



Sibley's Birding Basics

David Allen Sibley

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“I wrote and illustrated this book to help every inquisitive birder, from novice to expert. Whether you can identify six birds or six hundred, you’ll be a better birder if you have a grounding in the real nuts and bolts of what birds look like, and your skills will be even sharper if you know exactly what to look for and how to record what you see.” —David Allen Sibley

The Sibley Guide to Birds and *The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior* are both universally acclaimed as the new standard source of species information. And now David Sibley, America’s premier birder and best-known bird artist, takes a new direction; in *Sibley’s Birding Basics* he is concerned not so much with species as with the general characteristics that influence the appearance of all birds and thus give us the clues to their identity.

To create this guide, David Sibley thought through all the skills that enable him to identify a bird in the few instants it is visible to him. Now he shares that information, integrating an explanation of the identification process with many painted and drawn images of details (such as a feather) or concepts.

Birding Basics begins by reviewing how one can get started as a birder: the equipment necessary, where and when to go birding, and perhaps most important, the essential things to look for when birds appear in the field. Using many illustrations, David Sibley reviews all the basic concepts of bird identification and then describes the variations (of shape, size, and color) that can change the appearance of a bird over time or in different settings. And he issues a warning about “illusions and other pitfalls”—and advice on avoiding them.

The second part of the book, also plentifully illustrated, deals with another set of clues, the major aspects of avian life that differ from species to species: feathers (color, arrangement, shape, molt), behavior and habitat, and sounds.

This scientifically precise, beautifully illustrated volume distills the essence of David Sibley’s own experience and skills, providing a solid introduction to “naming” the birds. With Sibley as your guide, when you learn how to interpret what the feathers, the anatomical structure, the sounds of a bird tell you—when you know the clues that show you why there’s no such thing as “just a duck”—birding will be more fun, and more meaningful. An essential addition to the Sibley shelf!

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