

American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*)



◆ This is an American Crow, but most people know it as just “crow.” The crow is a super-smart member of the corvid family and is related to ravens and jays. It can even use tools: crows can drop nuts and clams on roads so cars will drive over them to open

them up! Crows are omnivores...that means they eat almost anything...from garbage and French fries to road kill and bird’s eggs.

◆ The crow is a large black bird, but not a blackbird (that’s a different family). They’re about 43 centimeters long with a wingspan of about 76 centimeters. Males and females look alike.

◆ Their large, strong beak helps them eat all kinds of food. Their toes and feet are strong because they spend so much of their life walking around on the ground looking for something to eat; their toes and feet are also built for perching.

◆ You’ll find crows all over the city because humans are always feeding them...whether they know it or not (think garbage cans, picnics and fruit trees—yum!)

◆ They’re well-known for their “caw” call and they use it to tell things to their friends and family. When crows make a lot of noise, pay attention: they might lead you to a raptor like an owl, hawk or eagle.

◆ In the fall and winter they sleep with thousands of other crows in a communal roost—a group sleeping area—usually in a big group of trees. If you see lots of crows flying together at dusk, they’re usually headed to this big slumber party.

Slater Kit ID number: G1

American Goldfinch (*Spinus tristis*)



◆ The American Goldfinch is the state bird of the Washington... and New Jersey...and Iowa! Some people think their bouncing flight looks like they’re pogo-sticking through the air. They call out “po-ta-to chip, po-ta-to chip!” as they spring merrily along, making flying look like the absolute best way to get around. And it is!

◆ Males are a striking yellow with black foreheads, black wings with white markings, and white patches both above and beneath the tail. Females are duller yellow beneath and olive-colored above. In the winter both males and females are a plain brown with dark wings and two pale wing bars.

◆ They’re among the strictest bird vegetarians, preferring an all-vegetable diet and only swallowing insects by accident. They eat mainly seeds and especially like the seeds of sunflowers, thistles, asters, grasses and alders.

◆ Their conical pink beaks help them crack seeds from feeders and plants. Their feet help them hang on like circus acrobats to bending stalks and dangling branches while they gather food. Hang up a “seed sock” full of thistle seed and you’ll see their antics up close.

Slater Kit ID number: A3

American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*)



- ◆ When you think of the early bird getting the worm...think of the American Robin! They're a widespread, common bird associated with lawns, though they can be found in all kinds of habitats: forests, mountains and even

the tundra. They're known for their jaunty way of moving around grassy areas looking for worms. When they cock their head to the side, some people think they're listening for their wiggly prey, but they're actually carefully looking for movement that leads them to...breakfast!

- ◆ The American Robin is a strong, fast-flying songbird with a large roundish body (up to 23 centimeters long), long legs and a relatively long tail. They're gray with a dark head, and a red-orange chest and belly. Females have the same coloration as males, but look washed out by comparison.

- ◆ Their melodic, warbling song is often associated with the arrival of spring.

- ◆ In spring and summer they use their strong bill to probe for earthworms and ground-dwelling insects. In fall and winter they eat mostly berries and other fruits.

- ◆ When it's not nesting season, they gather with other robins in a large flock in a shared roost (usually a group of trees) at night. More than 250,000 robins have been known to roost together.

- ◆ Because they feed on lawns, they're affected by pesticides and can help people learn about unhealthy chemicals.

Slater Kit ID number: F3

Anna's Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*)



- ◆ Anna's Hummingbirds are the most common hummingbirds in northwest cities, even though they didn't arrive here from California until about 50 years ago. They hang around all year thanks to hummingbird feeders. They also use flowers and get protein from spiders and small

insects. They are small - about seven centimeters long—and *fast*, their wings beating up to 50 times per second as they zoom by at 40 km/hr!

- ◆ They have shiny iridescent green backs and grayish-white undersides. Males are colorful with iridescent purple-red crowns and throat patches. Females have gray throats with a small patch of red.

- ◆ They have a long, slender beak and a long tongue that they use to lap up flower nectar and sugar water from feeders. Their tiny feet are useful for perching, but don't allow them to walk.

- ◆ The Anna's Hummingbird is a frequent visitor to parks and yards, and they can also be found in mixed forests.

- ◆ Their song is a rapid dry electrical sounding chatter. The male's tail makes a very loud chirp at the end of his impressive dive display. After flying up to 37 meters in the air, he does a dive-bomb drop at 64 kilometers an hour! He repeats this until he thinks he's made his point, either impressing a female or telling another male hummer to get lost.

- ◆ Their nest is the size of a big walnut, and their eggs are so tiny you might think they were jellybeans. They nest very early in the year – some nests can be found in February!

Slater Kit ID number: A2

Barred Owl (*Strix varia*)



◆ “Who cooks for you, who cooks for you all?” To people, this is what the Barred Owl’s most common hoot sounds like. They’re relatively new to the Northwest, but they’ve made themselves right at home and are causing some trouble because they are aggressive and like the same kind of habitat as their cousin the Spotted Owl—an endangered species that prefers

old-growth forests. Barred Owls prefer forests, parks, and suburban areas but are comfortable in forested urban areas and are the most commonly sighted urban owl. Sometimes they even hoot during the daytime, but like most owls they’re nocturnal (active at night). They nest in tree holes or in open nests built by other birds such as crows.

