The cliff swallow has black on its forehead and white near its beak.

### Diet and Body

The cliff swallows eat bugs and they don't catch them on the ground. The cliff swallow is not like other birds. It catches its food in the air.

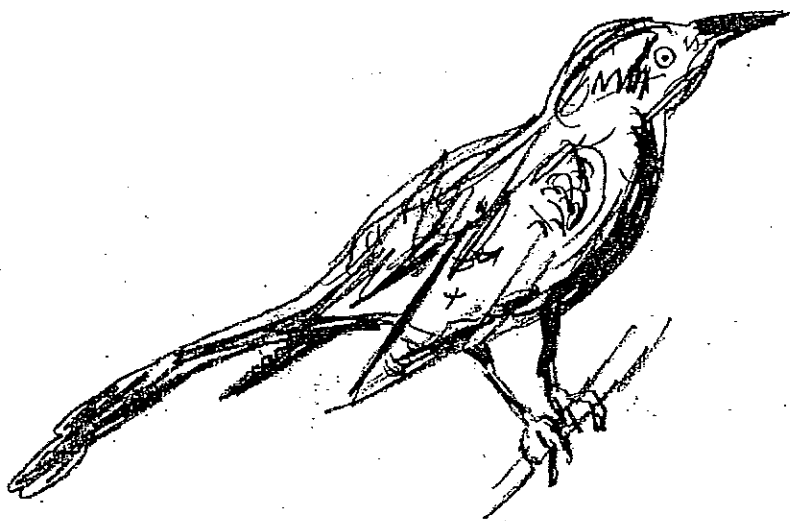
### Habitat and Nesting

The cliff swallow migrates to South America at winter. It comes to Denver in spring because there's lots of bugs. The female and the male cliff swallow both build the nest and take care of the babies. A cliff swallow makes its nest out of a mud pellet, maybe even hundreds of mud pellets. It gets them by the creek by its beak. It sticks it on the bridge and gets more to complete the nest.

## Common Grackle by Peter

### Size and Appearance

Common grackles are black birds, like crows and starlings. Common grackles are smaller than crows, but bigger than European starlings. A grackle is about as long as a grown-up man's shoe, 30 centimeters. Its wingspan is about 40 centimeters. My wingspan is about 170 centimeters. Mine is a lot bigger.



### Voice and Plumage

Common grackles sing like a creaky rusty gate. Common grackles are black, but their feathers look like shiny blue metal, especially on their heads. They're iridescent. Their eyes are yellow.

### Diet and Body

Common grackles forage on the ground. Common grackles are omnivores. That means they eat lots of different things, like insects and seeds and grain. They also eat small animals and birds and fish.

### Habitat and Nesting

We see common grackles all around the neighborhood. In winter they migrate to warmer places like Texas to find more food. They come back to Denver in the spring to breed. They make nests in trees. The hatchlings are helpless, or altricial, so the parents take care of them.



# Common Raven by Sawyer

## Size and Appearance

A common raven is as long as a first grader's leg. It is 56 centimeters long. The wingspan of the common raven is 116 to 118 centimeters. My wingspan is 119 centimeters. They are almost the same.

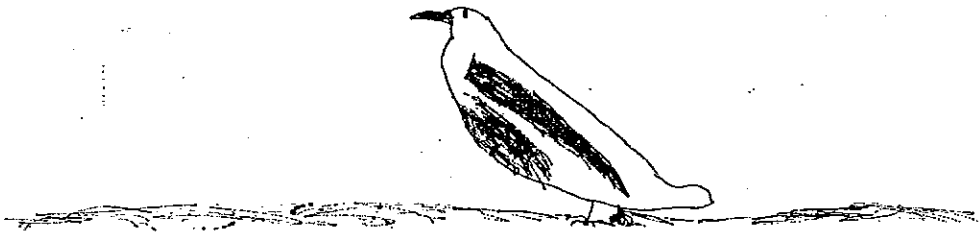


## Voice and Plumage

The common raven its sound sounds like this  
"Cocococococo!" its feather color is black.

## Diet and Body

The common raven has sharp claws. its beak is a little bit sharp. The common raven can eat small vertebrates with back bones, fruit, bugs, eggs, baby birds, things that are dead and even garbage. They are omnivores. That means they eat lots of different things. The raven can almost eat everything. It finds it on the ground.



