

Bird Songs and Vocalizations

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4. Enjoy learning bird songs and vocalizations. Bob Pettit
redknot@earthlink.net 734-755-8832

The Song Group

A Song Group consists of either a heterogeneous group of birds with comparable sounding songs or an assemblage of related birds with or without similar sounding songs.

These Song Groups include birds that say their names, make noises akin to familiar sounding objects, have phonetic presentation, have mnemonic (learning) phraseology, and are related or are not related. Some species

may be classified in more than one group so overlapping is present.

Song Groups

1. Name-Sayer

2. Sounds of Objects

3. Phonetic Phrases

4. Mnemonic Phrases

5. Unrelated Species

6. Related Species

1. Name-Sayer

Northern Bobwhite	Black-capped Chickadee
Killdeer	Veery
Eastern Wood Pewee	Tennessee Warbler
Eastern Phoebe	Bobolink
American Crow	Dickcissel
Blue Jay	Chipping Sparrow

2. Sounds of Objects

White-breasted Nuthatch	Hermit Thrush
Marsh Wren (Long-billed)	Bobolink
Sedge Wren (Short-billed)	Field Sparrow

3. Phonetic Phrases

Flycatchers

Eastern Kingbird	Great Crested Flycatcher
Least Flycatcher	Olive-sided Flycatcher

Vireos

Red-eyed Vireo	Yellow-throated Vireo
Warbling Vireo	White-eye Vireo

Warblers

Blue-winged Warbler	Golden-winged Warbler
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4. Mnemonic Phrases

Marsh Wren	Sedge Wren
Veery	American Goldfinch

Mimic Thrushes

Gray Catbird	Brown Thrasher	Northern Mockingbird
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5. Unrelated Species

American Robin	Sedge Wren
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	Field Sparrow
Scarlet Tanager	

6. Related Species

Mimic Thrushes

Gray Catbird	Brown Thrasher	Northern Mockingbird
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Thrushes

Eastern Bluebird	Hermit Thrush
American Robin	Veery
Gray-cheeked Thrush	Wood Thrush
Swainson's Thrush	

Vireos

Red-eyed Vireo	Warbling Vireo
Yellow-throated Vireo	White-eyed Vireo

Warblers

Blue-winged Warbler	Golden-winged Warbler
Cerulean Warbler	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Black-throated Green Warbler	

Sparrows

Chipping Sparrow	Swamp Sparrow
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Name-Sayers

Throughout the world many birds have been named because of the manor in which their songs or vocalizations have been interpreted through the language of the listener.

The **Name-sayers** singing group is unique since all members have a song that is similar to their name. (How intelligent some birds can be!) Whistling or speaking their calling phrases easily imitates them. Practicing the **Name-sayers** first will give you confidence so that later you can imitate and learn other birdcalls, which are not so easily mimicked. They belong to other song groups and will be discovered later.

By practicing the **Name-sayers** first, you will use them as guides when studying other song groups.

There are many other examples, which have been omitted here (non-passerines: **Willet**, **Godwit**, **Killdeer**, etc.) Three **Name-sayers**: **Eastern Phoebe**, **Eastern Wood Pewee**, and **Black-capped Chickadee**, appear to have similar song components and therefore may pose a problem in using song for identification. They are grouped together so that comparisons can immediately be made.

Northern Bobwhite

The *White* goes up.
bob, bob, white

Killdeer

kill-deer or kill-dee

Whip-poor-will

Endlessly repeating.
whip-poor-will, whip-poor-will

Northern Flicker

flick, flick, flick, flick, flickeeee
Substitute *wick* for *flick* - **OR** - *wick, wick, wick, wickeeee*

Eastern Wood Pewee

pee-a-wee OR pee-ur

Eastern Phoebe

fee-be OR fee-bee

Common Crow

caw OR cah

Blue Jay

jay, jay or jeeah, jeeah

Black-capped Chickadee

chick-a-dee-dee-dee or dee-dee-dee

Veery

vee-ree reer-ee reer-ee reer-ee

Tennessee Warbler

ten, ten, ten, ten, see, see, see, see

Bobolink

Sounds like playing a banjo.
bob-o-link-spink-spank

Dickcissel

dick-dick-dick, sis-sis-sis-sissel

Chipping Sparrow

Long series of monotone chips somewhat musical. See Pine Warbler and Dark-eyed Junco.
chip chip chip chip

Sounds of Objects

Birds make many different sounds that are difficult to classify as a song, call-note, whistle, and other vocalizations. There are a number of birds that mimic sounds that are man-made.

