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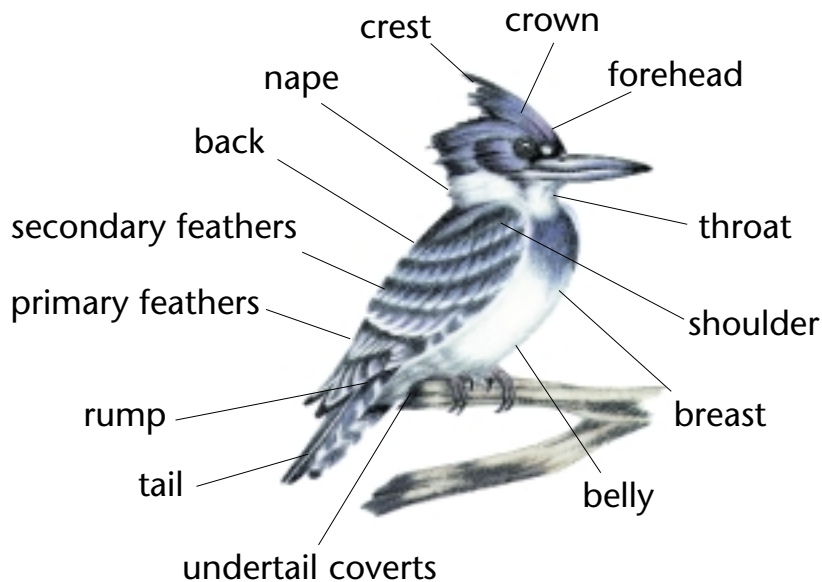
ANIMAL ACTIVITIES

HOW TO IDENTIFY BIRDS

As with other species, the best way to become good at identifying birds is simply to practice. The more birds you attempt to identify, the better you'll become at distinguishing species.

When birding, the first thing to note is the habitat you are exploring, in order to know what kinds of birds to expect. When you spot a bird, check for obvious field marks. Note the shape of its silhouette and beak. Note the color and pattern of its feathers for distinguishing markings at rest and in flight. Is it small (sparrow), medium (crow), or large (heron)? Does it have any unusual behavioral characteristics?

If you are interested in enhancing your field skills, it is essential to become familiar with bird songs because many species are easily distinguished by their call, and it is often difficult to positively identify a bird by sight in dense cover or in poor light. Bird song tapes and CDs are available from nature stores and libraries.



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