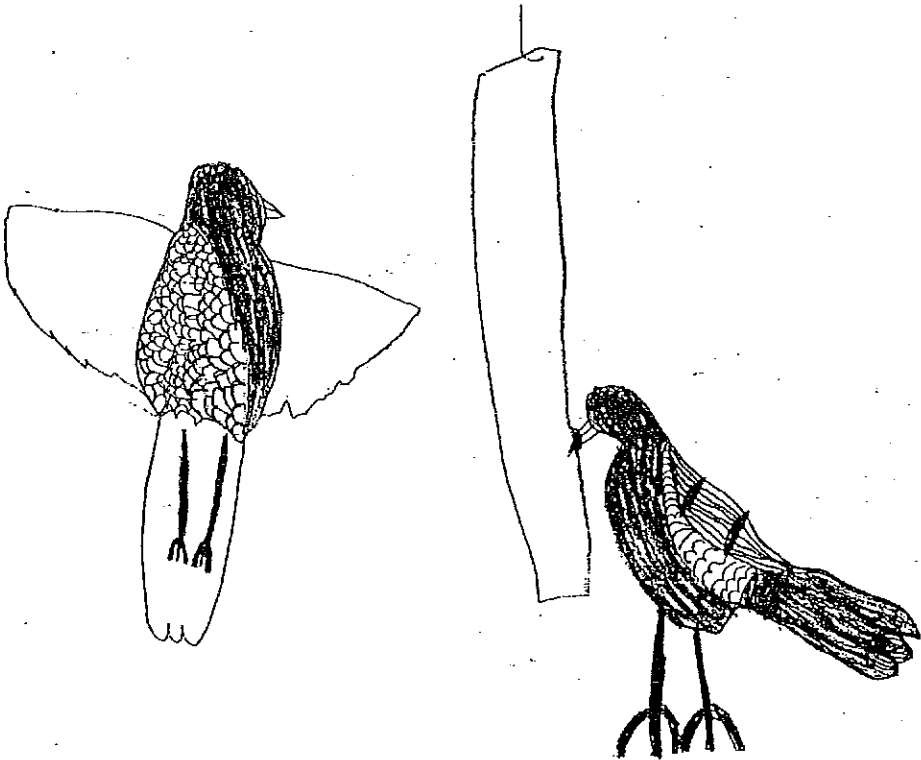
## Habitat and Nesting

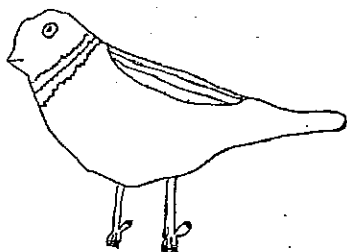
The common raven is in Denver. The common raven does not migrate. It can survive in Antarctica and in the desert. That means it can survive everywhere.

# House Finch by Izzy

## Size and Appearance

A house finch is about the size of a first graders hand, about 13 centimeters. The wingspan of the house finch is 20 to 25 centimeters. My wingspan is 113 centimeters. That's bigger than the house finch's wingspan. The house finch is bigger than the zebra finch.





### Voice and Plumage

The house finch has red on its head and breast. It has stripes on its wing.

The house finch's call sounds like this "WHeer" or "Che-urr. House finches have a high-pitched voice. It's as high as a whistle blows.

### Diet and Body

A house finch eats seeds. The house finch has a good Beak for holding onto seeds.

The house finch has perching feet and a fat beak. It has 3 toes in the front and one toe in the back.

### Habitat and Nesting

House finches stay in Denver the winter. We see house finches on the playground.

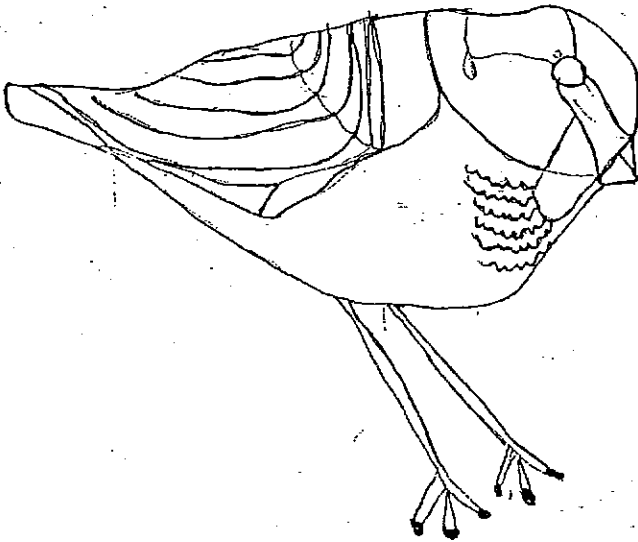
They eat seeds from our feeders. The house finch has pale blue lightly marked eggs.

it has a cup shaped nest.