◆ The Barred Owl is large, averaging 46 centimeters tall, with a smooth rounded head. Because their bulk is mostly feathers, they weigh in at only about .45 kilograms. They have dark eyes and are named for their barred feathers on their breast. Males and females look the same.

◆ Their sharp curved beak helps them dig into meaty prey: small mammals (like mice!), birds, amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates. Their curved talons (toenails to you) are needle sharp, allowing them to grab and hold on tight to their dinner.

◆ Besides their signature hoot, they make all kinds of strange noises that sometimes scare people awake in the middle of the night. They scream, cackle, caw and make gurgling sounds.

Slater Kit ID number: C1

Belted Kingfisher (*Megasceryle alcyon*)



◆ The Belted Kingfisher’s loud rattling cry is a common sound along Puget Sound shorelines and rivers. Though they can commonly be seen perching on branches near the water, one of their most distinguishing moves is to hover in the air like a

helicopter before diving headfirst into the water after...you guessed it...fish! They’re the king of fishers, in fact. After they dive, you might see them land with a wriggling flash of silver in their beak. Awesome!

◆ The kingfisher is a stout, big-headed jaunty bird, about 30 centimeters long and with a shaggy head crest and a spear-shaped bill (great for nabbing slippery fish). Males are gray-blue above and white below with a white collar and gray-blue breast stripe. Females are similar, but have a second rusty band across their bellies. Unlike most birds, females of their species are more colorful than the males.

◆ Their feet are small in relation to their body size, but very strong. The outer two toes are joined almost to the end and are good for kicking sand out of the burrow they dig with their beak.

◆ Mates work together to dig a nest tunnel (up to 2.5 meters long) in a waterside bank. They’ve been known to share their nest burrow with swallows, which sometimes nest in “rooms” off the main tunnel.

◆ To teach their young to fish, they drop bits of food into the water for their young to go after.

◆ A group of kingfishers is known as a “crown” or a “rattle.”

Slater Kit ID number: K3

Black-capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapilla*)



◆ “Chickadee dee dee dee!”
The Black-capped chickadee is one of the few birds around that calls their name out as they fly by. You’ll recognize them by their black cap and white cheeks. Chickadees are easy to identify because they’re

common and curious, and they’re one of the first birds at feeders.

◆ They have a short neck, round head, black cap and throat, and white cheeks. They’re gray above with light brown sides fading to white underneath. Males and females look the same.

◆ Chickadees travel in flocks, so look for them as they fly across a road or open area in their bouncy flight pattern.

◆ Their short and strong bill and strong legs help them to glean insects from bark and twigs. They can also hammer open sunflower seeds that they take from a bird feeder.

◆ You might see them hanging upside-down from trees to get at the undersides of branches and leaves. They also hover and sometimes fly out to catch bugs on the wing. They eat insects, spiders, berries and seeds—they especially like black sunflower seeds from feeders. In the winter, they join mixed feeding flocks of other birds like Red-breasted Nuthatches and Brown Creepers.

◆ They will store food in a secret spot in the fall and return to find it up to a month later. They can remember thousands of hiding places!

◆ When they’re warning their friends about predators, they will add “dee” notes to their call—the more “dee dees” you hear, the bigger the threat.

Slater Kit ID number: E2

Brown Creeper (*Certhia americana*)



◆ They call this bird a creeper because of the way they scoot up and around tree trunks collecting insect snacks as they go. Once the Brown Creeper reaches a tree top, they fly down to the bottom of another promising tree and begin their upwards feasting spiral.

◆ Their stiff tail braces them as they move up trees and branches like a small woodpecker.

◆ Their back is mottled brown with some white and black markings so they blend in well with tree bark. Their long tail helps them balance on tree trunks. In flight you’ll see their white breast and belly, and a cream-colored stripe on their wing. They have a rusty colored rump and brown tail. Males and females look the same.

◆ They have a fluty whistling song that ends on a high note.

◆ Their beak is thin and curved to help them grasp insects, spiders and their eggs in and under tree bark. Their leg muscles are powerful, with strong feet and sharp claws for holding tight to tree trunks.

◆ They make their nest where the bark has broken away from a tree creating a secret crevice. They prefer coniferous or mixed forests.

◆ Sometimes they’re hard to spot, so look for them in mixed feeding flocks in the wintertime among kinglets, nuthatches and chickadees.

Slater Kit ID number: F2

Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)



◆ If the Common Goldeneye gets close enough you'll see their telltale yellow-gold eyes. They're a winter bird inhabitant of Puget Sound shores along with their look-alike cousin, the Barrow's Goldeneye. They

both prefer sheltered inlets with abundant shellfish. Their wings make a loud whirring whistle during flight, which is why they're known to some people as the "whistler."

◆ Except for both having large heads and stocky bodies, males and females look very different from each other. Males have black and white plumage and a dark head (iridescent green, though it usually appears black), with a white circle on either side of the head next to the bill. (Male Barrow's Goldeneyes have a crescent shape here instead of a circle.) Females are gray with a chocolate-brown head.

