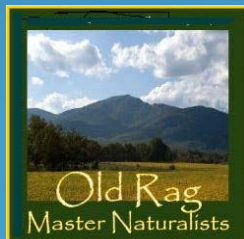


Birding Basics Part I

Learning to Know Birds

Cathy Mayes

Old Rag Master Naturalists



Why we love birds



Focus on the birds you see all the time

Size and shape



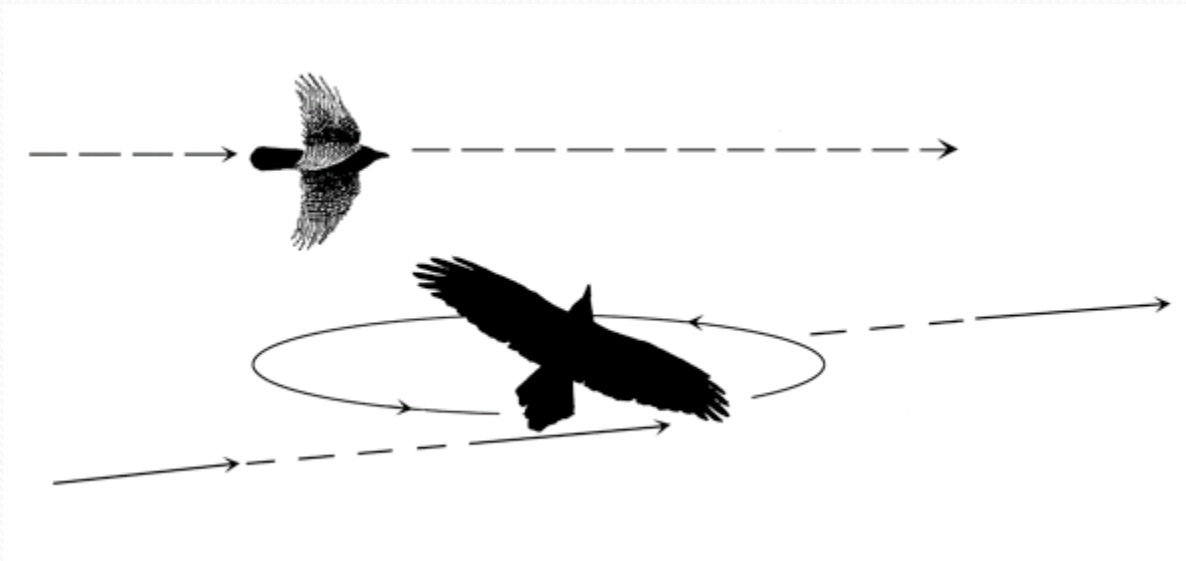
Focus on the birds you see all the time

Song



Focus on the birds you see all the time

Behavior



American crow
Corvus brachyrhynchos

Common Raven
Corvus corax

Then focus on the birds you haven't seen