## House Sparrow by Emery

### Size and Appearance

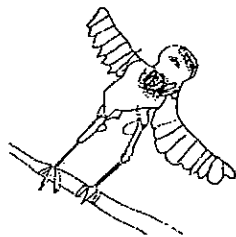
The house Sparrow is a common bird. It likes people. A house sparrow is as long as a first grader's hand to elbow. It's size is 14 to 16 centimeters long. The wingspan of the house sparrow is 18 to 25 centimeters long. My wingspan is 115 centimeters. It is bigger than a house sparrow.



## Voice and Plumage

The voice of the house sparrow is "Chirp!" and "Cheep!" The house sparrow has black feathers on the front of its chest. It looks like a bib.

It has a brown tail. The house sparrow male and female look different because the male is more colorful than the female.



## Diet and Body

The house sparrow eats seeds and fruit. It has a straight beak for cracking seeds. The house sparrow has feet that are wormish color. It has a backbone.

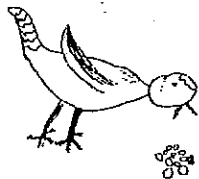


## Habitat and Nesting

We see house sparrow at our bird feeders.

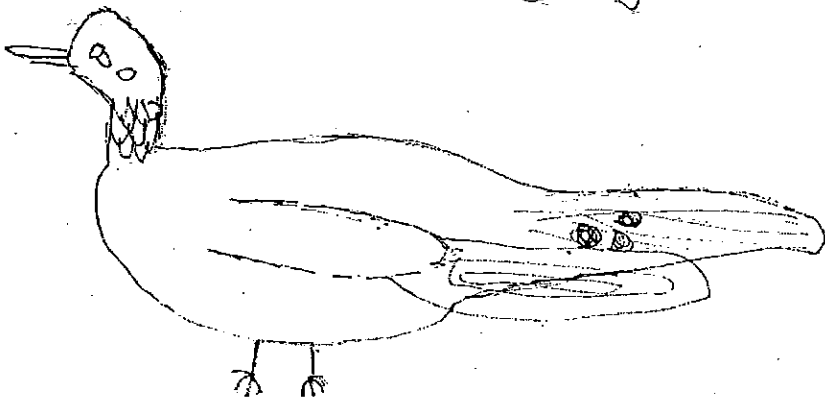
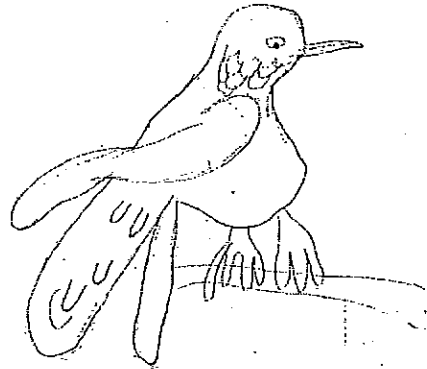
The house sparrow does not migrate in the winter. It stays in Denver. The house sparrow makes its nest in all sorts of trees. It builds its nest with grass and stuff. House sparrow lays eggs that have bluish and greenish marks on them.

It throws dirt on itself like he's taking a bath.



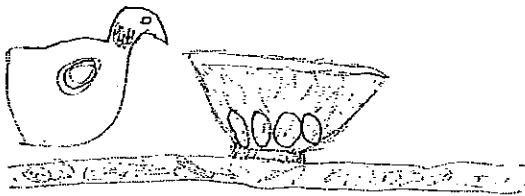
Mourning Dove  
by Julia L.

Size and Appearance  
The mourning dove is as long as my  
head about 45 cm. The mourning  
dove wingspan is 37 to 45 cm.  
My wingspan is 121 cm. I am bigger.



## Voice and Plumage

The mourning dove has some black feathers. The feathers are curved at the end of the tail, the mourning Dove has pink feet. The mourning Dove claps its wings when it flies. The mourning dove sounds like this "Coo coo coo coo."



## Diet and Body

It eats seeds and grains it's a kind of seed. It uses its beak for cracking seeds and eating them. They forage on the ground on the playground.

