

## Map Time

Decide on a nearby wetland to explore with your class or after school. What is the name of your wetland? Describe its location.

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Draw a map of your wetland in the space below. After your field trip, write names or draw pictures of plants and animals in the places you saw them.

## Field Notes

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Weather \_\_\_\_\_

Temperature \_\_\_\_\_

Who went with you? \_\_\_\_\_

What happened on your trip? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How many different kinds of birds  
did you see? \_\_\_\_\_  
Draw a picture of one of them.

How many different kinds of  
mammals (or mammal signs) did you  
see? \_\_\_\_\_  
Draw a picture of one of them.

How many different kinds of fish  
did you see? \_\_\_\_\_  
Draw a picture of one of them.

How many different kinds of inver-  
tebrates did you see? \_\_\_\_\_  
Draw a picture of one of them.

What kind of soil is in your wetland? \_\_\_\_\_  
Take a tiny bit and smear it here.

Describe the water in your wetlands.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Feel the water in different places.  
Where is it coldest? \_\_\_\_\_  
Where is it warmest? \_\_\_\_\_

What color is it? \_\_\_\_\_

Find a plant growing in the the water. Draw a picture of it here.

Find a plant growing next to water. Draw a picture of it here.

Find a plant growing far away from the water. Draw a picture of it here.

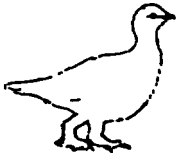
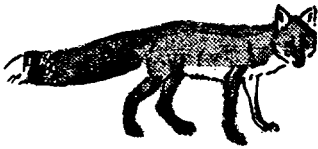
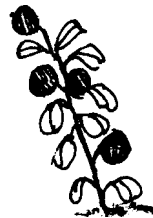
Find a tree growing near your wetland. Draw a picture of it here (Hint: in northern and western Alaska, "trees" may be very tiny.)

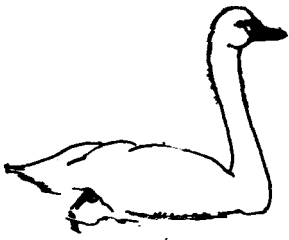
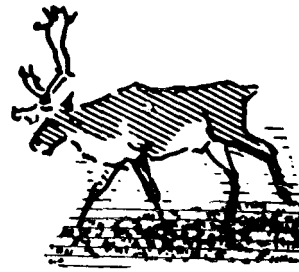
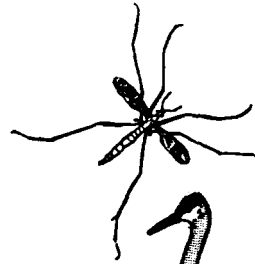
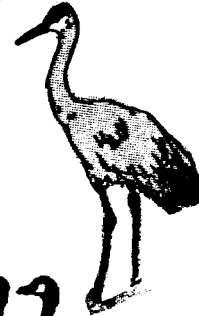
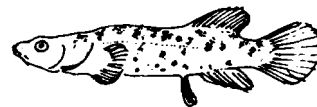
What differences did you notice in wetlands plants?  
\_\_\_\_\_

What similarities did you notice in wetlands plants?  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Wetlands Checklist

Write the names of these plants and animals on the lines. Check off the boxes as you see these species on your field trip.

 \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

 \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

## Wetlands Field Trip Summary

1. Type of wetlands \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_ Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

2. Weather \_\_\_\_\_ Temperature \_\_\_\_\_

3. Soil \_\_\_\_\_ Water \_\_\_\_\_

4. Fill in the following chart:

	Different kinds	Total numbers	Comments
Plants			
Invertebrates			
Fish			
Toads/Frogs			
Mammals			
Swimming Birds			
Birds of Prey			
Waders			
Grouse/Ptarmigan			
Gull-like Birds			
Perching Birds			

5. What human influences did you notice on the wetland? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

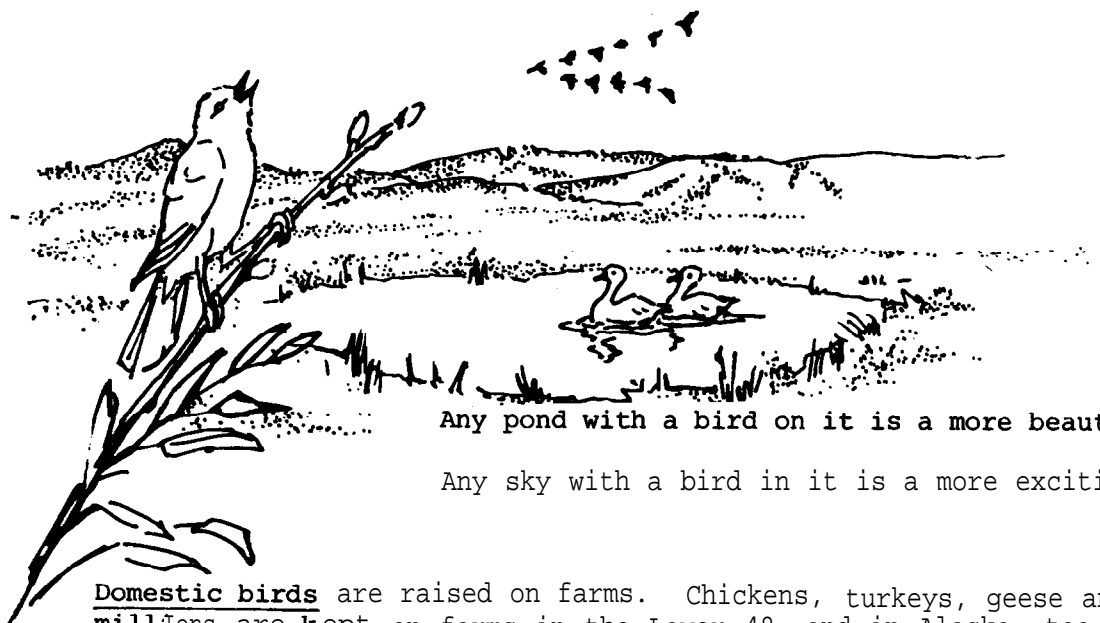
\_\_\_\_\_

6. What impressed you most about the wetland you visited? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Birds and People



Any pond with a bird on it is a more beautiful pond.

Any sky with a bird in it is a more exciting sky.

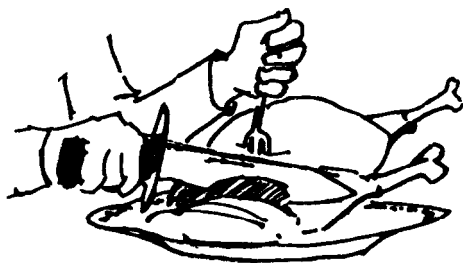
Domestic birds are raised on farms. Chickens, turkeys, geese and ducks by the millions are kept on farms in the Lower 48--and in Alaska, too.

List ways we benefit from domestic birds.

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The farmer provides habitat and protection for his domestic birds:

- Food (usually grain)
- Water (tanks or ponds)
- Shelter (often barns)
- Protection from predators (usually fences)
- Places to nest (nest boxes, nest materials)
- Protection for young (heated brooders)
- Protection from disease (antiseptics, antibiotics)



This all takes money, but if the farmer does his work well and is careful not to take too much, the birds will provide meat, eggs, and feathers year after year.

# 10A

Wild birds are split into two groups:

Game birds (birds that are hunted, like geese, ducks, and grouse) and Nongame birds (birds that aren't hunted, like robins, sparrows and eagles. Sometimes eagles or other birds are shot at, but this is illegal. It is illegal to hunt nongame birds.)

Name some ways that people benefit from game birds and nongame birds:

GAME BIRDS

NONGAME BIRDS

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Although some of the things people do harm birds or their habitats, we also help birds in many ways. Sometimes we help birds without especially meaning to. Many birds do very well in farmlands or gardens because plants and insects are abundant in these places. Have you ever looked closely at a nest and found string or other manmade materials? \_\_\_\_\_ Have you ever seen seagulls following a fishing boat? \_\_\_\_\_ Or a jay eating leftovers from a picnic table? \_\_\_\_\_ Or swallows nesting in the eaves of houses? \_\_\_\_\_

Other times we help birds on purpose. Are there any fields in your area that are sprinkled with grain in spring for the returning geese? \_\_\_\_\_ Are there any bird feeders or birdhouses in your neighborhood? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you think of any other ways that wild birds benefit from people?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## Habitat and Protection For Wild Birds

Government wildlife agents cannot take care of each wild bird the way farmers can take care of domestic birds. Occasionally they sprinkle grain on a field in spring for the returning geese or build ponds, but mostly the wild birds have to fend for themselves. What the government agents can do is work to see to it that the birds have enough good habitat to find their own food, water and shelter. Agents also keep track of bird populations; when there are too few birds; hunting is restricted. But the wildlife agents need our help! Think about what birds need, and list some things you can do to help the wild birds in your area.

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In Alaska, we have two government wildlife agencies: the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USF&WS).

The USF&WS is a federal agency that takes care of migratory birds--with our help. ADF&G is a state agency that handles birds which live in Alaska all year.

**\*\*Interesting fact:** There are more than three people in North America for every duck in the fall.

PEOPLE USA: about 220,000,000	DUCKS In fall: about 85,000,000
Mexico: about 60,000,000	In spring: about 45,000,000
Canada: about 25,000,000	
<b>Alaska: about 400,000</b>	

How many people are there in North America? Add these population numbers together to find out:



USA	_____
Mexico	_____
Canada	_____
TOTAL	_____

Figure out how many people there are for every duck in the spring.

Total People/Spring Ducks = Number of people for every  
duck in spring

\_\_\_\_\_ ÷ \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Probably no single bird species is as abundant as people are in North America, and most are much less abundant.

## Problems of Spring Birds

Why are there fewer ducks in the spring than in the fall? List things you think might kill birds.

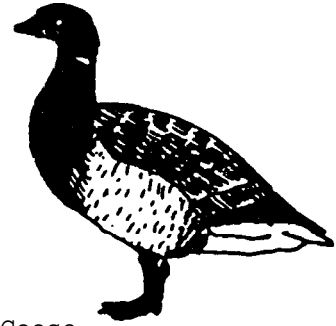
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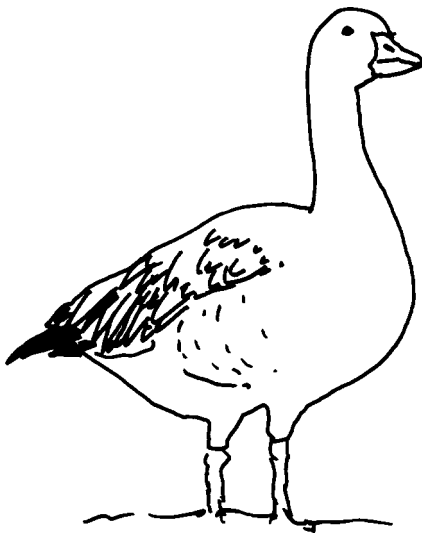


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White-Fronted Goose, Cackling Canada Goose, Black Brant, and Emperor Goose populations are alarmingly low on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. Many people all along the flyway have agreed to reduce or stop hunting, especially in the spring. Spring hunting and egging hurt bird populations. Both the goose and the gander are needed to raise the young birds and protect them from predators.

SPRING



1 GOOSE CAUGHT

NO YOUNG RAISED

How many are left to come back in the future? \_\_\_\_\_

FALL

1 GOOSE CAUGHT

3 YOUNG RAISED

How many are left to come back in the future? \_\_\_\_\_

The human population of America continues to increase rapidly. Not so the populations of some birds. If we want there to be as many birds in the future as there were in the past, people will have to give them more help: by not destroying too much of their habitat, by not overhunting them, and by taking steps to help recover populations that have been hurt by human interference.