Color



Red-bellied
Woodpecker
by Larry McQueen



Red-headed
Woodpecker
by James Coe

- Sexual dimorphism
- Plumages

Then focus on the birds you haven't seen

Size



American robin
Turdus migratorius



White-throated sparrow
Zonotrichia albicollis

Then focus on the birds you haven't seen

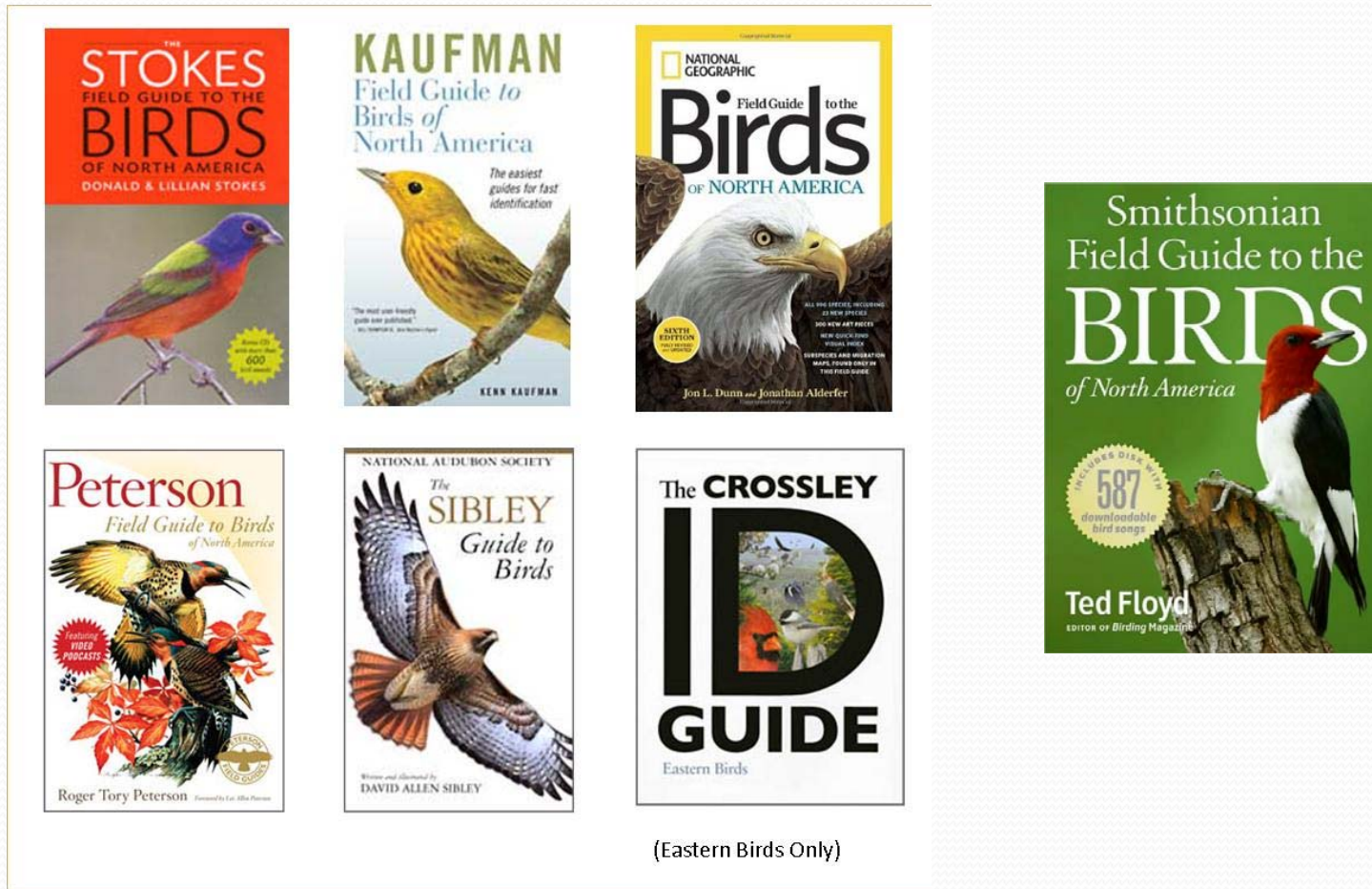
Habitat



©David Bryan

Tools of the trade

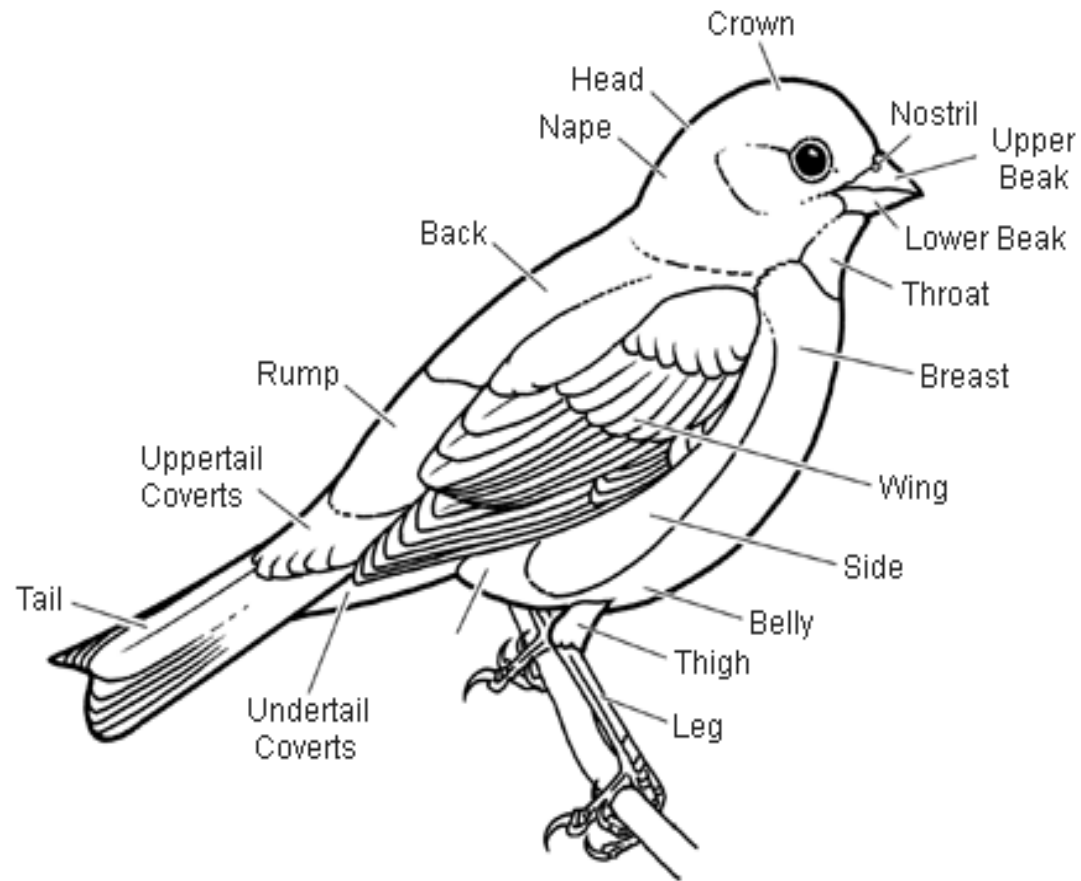
Field Guide



(Eastern Birds Only)