## Habitat and Nesting

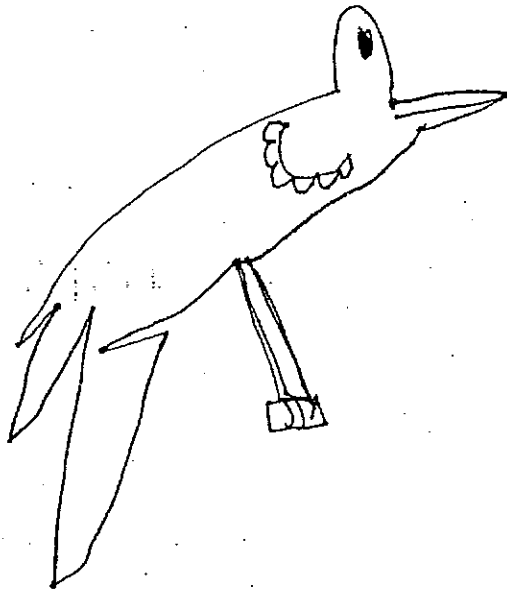
The mourning dove lives in Denver. We see mourning Doves on the playground. The mourning Dove is altricial. It has its eyes closed when its born and its mom feeds it.



Red-Winged Blackbird  
By Astoria

Size and Appearance

The red-winged blackbird is as big as one pencil and half of another 17 to 23 centimeters. The wingspan of the red-winged blackbird is 31 to 40 centimeters. My wingspan is 117 centimeters. My wingspan is bigger.

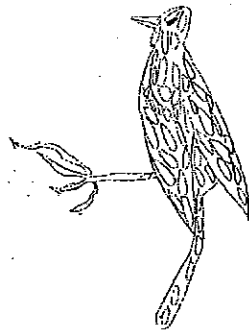


## Voice and Plumage

The red-winged blackbird's call is Tonk a leee.  
A red-winged blackbird is black like a crow with red and yellow on the wings.

## Diet and Body

Red-winged blackbirds eat insects and seeds.



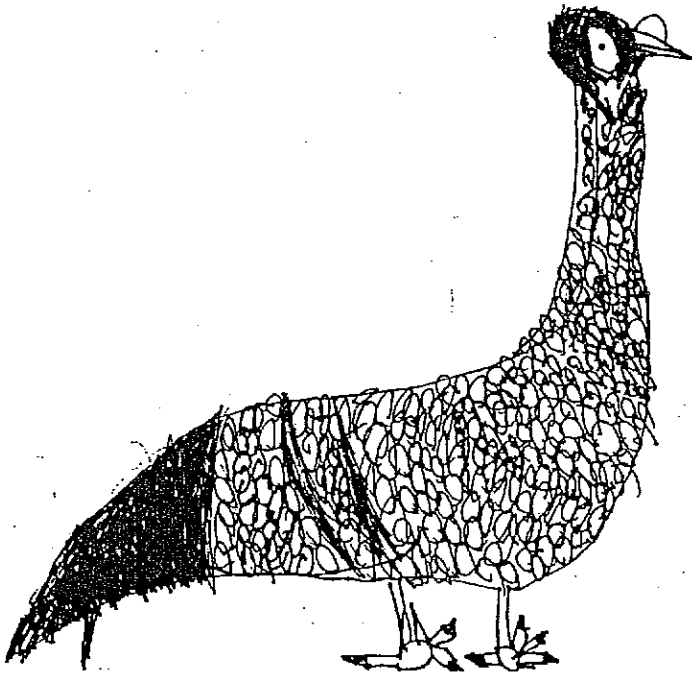
## Habitat and Nesting

The red-winged blackbird is very defensive like it will guard its nest. Males chase each other away. They are trying to fight over their territory. They are trying to show they're the handsomest red-winged blackbird there. If a dd red-winged blackbird gets a territory first sometimes the young red-winged blackbird dont get a territory at all.

Rock Pigeon  
by Nichols

Size and Appearance

A. first glider's arm is about a pigeon's length, 29 to 36 centimeters. The wingspan of the pigeon is 50 to 67 centimeters. My wingspan is 110 centimeters. That's bigger than a pigeon's wingspan.



### Voice and Plumage

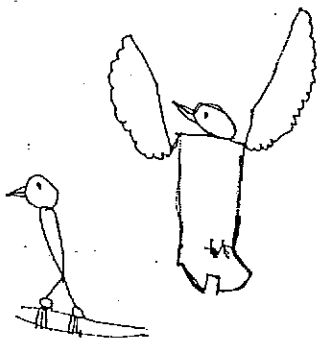
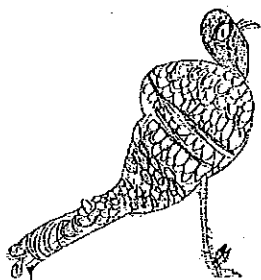
Rock pigeons blend in with rocks and colored like rocks. The rock Pigeon's eyes are red with a black dot in the middle. Pigeons have grayish rings around a black center, the center of their eyes. Pigeons songs are almost humming. "Bly-u-oo or Pp-p-pooan."

