

Birdwatching Journal

7 POINTS

Did you know?

There are over 250 different species of birds that live in Pennsylvania all year long!

How many species of birds can you identify? Take a walk at Kings Gap or watch a bird feeder at home and observe the birds you find there. Ask yourself these questions as you watch: What color is the bird? How large is it? What shape is its beak? How does it fly? How does it eat its food? What habitat is this bird in? Write down the answers to your questions and draw the bird to help you remember what it looks like. Use your observations to solve the mystery: what species of bird did I see?

For help with identifying birds, visit the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's page www.allaboutbirds.org or download the Merlin Bird ID app!

Four Keys to Identifying Birds



Size and shape

The combination of size and shape is one of the most powerful tools to identification.

Though you may be drawn to birds because of their wonderful colors or fascinating behavior, when it comes to making identifications, size and shape are the first pieces of information you should take note of. The Evening Grosbeak (left, above) and American Goldfinch (left, below) are both brilliant yellow, black, and white. But the grosbeak is far larger than the goldfinch, and its beak much stouter.

Bird identification can be tricky when you're starting out.

To identify an unfamiliar bird, focus first on these four keys to identification. They will help you to narrow down the possibilities. Field marks are very important, after you've placed your bird in the right group. Practice taking in size and shape, overall color pattern, behavior, and habitat, and you'll soon become proficient.



Habitat

A habitat is a bird's home, and many birds are choosy.

Narrow down your list by keeping in mind where you are. The Great Crested Flycatcher (right) and Western Kingbird (above) are both medium-sized flycatchers with yellow bellies, and can both be found in a narrow strip in the center of the continent. But the Great Crested Flycatcher is found within or at the edges of forests and woods, usually hunting within the upper tree branches. The kingbird hunts from fences, wires, and snags in open country.



Behavior

Behavior can sometimes lead you to an ID in the blink of an eye.

The Black Phoebe (left) and many Dark-eyed Juncos (below) are songbirds except for the white belly. But the juncos feed on the ground, often in flocks, and its posture is horizontal. The phoebe sits more vertically atop perches or rocks, often wags its tail, and flutters out to greet flying insects.



Color Pattern

Observe the overall pattern of light and dark, and the main colors and patterns.

Both the Chipping Sparrow (right, below) and American Tree Sparrow (left, above) have eye stripes and rusty caps. But the Chipping Sparrow has a more deeper look thanks to the black eye stripe, bordered with white above. The American Tree Sparrow's face has a softer, more subdued look because the brown eye stripe is bordered above and below with gray. The American Tree Sparrow's dark "in back" spot can clinch your identification.



Take your birding to the next level by watching the Inside Birding video series.

www.AllAboutBirds.org

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Bird #1: _____

Date & Time: _____

Location: _____

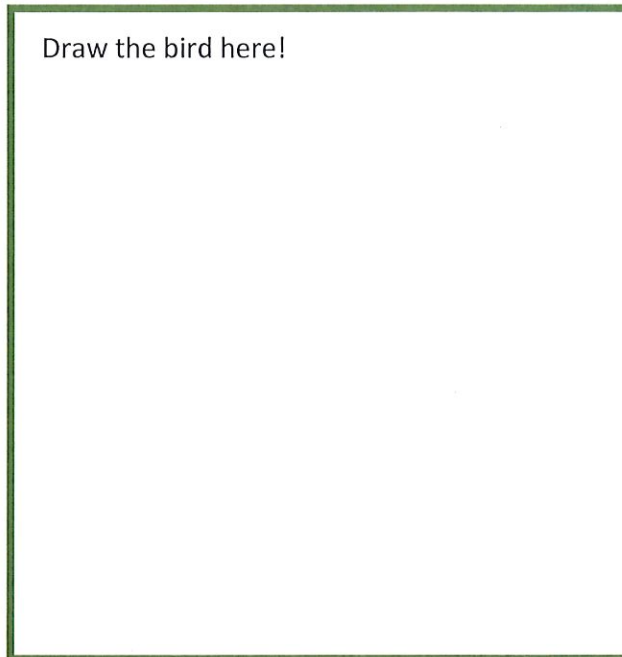
Color: _____

Size: _____

Beak shape: _____

Behavior: _____

Draw the bird here!



Bird #2: _____

Date & Time: _____

Location: _____

Color: _____

Size: _____

Beak shape: _____

Behavior: _____

Draw the bird here!



Bird #3: _____

Date & Time: _____

Location: _____

Color: _____

Size: _____

Beak shape: _____

Behavior: _____

Draw the bird here!