Tools of the trade

Field Marks



Tools of the trade

Field Marks



American goldfinch ♀
Spinus tristis



Scarlet tanager ♀
Piranga olivacea

Tools of the trade

Binoculars



<http://www.allaboutbirds.org/page.aspx?pid=2674> – Cornell Binocular Buying Guide

Tools of the trade

Feeding station



American Beautyberry
Callicarpa americana

Tools of the trade

Apps

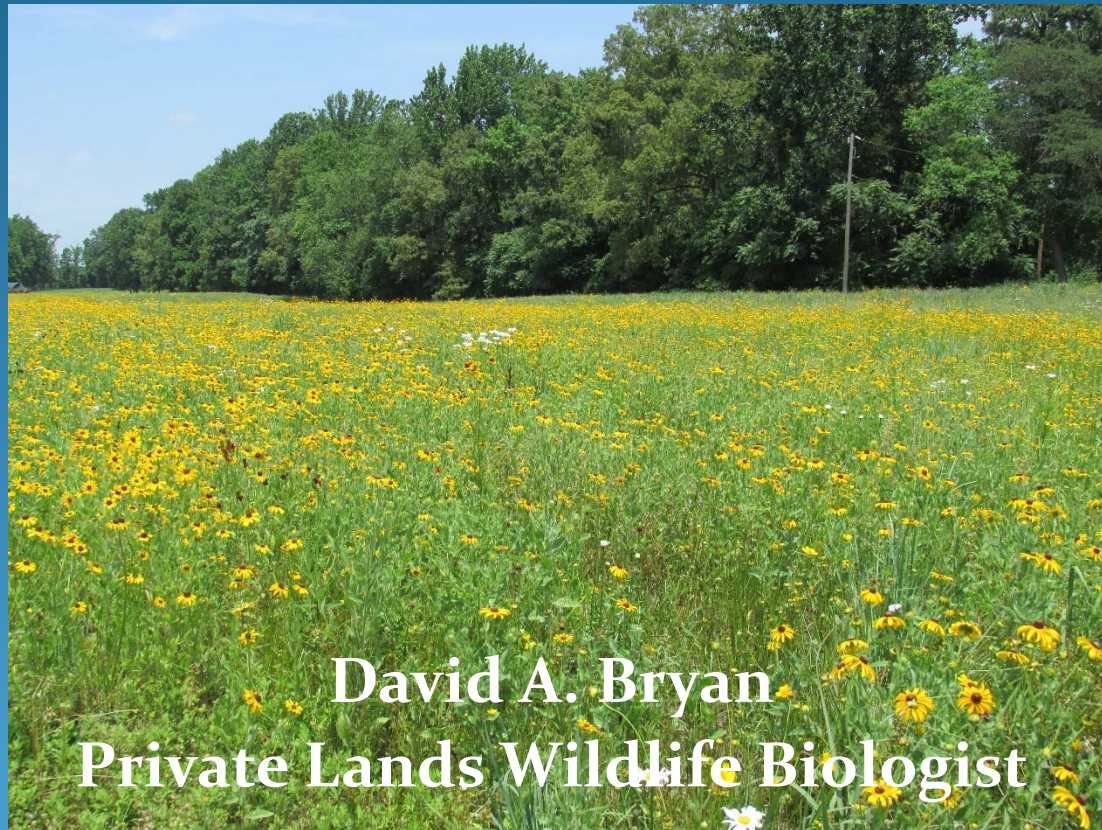


Chirp!



Birding Basics Part II

Website Tools and Habitat Tips



Key Websites for Birders


- Personal Favorites:
 - AllAboutBirds.org
 - Birdcast.info
 - eBird.org
 - All led by Cornell Lab of Ornithology



AllAboutBirds.org

The **Cornell** Lab of Ornithology

All About Birds

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Red-winged Blackbird © Tim J. Hopwood

Features

Featured This Week

How do birds survive extremely cold weather? Read our blog post [How Birds Survive the Cold: Feathers + Food = Warmth](#) and find out.

Question of the Week

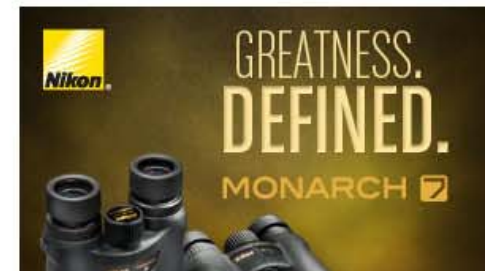
Q. Are cardinals brighter in winter? [Answer](#)

WELCOME TO ALL ABOUT BIRDS

Your guide to birds and bird watching

[Information on 596 species in our online bird guide](#)

Latest updates: Expanded info on [Sagebrush Sparrow](#), [Bell's Sparrow](#)



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The Cornell Lab of Ornithology

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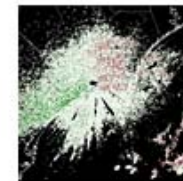
Bird Migration Forecasts in Real-Time

When, where, and how far will birds migrate? Our migration forecasts will answer these questions for the first time.



Species on the move: Common Redpoll

Every year for the last 15 years, Ron Pittaway of Ontario Field Ornithologists publishes a forecast for the movements of winter finches in the upcoming winter. Team BirdCast loves this. This forecast focuses specifically on the movements of...