### Diet and Body

The pigeon's beak fits what it eats. What does that mean? It means that what the bird eats, the beak fits. Pigeon will eat almost anything. Pigeons are omnivores omnivores eat anything.

### Habitat and Nesting

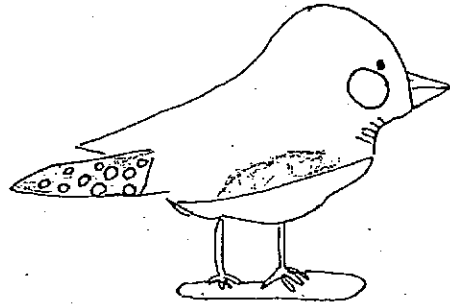
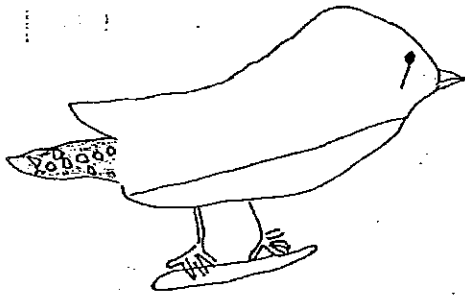
Pigeons like to be in cities. We see them all year. Pigeons do not migrate. They stay put here because they eat seeds. Pigeons nest in trees and on buildings.



## Zebra Finch by Samantha

### Size and Appearance

Zebra finches grow up as long from a first grader's chin up to the tip of our nose. The zebra finch is 9 centimeters long. The wingspan of the zebra finch is 14 centimeters. My wingspan is 124 centimeters. That's much bigger than a zebra finch's wingspan.



## Voice and Plumage

A zebra finch's voice sounds like this: "Chrp, chrp, chrp."

A boy zebra finch has stripes across its neck and an orange circle on its cheeks and dots on his sides and dots on his tail. And he has some white under his body and a black stripe that goes down from her eye. And dots on her tail and some white under her body.

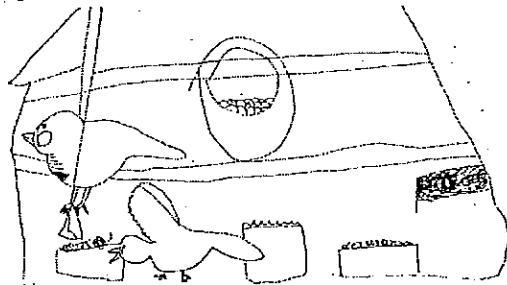
## Diet and Body

A zebra finch eats seeds, worms, and insects. A

zebra finch's beak is short, big and straight.

That is good for breaking seeds. What kind of foot does a zebra finch have? A wading foot, a grabbing foot, a webbed foot?

No. A Zebra finch's foot has three toes in front and one toe in back. Their foot is called a perching foot because it grips onto branches and resting on branches.



## Habitat and Nesting

The zebra finches that we have in our classroom are in a cage, so they can't migrate. And if it would be free in Australia they would migrate.

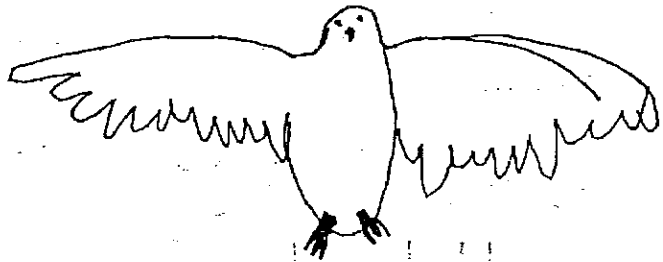
They migrate when it's too hot and dry in Australia. If you are in Australia, in the grasslands, you might see one.

# Japanese Quail

by Abbie

## Size and Appearance

A quail is as long as first graders wrist up to the elbow 20 centimeters. The quail's wingspan is 38 centimeters. My wingspan is 115 centimeters. My wingspan is bigger. The Japanese quail has little white lines and patterns on its feathers. It is brown.



### Voice and plumage

Well The Japanese quail has a chirp and it has brown feathers and brown dots. I hear the boy mostly. The boy quail crows. He sticks his head up when he crows. The girl quail has a soft coo.

### Diet and Body

The quail has a little sharp beak. It eats bugs and seeds and quail food and mealworms and crickets. The quail has a beak for eating small things. I get a good look at quail feet. They are brown. In the back the toe is tiny.

### Habitat and Nesting

The Japanese quail has another name. It is common quail. They live in Asia. Japanese quails migrate but ours cannot migrate because they live in a cage. We brought them in the school's neighborhood. We take care of them.

