

What kind of bird is that...

When trying to identify a bird, the first things to look for are location and behavior. Is the bird up high making noise, or on the ground digging in leaves? Next, think about size and shape. Is it big like a crow, or small like a sparrow? Does it have pointy wings, or a long tail? Finally, you can use field marks to identify birds flip to the back panel to discover how.

Circle the birds you find on your hike today!

in the trees?

Almost all the birds of the Blue Ridge Mountains use trees and shrubs for food, shelter, or nesting. Woodpeckers and chickadees make their nests in the cavities of trees and pick insects from the bark. Trees can provide seeds and berries for birds such as waxwings and goldfinches to eat.

Look into the trees. How many different birds can you find? _____ What parts of the tree are the birds using? _____



Carolina Chickadee
Poecile carolinensis
"chickadeedeede"

Eastern Bluebird
Sialia sialis
soft, low-pitched
"tu-a-wee"



American Goldfinch
Carduelis tristis
"per-chik-o-ry"

Dark-eyed Junco
Junco hyemalis
musical trill of 7-23 notes



in the air?

Birds that spend a lot of time in the air use their strong eyesight to find food. Hawks, crows and vultures can usually be found perched or circling up high as they search for their next meal. **Scan the sky over fields and through openings in the trees. Are there any large birds flying overhead? _____ Are they flapping or gliding? _____**



Turkey Vulture
Cathartes aura
warning "hsssss"

Red-tailed Hawk
Buteo jamaicensis
"keeee-arr" raspy scream



American Crow
Corvus brachyrhynchos
"caww caww"



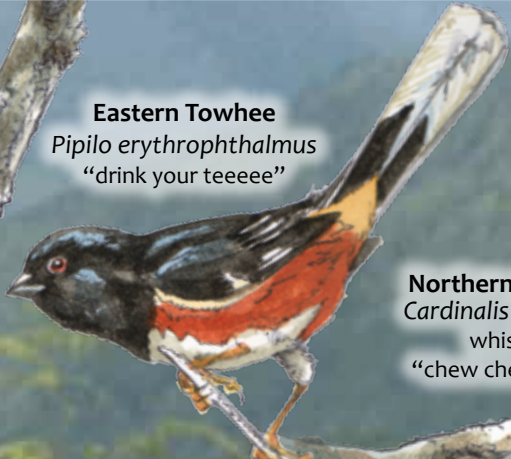
on the ground?

Birds that feed on the ground usually specialize in catching bugs or finding seeds. American Robins use their beaks to pull earthworms from the ground. Towhees and cardinals scratch through leaves to uncover fallen seeds and berries. Mourning doves peck insects and seeds from gravelly areas. **Check the ground near trail, stream and field edges.**

How many different birds can you find? _____ Can you tell what they are eating? _____



American Robin
Turdus migratorius
"plurri, kliwi,
plurri, kliwi"



Eastern Towhee
Pipilo erythrophthalmus
"drink your teeeee"



Northern Cardinal
Cardinalis cardinalis
whistles
"chew chew chew"



Mourning Dove
Zenaidura macroura
mournful "ooOOH
cooo coo coo"