Computer Science

Innovative machine learning will predict the migration of 400+ species across North America

Will a mid-winter warm blast kickstart early migrant movements in the western and central US?

In March 2012 much of the eastern US experience anomalously warm temperatures in March that



Biology

Our migration models will allow researchers to better understand bird behavior in

BirdCast

[Research](#) [People](#) [Publications](#) [Presentations](#) [Forecasts](#)

Search for...



Forecasts ▶

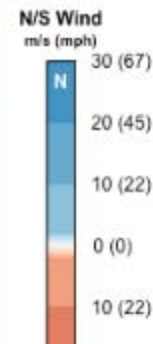
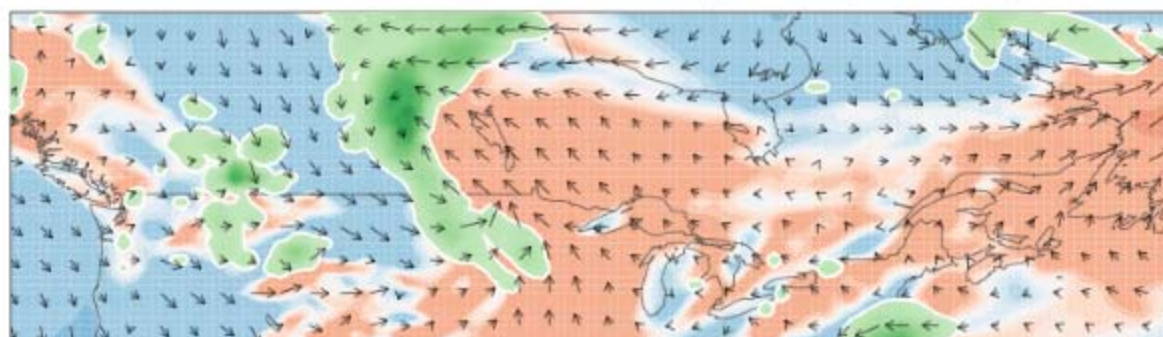
Regional Migration Forecast: 26 September – 3 October 2014

26 September, 2014

Continental Summary

Favorable conditions at the end of the forecast period bring widespread light to moderate movements to the West and moderate to heavy movements to the Plains, while increasingly scattered moderate movements occur in the East in more summer-like conditions. Species on the move this week will include Cackling, Snow, and Great White-fronted Geese, American Wigeon, Ring-necked Duck, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Northern Flicker, Hermit and Varied Thrushes, Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets, Brown Creeper, Gray Catbird, Orange-crowned, Palm, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Savannah, LeConte's, Fox, White-throated, White-crowned, Golden-crowned, Harris's, and Lincoln's Sparrows, and Dark-eyed Junco.

Forecast: 01 October 2014 at 0000 UTC (Tue 30 Sep 2000 EDT)





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Birding in the 21st Century.

The **Cornell** Lab
of Ornithology 

 Audubon

News and Features

[Scott Deckelmann, January 2015 Zeiss eBirder of the Month](#)

16 February 2015

Please join us in congratulating Scott Deckelmann of Portland, Oregon, winner of the January 2015 eBird Challenge, sponsored by Carl Zeiss Sports Optic. At the end of December we posted our article about [making eBird your New Year's Resolution](#). As a follow-up of that post and sentiment, our under-the-radar challenge for January was to submit at least 50 complete checklists over the course of the month. Scott's name was drawn randomly from the almost 1500 people who submitted over 50 checklists in the month of January! Scott will receive new ZEISS Conquest HD 8×42 binoculars for his eBirding efforts. We asked Scott to tell us a little more about himself, his use of eBird, and his love of birds – check out his story below!



Help Support eBird

 [Donate Now](#)





View and Explore Data



[Explore a Region](#)

Recent sightings, checklists, birding activity, best hotspots, and top birders for a county, state, province, or country.



[Explore Hotspots](#)

Discover the best places for birding nearby or around the world.



[Species Maps](#)

Explore interactive range maps by species or subspecies — zoom in for details

Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug S

Your Totals

Track your totals and compare with other eBirders.

[Yard Totals](#)

How many species and checklists have you submitted for your yard?

[Patch Totals](#)

How many have you submitted for your favorite birding patches?

[Top 100](#)

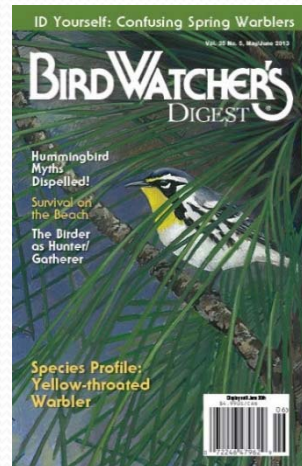
Compare with the top eBirders in your region.

Species You Need

Tools to find species you haven't seen yet.