◆ They dive from the surface to nab aquatic invertebrates, like mussels, and small fish from the bottom. Their beak has ridges on its edges to help them grab their prey tightly before they swallow it whole. Their large webbed feet make them an excellent swimmer.

◆ As for calls, they're usually quiet except on the breeding ground.

◆ Their short wings require a long take-off, so you'll see them run across the top of the water as they become airborne.

◆ Though they live most of their life on the water, they nest in lakeside tree hollows and nest boxes (up to 18 meters off the ground!) in Washington, Alaska and Canada.

Slater Kit ID number: K2

Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*)



◆ The Cooper's Hawk is one of the world's most agile fliers, and like their cousin the Sharp-shinned Hawk, their streamlined shape helps them chase songbirds through the forest. They are also known to perch near bird feeders to hunt unsuspecting visitors. They're a kind of hawk known as an accipiter, Latin for "bird of prey." They are forest raptors characterized by long tails, relatively short rounded wings, and a "flap, flap, flap, glide" flight pattern.

◆ The Cooper's Hawk is a medium-sized hawk (about 40 centimeters) with a long tail that has black bars with a white tip. They use their tail to help make tight turns through thick trees. Adults have red eyes, slate-gray backs and reddish, streaked chests. Females are larger than males. It's easy to confuse them with the Sharp-shinned hawk, which is smaller, but similar in coloration. In contrast, they have a larger head and broader shoulders.

◆ Though they mainly eat birds, the Cooper's Hawk also dines on small mammals, lizards and snakes.

◆ A life of forest flying has its downside: One study surveyed 300 Cooper's Hawk skeletons and found that 23 percent had healed chest bone injuries, probably the result of crashing into branches.

◆ Like other raptors they have sharp talons (claws) for catching and gripping prey. Their hooked beak is used to tear into meat.

◆ Near the nest they make a repeated "pek, pek" sound.

Slater Kit ID number: I2

Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*)



◆ The Dark-eyed Junco is a very common bird in the sparrow family and can be found across North America. You might notice their longish, white-sided tail fanning out when they take off from the ground. In the

spring and summer, males seek out a high perch from which to sing a trilling call that sounds a lot like a phone ringing over and over and over. But mostly they're ground birds, preferring to forage for seeds, and even nest, on the ground.

◆ They're dark gray or brown with a distinctive darker "hood" on their rounded heads. They average 13 centimeters long and have light pink bills and dark eyes, as their name suggests. Females are overall lighter than males, with gray hoods.

◆ When they're on the ground, they hop rather than walk. You'll see them bopping around bushes and trees hunting for fallen seeds. They make a continuous high chirp call as they hop around. Their conical beak is built for seed-cracking; their feet for perching and hopping.

◆ They get around and you can find them in diverse habitats such as forests, fields, city parks and gardens. Their favorite nesting habitat is on or near the ground in a coniferous forest.

◆ In the wintertime they join other juncos in large flocks of 80 birds or more.

Slater Kit ID number: C2

Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*)



◆ You might know the Double-crested Cormorant as a large, living Batman logo. They perch on pilings in Puget Sound with their wings outstretched in bat-cape fashion. Water is where they're most at home and diving is their specialty. They've been recorded swimming to

below 37 meters, and they can stay underwater for up to a minute or more while they chase down fish, their main food.

◆ They are a large (almost one meter long), dark bird with a long snake-like neck. Their bill is strongly hooked at the tip, helping them grab and hold slippery fish. Males and females look alike, with a patch of orange at the throat that is really a small pouch (they're closely related to pelicans). They're named for a handsome swoop of feathers behind their eyes, but it only appears during the breeding season.

◆ Usually silent, you might hear their hoarse bullfrog-like grunts when they land or jostle for space on a cormorant-crowded dock.

◆ Their group nest sites are found on rocky islands, but you can see Double-crested Cormorants around Puget Sound in the winter time.

◆ Their rib cage is unusually strong to help withstand the pressure of their deep-water explorations. And their bones aren't as hollow as those of other birds, making them less buoyant and a better deep-sea diver.

◆ They dive from the surface, chasing their fish prey propelled by their large webbed feet. All four of their toes are connected by web, so they have built-in swim flippers.

◆ You might call them a recycling bird: To improve upon their stick nest they've been known to add rope, plastic garbage, pieces of fishing net and other cast-off items.

Slater Kit ID number: I1

European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)



◆ People call them pests, but it's not their fault that they're *everywhere*. A New Yorker named Eugene Schieffelin was crazy about William Shakespeare. So crazy that he decided to bring to the United States every bird the English playwright ever mentioned in his plays. Schieffelin's Shakespeare-loving group was called The Acclimatization Society,

and they let go 100 European Starlings in New York City's Central Park in the late 1800s. Starlings didn't mind the city, in fact, they really liked it...and now they're one of North America's most common birds.

◆ Starlings got their common name because in flight their triangular wings, short tails and pointy beaks look a lot like four-pointed stars. From far away, they look black, but up close they're quite striking with summer feathers of an iridescent purple-green color, and winter coats of dark brown with white polka-dots. Males and females look alike.

◆ They eat almost anything, but prefer insects and other invertebrates. Their long beaks are designed to open with muscular force and they use them in a technique called "gaping" to probe lawns for worms and other tasty treats. Like other songbirds, their feet are built for perching, but they also work just fine for walking.