White-breasted Nuthatch

Phrasing is like Morse code telegraph key. Dots and dashes as noted below.

.....- / -.....- /-
learning bird song
 ...- / ...-
 S O S S O S

yank, yank, yank.

Red-breasted Nuthatch

Tooting of an old fashion toy tin horn on one high-medium pitch.

Hermit Thrush

Sounds like an ethereal flute.

Marsh Wren

Guttural raddles sounding like an old-fashion foot-run treadle sewing machine.

tick'-a, tick'-a, tick'-a, turrrrrr-ur.

Sedge Wren

Sounds like a bouncing steel ball on a hard surface. See Field Sparrow.

tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick

Bobolink

Sounds like a banjo.

Bob-o-link-spink-spank.

Field Sparrow

Sounds like a steel ball bouncing on a marble floor.

Q, Q, Q, Q, D, D, D, D, D.

Phonetic Phrases

The birds song or vocalization might remind us of a specific *statement* that has a **special phonetic phrasing**.

see me here i am -or- bee, buzz, buzz -or- bee, buzz, buzz, buzz-or- che-bek! -or- thief! thief! burt-burt-burt.

FLYCATCHERS

Eastern Kingbird

Series of bickering notes

Great Crested Flycatcher

Thief is drawn out and may be given singly.

thief! thief! burt-burt-burt.

Least Flycatcher

Song is a nasal monotone that is repetitive.

che-bek!

Olive-sided Flycatcher

hic-three-beers or hip-three-cheers

VIREOS

Red-eyed Vireo

see me? here i am! see me? here i am!

Yellow-throated Vireo

Like a slow Red-eyed Vireo

see me? (pause) here i am.

Warbling Vireo

can you catchem? if you catchem and you squeezeem. will he squirt? or

abba-gee-ja, abba-gee-ja, abba-gee-ja, abba-gee.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler

Throaty, insect-like. One *buzz*, see Golden-winged Warbler.

bee, buzz.

Golden-winged Warbler

Two or three buzzes. Not as throaty as Blue-winged Warbler.

bee, buzz-buzz-buzz

Mnemonic Phrases

Mnemonic means memory learning. Non-birding examples include: ROY G. BIV (light spectrum), My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Nine Pizzas (Planets from sun outward.). These following songs are remembered by their **description**. It sounds like.... Example: Its song is given in flight. Mimics other birds song.

Marsh Wren

It sounds like an old-fashion foot-run treadle sewing machine. A guttural raddle;

tick'-a, tick'-a, tick'-a, turrrrrr-ur.

Sedge Wren

It sounds like a bouncing steel ball on a hard surface. See Field Sparrow.

tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, ticckker.

Veery

It sounds like whistling down a rain barrel or into a pipe.

vee-ree reer-ee reer-ee reer-ee.

American Goldfinch

Undulating flight. It has the dip to go with it.

potato chips, potato chips. or virginia, virginia. Given in flight.

Unrelated Species with Similar Songs

American Robin, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Scarlet Tanager

These birds are united by their similar songs and by their distinctive red-colored plumages. This double association (song and red color) should assistance you in learning this song group.

American Robin

The Robin is the first returning songbird we see in the pre-spring days of March and they are associated with the coming of springtime. Their song is proclaimed customarily in the pre-dawn light and again during the twilight hours. It is a song we should know and recognize. This is a good occasion for learning the Robins song since there are few other birds competing for our ears this early. *Learn and remember the Robin song well for it is the key to this song group.*

getem, killem, cureem, giveem, physic!

A dry, flute-like, musical staccato song is given. Listen for this song when the humidity is high, especially before of after a spring shower. This phrasing is the same as other times, but the volume seems softer and the phrases are more connected and continuous.

The call notes are a series of similar sounds; a rapidly repeated skip in groupings of one to four.

skip Skip, skip. Skip, skip, skip, skip.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak

The song of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak is rounded, softer, and more rapid than the Robins. The phrasing is similar but it lacks its flute-like nature common to thrushes. The notes are clearly whistled but slurred giving the song an overall mellowing quality. The last notes of the song appear to be inhaled or swallowed. The mnemonic to remember is a *Mellow Robin*. There is a call note, which is a metallic *Click* or *Kick*. Sometimes the song is so quit and soft that the bird seems to be 30-60 feet away, but it is only 10 feet distance!