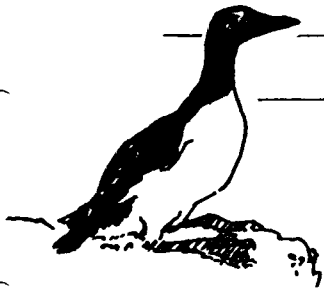
Go back to your List of Birds You Know, 1A. Fill in column 7-OK to Hunt and column 8-People Uses.

# Seabird Conservation



The world's great oceans and seas are home to most seabirds. They head to land only to nest and raise their young. Some of them gather to nest in large colonies on rocky cliffs and islands.

The term "seabird" includes a wide variety from two bird groups: swimming birds and gull-like birds. You can see gulls and other seabirds anywhere in Alaska. Look at these drawings of seabirds. What does a seabird look like to you? How are seabirds similar?



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Alaska is one of the most important places in the world for seabirds because of its abundant, safe nest sites and its plentiful food. But seabirds are affected by oil pollution, plastic pollution--and loss of habitat. When feathers get oil on them they lose their insulating value; the birds get chilled and soon die. Plastics thrown or washed overboard are eaten by birds who mistake the plastic for food. Dead seabirds have been found with stomachs so full of plastic scraps and Styrofoam balls that there was no room for food! Seabirds also become tangled in plastic fish nets.

Are there threats to seabirds in your area? List them.

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What alternatives are there? \_\_\_\_\_

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Which alternative do you favor? \_\_\_\_\_

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How will you make your opinion known? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Wetland Values

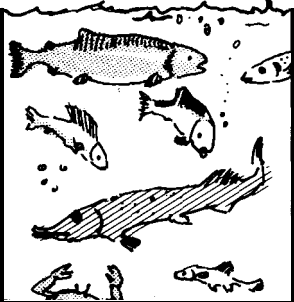
Directions: Number the pictures to match the paragraphs.



1. Alaskan wetlands are very important for migratory birds. Millions of waterfowl and waders nest in Alaska's muskeg, wet tundra, marshes, and coastal wetlands.



2. Fish, too, depend on wetlands. Alaska's salmon industry is based on wetland spawning and rearing areas. Grayling, pike and whitefish spend their entire lives in freshwater wetlands.



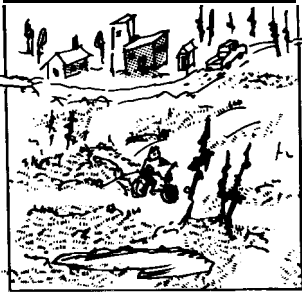
3. Bear, caribou, moose, mink, muskrat, otter and beaver live in Alaska's wetlands. These animals depend on the plants that grow rapidly in the long summer days. Some animals eat these wetland plants. Other wetland animals eat the animals that eat the plants.



4. Some tidal wetlands can grow more plant material than the best farm fields. And no one has to plant or fertilize a wetland. Farmer's crops can be measured in bushels per acre. But the crops from wetlands can be measured only by estimates of the numbers of plants and fish, birds, mammals, clams and crabs in the area.



5. Alaska's Native peoples have known about wetland values for a long time. They have been depending on birds, fish, mammals and plants for food and clothing.



6. Today, Alaskans use wetlands for hunting, fishing, trapping, berry picking, and collecting edible greens! We also use them for recreation--bird watching, hiking, jogging, cross-country skiing, sketching and photography.



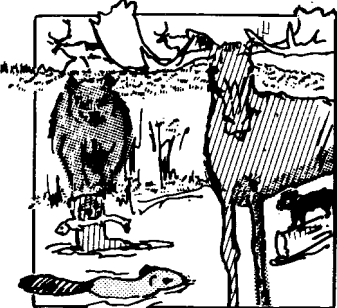
7. Wetlands help protect our villages and towns from flooding. Extra rain and snow is soaked up like a sponge. Then, in drier times, the moisture is slowly released.



8. The water that is stored in wetlands helps keep our rivers, lakes and underground reservoirs full. That way, we have plenty of water for people as well as wildlife.



9. Wetlands filter water to help reduce pollution. Wetland plants take some of the nutrients from waste water and use them for growth. Wetland plants also hold the soil. They help prevent soil erosion and help keep streams and rivers from filling up with mud and other sediments.



10. Wetlands serve as natural storm barriers. They protect animals, plants and people from waves and flooding.



11. When wetlands are changed too much or lost, wildlife populations decrease and the work done by wetlands--like storing and filtering water--is also lost. Over 40 percent of the wetlands in the lower 48 have been destroyed by draining, filling, dredging and pollution. We are lucky in Alaska; we still have vast areas of wetlands and plentiful wildlife. But human activities can bring rapid changes to the land.



# Wetland Habitat Protection

1. List things that people do on wetlands which do not destroy the habitat.

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2. List some things that people have done in your area that do destroy wetland habitat for birds or other creatures.

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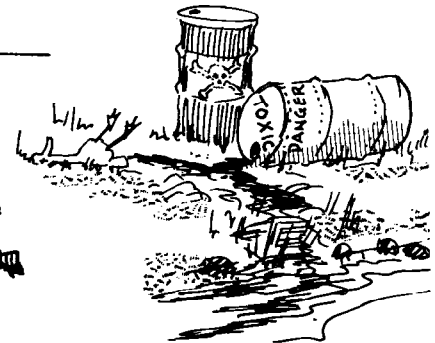
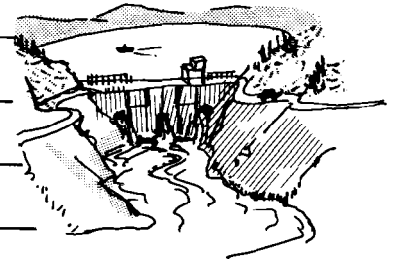
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Some of these things may be necessary if we are going to have a place for people. Some could be done elsewhere, or done differently. Which of the items you listed as destructive could have been done in a more suitable location or in a less harmful way?

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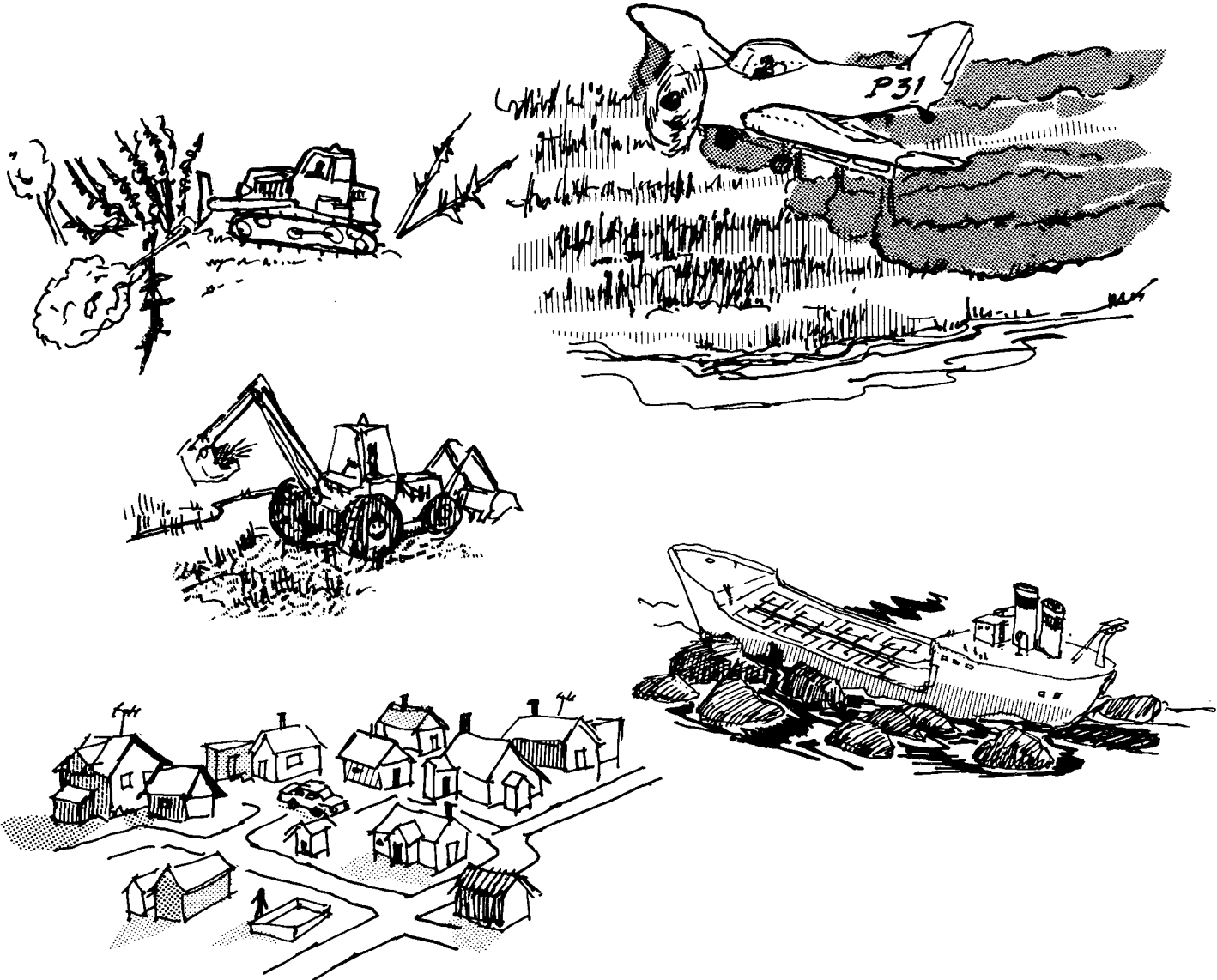
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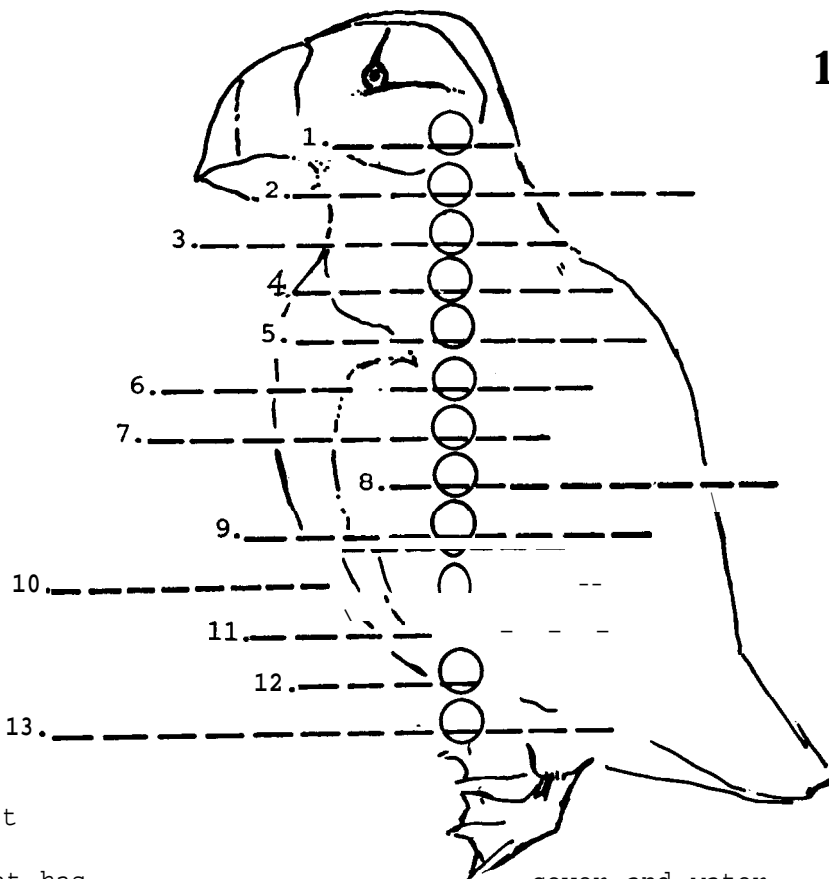


## Wetlands Development

Alaska's fish and wildlife depend on high quality water and wetlands. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has a permit system to protect these wetlands and navigable waters. The permits (authorized by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act) are designed to allow necessary development to proceed while protecting Alaska's valuable water resources from poorly planned projects. This will help save our favorite fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing areas.