◆ They're eclectic songsters who make a surprising number of warbles, whistles, trills and rattles. Like their cousins the myna birds, they're great mimics—they can even copy cell phone ringtones!

◆ They like living around people because we create great habitat for them. Starlings feed in our lawns, streets and farm fields, and nest in holes in our trees, houses and other buildings.

Slater Kit ID number: J2

Glaucous-winged Gull (*Larus glaucescens*)



◆ The Glaucous-winged Gull is the biggest, baddest gull around. You're probably used to calling them "seagulls"— but there are so many different species of gulls that "seagull" isn't a very helpful term. They're what you call an "opportunist"—they are happy eating

pretty much anything, and they can cover a lot of ground (and grub!) in a day. They might start out by stealing from a fishing boat, then fly to the beach to grab a crab snack from the inter-tidal zone before heading inland to a farmer's field or a handy dumpster. They're not picky and that serves them well in times of change...in the wake of development and pollution they find ways to survive and thrive.

◆ "Glaucous" means gray, and they're the only gull with medium gray wing tips, the same color as their back. They average around 60 centimeters from bill tip to tail tip with a wingspan of about 1.2 meters. They have a white head, white chest and belly, pink feet and a bright yellow bill. Males and females look alike, and younger birds go through a long series of color changes – it takes them 4 years to attain their adult plumage!

◆ Their bill is sharp and helps them nab fish and tear into flesh. Their feet are webbed, making them strong swimmers.

◆ Their high, repetitive cry is a common sound at the seashore.

◆ Though they like to nest with other gulls in large colonies on off-shore rocks, they'll also lay their eggs on the rooftops of city buildings.

Slater Kit ID number: D1

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*)



- ◆ At 1.2 meters tall with a wingspan of 1.6 meters the Great Blue Heron is definitely GREAT, but truth be told, they're more gray than blue. They're the largest and most widespread heron in North America. You'll see them

wading in Puget Sound shallows, along quiet pond banks or in fields, patiently hunting. They prefer fish, but will eat a varied diet including frogs, salamanders, snakes and voles. When they take off in flight you'll hear their hoarse call: "braaak!" This sound and their large size and ungainly posture remind some people of dinosaur-era pterodactyls.

- ◆ They're a large bluish-gray bird with long legs and an elongated S-shaped neck. They have a long, spear-shaped bill and a black stripe running from behind their eye and extending in a plume off the back of their head. They have shaggy feathers on their neck and back. Though they're tall, they weigh only 2.3 kilograms tops because their bones are hollow and weigh next to nothing. Males and females look the same.

- ◆ They have long legs for wading, and long, spread-apart toes to help them walk on mud. They use their strong bill like a pair of barbecue tongs to grab and hold tight to prey. Their wings, as large as those of an eagle, allow them to come in for a gentle landing without scaring away all the fish in the neighborhood.

- ◆ Their specialized neck vertebrae fit together to form a kinked S-shape that allows their neck to shoot forward with incredible speed into a long, straight line when they nab their prey.

- ◆ They like to nest in groups called colonies or heronries that can contain a few to hundreds of nests.

- ◆ On their nesting grounds, you may see what's called a "bill duel"—when a male and a female heron lock their beaks together and seesaw them back and forth.

Slater Kit ID number: F1

House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*)



- ◆ Living up to their name, the House Finch is quite at home near your home and most other buildings. They're a very social bird and like to travel in groups. They have a telltale bouncy flight and are a common visitor to bird feeders, though they prefer to forage on the ground with a safe perch nearby. They use their

large beak to crack and munch seeds. They're very common across the country...some scientists estimate there are more than 1.4 billion in North America!

- ◆ They're small-bodied birds (about 13 centimeters long) with large, stubby beaks. Males are rosy red on their heads and chests, with a streaked brown back, wings and tail. Females are a plain grayish brown with blurry streaks on their backs and sides.

- ◆ The male's red color and female's yellow color comes from pigments (colors) in their food. If there is not much red-pigmented food around, you'll see lighter red or orange House Finch males.

- ◆ They sing a cheery musical song with a harsh, burry finale.

- ◆ The House Finch has an excellent memory and will return to the same feeder year after year...just keep it full and they will be there. Like other songbirds, their feet are built for perching, and you can watch them easily navigate foot-holds at your feeder.

- ◆ They nest in holes in trees, houses and other buildings.

Slater Kit ID number: I3

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)



◆ Hey—don't blame the House Sparrow. People are upset because they take over the nests of bluebirds and other cavity nesters, but humans brought them here in the early 1900s to control pests. They like human-disturbed habitats, and now they live almost everywhere

due to their ability to nest in all types of natural or man-made holes.

- ◆ House Sparrows are dapper birds, all dressed up with every place to go! Males have gray caps, white cheeks, black bibs and reddish C-shapes running from behind the eye to the back of the head. Females are light gray-brown, with backs striped in buff, black, and brown.
- ◆ Chirping repeatedly, they're a common bird at outdoor restaurant tables. Some of them can even operate automatic doors at malls to get at the food courts inside! They have a conical bill built for seed-cracking; feet for perching.
- ◆ Bathtubs are overrated...they take dust baths by scraping a small hole in the ground and then tossing bits of dirt all over themselves.
- ◆ They have a bad reputation when it comes to protecting their nests. They will attack other birds to defend territory and will even shove other birds, like Purple Martins, out of their homes to make way for sparrow eggs.