Scarlet Tanager

The Scarlet Tanager is a *Robin with a sore throat*. The song is husky with the notes having a raspy sharpness. The phrases are quick and loud. The call notes are; *tick', burr*

Related Species

Red-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, and Warbling Vireo

The three vireos, of the Genus *Vireo*, that are perhaps the most commonly encountered are the Red-eyed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, and Yellow-throated Vireo. Their plumages help to separate them into two groups. The Yellow-throated Vireo *HAS wing-bars and spectacles* (eye-ring with connecting bar over the bill) but *LACK have heavy lines over the eye*. The Red-eyed Vireo and Warbling Vireo each *HAVE eye lines but LACK wing-bars or spectacles*. Separation of these species using these plumage field marks is

usually quite simple unless heavy foliage is evident then song is the best tool for identification.

The key to vireo identification is the Red-eyed. **Understand and remember** its song. Use it as a reference to the others. They sing while feeding. They are slow and methodical in feeding behavior. Look up, right, down take insect larva off bark or leaf. Look at the bill to see the upper mandible hooking over the lower mandible. Warblers have a sharpened pencil bill with on over hang.

Red-eyed Vireo Looks like the **Warbling Vireo**.
Sounds like the Yellow-throated Vireo.

Red-eyed Vireo

The Red-eyed Vireo song has of a series of repetitious phrases given at a rate of **35-40** per minute. Each phrase is separated by a distinct but short pause. The commonest phrasing is,

see me? (pause) **here i am!** (pause) **see me?** (pause) **here i am!**

The first part tends to go downward, while the second part goes upward. It may be given while the bird is perched in one place for several minutes or while it is systematically and swiftly feeding from food ingredient to food ingredient and branch-to-branch.

see me? here i am! see me? here i am!

Yellow-throated Vireo

The Yellow-throated Vireos song suggests the Red-eyed Vireos but it is much slower (**17-20** per minute) and has a husky quality at a lower pitch. The pauses between phrases are much longer. Two different phrases are suggested;

veery? (a long hesitant pause) **oh!**

three-eights? (a long hesitant pause) **three-eights?**

The Veery goes upward and the Oh goes downward. The 3/8s doesn't change pitch much.

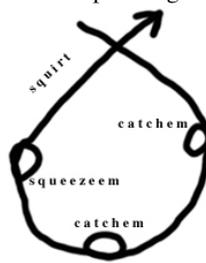
Both birds are found in the deciduous woods with the Red-eyed Vireo being more abundant. The Red-eyed Vireo may be said to

have a **fast song**, while the Yellow-throated Vireo has a **half-fast** song. Occasionally you might hear a slow Red-eyed or a fast Yellow-throated.

Warbling Vireo

The Warbling Vireo lacks the black boarding of the eye line of the Red-eyed Vireo and is generally paler in color. Its song is a rapid warbling of a series of four uninterrupted phrases presented in a circular fashion or pattern with an up swing at the end.

The rhythm of the **song is fast**, twisting, and rotating with a jerky but circular motion. There is an up swing at the ending. A second phrasing may also be found.



**can you catchem?
if you catchem
and you squeezeem,
will he squirt?**

OR
**abba-gee-ja, abba-gee-ja,
abba-gee-ja, abba-gee**

Bird Song Compact Disc (CD)

birdJam -Welcome to the revolution in learning bird songs!

birdJam Maker organizes and formats bird songs and, in many cases, **adds photographs**, for specific regions or specialty species collections. BirdJam Maker does not contain the songs, but is paired with a specific song collection to:

- Remove narration and bird name announcements for pure bird song playback
- Split double tracks so each bird is visible on an iPod
- Creates alphabetic, taxonomic, habitat, species and other playlists for speedy access
- Add definitive photographs (for most collections)
- Rename birds (i.e., an Eastern Bluebird becomes a Bluebird, Eastern) so you find them faster
- Add scientific names, song descriptions, and information about the recordings
- Provide bird names in English, Spanish, or French

Peterson Field Guides: Eastern/Central Bird Songs, Roger Tory Peterson, editor; Cornell Lab, 2003; \$17.95 (CD) Keyed by page number to Peterson's 5th edition of *Field Guide to the Birds East of the Rockies*

Common Bird Songs (with paperback) by Donald J. Borer, 2003, Dover Publications, \$7.95.

Bird Song Ear Training Guide: Who Cooks for Poor Sam Peabody? By John Feith, \$10.17.