1. Name a wetland area in your community that may be developed in the future. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What is planned for this area? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Find out more about it. What animals and plants live there?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Write to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Environmental Conservation about permits required for the development.
5. Write to the people planning the development, asking them exactly what their plans are.
6. Is this development necessary? If it is, has your community found the best location for it? Are the planners designing the project so as to do the least possible damage? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What do you think should happen to this wetland? Should the development take place there? If it should, can any changes be made in the plans to protect the wetland better? If it shouldn't, can you think of a better place for the project? Is the project necessary?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. How can you make your opinions known? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Discuss the situation with your village/city officials. What were your results? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Bubble Bird



Need some help?  
Try these words:

predators	food chain
conservation	seabirds
eggs	altricial
food	wetlands
extinct	feathers
precocial	camouflaged
migration	ornithologist

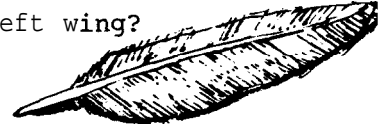
1. Birds need habitat that has \_\_\_\_\_, cover and water.
2. Most Alaskan birds move south for the winter. This is called \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Alaskan \_\_\_\_\_ are important resting, feeding and nesting grounds for many North American birds.
4. A bird is "endangered" if there is a chance it might become \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Birds are the only animals in the world that have \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Energy passes from plants to animals through what is called the \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Hawks, owls, and other birds that kill birds and animals for food are called birds of prey, or \_\_\_\_\_.
8. A bird that is helpless when hatched is an \_\_\_\_\_ bird.
9. A bird that can walk or swim and find its own food a few hours after birth is a \_\_\_\_\_ bird.
10. Birds that blend in with their habitat are \_\_\_\_\_.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ often nest in large colonies on islands and along rocky areas of the coast.
12. Birds give us pleasure as we listen to them sing or watch them fly about. People use some birds for more practical purposes as well--we eat their \_\_\_\_\_ and meat and wear jackets stuffed with their feathers.
13. The protection and wise use of our resources is called \_\_\_\_\_.
14. Whoooo... are you? I'm an \_\_\_\_\_. I study birds!

# Bird Watcher's Special

Directions: Answer the questions.

1. Did this flight feather come from the bird's right or left wing?

\_\_\_\_\_



2. How do birds fly? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Name a local bird that migrates. \_\_\_\_\_

Where does it go? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What are four hazards a bird might meet during migration?

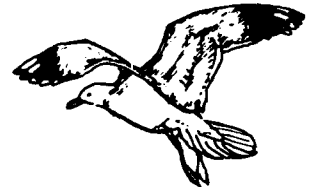
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Name these birds!



a. \_\_\_\_\_  
bird group

b. \_\_\_\_\_  
bird group

c. \_\_\_\_\_  
bird group

\_\_\_\_\_  
name

\_\_\_\_\_  
name

\_\_\_\_\_  
name



a. \_\_\_\_\_  
bird group

b. \_\_\_\_\_  
bird group

c. \_\_\_\_\_  
bird group

\_\_\_\_\_  
name

\_\_\_\_\_  
name

\_\_\_\_\_  
name

6. Match these bird bills with appropriate foods. Write the name of the food next to the picture of the bill.



a. \_\_\_\_\_



b. \_\_\_\_\_



c. \_\_\_\_\_



d. \_\_\_\_\_



e. \_\_\_\_\_



f. \_\_\_\_\_

7. Write what each of these types of feet are used for:



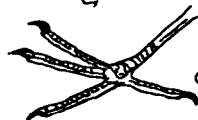
a. \_\_\_\_\_



b. \_\_\_\_\_



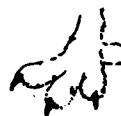
c. \_\_\_\_\_



d. \_\_\_\_\_



e. \_\_\_\_\_



f. \_\_\_\_\_

8. Draw a sketch or cartoon that shows how wetlands are important to birds.

A.	B.	C.
	E.	F.
G.	H.	I.

# Wetlands Magic

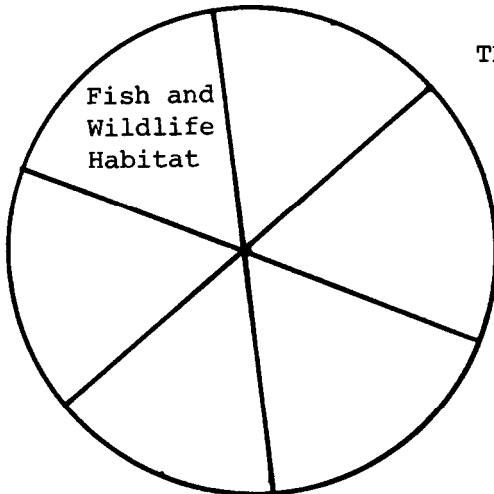
Directions: Select from the numbered descriptions the best answer for each of the wetland terms. Put the number in the proper space in the magic wetland box. The total of the numbers will be the same across each row and down each column.

Wetland terms

Descriptions

- |    |                           |    |  |
|----|---------------------------|----|--|
| A. | Muskeg                    | 1. | Flat, treeless water-soaked land found in northern and western Alaska.                         |
| B. | Wet tundra                | 2. | Grasses and sedges that are sometimes covered by salt water.                                   |
| C. | River, lakes, and marshes | 3. | A general term to describe where land and salt water meet.                                     |
| D. | Coastal wetland           | 4. | Wetland formed at a river's mouth.   |
| E. | Estuary                   | 5. | A place where freshwater rivers and streams meet salt water.                                   |
| F. | Tideland                  | 6. | Freshwater wetlands that are needed for spawning and rearing salmon (and many other purposes). |
| G. | River delta               | 7. | Beaches and mudflats periodically covered by the tide.   |
| H. | Barrier Island            | 8. | A bog known by its plentiful sphagnum moss.  |
| I. | Salt marsh                | 9. | A narrow sand or gravel island that divides the open ocean and a lagoon.                       |

THE MAGIC NUMBER IS \_\_\_\_\_.



Wetlands are important for: (fill in the circle).

# Glossary

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ACCIDENTAL	A bird found in Alaska that does not normally migrate to Alaska. Some accidentals are Asian species that are blown to Alaska by storms. Others are birds normally found farther south that for some reason stray north. Armstrong in his <u>New, Expanded Guide to Birds of Alaska</u> lists 355 kinds of birds regularly found in Alaska and 50 accidentals.
ADAPTATION	A trait that improves an animal's ability to live in a particular habitat.
AIRFOIL	A wing designed to create lift while an aircraft is moving through the air.
ALTRICIAL BIRD	A bird that is helpless when it hatches.
AQUATIC	Living in water.
BARRIER ISLAND LAGOON SYSTEM	A type of coastal wetland that forms where a narrow gravel or sand island separates the open ocean from a lagoon.
BRACKISH WATER	A mixture of salt and fresh water.
BROOD	The young birds from a single nest.
BROODING	The action of a mother bird cuddling her young under her wings and body. This protects them from the weather and keeps them warm.
CARNIVORE	A meat eater.
COASTAL WETLANDS	Wetlands formed along the coast where land and salt water meet. Includes river deltas, salt marshes, tidelands, estuaries and barrier island lagoon systems.
COLONY	A group of densely nesting birds.
CONIFEROUS TREES	Trees that bear their seed in cones.
CONSERVATION	The protection and careful use of our natural resources.
COVER	Any place where a bird can find protection from weather or enemies. Good habitat must provide food as well as cover.

CRUSTACEANS	A large class of invertebrates with hard shells, including crabs, shrimps, lobsters, barnacles, and others.
DECIDUOUS PLANTS	Plants that lose their leaves or needles every year, usually in the fall.
DETRITUS	Dead plant or animal material, including scats, bone, hair and feathers.
DOWN	Feathers without shafts, found close to a bird's body.
EAGLET	A young eagle.
EDGE EFFECT	The increased variety of food and cover that is found in places where two or more types of habitat meet.
EGG TOOTH	The special hard spot on the upper part of a gosling's beak. It is used to crack a hole in the egg so the bird can get out.
EMBRYO	An animal in the early stages of development before birth or hatching.
ENDANGERED SPECIES	An animal or plant species that is in danger of becoming extinct.
ENVIRONMENT	All our surroundings including air, water, soil, vegetation, wildlife, people, and things made by people.
ESTUARY	A coastal wetland formed where rivers or streams meet the sea.
EXTINCT SPECIES	A plant or animal species of which there are no longer any living members.
FEATHER	Birds are covered by feathers. No other creatures have feathers. There are four kinds: down, body, wing and tail feathers.
FOOD CHAIN	The energy flow from plant to herbivore to carnivore--the line of what eats what in a particular environment.
FOOD WEB	Interconnected food chains form a food web.
FOREST	A dense and extensive growth of trees.
GAME ANIMAL	A wildlife species that is commonly hunted. Game animals are protected by regulations.

GANDER	A male goose. (The word "goose" can refer to a bird of either gender or it can be used especially to refer to a female.)
GOSLING	A young goose.
HABITAT	A place where plants and animals grow and live; their home.
HERBIVORE	A plant eater.
INCUBATE	To sit upon eggs in order to hatch them with the warmth of the body.
INVERTEBRATE	Any animal lacking a backbone. Insects, shellfish, worms and spiders are examples. Invertebrates are often an important source of food for birds and people.
MARSH	A freshwater or saltwater wetland formed along flowing and still waters, and the nearby soft, wet, treeless land.
MIGRATION	A mass movement from one place to another, usually faraway place, and back.
MUSKEG	A bog; known by an abundance of sphagnum moss.
NON-GAME ANIMAL	A wildlife species that is not commonly hunted or consumed.
OMNIVORE	An animal that eats both meat and plants.
ORNITHOLOGIST	A person who studies birds.
PEAT	A type of dark brown soil, formed by dead and decayed sphagnum moss.
PESTICIDE	Any chemical used for killing insects or weeds.
PLANKTON	Animal or plant life, usually microscopic, found floating or drifting in the ocean or in bodies of fresh water.
PRECOCIAL BIRD	A bird that can walk or swim, see and find its own food a few hours after hatching from its egg.
PREDATOR	An animal that kills and eats other animals.