Bird #4: _____

Date & Time: _____

Location: _____

Color: _____

Size: _____

Beak shape: _____

Behavior: _____

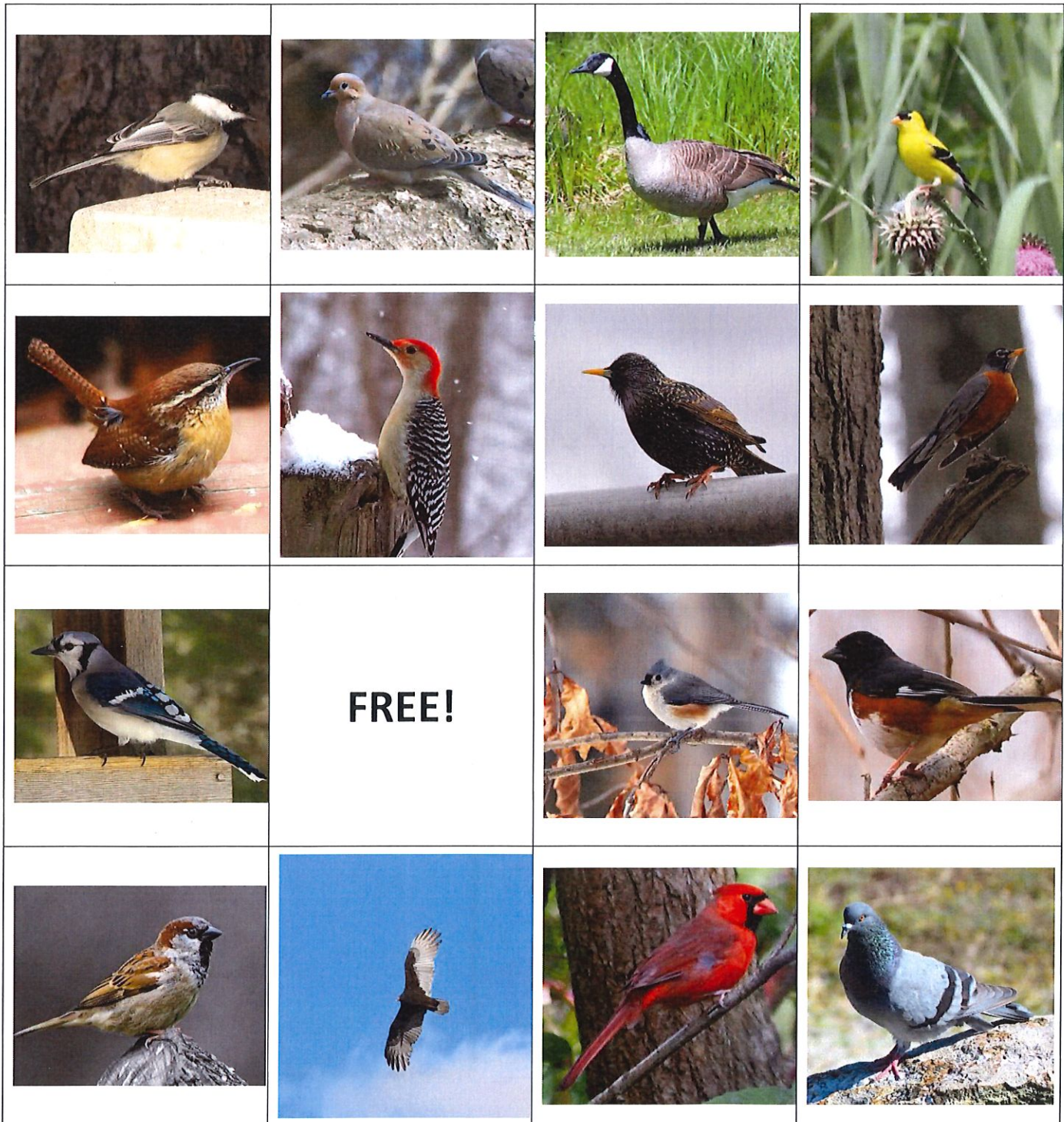
Draw the bird here!