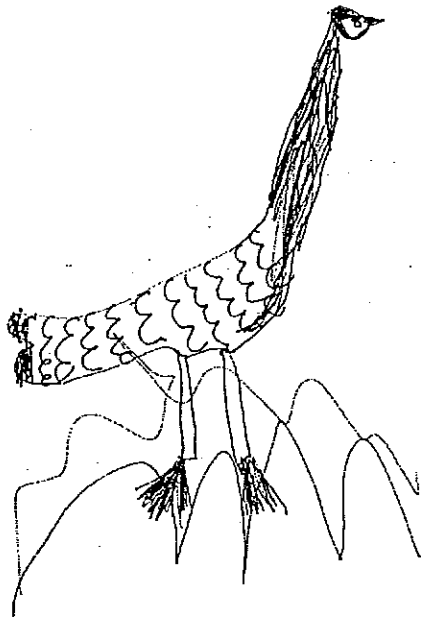


# Canada Goose

by Addie

## Size and Appearance

A Canada goose is 110 centimeters long which it is as big as me. The wingspan of the Canada goose is 150 centimeters. My wingspan is 108 centimeters. That is littler than a Canada goose.

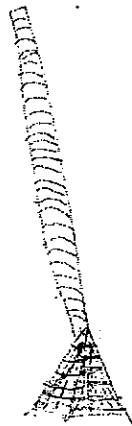


## Voice and Plumage

Canada goose male, that's the boy, has a lower voice than the female which is the girl. They honk. The Canada goose's neck is black.

## Diet and Body

Canada geese eat grass and plants. A Canada goose beak is black. It is not pointy. Canada geese have webbed feet. They swim.



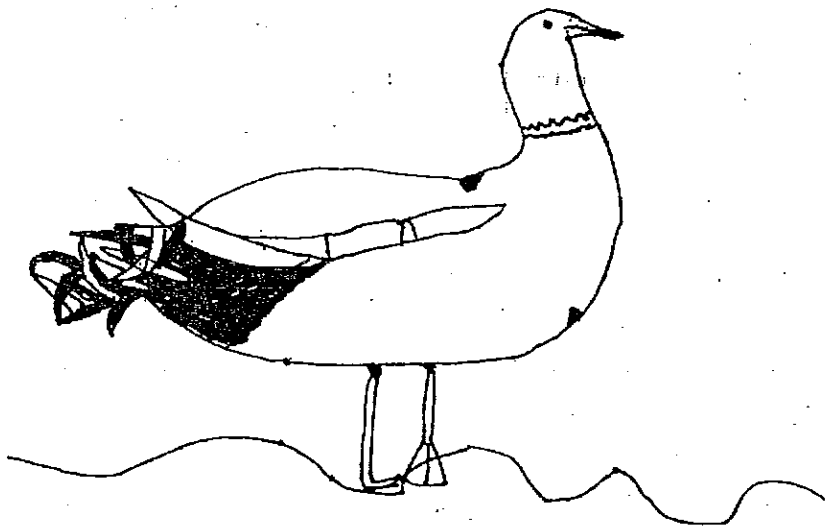
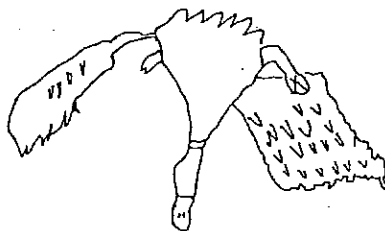
## Habitat and Nesting

Canada geese like to go by the water and they like the water a lot. They make their territory there. Some Canada geese stay here winter and summer.

Mallard  
by Clayton

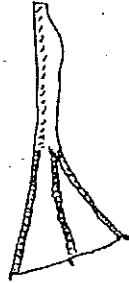
Size and Appearance

The mallard is as big as a first grader's leg. It's as long as 50 to 65 centimeters. The wingspan of the mallard is 82 to 95 centimeters. The wingspan of me is 125 centimeters. That is bigger than the mallard.



### Voice and Plumage

The mallard has a green head and neck. The female has a light brown neck and head. The female has dark brown spots. It helps the mallard camouflage in the grass. The male is colorful. The call is "Cwek cwek" The male is a low "Cwek cwek cwek."



### Diet and Body

The mallard dabbles to get food. Dabbling means you stick your head in the water and your bottom sticks up. The mallard's beak is good for eating plants. The mallard has a sort of hole in the beak. They help the mallard strain the water. But the holes in the beak keep the food. They eat plants and small invertebrates. Invertebrates don't have backbones. It's also a good swimmer. It has webbed feet. It helps the mallard swim in the water.