Other Resources for Birders

- Others Resources
 - Periodicals such as *Birdwatching*, *Bird Watcher's Digest*, *Birds & Blooms*

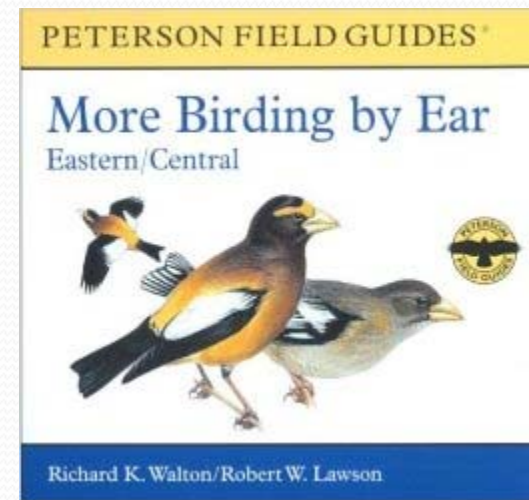
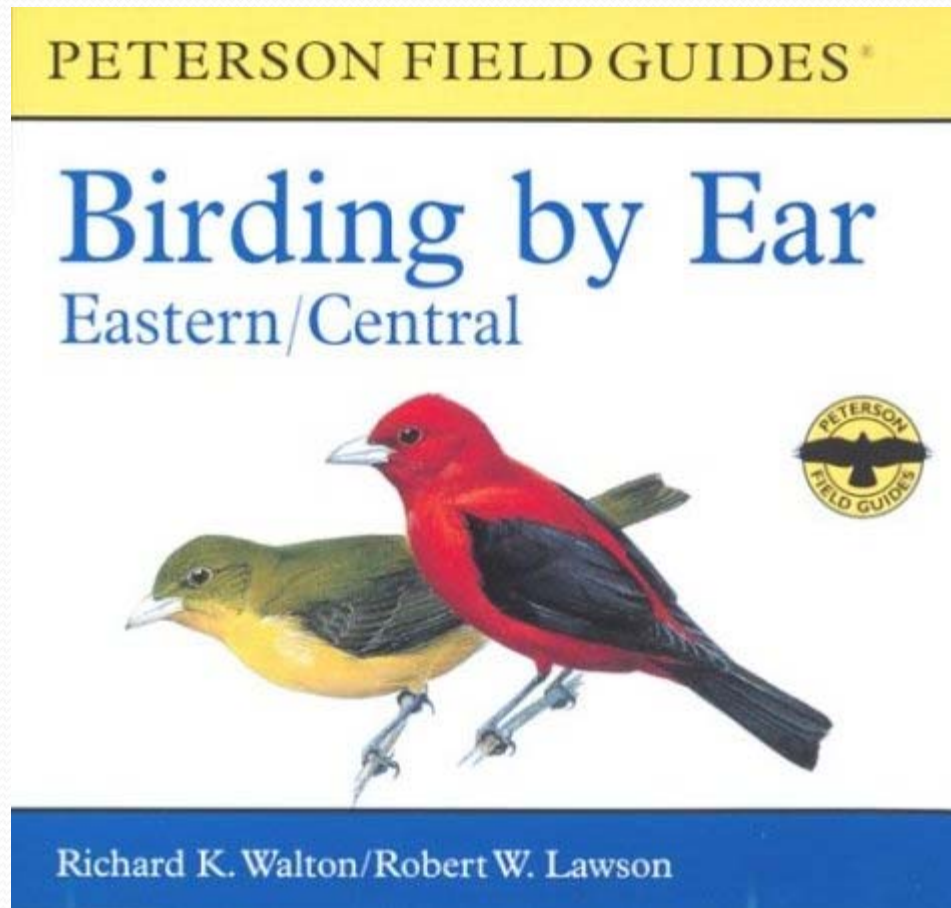


- Non-profits such as National Audubon Society and American Bird Conservancy:
audubon.org; abcbirds.org



Other Resources for Birders

Birding by Ear CDs.... Greatly helpful...



What Limits Wildlife Use on Your Property?



*i.e. how do I get
more of these???*

the key is habitat...



By Bob Schamerhorn, iphotobirds.com

Problems? First things first... get rid of lawn



From smallfarms.oregonstate.edu

(1) Monocultures Aren't Good, (2) Too Thick, (3) No Cover

Top 3 Things to do for Songbirds if you have a Small Lot



© David Bryan

#1 – Stop the “Clean” Mentality

- The areas that look messy or grown up to humans are typically the best habitats for wildlife
- Native weeds and wildflowers provide pollinator habitat and attract insects for natural bird food
- Shrubby cover is a critical habitat element for migrating and breeding songbirds, quail and rabbits; often lacking in suburban or rural lots

So what to do...?