PREEN	To clean and properly arrange feathers by combing them with the bill. Birds have an oil gland above the rump which supplies oil. They use their heads and bills to spread the oil, which keeps their feathers waterproof.
PREY	An animal hunted or killed for food by another animal.
RIVER DELTA	A wetland area built by the deposit of silt and organic material as a river enters a lake or the ocean.
SHOREBIRDS	Birds that feed or nest on the shores of oceans, rivers and lakes, or on the tundra.
SHRUB	A low, woody plant usually having several stems; a bush.
SPECIES	A distinct kind of animal or plant. Members of the same species can breed and reproduce their own kind.
SWAMP	Land with shrubs and trees that is regularly covered with water. This type of wetland is common in the southeastern United States, but not in Alaska.
THREATENED SPECIES	A plant or animal species whose numbers are so low that it may become endangered.
TIDELAND	A shoreline mud flat that is periodically covered by water--a type of coastal wetland.
TREE	A woody plant with a single stem that grows more than ten feet high.
VERTEBRATE	Any animal with a backbone. Birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians and mammals, including humans, are all vertebrates.
WATER BIRDS	Any of the birds that swim, dive, wade or feed in the water.
WATERFOWL	Ducks, geese and swans.
WET TUNDRA	Flat, treeless, water-soaked land; common in western and northern Alaska.
WETLAND	It's a place where you need boots to keep your feet dry! Wetlands are very rich in plants and invertebrates that provide food for birds and other creatures.



**STUDENT  
FIELD GUIDE  
TO  
COMMON  
ALASKA  
BIRDS**

# KEY TO STUDENT FIELD GUIDE

**Size:** This refers to the average size of an adult bird, and is given in general terms: very small, small, medium, large and very large.

**Feet:** This gives a general idea of what the feet look like or are used for.

**Bill:** One or two of the most important characteristics of the bird's bill.

**Summer Habitat:** The type of place in which a bird lives during the summer months.

**Nest:** The bed or shelter prepared by a bird for laying and hatching its eggs and for rearing its young.

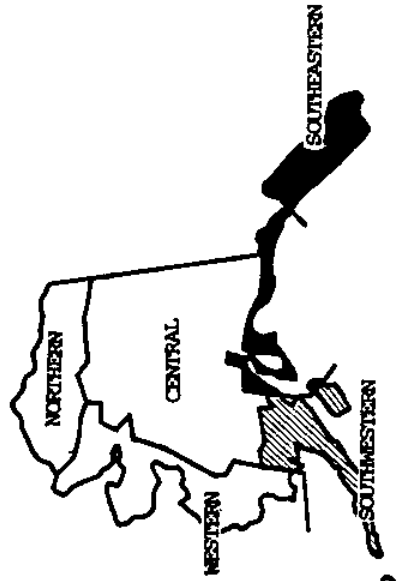
**Food:** What the bird eats during the breeding season.

**Wintering Area:** Where the bird goes in winter.

**Notes:** Any additional interesting information on the appearance or habits of birds.

For each bird in the guide there is a description, a drawing and a range map. The range maps show a general outline of Alaska divided into its six regions: Southeastern, Southcoastal, Southwestern, Central, Western and Northern. If a bird is either common or uncommon within a region, in springtime, that region will be completely blackened. If a bird is rare within a region, that region will be striped. If it is never found in a region, that region will be left white.

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SWIMMING BIRDS: Birds with duck-shaped bodies and webbed feet, usually seen swimming. Some dive underwater for food and others dabble at the surface.

### Pacific (Arctic) Loon



Size: Large

Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Sharp  
Daggerlike

Summer habitat: Lakes in tundra and in evergreen forests

Nest: Small island or point of land jutting into lake

Food: Small fish, crustaceans and some aquatic insects

Wintering Area: Coastal Alaska to Mexico

Notes: Like all loons, dives deep into the water with its powerful legs. Back of head and neck gray, with white striping on sides of neck. Red-throated Loon looks similar, but has a red throat patch and tilts bill up.



### Common Loon



Size: Large

Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Sharp, heavy

Summer Habitat: Deep lakes or slow-moving rivers in tundra and in evergreen forests

Nest: On grassy edge of lakes, small islands or on top of old muskrat houses

Food: Small fish and other water animals

Wintering Area: Southern Alaskan coast

Notes: Famous for its laughing, loud, yodel-like call. Head dark with a fancy white collar, bill black and straight. Back is covered with white checkers. If you see a bird that looks similar but has an ivory yellow bill, it's a Yellow-billed Loon.



### Horned Grebe



Size: Medium, but smaller than many ducks

Feet: Lobed                      Bill: sharp

Summer Habitat: Freshwater ponds, sloughs and shallow lakes

Nest: Made of mud and plants--floating, attached to growing plants

Food: Fish and tadpoles

Wintering Area: Coastal Alaska to California

Notes: Light yellow ear tufts show brightly on black head; reddish neck. Small head and short, dark bill. Like other grebes, it looks as if it has no tail.



### Pelagic Cormorant



Size: Medium to large

Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Hooked

Summer habitat: Sea cliffs, rocky shores and inshore marine waters

Nest: Mass of sticks on cliff ledges or rocky islands

Food: Small fish

Wintering Area: Coastal Alaska to Mexico

Notes: Dives deep and swims underwater. Body greenish-black, with white patches on sides, and dull red patch on face.



## Trumpeter Swan

Size: Very large

Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Wedge-shaped

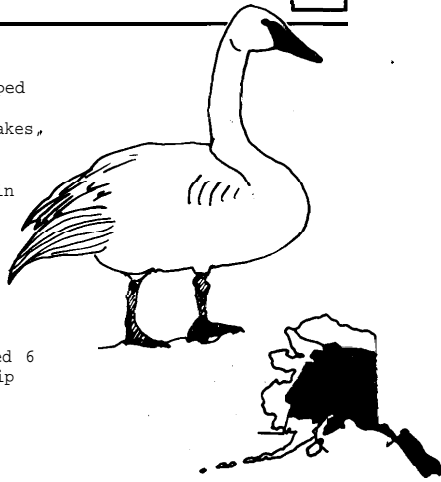
Summer Habitat: Freshwater or brackish lakes, marshes, and densely vegetated rivers

Nest: A platform 3-12 feet in diameter, in water, made of surrounding vegetation

Food: Aquatic vegetation

Wintering Area: Southcoastal Alaska to Northern California

Notes: The largest swan, it is outnumbered 6 to 1 by the smaller Tundra Swan. Swans dip their heads and necks down low to feed on bottom vegetation.



## Canada Goose

Size: Large

Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Wedge-shaped,

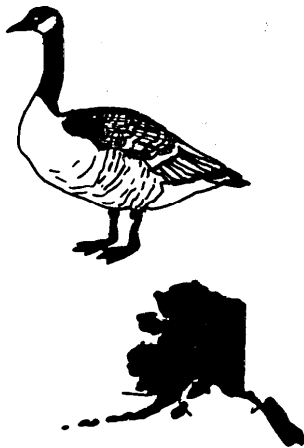
Summer Habitat: Marshes, islands and bars in rivers, and tundra tidelands

Nest: Near ponds

Food: Vegetation

Wintering Area: Coastal Alaska to Mexico

Notes: There are 6 subspecies of Canada Geese in Alaska. The larger of these subspecies have the familiar honk call, while smaller ones make a high-pitched cackling call. All geese's bills are strong and blunt for digging and clipping grass.



## Tundra Swan

Size: Very large

Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Wedge-shaped

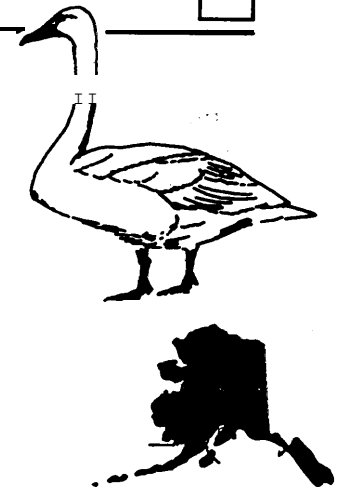
Summer Habitat: Tundra or sheltered coastal marshes

Nest: Large mound near or on edge of tundra pool or lake, or on an island

Food: Water plants, seeds

Wintering Area: California, Maryland, North Carolina

Notes: Usually has bright yellow teardrop on otherwise black bill. The most common swan, it is hard to tell apart from the Trumpeter Swan, which is larger and has an all-black bill.



## Greater White-fronted Goose

Size: Large

Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Wedge-shaped

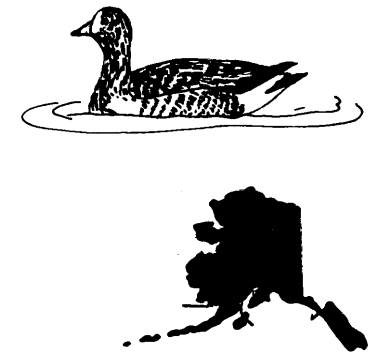
Summer Habitat: Tundra

Nest: Made of dry plants placed in shallow depression in wet tundra

Food: Vegetation

Wintering Area: Canada, Texas, Mexico

Notes: The most common Arctic goose in Northern Russia, Greenland, Canada and Alaska. Pink bill and white face patch. Brown head and neck, black markings on gray belly, and yellow or orange legs. Often seen in fields and lakes during migration.



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## Snow Goose



Size: Large  
Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Wedge-shaped

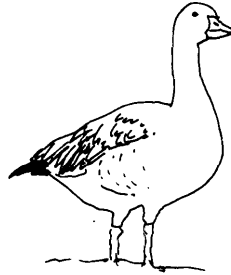
Summer Habitat: Grassy tundra, ponds

Nest: On ground in tundra and tidelands

Food: Sedges, grasses, berries

Wintering Area: California

Notes: All white, except for black wing tips, pink bill and pink feet.



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## Emperor Goose



Size: Large  
Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Wedge-shaped

Summer Habitat: Coastal tundra, often near ponds and lakes

Nest: In grassy marsh habitat on an island, bank, or in a tussock; always near water

Food: Sedges, grasses, mussels and shellfish

Wintering Area: Southwest Alaska

Notes: Head, back of neck and tail are white; chin and throat are black, and body is gray.



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## Brant



Size: Large, but small for a goose  
Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Wedge-shaped

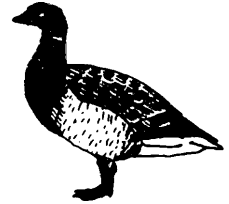
Summer Habitat: Lowland coastal tundra

Nest: On ground in grassy areas

Food: Eelgrass, sedges, grasses

Wintering Area: California, Baja California (Mexico); some in Izembek Lagoon, Alaska

Notes: A stocky goose, similar to the Canada Goose, with black head, neck and breast, and whitish patch on either side of neck. Call is a croaking sound, different from other geese.



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## Mallard



Size: Medium to large  
Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Wide, flat

Summer Habitat: Marshes, lakes, rivers and tidelands

Nest: On ground, usually near water

Food: Aquatic vegetation, insects

Wintering Area: Coastal Alaska to Washington

Notes: Metallic green head, yellow bill, white collar, and chestnut breast. Dabbling ducks leap into the air to take off, rather than running on the water. Their tails tip up as they submerge their heads and necks to feed.



## Northern Pintail



Size: Medium to large

Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Wide, flat

Summer Habitat: Marshes, lake's, ponds and streams

Nest: On ground, sometimes far from ponds

Food: Plants, mollusks, insects and small fish

Wintering Area: Washington to Mexico

Notes: Chocolate brown head; long, slender neck; white breast; and long, pointed, black tail feathers.



## Northern Shoveler



Size: Medium

Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Wide, flat

Summer Habitat: Ponds, flooded marshes and bays

Nest: On ground, near water

Food: Seeds, insects, small fish, crustaceans and mollusks

Wintering Area: California

Notes: Green head, white breast and brown sides. The large spoon-like bill is longer than the head.



