

Beginning Birding - Ten Tips for New Bird Watchers

Welcome to the wonderful world of birding!

If you like watching birds in your backyard or you want to travel the world to see all 10,000 bird species, use these ten tips to get started!

Hint #1:

You need a **field guide** for your area. A field guide is a book with pictures of the birds and tips for identifying them.

Hint # 2:

You need **binoculars** to see the birds. You will soon discover that a good pair of binoculars is a sound investment.

Hint #3:

You need to know **what to expect** in your area. The giant woodpecker you saw in the woods was a Pileated Woodpecker, not an Ivory-billed Woodpecker. Checklists of birds in your area will tell you this. Many State and National parks near you have Checklists of the birds seen in the park.

Hint #4:

You need to be able to **find the birds**. To do this, you should learn about the habitat each species of bird prefers. Do they like to spend their time at the top of a tree or on the ground or on a lake? You should learn the songs of the birds in your yard. Many bird songs can be accessed on-line or invest in some birding software. Later, learn the songs of other birds in your area of the country. To find a bird, you will often hear it first.

Hint #5:

Join a group of other birders. Birders are very friendly and helpful. They are always willing to share their knowledge. We were all beginners once. Start by calling the local Bird Club. Go to the park with your binoculars. Someone is sure to strike up a conversation and they might lead you to a whole new group of birding buddies.

Hint #6:

Try a **birding trip** or tour. Local bird trips are sometimes advertised in the newspapers. These

are often led by park rangers or a local bird club member. The trips may last a morning or most of the day. These trips are usually free of charge. You might also want to join a professional guide on a tour. Tour guides charge for their services but they are worth every penny. When birding, wear neutral clothing, not white.

Hint #7:

Read about birds. There are many good magazines about birds and birding. For North American birds [Birder's World](#), [Bird Watcher's Digest](#), [Birding](#) and [WildBird](#) are magazines you might like. Subscribe to the ones that appeal to you. There are also thousands of books about birds. Browse through your local library holdings for a wide variety of books and periodicals on the topic.

Hint #8:

Bring the birds to you. You can **attract birds** to your yard with just a little work. Planting the right flowers will attract hummingbirds. Sunflower seeds will bring lots of new birds to your house. You might even want to build a bluebird house.

Hint #9:

Record your bird sightings. You might want to keep a "diary" or list of the birds you see in your yard. You can also keep a list of birds you see in your town or on your vacation. Birders often keep lists for their county, state or country. They may also keep track of birds seen in one day or one month or one year.

Hint #10:

HAVE FUN!