#1 – Stop the “Clean” Mentality

- Change your mowing/weed-eating habits
 - Let beneficial species grow up
 - If you have odd, out-of-sight areas:
 - Do not mow non-critical areas in the nesting season
 - Mowing is better in the late winter than late summer
- Develop the brushy areas on your land
 - Create brush piles
 - Don't burn off old brush
 - Plant shrub hedgerows
 - Especially within flight distance of feeder



#2 – Plant Native

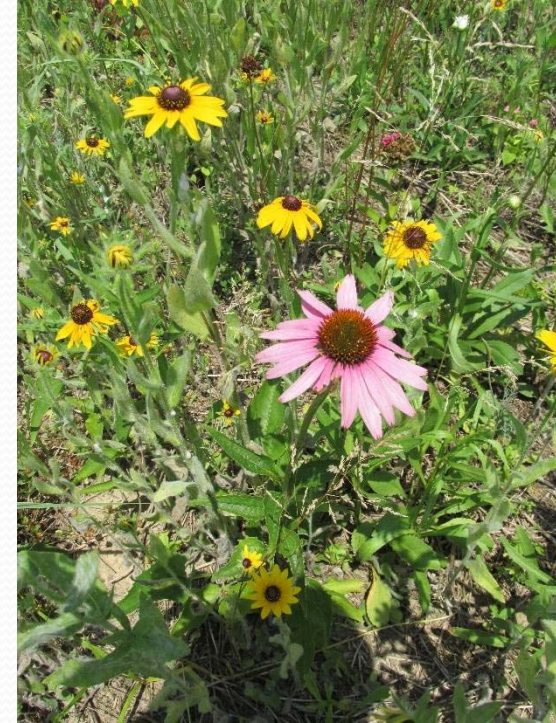
- Native grasses, forbs (wildflowers and weeds), shrubs and vines provide excellent habitat for birds, mammals and pollinators
- In general, native plants are used to native soils and thus are hardier, require less water, less pesticides and fertilizers, and less overall care
- Many are used to a broad range of site conditions



VIRGINIA
NATIVE PLANT
SOCIETY

#2 – Plant Native

- Why are Natives Attractive:
 - Fruits
 - Flowers (nectar)
 - Cover and nest sites
 - Migratory rest stop
 - Generally not an invasive monoculture
 - From a bird perspective, attract lots of juicy insects (see next slides)



©David Bryan

Ten most valuable woody plant genera for supporting Lepidoptera

- *Quercus* (oaks) 534 spp
- *Prunus* (cherries) 457 spp
- *Salix* (willows) 456 spp
- *Betula* (birches) 413 spp
- *Populus* (poplars) 368 spp
- *Malus* (crabapples) 311 spp
- *Vaccinium* (blueberries) 288 spp
- *Acer* (maples) 285 spp
- *Ulmus* (elms) 213 spp
- *Pinus* (pines) 203 spp



Thanks to Dr. Lou Verner and Dr. Douglas Tallamy for this slide's information

Ten most valuable ornamental perennial genera for supporting Lepidoptera

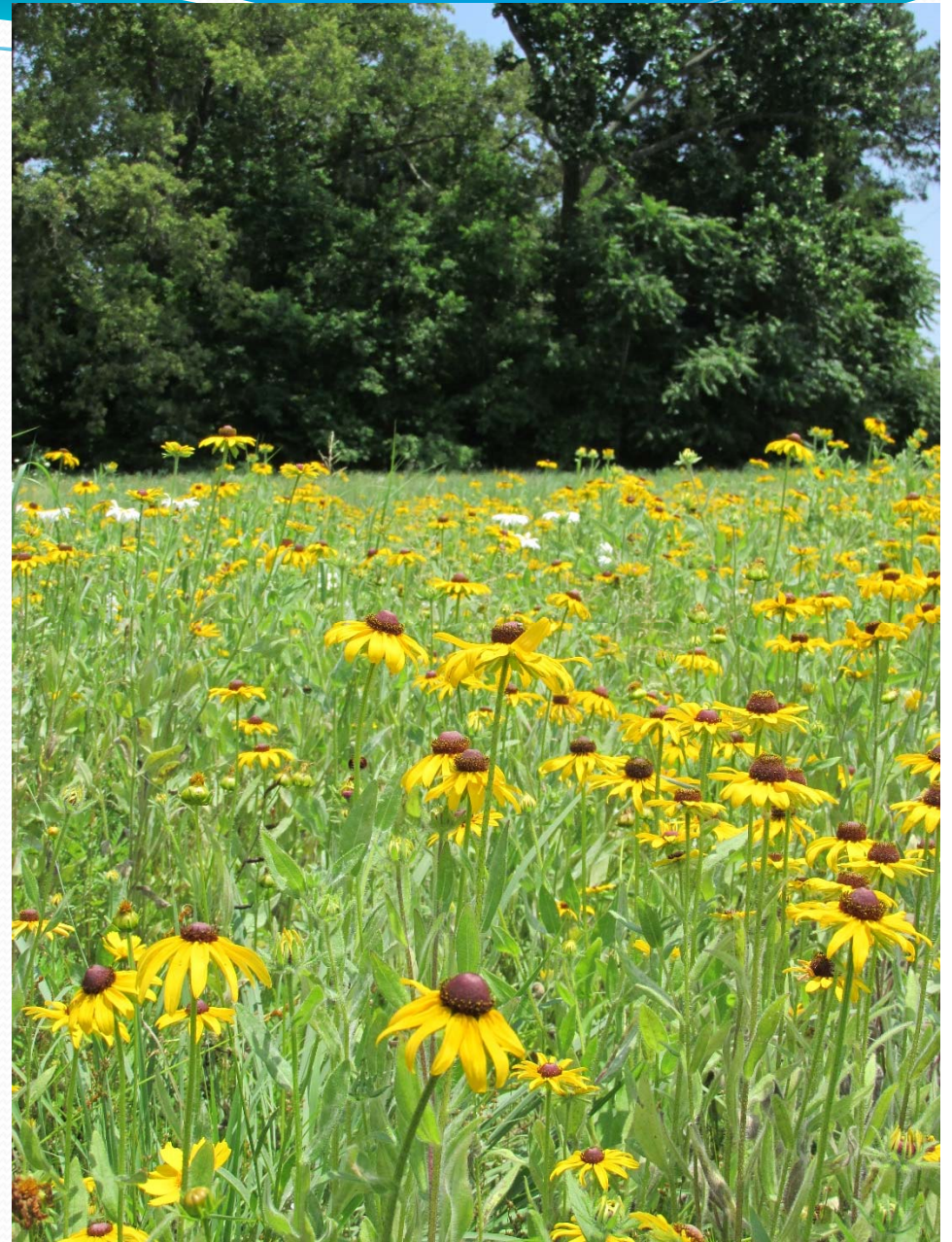
• <i>Solidago</i> (goldenrod)	115 spp
• <i>Aster</i> (asters)	112 spp
• <i>Helianthus</i> (sunflower)	73 spp
• <i>Eupatorium</i> (JoePye, boneset)	42 spp
• <i>Ipomoea</i> (morning glory)	39 spp
• <i>Carex</i> (sedges)	36 spp
• <i>Lonicera</i> (honeysuckle)	36 spp
• <i>Lupinus</i> (lupines)	33 spp
• <i>Viola</i> (violets)	29 spp
• <i>Geranium</i> (geraniums)	23 spp
• <i>Rudbeckia</i> (black-eyed Susans)	17 spp