Slater Kit ID number: D3

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)



◆ You might know the Mallard for their classic “quack”—and unlike many other birds, the females do most of the talking. They're one of the most common ducks around, in fact many think they're

the most widespread and abundant duck on the planet! Mallards are the largest dabbling duck (66 centimeters long and weighing up to 1.3 kilograms), meaning they stir up pond and marsh water to get to tasty water plants and invertebrates. Sometimes they feed in a “follow the leader” formation to make use of the food brought up by those at the head of the line. They rarely dive, but will dip their head in a humorous (to us humans) “tails up” position. They'll also feed on grain and plants on land—they love farmers' fields after a long rain or recent harvest.

- ◆ The males of this species are good-looking, with iridescent green heads, white “necklaces,” brown chests, pale bodies and curling tail feathers. Females are a drab brown color (perfect camouflage when they are sitting on eggs) with orange legs and bills, and a bright-blue wing patch.
- ◆ Their webbed feet allow them to navigate well in the water, and their bill is perfect for gleaning food from the water. Their bill has special plates on its edges for filtering out the good stuff.
- ◆ When it comes to water, they're not too picky, but they prefer calm, shallow saltwater and wetlands.
- ◆ If frightened, they fly away by jumping into the air like their feet have springs attached!

Slater Kit ID number: G3

Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*)



◆ Unlike most other woodpeckers, the Northern Flicker can often be seen on the ground using their pointed beak to dig for ants and beetles. Their 10-centimeter long barbed tongue is sticky like an anteater's. They are known for loud drumming in the springtime: they look for hollow branches, telephone poles, or resonant metal objects like chimney caps where they can pound their

beak like a jackhammer to announce their territory and communicate with their mate.

◆ At first glance they look brown, but looking more closely you'll see a beautiful pattern of black spots, bars, and crescents. Their heads are gray and the males have a red mustache. Their white rump patch is a good identifying feature when they fly away. The undersides of their wing and tail feathers are a memorable deep orange color.

◆ Most birds have 3 toes pointing forward and one backwards, but woodpeckers have two toes pointing frontwards and two backwards (called zygodactyl toes) allowing them to easily scale trees. Their beak is long and strong for chipping away at wood. They're likely to be seen at forest edges and in city parks.

◆ Northern Flickers sometimes perform a "fencing duel" display to impress females. Two males face each other and bob their heads making a "wicka, wicka" sound.

◆ In addition to their display call, they make a long, repeated cackling cry, and also a single-note call that sound like an abrupt, loud "clear!"

Slater Kit ID number: A1

Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*)



◆ You might hear the Pileated Woodpecker before you see it—they make a powerful drumming sound (like someone hitting a tree with a hammer) when they're searching for food. Their loud, ringing call sounds like something out of the jungle. They're the largest woodpecker around (crow-sized) with a bright red crest. The cartoon character Woody Woodpecker was created with them in mind.

◆ They're mainly black with a red crest and white lines down the sides of their neck. Males have a red "mustache"

and red on the front of their crown. When they fly, watch for flashes of white on their wings.

◆ Their stiff tail feathers help them balance against tree trunks. Like most woodpeckers they're zygodactyl. Like other birds, they have four toes, but two face frontwards and two backwards to allow them to easily scale trees. Their beak is long and strong, with the end chisel-shaped for chipping away at wood. They have a very long, sticky tongue for snagging their favorite foods: carpenter ants and beetle larvae.

◆ They make large rectangular holes in trees, so look for these and piles of woodchips on the ground to see where they've been feeding. They're happy in deciduous or coniferous forests with mature trees.

◆ They make a new nest hole every year, usually in a dead tree. Like other woodpeckers, their excavations provide important homes for many other species such as owls and squirrels.

Slater Kit ID number: H1

Pine Siskin (*Spinus pinus*)



◆ The Pine Siskin is usually heard before they are seen because they like to gather in noisy groups of small chattering birds high in the tree canopy to gather seeds and glean insects and spiders from branches. They're a very social member of the finch family, and when a flock moves through the sky you'll

see their distinct rising and falling flight pattern.

- ◆ They have an 18-centimeter wingspan and weigh in at about 14 grams. They're brown all over with heavy yellow streaking. Their belly and chest are a bit paler than their back. Males and females look similar, but males usually have yellow wingbars.
- ◆ Their finely pointed bill is shaped perfectly for reaching under conifer cone scales to get to the tasty seeds inside. Holding on with their strong legs and feet, they move agilely from branch to branch looking for the next promising pinecone.
- ◆ In addition to a happy chitter-chatter noise, they make a distinct zipper-like "zreeeeeet!"
- ◆ They're such a social bird that they even build their nests on branches next to other Pine Siskins.
- ◆ The name "siskin" comes from the sounds of their chirp, so their common name could be translated as "pine chirper."