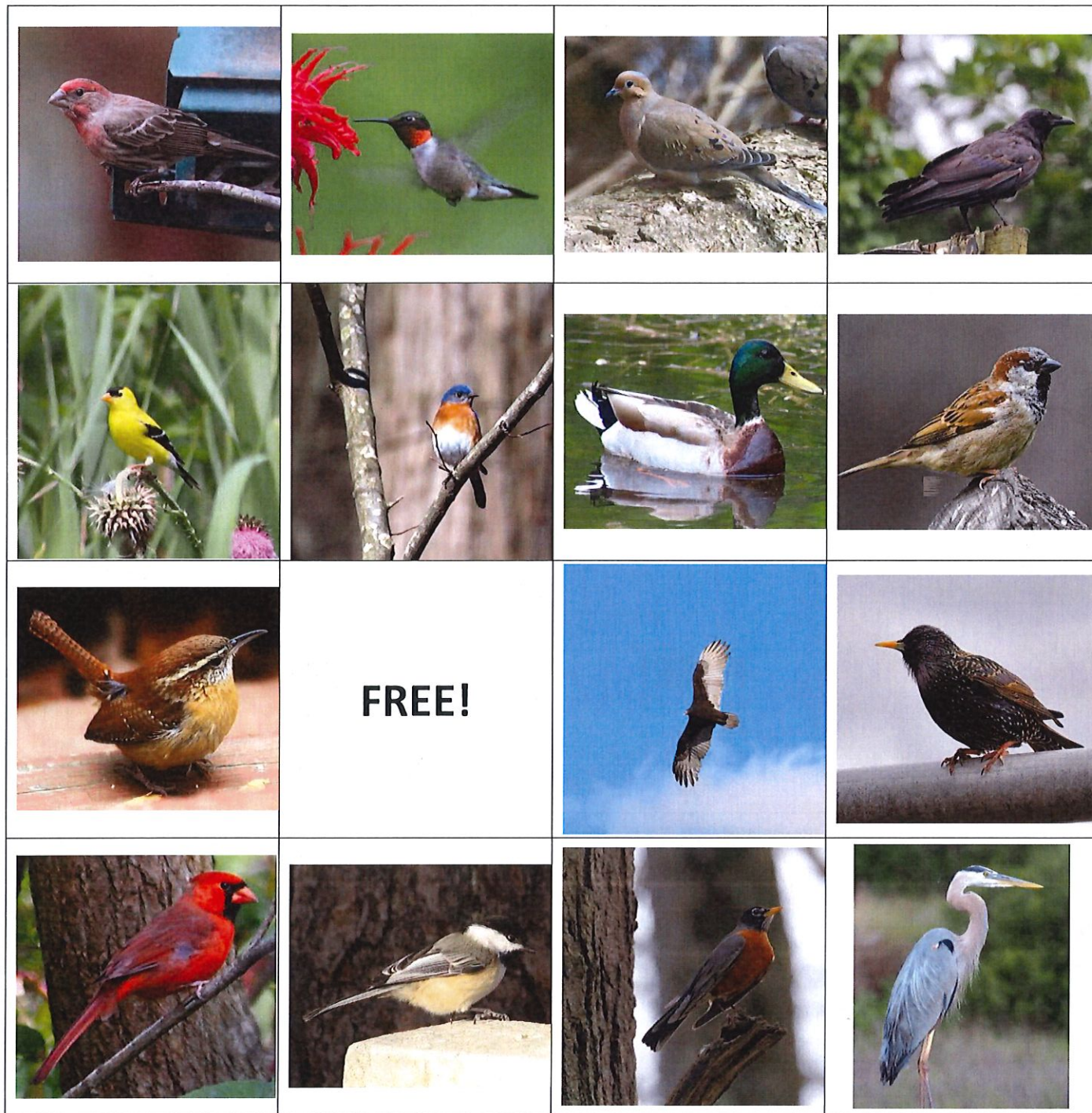
Bird Bingo!

6 POINTS

DIRECTIONS: Each player chooses a bingo board—every board is different! Take a walk at Kings Gap or another park of your choice. When you see a bird, find it on your bingo board and check it off. Look closely, though! Not all of the birds you find will be on the bingo board.

The first player to get four birds in a row (one column, one row, or diagonal) wins!









FREE!



Build a Bird Feeder Challenge!

10 POINTS

Setting up a bird feeder in your backyard can be a great way to continue watching birds even after you leave a state park!

At Kings Gap, we like to find ways to reuse old materials and turn them into something new! We challenge you to build a bird feeder that you design completely out of recycled materials. Find items around your house that you can reuse. You cannot buy anything new to help make your bird feeder!

Your bird feeder can be as simple or complex as you want. Use the questions below to help guide you, and share a picture with us of your finished bird feeder!

Materials I will use: _____

How I will hang the feeder: _____

Sketch your design here!

Why I chose this design:

Did the design work? If I built this again, would I change anything about the design?