Thanks to Dr. Lou Verner and Dr. Douglas Tallamy for this slide's information

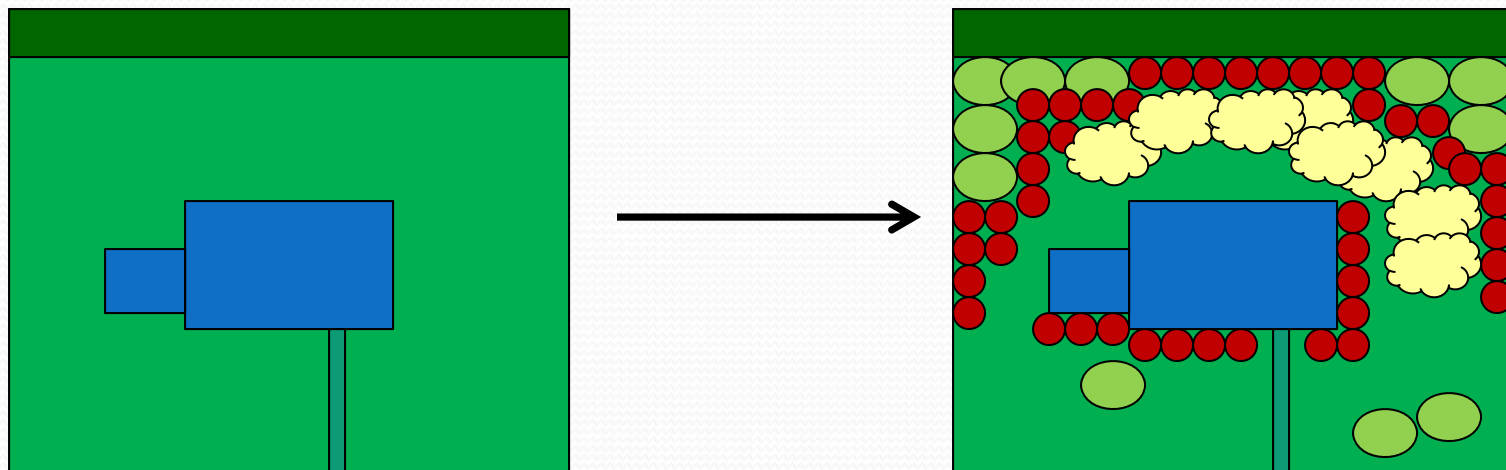
Wildflower Options

- Partridge Pea
- Black-eyed Susan
- Lanceleaf Coreopsis
- Plains Coreopsis
- Purple Coneflower
- Butterflyweed
- Common Milkweed



After Killing Fescue Where You'd Like...

- Plan From Outside, Working Your Way In
- Remember to Stair-Step
 - Start with Shrubby Cover Closest to Woodline or Fenceline
 - Have Forbs, or Native Grasses and then Forbs, closest to Lawn



#3 – Keep Cats Indoors

- Outdoor cats, both domestic and otherwise, kill billions of animals per year
- Particularly bad in urban/suburban areas
- Greater impacts on small reptiles, mammals, and invertebrates, then birds and lastly amphibians
- Recent study of free-roaming pet cats found that only about 28% of prey is eaten, 49% left at capture site, and 23% returned to cats' residences
- So what to do? Simply put, keep cats indoors – and tell your neighbor too!