Slater Kit ID number: B3

Red Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*)



◆ The Red Crossbill's most noticeable feature is hard to see without binoculars: they have a crisscrossing bill that looks like a pair of curved scissors. They use this bill to pry seeds from the

tightly closed cones of pines, Douglas-firs and spruces. They will travel far and wide to find a bountiful cone crop. Different groups of Red Crossbills have different sized bills; they are specialized to feed on different species of cones!

- ◆ Their large head makes them look a lot like a miniature parrot, and they sometimes hang upside-down to feed. Males are mainly dull red with dark wings, while the females are grayish yellow, also with dark wings. They have long wings compared to their short bodies—a 23-centimeter wingspan though they're just 13 centimeters long.
- ◆ Their songs vary, but when they fly overhead you'll hear a repeated "kip, kip, kip, kip."
- ◆ As you watch them working the cones of a tree you might be reminded of the stout, jerky movements of a parrot, though they're a member of the finch family.
- ◆ Due to their unusual bills, a group of them is known as a "crookedness" or "warp" of crossbills.

Slater Kit ID number: C3

Red-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*)



◆ “Down the hatch!” People use this saying to remember the name of the Red-breasted Nuthatch because it’s the only tree-trunk foraging bird that can travel head-first down trees, probing the bark for insects and spiders. They love black sunflower seeds and will come to your bird feeder if you stock it for them. The nuthatch will grab a seed, and then fly to a nearby branch where

they hold the seed with their foot or jam it into the bark. Next they crack it open with their sharp beak to get to the tasty meat inside.

◆ Their call is a nasal repeated “yank-yank-yank-yank”—that some people say sounds like a toy trumpet.

◆ True to their name, they have a rusty-red breast and a blue-gray back, with a black cap on their head and black stripes through their eyes. They’re small (10 centimeters long) and compact with a very short tail and a long, pointed beak to probe for bugs and hammer open seeds. Females are similar, but have a gray crown and a slightly paler breast.

◆ The Red-breasted Nuthatch has strong legs and their feet are similar to a woodpecker’s with long toes and sharp claws.

◆ They prefer coniferous forests where they nest in tree holes that they make with the help of their mate. They can spend 18 days chipping out a nest hole 6 to 20 centimeters deep in a dead tree.

◆ To impress females, sometimes a male will work on several nest holes at once to show he’s a good provider.

Slater Kit ID number: G2

Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)



◆ The Red-tailed Hawk is probably the most commonly seen hawk in North America, and they’re often near freeways perched on light poles and trees—perfect lookouts for hunting voles and other rodents. Look for their stout, football shape and watchful stance. When they’re soaring, you’ll see their namesake red tail, which usually appears rusty. Their call is a distant-sounding, raspy scream that was made famous by Hollywood sound engineers who often use it

as a background sound in movies set outdoors.

◆ Red-tailed Hawks vary a lot in color and are sometimes hard to identify. Most of them are rich brown above and pale below, with a streaked belly. Their tails are usually pale below and rusty-red above. Males and females look alike, though females are larger.

◆ Like other raptors, or birds of prey, they have sharp talons (claws) for catching and gripping food. Their hooked beak is used to tear into meat.

◆ They sometimes hunt by “kiting,” facing into the wind for support and eyeing the ground for mice, voles, rats, rabbits, squirrels, snakes and even birds. They also eat carrion (dead animals).

◆ Red-tailed Hawks like to soar over open fields, making wide circles with their broad wings.

Slater Kit ID number: B1

Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*)



◆ Though they're mostly known as plain "pigeon," their full name dignifies them and lets people know they ROCK! The truth is that Rock Pigeons are named for the rocky cliffs of their preferred natural habitat (the ledges of city buildings are a useful substitute, and they'll also nest in barns, in grain towers and under bridges). They're a common

urban bird and you'll see them gathered in flocks along city streets waiting for the next intended or accidental hand-out. They're so good at finding their way home that they can navigate their return even when blindfolded—in fact, pigeons were used by the U.S. Army to carry top-secret messages during World Wars I and II.

◆ Typically they're blue-gray with two dark wing bars, but pigeons can vary greatly in color and you'll see white, dark, spotted and reddish Rock Pigeons. Males and females look almost the same.

◆ Listen for their low, humming coo-coo-cooing sound.

◆ Their red eyes can look menacing, but they're not enough to scare away the Peregrine Falcon—pigeons are one of their favorite foods.

◆ Both male and female Rock Pigeons produce "crop milk" that they feed to their squabs (hatchlings). The crop, a muscular pouch near the throat, is a part of the digestive tract where pigeons can store food and make a nutritional milky substance that looks a bit like yellow cottage cheese. The fleshy plates over their nostrils keep them from getting milk up their nose!

◆ Egyptian hieroglyphs show they have been hanging out near humans for at least 5,000 years!

Slater Kit ID number: J1

Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*)



◆ Don't let their size fool you - the Rufous Hummingbird is tiny, fierce and strong. In fact, they make one of the longest migratory journeys of any bird in the world when measured by body size. They're 7 centimeters long and can fly 6,276 kilometers from Mexico to Alaska – that would be like us going 4 times around the world under our own power! They're pushy at feeders and will defend their spot from interloping hummers twice their size.