## Green-winged Teal



Size: Medium, but small for a duck

Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Wide, flat

Summer Habitat: Ponds, lakes and marshes in forested areas

Nest: On ground in sedges or long grasses, near water

Food: Insects, mollusks, crustaceans

Wintering Area: Washington to Mexico

Notes: Smallest dabbling duck, fast flying and agile. Green ear patch on rusty-colored head, white stripe on gray side.



## American Wigeon



Size: Medium

Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Wide, flat

Summer Habitat: Marshes, shallow waters of ponds and lakes

Nest: On ground, sometimes away from water

Food: Aquatic vegetation, occasionally comes to shore to eat shoots of sedges and grasses.

Wintering Area: Washington to Mexico

Notes: Shiny white crown, green band on side of head. Nickname is Baldpate.



## Canvasback



Size: Medium

Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Wide, flat

Summer Habitat: Open lakes and marshes

Nest: In deep water lakes with vegetated shorelines; marshes and sloughs

Food: Fish, aquatic vegetation, insects, molluscs, crustaceans

Wintering Area: California and Maryland

Notes: Red, sloping head, black chest, white back. The Canvasback and ducks in the following descriptions are diving ducks, which dive underwater for food. They are heavy birds that patter along the water surface before taking off.



## Greater Scaup



Size: Medium

Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Wide, flat

Summer Habitat: Tundra, lakes, ponds and coastal waters

Nest: Near water in dense vegetation

Food: Fish, snails, mollusks, vegetation

Wintering Area: California, Maryland, Louisiana, Mexico

Notes: Dark head, bluish bill. The two kinds of scaups, Greater and Lesser, are difficult to tell apart.



## Common Goldeneye



Size: Medium

Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Wide, flat

Summer Habitat: Forested lakes and rivers

Nest: Tree cavity

Food: Aquatic vegetation, fish, crustaceans, molluscs

Wintering Area: Coastal Alaska to Mexico

Notes: The Common Goldeneye has a roundish white spot below the eye and a glossy green head, while the Barrow's Goldeneye has a crescent-shaped spot and a glossy purplish head.



## Bufflehead



Size: Medium, but small for a duck

Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Wide, flat

Summer Habitat: Wooded lakes, ponds and rivers

Nest: Tree cavity

Food: Aquatic vegetation, fish, crustaceans, molluscs

Wintering Area: Coastal Alaska to Mexico

Notes: Large white patch on black head. Unlike other diving ducks, it takes off without running along the surface.



## Oldsquaw

Size: Medium

Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Wide, flat

Summer Habitat: Tundra lakes and marine waters

Nest: Under bushes or in sedges near coastal ponds and lakes, and in well-concealed depressions in the tundra

Food: Aquatic vegetation, mollusks, insects

Wintering Area: Sea of Japan, Siberia, or Bering Sea

Notes: Dark brown breast, white sides, with a long, pointed tail.



## Harlequin Duck

Size: Medium, but small for a duck

Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Wide, flat

Summer Habitat: Swift streams and rivers; also along arctic shores

Nest: On ground near fast streams

Food: Mollusks, crustaceans, fish, salmon eggs

Wintering Area: Coastal Alaska to California

Notes: The male's colorful red, blue, white and black plumage appears dark at a distance.



## Common Eider

Size: Medium to large

Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Wide, flat

Summer Habitat: Shallow bays and tundra near marine waters

Nest: Near ponds and lakes

Food: Mollusks and crustaceans

Wintering Area: Coastal Alaska wherever water is open, except Southeast

Notes: White back and breast, with black sides and an orange bill shield. Largest duck in Alaska and North America. There are four kinds of eiders in Alaska.



## Surf Scoter

Size: Medium

Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Wide, flat

Summer Habitat: Lakes and rivers

Nest: On tundra and in wooded areas, near lakes and ponds

Food: Vegetation and mollusks

Wintering Area: Coastal Alaska to Mexico

Notes: Black overall, with long multicolored bill, and white patches on forehead and back of neck.



## Red-breasted Merganser

Size: Medium to large

Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Hooked,  
teethlike

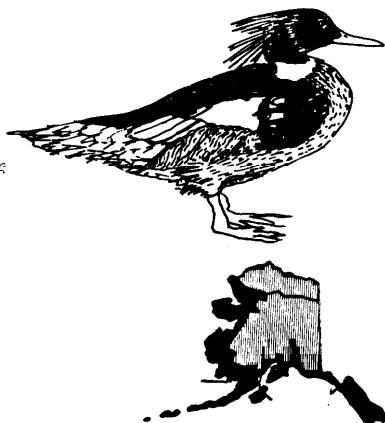
Summer Habitat: Lakes, fish streams, marine waters

Nest: In woodlands near lakes and rivers, or in sheltered coastal areas.

Food: Fish, crustaceans and mollusks

Wintering Area: Coastal Alaska to Mexico

Notes: Reddish-brown chest patch; glossy green, crested head; red eyes; long, narrow bill.



**BIRDS OF PREY:** These birds have large, hooked bills, and feet with strong, curved talons for catching and tearing birds and small mammals that they feed on.

## Red-tailed Hawk

Size: Large

Feet: Grasping                      Bill: Hooked

Summer Habitat: Deciduous woodlands and coniferous forests

Nest: In trees or on cliffs

Food: Squirrels, rabbits, voles, lemmings

Wintering Area: Western United States

Notes: Broad wings and short, rounded tail. The feather colors vary widely from bird to bird. Has a distinctive call--a harsh descending scream.



## Rough-legged Hawk

Size: Large

Feet: Grasping                      Bill: Hooked

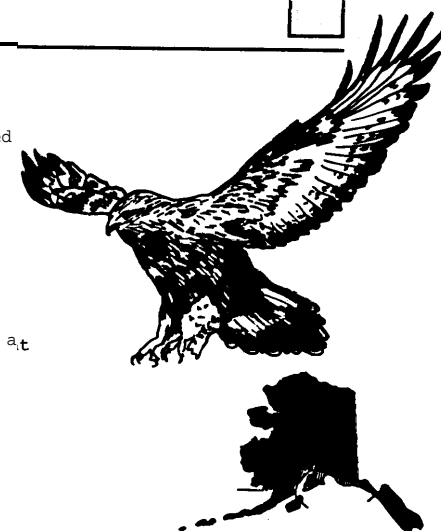
Summer Habitat: Upland tundra with cliffs

Nest: On cliffs or in trees

Food: Rodents

Wintering Area: Western United States

Notes: Broad, white tail with a dark band at the end. Often hovers while hunting.



## Bald Eagle

Size: very large

Feet: Grasping                      Bill: Hooked

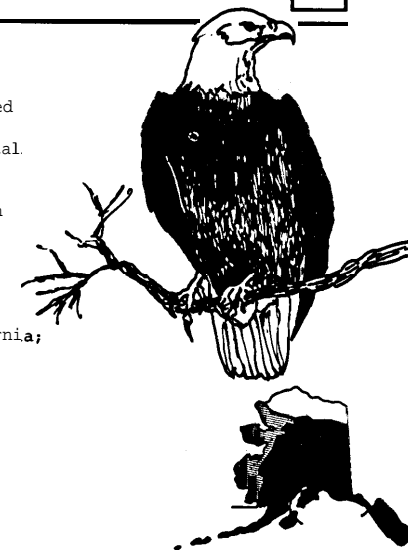
Summer Habitat: Rivers and streams, coastal beaches, forests

Nest: In old trees; also in cliffs and on ground in areas without trees

Food: Mainly dead or dying fish, birds, seabirds and small mammals, carrion

Wintering Area: Coastal Alaska to California; a few winter in open water in Interior

Notes: The white head and tail feathers contrast with the brown body.



## Golden Eagle



Size: Very large

Feet: Grasping

Bill: Hooked

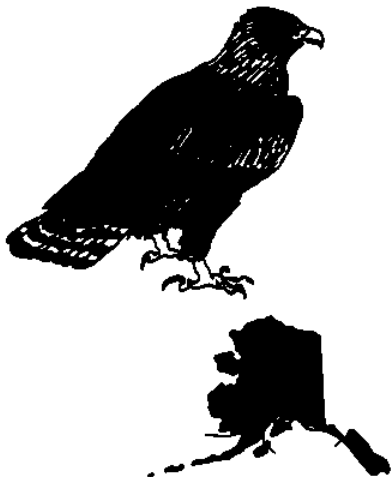
Summer Habitat: Mountains, tundra

Nest: Cliffs or treetops

Food: Rodents, rabbits, marmots, squirrels and birds

Wintering Area: Coastal Alaska

Notes: Body a golden-brown color. Commonly seen soaring over mountain ridges.



## Northern Harrier



Size: Medium

Feet: Grasping

Bill: Hooked

Summer Habitat: Open marshes, open mountain ridges, fields

Nest: On ground in wet, marshy areas

Food: Mice and small birds

Wintering Area: Mexico, Central America

Notes: White rump is prominent in flight. Hunts flying only a few feet off the ground, with wings held at an upward angle.



## Peregrine Falcon



Size: Medium

Summer Habitat: Open country near cliffs, shores and marshes frequented by waterfowl and shorebirds

Nest: On cliff ledges

Food: Birds, especially seabirds and songbirds

Wintering Area: British Columbia to South America

Notes: One of the swiftest birds in the world. Nickname is "the duck hawk." Best identifying marks are facial pattern, dark cap and large size.



GROUSE AND PTARMIGAN: These are plump, chicken-like birds that generally feed on the ground.

## Blue Grouse



Size: Medium

Feet: Scratching

Bill: Short, strong

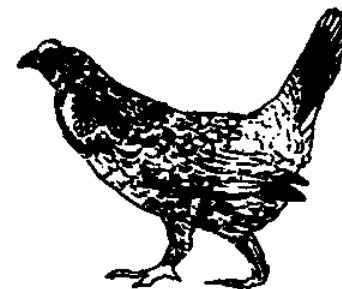
Summer Habitat: Deciduous and coniferous forests, muskeg, alpine meadows

Nest: On ground, often near a tree or log

Food: Seeds and berries

Wintering Area: Southeast Alaska

Notes: The courting male bird produces deep booming sounds from his inflated neck sacs.



## Spruce Grouse



Size: Medium

Feet: Scratching      Bill: Short, strong

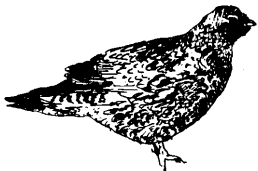
Summer Habitat: Forests

Nest: On ground, near a tree or under a log

Food: Seeds, berries, leaves and tree needles

Wintering Area: Central Alaska

Notes: This bird is very tame and can often be approached quite closely. Black throat and breast; black tail with orange tip; red comb over eye.



## Willow Ptarmigan



Size: Medium

Feet: Scratching      Bill: Short, strong

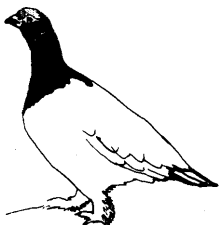
Summer Habitat: Willow thickets, muskeg and tundra

Nest: On ground under luxuriant vegetation

Food: Willow buds and leaves, berries, insects

Wintering Area: Throughout Alaska

Notes: Black-tipped tail, feathers on feet. This is Alaska's state bird. It usually looks more reddish than the Rock Ptarmigan, but the two are difficult to tell apart.



**WADING BIRDS:** These long-legged birds are often seen in open habitats on the tundra and along shorelines, foraging or fishing. Some shorebirds can be recognized by their flocking behavior.