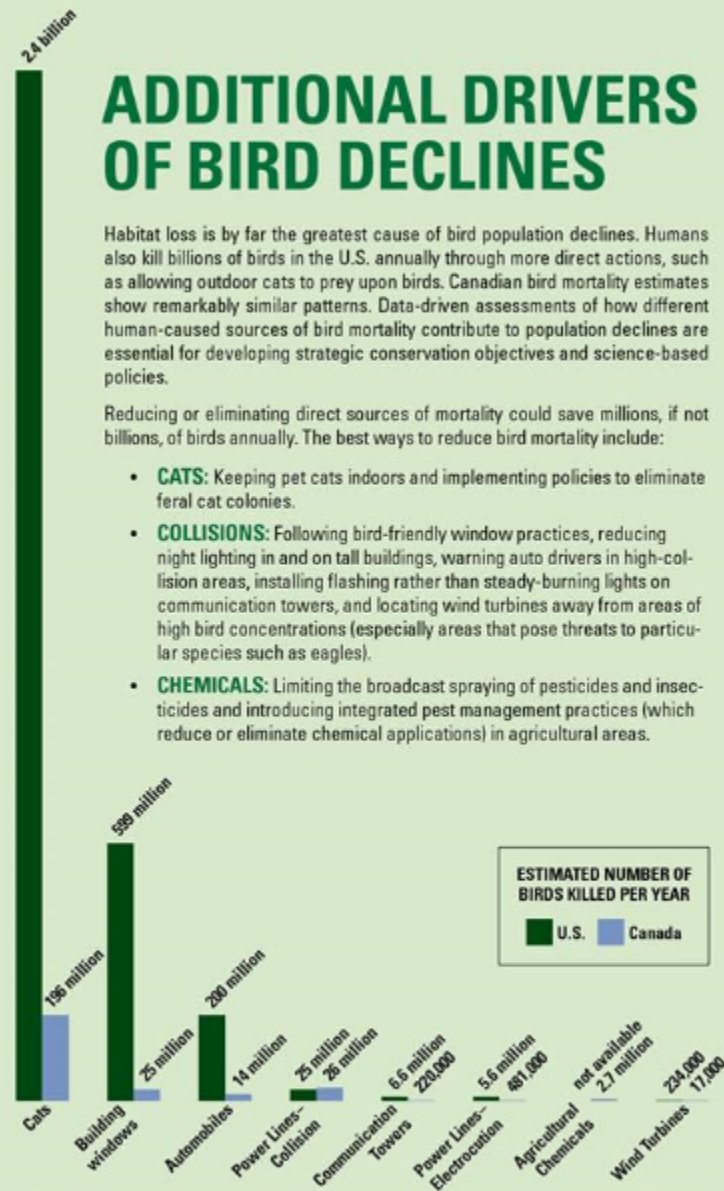
From Cats Indoors website

ADDITIONAL DRIVERS OF BIRD DECLINES

Habitat loss is by far the greatest cause of bird population declines. Humans also kill billions of birds in the U.S. annually through more direct actions, such as allowing outdoor cats to prey upon birds. Canadian bird mortality estimates show remarkably similar patterns. Data-driven assessments of how different human-caused sources of bird mortality contribute to population declines are essential for developing strategic conservation objectives and science-based policies.

Reducing or eliminating direct sources of mortality could save millions, if not billions, of birds annually. The best ways to reduce bird mortality include:

- **CATS:** Keeping pet cats indoors and implementing policies to eliminate feral cat colonies.
- **COLLISIONS:** Following bird-friendly window practices, reducing night lighting in and on tall buildings, warning auto drivers in high-collision areas, installing flashing rather than steady-burning lights on communication towers, and locating wind turbines away from areas of high bird concentrations (especially areas that pose threats to particular species such as eagles).
- **CHEMICALS:** Limiting the broadcast spraying of pesticides and insecticides and introducing integrated pest management practices (which reduce or eliminate chemical applications) in agricultural areas.



BAR CHART BASED ON INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENTS OF DIRECT HUMAN-CAUSED MORTALITY IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA. THIS DATA IS ADAPTED FROM LOSS SR, WILL T, MARRA PP. DIRECT HUMAN-CAUSED MORTALITY OF BIRDS. ANNUAL REVIEW OF ECOLOGY, EVOLUTION, AND SYSTEMATICS IN PREP

What's Next?

- If Interested in More Information:
 - Contact:
 - David.Bryan@va.usda.gov
 - (804) 537-5225 ext. 119
 - bringbackbobwhites.org
 - [Facebook.com/VirginiaBobwhiteBulletin](https://www.facebook.com/VirginiaBobwhiteBulletin)
 - Questions?



A screenshot of a Facebook login page. At the top, the Facebook logo is on the left, and the login fields for "Email or Phone" and "Password" are on the right, with a "Log In" button. Below the login fields are checkboxes for "Keep me logged in" and a link for "Forgot your password?". The main content area features a large background image of a field with a forest in the distance. Overlaid on this is a white box with the text "Virginia Bobwhite Bulletin is on Facebook." and "To connect with Virginia Bobwhite Bulletin, sign up for Facebook today." Below this text are "Sign Up" and "Log In" buttons. At the bottom left of the page is a profile picture of a Virginia Bobwhite quail. To its right, the page name "Virginia Bobwhite Bulletin" and category "Education" are displayed. At the very bottom, navigation tabs for "Timeline", "About", "Photos", "Likes", and "Videos" are visible.