### Habitat and Nesting

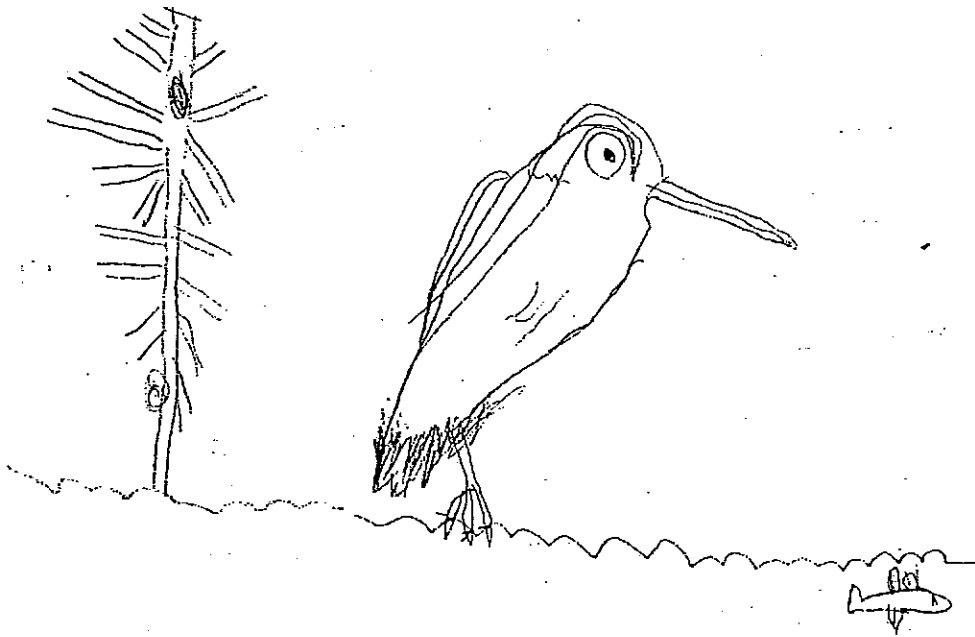
We see mallards in Cherry Creek and Lollipop Lake and Goldsmith Gulch. Sometimes they are swimming and sometimes they are walking on the ground and the ice. Mallards do not migrate. They stay in Denver all summer and winter.

The mallard nest is in the tall grass. The female makes a nice warm nest made out of grass and feathers. The female mallards sit on the eggs. The mallard is precocial. That means that it can walk when it first hatches. Its eyes are open. It can find its own food. It has feathers. They are down.

## Black-Crowned Night Heron by Sam

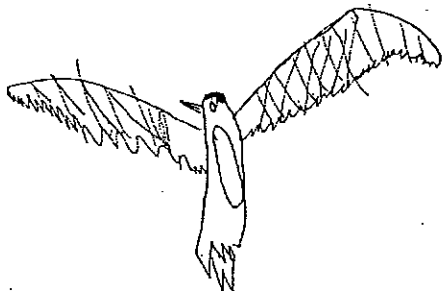
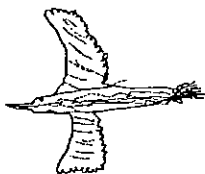
### Size and Appearance

The night heron is 66 centimeters. It's as long up to my belly button. Its wingspan is 118 centimeters long. My wingspan is 125 centimeters. That's bigger than the night heron. When the night heron flies, its wings are bigger than the body.



### Voice and Plumage

The night heron has a black top with plumes coming out of its head. The night heron has yellow legs and feet with a long beak with a black head with red eyes with a white line across its forehead.



### Diet and Body

The night heron has a long skinny bill. It's good for eating fish. Fish and crawdads and frogs, that's what it's good for. The night herons have wading feet. The legs are very long and the toes are long for standing in mud. They can stand very still so they don't scare the fish. When they see one swimming by they catch it really fast with their beak.

### Habitat and Nesting

We see night herons at Cherry Creek. Most herons go to California for winter. Some go to Texas or Florida. The night heron's nest is made out of sticks. It likes to make it in a tree.



# Glossary

## altricial

Altricial means that the baby has its eyes closed. It can't feed itself. It has to be fed by its mom or dad. Also it's naked. Our zebra finches are altricial. The hatchlings are helpless. Most of our neighborhood birds are precocial. Precocial is the other kind.

## aquatic

It means something that could live underwater or something that goes on water. Birds can go underwater to be aquatic like cormorant. Some can dive in water like kingfisher. On top of the water could be the umbrella one like a heron. The mallards and the Canada geese are aquatic. And bugs can be aquatic also.