## Great Blue Heron



Size: Very large--may stand four feet tall

Feet: Wading      Bill: Long spear

Summer Habitat: Salt and freshwater beaches, streams, shallow lakes, and marshes

Nest: Colonial nesters. Make platform of sticks in upper parts of tall trees, sometimes on rocky ground or in bushes

Food: Expert at catching fish, frogs and other water animals by spearing with bill

Wintering Area: Coastal Alaska

Notes: Long-necked, long-legged, blue-gray bird with a long yellow bill. Often seen wading in shallow water; sometimes in trees.



## Sandhill Crane



Size: Very large

Feet: Wading      Bill: Long, pointed

Summer Habitat: Lowland tundra and marshes

Nest: On ground in grassy marshes

Food: Small rodents, frogs and insects

Wintering Area: California to Mexico

Notes: Gray, with red crown. Flies in large, noisy flocks. Holds neck straight out in flight, unlike the Great Blue Heron which folds its neck back in an "S" when flying.



## Black Oystercatcher



Size: Medium

Feet: Wading      Bill: Long, flat

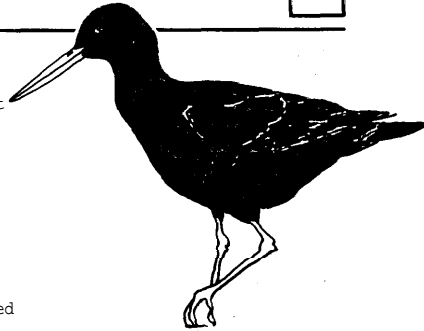
Summer Habitat: Rocky shores, islands

Nest: In beach gravel

Food: Mollusks, crabs and worms

Wintering Area: Coastal Alaska to Mexico

Notes: Black feathers, striking orange-red bill and pink legs.



## Semipalmated Plover



Size: Small

Feet: Wading      Bill: Pointed

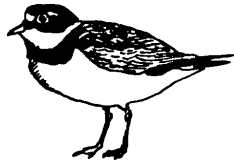
Summer Habitat: Lake, pond and river beaches; mudflats

Nest: On ground in sand, gravel or moss

Food: Worms, mollusks, and crustaceans

Wintering Area: California to South America

Notes: Has a single, black breast band; the legs and base of bill are orange.



## Lesser Golden-Plover



Size: Small to medium

Feet: Wading      Bill: Pointed

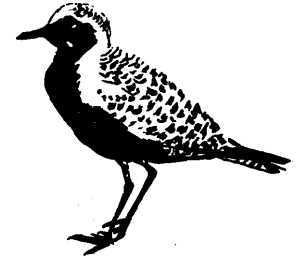
Summer Habitat: Tundra, tidelands

Nest: Moss in tundra

Food: Insects or small marine animals, berries

Wintering Area: Hawaii, New Zealand, Asia

Notes: Black breast, throat and chin; marbled golden back.



## Whimbrel



Size: Medium--but large for a sandpiper

Feet: Wading      Bill: Pointed

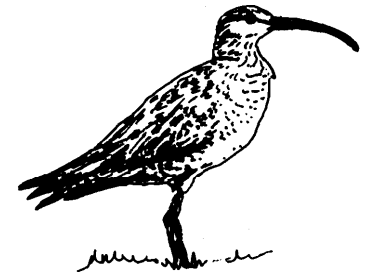
Summer Habitat: Tundra

Nest: In a depression or on a mound of vegetation in the tundra

Food: Insects, small marine animals

Wintering Area: California to South America

Notes: Impressive long, downcurved bill; striped crown.



## Greater Yellowlegs



Size: Medium

Feet: Wading      Bill: Pointed

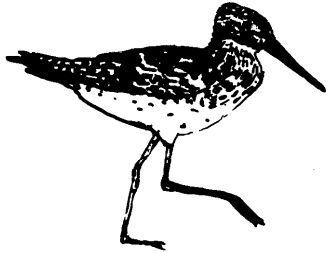
Summer Habitat: Muskeg and tundra

Nest: On ground in moss

Food: Insects, small marine animals

Wintering Area: Washington to South America

Notes: A slim bird with yellow or orange legs. Larger than Lesser Yellowlegs and has a longer, heavier bill. Has a yodeling cry.



## Spotted Sandpiper

Size: Small

Feet: Wading      Bill: Pointed

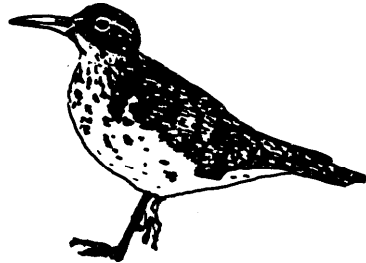
Summer Habitat: Shores of streams, rivers, lakes and marshes

Nest: Near water in gravel or grass

Food: Aquatic insects

Wintering Area: Washington to South America

Notes: Striking plumage; barred upper-parts and spotted underparts. On ground this bird bobs and teeters almost constantly.



## Red-necked Phalarope



Size: Small

Feet: Wading      Bill: Pointed

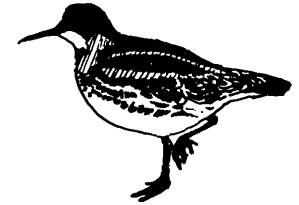
Summer Habitat: Tundra marshes and ponds

Nest: Near water on ground in wet, grassy areas

Food: Small marine animals, insects, crustaceans

Wintering Area: At sea in South Pacific

Notes: Has a white throat with chestnut neck. Males incubate the eggs and care for young.



## Common Snipe

Size: Small

Feet: Wading      Bill: Pointed

Summer Habitat: Freshwater marshes, muskeg

Nest: In grasses, sedges or alders

Food: Insects, small marine animals

Wintering Area: Southeast Alaska to South America

Notes: Vibrating tail feathers make a winnowing sound as bird dives downward in display flight.



## Pectoral Sandpiper

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Size : Small

Feet: Wading                      Bill: Pointed

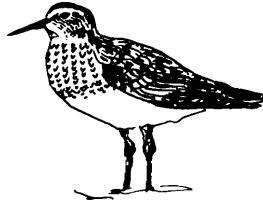
Summer Habitat: Grassy areas in wet tundra

Nest: On ground within tundra vegetation

Food: Insects, small marine animals, worms.

Wintering Area: South America

Notes: Legs are yellowish-green. Breast streaks form bib above white belly.



## Dunlin

Size: Small

Feet: Wading                      Bill: Pointed

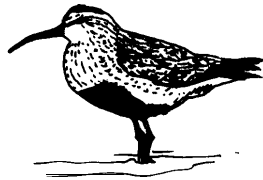
Summer Habitat: Coastal sedge-grass marshes, wet grassy tundra

Nest: On ground in grassy areas

Food: Mollusks, insects

Wintering Area: Asia, and California southward

Notes: Rusty back; white underparts with a large black patch on belly; drooped bill.



**GULL-LIKE BIRDS:** Large birds with strong wings and powerful flight. Live over open sea, coastal waters and inland waters.

## Long-tailed Jaeger

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Size: Medium

Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Hooked

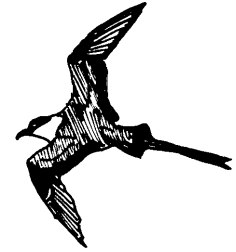
Summer Habitat: Wet coastal tundra and drier Interior tundra

Nest: On ground

Food: Mostly lemmings; also other rodents, eggs, young shorebirds and songbirds

Wintering Area: At sea in South Pacific

Notes: Long central tail feathers, which often flutter in flight. Hovers over prey, then swoops down.



## Glaucous-winged Gull

L - I

Size: Medium to large

Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Stout, hooked

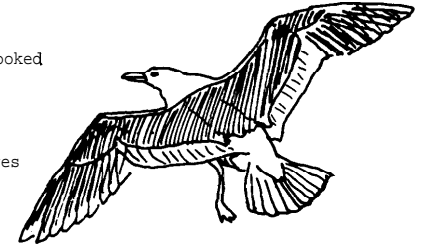
Summer Habitat: Tidal flats and beaches, islands and cliffs

Nest: In colonies on islands, cliff ledges and on rocky beaches

Food: Fish, bird eggs, molluscs

Wintering Area: Coastal Alaska to California and Japan

Notes: Large gull with dark eyes, pink legs, light gray back, and yellow bill with a red spot.



## Mew Gull



Size: Medium

Feet: Webbed      Bill: Slender, hooked

Summer Habitat: Tundra, streams, rivers, lakes and islands

Nest: On tundra, on stumps, in trees, in depressions on sand

Food: Fish, insects, molluscs, crustaceans

Wintering Area: Coastal Alaska to California

Notes: Half the size of Glaucous-winged Gull. At close range the thin, yellow bill and greenish-yellow feet and legs are visible.



## Sabine's Gull



Size : Medium

Feet: Webbed      Bill: Stout, hooked

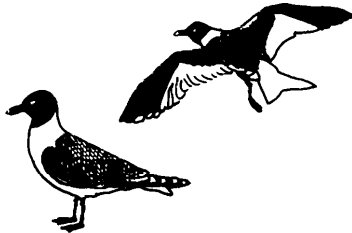
Summer Habitat: Wet tundra, tidal flats, lakes and ponds

Nest: On tundra near lakes and ponds

Food: Fish, insects, crustaceans

Wintering Area: Coast to South America

Notes: Bold black, gray and white pattern of triangles on spread wings. Dark head; grey back; forked tail; black bill with yellow tip.



## Bonaparte's Gull



Size : Medium

Feet: Webbed      Bill: Stout, hooked

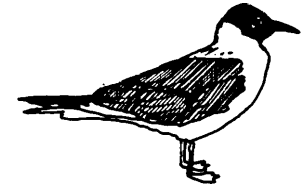
Summer Habitat: Coniferous woods near ponds and lakes

Nest: In trees

Food: Fish, invertebrates

Wintering Area: British Columbia to Mexico

Notes: Black head, black bill, gray back and red legs. Flight is buoyant and ternlike.



## Black-legged Kittiwake



Size: Medium

Feet: Webbed      Bill: Stout, hooked

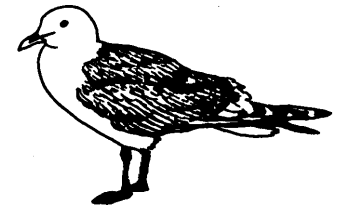
Summer Habitat: Sea cliffs, inshore marine waters

Nest: In large colonies on sea cliffs

Food: Fish, crustaceans

Wintering Area: Coastal Alaska to Mexico, Japan

Notes: Triangular black wing tips, black legs, and yellow bill. Follows fishing boats.



## Arctic Tern



Size: Medium

Feet: Webbed Bill: Sharp, strong

Summer Habitat: Tidelands, lakes, rivers, beaches and marshes

Nest: In rocks, sand, gravel or moss; in colonies or pairs

Food: Small fish, insects

Wintering Area: South America, Antarctica

Notes: Most terns have a forked tail. They differ from gulls in their feeding technique: they hover, then plunge-dive after fish.



## Common Murre

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Size: Medium

Feet: Webbed Bill: Heavy, pointed

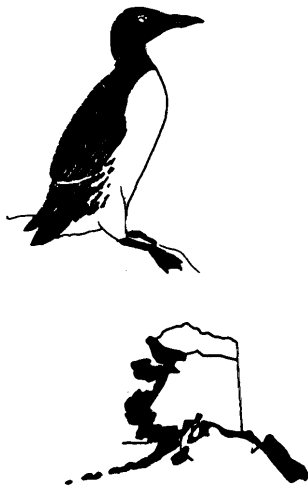
Summer Habitat: Coastal sea cliffs, islands

Nest: In colonies on cliff ledges and cliff tops

Food: Small fish, marine invertebrates

Wintering Area: Coastal Alaska to Washington; Japan

Notes: White belly, black head and back. Murres, guillemots, puffins and other birds in the same family come to shore only to nest. They stand upright like penguins and have small, narrow wings for swimming underwater and flying.