◆ When the sun shines, male Rufous Hummingbirds seem to glow from within. They have bright red-orange backs and bellies, with dramatic shiny iridescent-red throats. Females are green above with rufous (reddish) sides, rufous patches on a green tail, and an orange spot at the center of the throat.

◆ They have a long beak and thin brush-tipped tongue used to lap nectar from flowers and sugar water from feeders. They also eat insects and spiders, and will pluck spider's prey from their webs. Their feet are useful for perching, but don't allow them to walk.

◆ They have such a great memory for location that it's like they have a map in their brain. They return to the same flower patches from day to day, and even year to year. They even remember where feeders were placed in previous years, and return to look for them every year!

◆ They're commonly seen in mixed forests and along forest edges.

◆ They nest farther north than any other hummingbird in the world: Some of them build their tiny cup-shaped nests (bound by spider silk) in southeastern Alaska!

Slater Kit ID number: B2

Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*)



◆ The Sharp-shinned Hawk is a hunter with a streamlined shape perfect for chasing songbirds through forested areas. You might find them hunting birds at your feeder or eating their prey on a tree branch...if you see feathers falling, look up and you might see them plucking their lunch. The Sharp-shinned Hawk is a kind of hawk known as an accipiter, Latin for “bird of prey.” They’re forest raptors characterized by long tails, relatively short rounded wings, and a “flap, flap, flap, glide” flight pattern. Birders call them “sharpies.”

- ◆ They are small hawks (about 30 centimeters long) with a long tail that has black bars ending in a square tip. They use their tail to make tight turns through thick trees. They have red eyes, slate-gray backs and reddish chests. Females are larger than males, true of most birds of prey. It’s easy to confuse them with the Cooper’s Hawk, which is larger but similar in coloration.
- ◆ Like other raptors they have sharp talons (claws) for catching and gripping prey. Their hooked beak is used to tear into meat.
- ◆ They make a repeated “kiw, kiw, kiw” sound.
- ◆ When their fledglings first leave the nest, adults help them practice hunting by hovering in front of them with food in their talons, and then releasing it for the fledglings to catch in mid-air.

Slater Kit ID number: E1

Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*)



◆ Although they look kind of plain, their voice would take them to the finals of American Bird Idol. True to their name, Song Sparrows can sing more than 20 different songs with 1,000 different variations. They’re one of the first birds to start

singing in the spring and will burst into song at any hour of the day, almost all year long. Though their voice is anything but ordinary, Song Sparrows are one of the most common birds in North America.

- ◆ They’re a small bird about 15 centimeters long. Male and female Song Sparrows are both brown birds with dark streaks through each eye and on the top of the head, and a gray stripe down the middle of the head. They have brown and gray stripes on their back and a streaked breast.
- ◆ They feed mostly on the ground and their cone-shaped bill helps them husk seeds in the winter. They eat insects in the spring and summer. With their strong feet and claws, they scratch in the soil for seeds.
- ◆ You might find them in forests, marshes, fields and in your backyard. They’re pretty adaptable and build their nest on the ground or in the low branches of a bush. You’ll hear them scold you if you get too near their nest or young.

Slater Kit ID number: H3

Steller's Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri*)



◆ The Steller's Jay's beautiful plumage and loud harsh voice are what people usually notice first about this bird. They're so dazzlingly colored that they're often mistakenly called by their cousin's name: the Blue Jay. They're blue and they're a jay, but their name is Steller's, as in, "Now there's a stellar bird!" However, they were named

after Georg Wilhelm Steller, a German naturalist who found them in 1741 on an Alaskan island while traveling on a Russian explorer's ship.

- ◆ Steller's Jays are large songbirds, measuring about 30 centimeters long. They have a long, powerful bill and a striking head crest, which stands up on their head like they use feather gel. They have a black head and blueberry-blue body—both males and females look the same.
- ◆ They're excellent mimics and will do their best Red-tailed Hawk call near feeders to clear away the other birds and make room for them. Steller's Jays can also do good imitations of cats, dogs, chickens, squirrels and even copy some mechanical sounds.
- ◆ They're a smart member of the corvid family along with ravens and crows. They know how to use tools, like turning a branch into a "nutcracker" to help them open up hazelnuts.
- ◆ Their large bill helps them open nuts, dig up seeds they've hidden in the ground, and kill small prey (insects and nestlings). Their large feet make it easier to hop between branches.
- ◆ They like forests, but are also found in city backyards and parks.
- ◆ "Noisy" and "bold" are words they're proud to be associated with.
- ◆ They like to transport several nuts in their mouth and throat to bury in a secret place for a cold winter's day.

Slater Kit ID number: K1

Violet-green Swallow (*Tachycineta thalassina*)



◆ If you see a bird high in the air swooping around like a circus acrobat, it could be the Violet-green Swallow. They catch all their food while flying—scooping up insects in their wide-open beak. You'll only see them here in the spring or summer, because they like warm, sunny weather. When that Northwest rain begins to fall, they smartly head south to southern California, Mexico and Central America.

◆ Violet-green Swallows are about 13 centimeters long and their back and the top of their head are

metallic green. Their wings and tail are iridescent purple, though it's hard to see the bright beauty of their colors unless the light is just right. Their face and underparts are white, and they have a slightly forked tail. Females are duller in color than males.