## beak and bill

Beak and bill are the same thing. Birds have beaks. If a bird has a boney jaw, it can't fly because the bones are too heavy. The beak is light bone with fingernail stuff covering it. All beaks are different because different beaks are for different things to eat. Some beaks to crack seeds, like zebra finches and sparrows and finches. Some birds have big beaks, long beak, fat beaks, spoon beaks like the spoonbill. Some beaks are for cracking nuts and some are for carrying and some are for eating bugs and some are for catching slippery stuff.



bird

Birds are a kind of animal that has feathers, which no other animal has. They're not a reptile. They're not a mammal. They have a backbone and a beak.

breed

Breeding means when they have their babies. the breeding season is in springtime.

brood

A brood is like a pack of chicks.

camouflage

Camouflage is good if a predator comes you can blend into grass, rocks, trees, snow and you can blend into bark like a brown creeper. Like this morning at the museum I couldn't even see the brown creeper on the tree cause it blended so well on the tree. you only notice them when a piece of bark seems to come alive!

diet

Diet is what the bird eats. Like an American kestrel eats lizards and frogs and insects and stuff and birdies. A different bird like an American robin eats seeds and insects.

egg

An egg is an oval. They can be many sizes and many colors. They can have designs on them too. Inside the egg there is a baby bird. Now this is not the kind you eat. A girl bird lays an egg. Yolk is inside too. It is the baby food. When the baby gets bigger the yolk gets smaller.

## feathers

The feathers keep them warm. The feathers help too. And they help them show off.

## fledge

Fledge means learning to fly like when the babies of a robin or a black capped chickadee are learning to fly.

## fledging

A fledgling is somebody who's just learning to fly.

## fly

Flying means like you're in the air and you're not falling. Flying is good for a bird of prey. Flying is good so when they're trying to catch their food like the rabbits can't see them, like the owl flies silently. Flying is good so it can get away from predators like the fox, coyotes or cheetahs, which live in Africa. Flying is good for migrating to where they migrate. Flying is good for migrating and catching food and finding the group. Some birds like hawks can't flap their wings that much. Some birds, like the northern flicker flaps and then puts in its wings and then again and so they go up and down and up and down undulating flight. There's different wing beats. Some birds fly with faster and slower wing beats.

## forage

Forage means searching for food.

## hatch

The word hatch means when a baby bird just pokes its beak through the egg and it keeps doing it until it finally breaks the shell. It climbs out. It gets out because the baby bird has a front tooth.

## hatchling

A hatchling is a little baby bird that just hatched from an egg.

## Incubate

Incubate means birds sit on their egg to keep them warm. The baby inside the egg gets bigger each day. We incubated the quail eggs. In a incubator when the mom sits the egg gets warm.

migrate

Migrate is when birds fly to a different state, like the brown creeper goes somewhere in Mexico in the winter time because it's cold and some birds don't have enough food.

molt

When a bird loses its feathers it's called molting. Molt means that you shed your skin or feathers. Some birds molt all at a time. Some do one by one.

nest

A nest is where they take care of their babies.

ornithology

Ornithology is studying birds. Now you are an ornithologist because you are reading this book about birds and you are studying them as you go along.

plumage

Plumage is their feathers and the colors. It's for flying and keeping warm and attracting their girlfriends. Plumage is for attracting girlfriends and for saying, "I'm over here, look at me, I'm over here!" Plumage is so birds can attract mates.

precocial

That means that it can walk when it first hatches. Its eyes are open. It can find its own food. It has feathers. They are down. Our Japanese quail hatchlings are precocial. Mallards and Canada geese are precocial. Altricial is the opposite one.

predator

A predator is an animal that catches meat. American kestrels, Cooper's hawk's, red tailed hawks, foxes, coyotes, cheetahs, lions, tigers, sharks, and piranhas are all predators.

preen

Preening means when birds have crooked feathers they use their beak to smooth the feathers down.

raptor

Raptor means they grab on their prey with their feet.

soar

Soar means the bird is flying but it is not flapping.

stoop

stoop means that predators like a hawk tuck their wings in their sides and dive to catch their prey.

talon

Talons are really sharp claws. They are really good for killing. The talon of a raptor is ~~not~~ sharp. The raptor can kill a bird with its talons. It could kill a rabbit and it could kill fish. Talons are very sharp and they're used to tear meat and to hold onto slippery animals like fish. Talons are like the end of a scissor because it needs to kill its prey.

territory

It's their home where they want to protect their selves. And they want to protect their babies. And they go and look for more food. If somebody comes they go and scare them away so they have enough food. It means like they want to have like their own space. They're trying to protect their babies and they're trying to get all the other visitors to go away.