## Pigeon Guillemot



Size: Medium

Feet: Webbed Bill: Heavy, pointed

Summer Habitat: Inshore marine waters

Nest: In cliff crevices and between boulders above high tide line.

Food: Fish

Wintering Area: Along edge of Arctic ice pack to California

Notes: Black body with white wing patch. Feet are bright red.



## Marbled Murrelet



Size: Small

Feet: Webbed Bill: Heavy, pointed

Summer Habitat: Inshore marine waters

Nest: Inland, on ground or in trees

Food: Marine invertebrates, fish

Wintering Area: Coastal Alaska to California

Notes: Smallest of the murres and others in this family. Upper parts are brown mottled with red or gray; underparts white mottled with brown. Flight is very rapid.



## Tufted Puffin

Size: Medium

Feet: Webbed                      Bill: Large,  
triangular

Summer Habitat: Inshore marine waters;  
islands

Nest: In burrows in the soil; sometimes in  
rock crevices

Food: Fish, marine invertebrates

Wintering Area: Coastal Alaska to California,  
Japan

Notes: Long, yellow tufts behind eyes.  
Striking orange-and-green bill. White face  
and black body.



PERCHING BIRDS: Most small birds which perch  
in trees, on shrubs, or on rocks.



## Rock Dove

Size: Medium

Feet: Perching                      Bill: Short; swell-  
ing at base

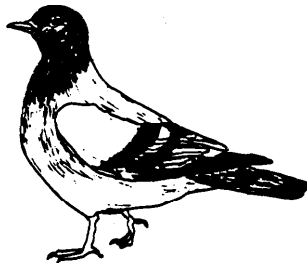
Summer Habitat: Cities and towns

Nest: On building ledges

Food: Grain, fruit, seeds

Wintering Area: Does not migrate

Notes: These birds have been introduced into  
each Alaskan community in which they are seen.  
Color varies, but many are gray with two black  
bars on wings.



## Boreal Owl

Size: Small to medium

Feet: Grasping                      Bill: Hooked

Summer Habitat: Coniferous and mixed  
coniferous-deciduous forests; muskeg

Nest: In tree cavities

Food: Mice, small birds and insects

Wintering Area: Central Alaska

Notes: Strictly nocturnal except during the  
arctic summer. Seems quite tame. Like other  
owls, has a large head, short neck, and large  
eyes facing forwards. Black frame around  
face.



## Great Horned Owl

Size: Large

Feet: Grasping                      Bill: Hooked

Summer Habitat: Coniferous and deciduous  
forests

Nest: In trees

Food: Rabbits, squirrels, minks, weasels,  
porcupines, mice, skunks, grouse, geese,  
ducks, and domestic cats and poultry

Wintering Area: Throughout Alaska

Notes: Prominent ear tufts or "horns." Very  
aggressive. Chiefly nocturnal.



## Short-eared Owl



Size: Medium

Feet: Grasping

Bill: Hooked

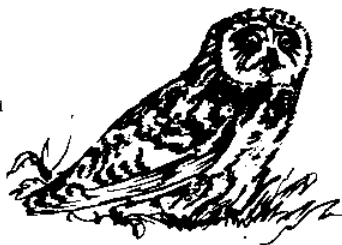
Summer Habitat: Open country: marshes, muskeg, tundra and tidal flats

Nest: On ground in grass-lined depression

Food: Small mammals

Wintering Area: Throughout Alaska and south to California

Notes: Active at dawn and dusk. Bounds from side to side in flight, with long glides, and very deep wing strokes.



## Snowy Owl



Size: Large

Feet: Grasping

Bill: Hooked

Summer Habitat: Tundra

Nest: On ground on dry tundra; on cliffs

Food: Lemmings, rodents and hares

Wintering Area: Along ice pack to California

Notes: All white, with round head and no ear tufts. Hunts by day and night.



## Rufous Hummingbird



Size: Very small

Feet: Perching

Bill: Long, slender

Summer Habitat: Forests, woodland edges, and anywhere flowers are available

Nest: In trees and bushes

Food: Flower and blossom nectar, tiny insects

Wintering Area: California to Mexico

Notes: Orange-rufous body and iridescent orange-red throat patch. The smallest bird in Alaska.



## Belted Kingfisher



Size: Small to medium

Feet: Perching

Bill: Spearlike

Summer Habitat: Rivers, streams, ponds, lakes and estuaries

Nest: In burrows dug into a stream bank

Food: Fish

Wintering Area: Coastal Alaska

Notes: Head, upperparts and band across chest are blueish-gray. Often hovers over water or perches nearby watching, then plunges head-first to catch fish.



## Northern Flicker

| - |

Size: Medium

Feet: Two forward      Bill: Sharp, strong  
toes, two back

Summer Habitat: Coniferous or deciduous  
forests; open woodlands.

Nest: In a tree or stump cavity

Food: Insect larvae, ants and berries

Wintering Area: Washington to California

Notes: Gray face with red mustache; black and brown barred upperparts; white rump patch shows in flight. Strong, sharply-pointed bill for digging into tree trunks. Stiff tail feathers used as a prop for climbing.



## Downy Woodpecker

□

Size: Small

Feet: Two forward      Bill: Sharp, strong  
toes, two back

Summer Habitat: Coniferous and deciduous  
forests

Nest: In a tree cavity

Food: Insect larvae

Wintering Area: Forests from Coastal Alaska  
to Washington

Notes: Black and white markings, red patch on back of head, and a stubby bill that is shorter than head. The similar Hairy Woodpecker is larger, with a longer bill.



## Three-toed Woodpecker

□

Size: Small

Feet: Two forward      Bill: Sharp, strong  
toes, two back

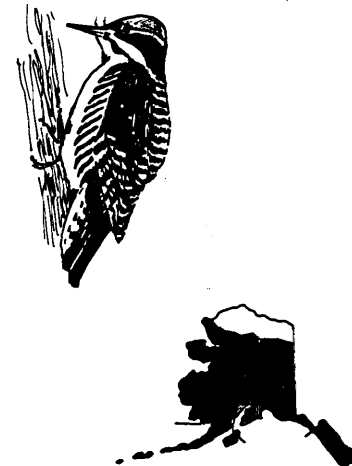
Summer Habitat: Coniferous and mixed  
deciduous-coniferous forests

Nest: In a tree cavity

Food: Insect larvae

Wintering Area: Alaska

Notes: Black and white barring down back and sides; yellow cap on head.



## Alder Flycatcher

□

Size: Small

Feet: Perching      Bill: Slender

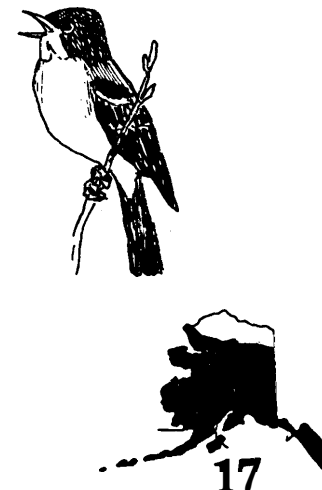
Summer Habitat: Bogs, ponds, alder and willow  
thickets

Nest: In the upright crotch of a tall shrub

Food: Insects

Wintering Area: Central and South America

Notes: There are four small flycatcher species in the state; they are difficult to tell apart, but their calls are different and they are found in different types of habitat.



## Horned Lark



Size: Small

Feet: Perching      Bill: Slender

Summer Habitat: Alpine tundra

Nest: On ground in tundra

Food: Seeds and insects

Wintering Area: Rocky Mountains southward

Notes: Yellow face with black markings, brown back, white belly. Song is a weak tinkling series of notes, given from high in the air. Walks along on the ground, and seldom alights on trees or bushes.



## Tree Swallow

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Size: Small

Feet: Perching      Bill: Slender

Summer Habitat: Marshes, lakes, streams and wet muskeg

Nest: Tree cavities, especially near water.

Food: Insects

Wintering Area: California to Panama

Notes: Body dark blue-green above, white below. Swallows capture insects while flying, have big mouths and tiny bills.



## Bank Swallow



Size: Small

Feet: Perching      Bill: Slender

Summer Habitat: Near water

Nest: In colonies; burrows are excavated in river and stream banks and highway cuts

Food: Insects

Wintering Area: South America

Notes: Brownish-gray breast band on white underparts; brown back.



## Barn Swallow



Size: Small

Feet: Perching      Bill: Slender

Summer Habitat: Marshes and over water

Nest: Mud cup on or in buildings; under bridges; in caves

Food: Insects

Wintering Area: South America

Notes: Glossy blue back and cinnamon belly; deeply forked tail.



## Cliff Swallow



Size: Small

Feet: Perching Bill: Slender

Summer Habitat: Over water and open land

Nest: Bulb-shaped and made of mud; built under building eaves, or on cliffs, dams and bridges. Nests in colonies.

Food: Insects

Wintering Area: South America

Notes: Short, square tail; chestnut throat; blue-black back with white stripes.



## Gray Jay



Size: Medium

Feet: Perching Bill: Slender

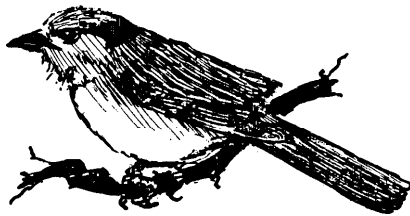
Summer Habitat: Coniferous forests

Nest: In conifers

Food: Meat, carrion, eggs, insects, berries and seeds

Wintering Area: Forests of Central Alaska

Notes: Common campground visitors, Gray Jays will take any food left unattended. Very tame; will take food from a hand.



## Steller's Jay



Size: Medium

Feet: Perching Bill: Heavy, pointed

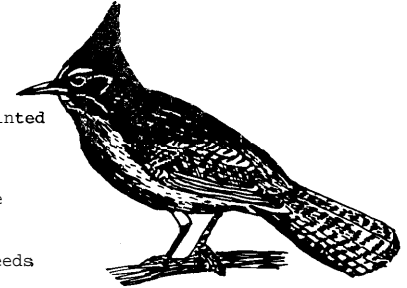
Summer Habitat: Coniferous forests

Nest: In conifers, at least 10 feet above ground

Food: Meat, eggs, insects, berries and seeds

Wintering Area: Southeast Alaska

Notes: Deep blue and black, with a striking black crest. Voice is a harsh call: shack-shack-shack. Also mimics hawks.



## Black-billed Magpie



Size: Medium

Feet: Perching Bill: Heavy, pointed

Summer Habitat: Open woodlands

Nest: Tall brush or trees

Food: Meat, carrion, eggs, insects, fruit and seeds

Wintering Area: Southern Alaska

Notes: Black and white body, and unusually long tail with glossy green highlights.



## Common Raven



Size: Large  
Feet: Perching Bill: Heavy, pointed

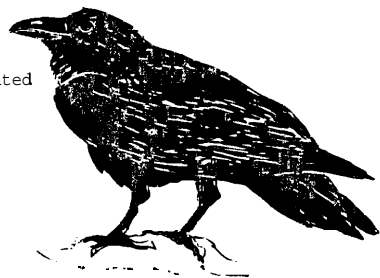
Summer Habitat: Mountains, coastal areas, cliffs and garbage dumps

Nest: In trees or on cliffs

Food: Mostly carrion, birds eggs, seeds, and any available garbage

Wintering Area: Throughout Alaska

Notes: Large black body, with wedge-shaped tail and heavy bill. Soars like a hawk. Makes a variety of hoarse sounds.