- ◆ Their slim body is streamlined for flight, and they can reach speeds of up to 72 kilometers per hour on a good day.
- ◆ They lay 4 to 6 eggs in a shallow cup nest built out of small twigs, grass and straw built in a hole in a tree or cliff, or in a nest box built by a helpful human. The swallow and its mate will line their nest with feathers. You're likely to find them anywhere in open country, even in cities, as long as there is a place to nest and insects to catch.
- ◆ A group of swallows is known as a "gulp," "herd," "kettle" or "richness."

Slater Kit ID number: E3

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*)



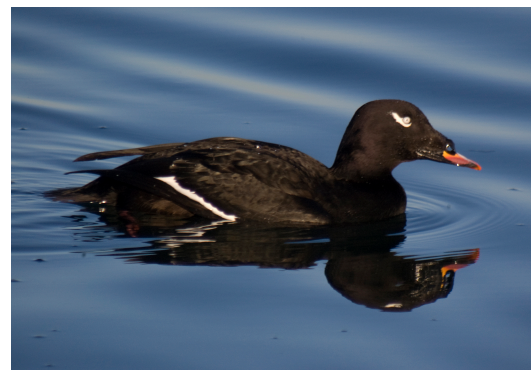
◆ Known for their water-loving habits, the Western Grebe is sometimes described as “more fish than feathers.” They’re streamlined for swimming, with large lobed toes on feet set far back on their body. They’re the largest grebe in North

America—about 60 centimeters long with a very slender swan-like neck and thin bill. But you’ll rarely see them out of the water, or even in the air; they’re hatched on the water and it’s there they like to stay.

- ◆ Their feet work like the blades of a propeller to whoosh them through the water. They have broad lobes (wide, flattened skin) on their toes, instead of webs like most water birds. Their plumage is dense and waterproof, and by pressing their feathers against their body they can adjust their buoyancy to improve their dives.
- ◆ Their body is gray and their head and neck are black on the back and white on the front. They have red eyes and a thin pointy bill perfect for spearing fish. Western Grebes can eat up to a half kilogram of herring a day!
- ◆ Their call is a high-pitched “crreeet-crreeet.”
- ◆ They gather with other Western Grebes in large “rafts” (groups) far from shore. Their nest is a floating raft made of pond plants, and their young ride on the adult’s back until they can swim on their own.
- ◆ Though their courtship display is usually seen only on breeding lakes, you can sometimes witness it on Puget Sound. A male and female face each other with necks outstretched, then turn together to run across the water, necks arched cobra-like with bills in the air.
- ◆ In winter their main food is herring, which depend on the healthy eelgrass beds of Puget Sound. As eelgrass and herring become scarce, there aren’t as many grebes as there used to be.

Slater Kit ID number: J3

White-winged Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*)



◆ The White-winged Scoter is a large, stocky diving sea duck with a prominent, strong bill made for grasping their favorite foods: mussels and clams. They sometimes flock with their cousins the Surf Scoters and the

Black Scoters, but White-winged Scoters prefer less rocky, sandy shores. You won’t see them around local shorelines until fall because they spend the summers up north in Canada and Alaska where they breed on large freshwater lakes and ponds.

- ◆ Males are black with a white wing patch and a “swoosh” by the eye that looks like white eyeliner. Females are dark brown with varying white patches near the bill and on the cheek. It can be hard to see their namesake white wing unless they’re in flight when it’s obvious.
- ◆ They are an excellent flyer, but they have to take a running start across the water to take off, like an airplane uses a runway.
- ◆ They use their feet and wings to dive to the ocean floor and use their large, sturdy beak with strong ridges on the edges to find and pull clams out of the sediment. They swallow clams whole and grind them up in their gizzard (an organ in their digestive system with a thick muscular wall). They swallow small rocks that work like teeth inside the gizzard to help break down their food.
- ◆ Underwater, they move their head and tail to steer. Once they’re near the bottom, their wide, webbed feet are constantly in motion so they can maintain a hovering stance while they forage.

Slater Kit ID number: H2

Pacific Wren (*Troglodytes pacificus*)



◆ The Pacific Wren is a tiny wren of the dark forest with a song that seems much bigger than their body could possibly produce. In fact, when measured by weight (they weigh only 9 grams) their song is delivered with 10 times the power of a crowing rooster! They

sing a memorable musical run of trills and buzzes that can last up to 10 seconds. Scientists studying their melodies have recorded an average of 36 notes per second. The Pacific Wren's song is the longest song of any bird in North America.

◆ They're 10 centimeters long, dark rusty brown with a light eye stripe. They hold their small tail up in the air like many wrens do. Males and females look alike.

◆ Pacific Wrens prefer shady woods and dense brush, so you may hear them but have a hard time seeing them because they're well-camouflaged. With a flick of their wings they dart in and out of shrubs on the forest floor.

◆ They eat invertebrates like insects, millipedes and spiders. They have a slender, pointed beak for probing into leaves and pulling out insect larvae. Their toes are relatively long compared to similar-sized birds to help them scurry through the underbrush.

◆ Their scientific name means "cave dweller"—and refers to their habit of nesting in crevices along forest hillsides or tree trunks, and hunting for food in dark cavities.

Slater Kit ID number: D2