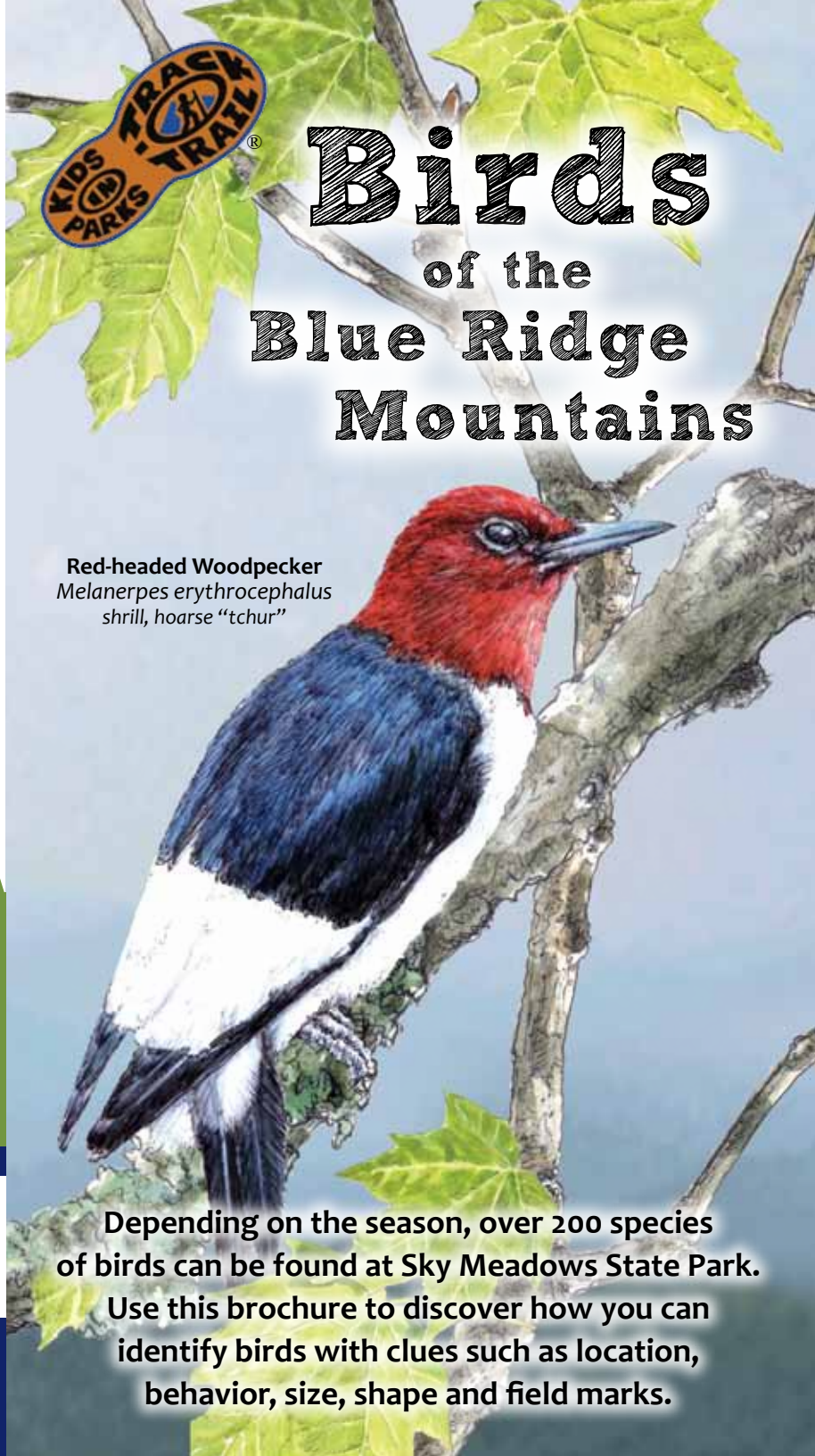
Carolina Wren
Thryothorus ludovicianus
"pidaro pidaro pidaro"



Northern Mockingbird
Mimus polyglottos
varied phrases "krrDEE krrDEE
krrDEE, wikwikwik"

making noise?

Birds make all kinds of noises some sing to attract a mate, while others will call attention to food, danger or territory. Carolina wrens are known for their loud, cheerful song and chattering sounds. Northern mockingbirds can imitate hundreds of different sounds, and will sometimes sing at night! **Close your eyes and listen for one minute. How many different birds can you hear around you? _____**



Birds of the Blue Ridge Mountains

Red-headed Woodpecker
Melanerpes erythrocephalus
shrill, hoarse "tchur"

Depending on the season, over 200 species of birds can be found at Sky Meadows State Park. Use this brochure to discover how you can identify birds with clues such as location, behavior, size, shape and field marks.

TRACK your hike at kidsinparks.com and get **FREE** prizes!



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For an extensive, easy to use Nature Guide, go to www.skymeadows.info

Field Marks

In addition to size, shape, location and behavior, field marks can be used to help identify birds. If you can't identify a bird on your hike, remembering what certain parts of the bird looked like can help you identify it when you get home. On your birding adventure, try to find a bird you don't know and see if it has any of the following field marks:

Blue Jay
Cyanocitta cristata
harsh "jayy"

- wing bars**
Does the bird have wing bars or patches?
- tail bars**
Are there any stripes across the bird's tail?
- tail markings**
Does the bird have white edges on its tail or a different color on the tip?
- nape**
Is the bird's nape a different color?
- crown**
Does the bird have a colored "cap" or a crest on its head?
- eyestripe**
Does the bird have a stripe through the eye?
- eyebrow**
Does the bird have an eyebrow? What color?
- belly**
What color is the bird's belly?
- side**
Does the bird have coloring on the sides?
- breast**
Does the breast have speckles or bands of color?
- throat**
Is the bird's throat a different color?
- beak or bill**
What shape and color are the beak?