## Northwestern Crow



Size: Medium  
Feet: Perching Bill: Heavy, pointed

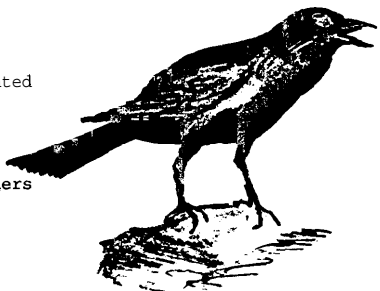
Summer Habitat: Coastal areas, tidelands, marshes, forest edge

Nest: In conifers or sometimes under boulders near shoreline, sometimes in large groups

Food: Dead fish, clams, mussels, crabs, berries and insects.

Wintering Area: Southeast Alaska

Notes: All black. Has a square-cut tail and shorter bill than the Common Raven. Often scavenges along shorelines.



## Black-capped Chickadee



Size: Small  
Feet: Perching Bill: Short, strong

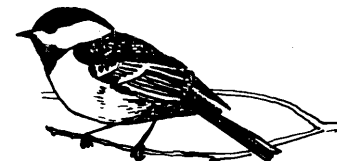
Summer Habitat: Both deciduous and coniferous forests

Nest: In dead tree or shrub cavities

Food: Insects

Wintering Area: Central and Southern Alaska, Coastal shrublands

Notes: Boreal Chickadees and Chestnut-backed Chickadees are also seen in parts of Alaska. Black-capped has solid black cap, gray back and pale sides. Boreal and Chestnut-backed both have brown caps and more chestnut color on body. All chickadees dark bibs.



## American Dipper



Size: Small  
Feet: Perching Bill: Short, strong

Summer Habitat: Fast moving streams; occasionally lake and pond shores

Nest: Large, mossy nests on rock wall or bank of stream, often behind a waterfall

Food: Aquatic insects, small fish and fish eggs

Wintering Area: Open streams throughout Alaska

Notes: Slate-gray; short tail. Dips up and down while standing. Can walk and swim underwater to feed.



## Winter Wren



Size: Very small

Feet: Perching Bill: Short, strong

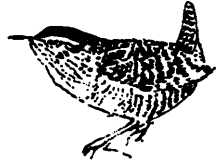
Summer Habitat: Brush or thick undergrowth of forests; on island beaches in rocks

Nest: In brush piles, old stumps, and upturned tree roots, especially along stream banks

Food: Insects

Wintering Area: Southern Alaska

Notes: Only Alaskan wren; all brown with tail cocked up over back.



## American Robin



Size: Small to medium

Feet: Perching Bill: Strong, slender

Summer Habitat: Forest edges, muskeg, tundra, and tidelands

Nest: In crotch of tree or shrub

Food: Worms, insects and berries

Wintering Area: Southern Alaska to California and Louisiana, Florida

Notes: Brick red breast and dark gray body. Often seen hopping on ground, eating worms. The robin is a kind of thrush; thrushes are all fine singers and have large eyes.



## Hermit Thrush



Size : Small

Feet: Perching Bill: Strong, slender

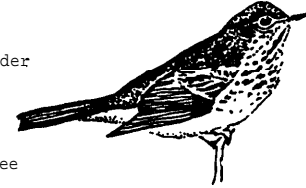
Summer Habitat: Coniferous or mixed woodlands; shrub thickets

Nest: Usually on ground, sometimes in a tree

Food: Insects and berries

Wintering Area: Oregon and California southward

Notes: Brown upperparts, reddish-brown tail. Flutelike song is a single long note followed by a rapid series of rising and falling notes.



## Northern Wheatear



Size: Small

Feet: Perching Bill: Strong, slender

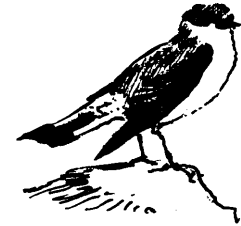
Summer Habitat: Tundra, mountain ridges

Nest: In crevices under rocks and rubble

Food: Seeds and insects

Wintering Area: Africa

Notes: White rump, blue-gray back, black and white tail. A perky bird, it bobs up and down and flits from rock to rock in search of food.



### Ruby-crowned Kinglet



Size: Very small

Feet: Perching      Bill: Slender

Summer Habitat: Coniferous forests, woodlands, shrub thickets and brush

Nest: In conifers, usually 20-60 feet above ground

Food: Insects and insect larvae

Wintering Area: California

Notes: Whitish eye-ring, greenish-olive upperparts. The ruby crown is often hidden. Often flicks its wings.



### Water Pipit



Size: Small

Feet: Perching      Bill: Slender

Summer Habitat: Tidelands, lakes, ponds, tundra, rivers and streams

Nest: On ground in tundra or mountain meadows

Food: Insects and seeds

Wintering Area: Mexico, China

Notes: Lightly streaked brown back, heavily brown-streaked breast. Tail bobs rapidly. Very common throughout Alaska.



### Bohemian Waxwing



Size: Small

Feet: Perching      Bill: Short, strong

Summer Habitat: Wet muskeg

Nest: In a conifer

Food: Fruits, berries and insects

Wintering Area: Southeast Alaska to Mexico

Notes: Crested head, black mask, yellow-tipped tail and gray belly.



### Northern Shrike



Size: Small to medium

Feet: Perching      Bill: Slender

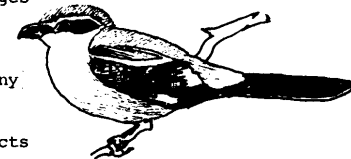
Summer Habitat: Tundra shrub thickets, edges of coniferous forests and mixed deciduous-coniferous woodlands

Nest: In a small deciduous tree or a thorny shrub

Food: Small rodents and birds, large insects

Wintering Area: Southeast Alaska to California

Notes: This pale gray and black bird lacks talons; it impales its prey on thorns, broken twigs or barb-wires. If it kills more than it can eat it hangs food in trees, so it is called the "butcher bird."



## Yellow-rumped Warbler



Size: Small

Feet: Perching      Bill: Slender

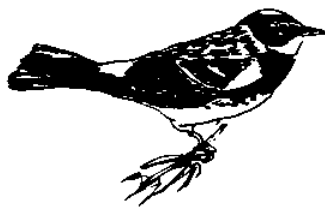
Summer Habitat: Coniferous forests, shrub thickets, mixed deciduous-coniferous woodlands

Nest: In a conifer, usually 4-10 feet above ground

Food: Insects

Wintering Area: Southern British Columbia to Mexico

Notes: Bright yellow crown, rump, and patches on either side of belly; body is gray, black and white.



## Rusty Blackbird



Size: Small

Feet: Perching      Bill: Sharply pointed, slender, strong

Habitat: Willow thickets in coastal areas; marshes inland

Nest: In a conifer, willow or alder near water

Food: Insects

Wintering Area: Rare as far north as southern Alaska, but most winter in southern central Canada and northern, central and eastern United States

Notes: Black body; yellow eyes.



## Wilson's Warbler



Size: Small

Feet: Perching      Bill: Slender

Summer Habitat: Moist woodlands, shrub thickets

Nest: On or near the ground in shrub thickets

Food: Insects

Wintering Area: Mexico to Panama

Notes: Body is olive above and entirely bright yellow below. Black cap.



## Pine Grosbeak



Size: Small to medium

Feet: Perching      Bill: Short, strong, curved

Summer Habitat: Open coniferous forests

Nest: In a conifer, 10-15 feet above ground

Food: Seeds and berries

Wintering Area: Alaska to Washington; Japan

Notes: Plump, robin-sized bird. Upper body is red; belly gray; bill dark. Usually seen in flocks.



## White-winged Crossbill



Size: Small  
Feet: Perching      Bill: Strong, short, crossed

Summer Habitat: Coniferous forests

Nest: In a conifer

Food: Conifer seeds

Wintering Area: Central and Southcoastal Alaska

Notes: Distinctive pinkish color; broad white wingbars. Only at close range can one observe the crossed bill.



## Common Redpoll



Size: Small  
Feet: Perching      Bill: Short, strong

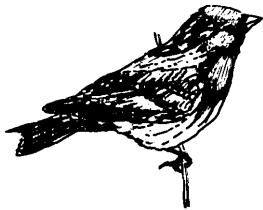
Summer Habitat: Subarctic forests, tundra shrub thickets, open fields and grasslands

Nest: On ground, in shrubs, or in lower branches of trees

Food: Seeds, insects

Wintering Area: Alaska to California, Japan

Notes: Bright red cap, blackish chin and pink breast. Has heavier streaking and longer bill than the very similar Hoary Redpoll. These two kinds of redpolls are often found together, and they interbreed.



## Savannah Sparrow



Size: Small  
Feet: Perching      Bill: Short, strong

Summer Habitat: Open grassy fields

Nest: On ground in grassy areas, tundra

Food: Insects, insect larvae, seeds

Wintering Area: British Columbia to California

Notes: Pale; streaked breast; yellow eyebrow; short, notched tail. Song is a buzzy tsit-tsit-tsit-tseee-tseee.



## Dark-eyed Junco



Size: Small  
Feet: Perching      Bill: Strong

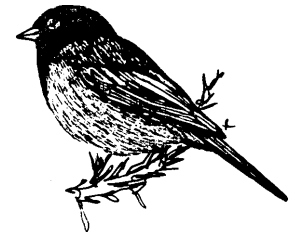
Summer Habitat: Coniferous forests, muskegs and clearings

Nest: On ground

Food: Insects, seeds

Wintering Area: Southern Alaska to Mexico

Notes: Juncos breeding north of Yakutat Bay are all slate gray with a white belly; those breeding south of Yakutat Bay have a black hood, reddish-brown back and buffy-pink sides.



## White-crowned Sparrow

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Size: Small  
Feet: Perching Bill: Short, strong  
Summer Habitat: Forest edges, brush  
Nest: On ground in low shrub or grass clump  
Food: Seeds, insects  
Wintering Area: British Columbia to Mexico

Notes: Black and white striped head; flesh-colored bill. Song is a series of 6 notes, rising on the second and third, and falling on the last three.

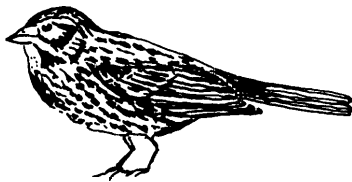


## Fox Sparrow

□

Size: Small  
Feet: Perching Bill: Short, strong  
Summer Habitat: Shrub thickets; forest edge  
Nest: On ground under shrubs, or low in a tree or shrub  
Food: Seeds, insects  
Wintering Area: Southern Alaska to California

Notes: Brown or gray-brown back and streaked underparts. Colors of tail and head highly variable throughout state.



## Lapland Longspur

□

Size: Small  
Feet: Perching Bill: Short, strong  
Summer Habitat: Tundra, alpine  
Nest: On grass clumps or dry knoll  
Food: Insects, seeds  
Wintering Area: Washington to California

Notes: Head and breast are black; broad white stripe from eye to side of breast; hind neck reddish-brown. One of the most common breeding land birds on the tundra.



## Snow Bunting

□

Size: Small  
Feet: Perching Bill: Short, strong  
Summer Habitat: Tundra, rocky slopes, rocky shores  
Nest: On ground in tundra, rock crevices  
Food: Seeds, insects  
Wintering Area: British Columbia to Oregon and Japan

Notes: Black and white bird with long black and white wings. Often seen with Lapland Longspurs and Horned Larks.