Stokes Field Guide to Bird Songs (Eastern Region), Lang Elliott with Donald and Lillian Stokes; Little, Brown and Co., 1997; Companion to *Stokes Field Guide to Birds: Eastern Region*, \$29.95 (CD); \$29.95 (cassette)

Stokes Field Guide to Bird Songs (Western Region), Kevin J. Colver with Donald and Lillian Stokes; Little, Brown and Co., 1999; 4-CD set; Companion to *Stokes Field Guide to Birds: Western Region*, \$34.95 (CD); \$34.95 (cassette)

Peterson Field Guides: Eastern/Central Birding by Ear, Richard K. Walton and Robert W. Lawson; Houghton Mifflin, 1989; This system uses pairing, comparative ideas, and mnemonics to create groups of bird-songs. \$25.00 (CDs)

Peterson Field Guides: Eastern/Central More Birding by Ear, Richard K. Walton and Robert W. Lawson; Houghton Mifflin, 1994: (CD) \$29.95; This edition covers virtually all the warblers, plus many finches and sparrows, shorebirds, gulls, terns.

Guide to Bird Sounds, National Geographic Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, 1986; \$24.95 (CD)

Peterson Field Guides: Western Bird Songs, Cornell/Interactive; Cornell Lab, revised 1992; Keyed by page number to Petersons revised Field Guide to Western Birds. \$21.50 (CD).

Summary of Passerine Songs

Flycatchers

1. **Olive-sided Flycatcher**
Perches on open snag and flies out (sally forth) a distance for an insect and returns to same perch.
hic-three-beers
OR
hip-three-cheers
2. **Eastern Wood-Pewee**
pee-a-wee pee-a-wee pee-a-wee pee-ur
3. **Alder Flycatcher**
Song a harsh, ripping *f-bee-o* or a burry *rreebeet* or *rreebeea* accent on 2nd syllable. Call note is *peep* or *pip* or *pit*. [Stokes] [CLO] [BNA]
fee-bee'-o
rrree-beep rreebeet rreebeea
fee-beep knee-deep!
OR
free-beer'
4. **Willow Flycatcher**
Song a harsh *fütz-bew* or *rrritz-bew*, accented on the 1st syllable. Call note a mellow *whit*. [Stokes] [CLO] [BNA]
fütz-bew fizza-bew
OR
rrritz-bew
5. **Least Flycatcher**
Emphatic, nasal, and monotonous chant.
che-bek! che-bek che-bek che-bek che-bek.
6. **Eastern Phoebe**
May have a hoarse quality to the song.
fee-be
OR
fee-bee
7. **Great Crested Flycatcher**
Thief note is drawn out and may be given singly.
thief! thief! burt-burt-burt
8. **Eastern Kingbird**
Series of bickering notes

Vireos

9. **White-eyed Vireo**
pitch´em-up-a-creeeek, quick´
OR
quick´, pitch´em-up-a-creeeek
10. **Yellow-throated Vireo**
Like a slow Red-eyed Vireo. (17-20 song/min)
see me? (pause) here i am

11. **Blue-headed Vireo**
Like Red-eyed but **less repetitious**, clearer, **higher pitched** but much **slower meter**.
12. **Warbling Vireo**
Circular song with connecting loops and an upward zip.
can you catchem? if you catchem and you squeezeem, will he squirt?
OR
abba-gee-ja, abba-gee-ja, abba-gee-ja, abba-geee.
13. **Philadelphia Vireo**
Like Red-eyed, **slower, higher pitched**.
14. **Red-eyed Vireo**
Rapid and repetitive song sung while feeding and used as a reference for learning other Vireos. (35-40 song/min)
see me? here i am! see me? here i am!

Crows and Jays

15. **Blue Jay**
Mimics squeaky pump handle, red-shouldered hawk call, bill clicks, etc.
jay, jay
OR
jeeah, jeeah
16. **American Crow**
caw
OR
cah

Larks

17. **Horned Lark**
A long tinkling of notes descending in pitch.

Swallows

[R. T. Peterson]

18. **Purple Martin**
Throaty, bubbly, and rich.
tchew-wew
19. **Tree Swallow**
Note, *cheet* or *chi-veet*. Also a **liquid** song.
cheet
OR
chi-veet
20. **Northern Rough-winged Swallow**
Rougher than Bank Swallow's song.
trit-trit trit-trit.
21. **Bank Swallow**
A short dry buzz or rattle, *brrt* or *bjjt*.
brrt
OR
bjjt

22. **Cliff Swallow**
More squeaky and husker than Barn Swallow.
23. **Barn Swallow**
A soft *wit* or *kvik-kvik*, *wit-wit*. My become rapid when excited.
wit
OR
kvik-kvik, *wit-wit*

Chickadees, Nuthatches, and Creeper

24. **Black-capped Chickadee**
chick-a-dee-dee-dee
OR
dee-dee-dee
OR
peter peter
25. **Tufted Titmouse**
May be more than three. Rather rapid speed.
peter, peter, peter
OR
here, here, here
26. **Red-breasted Nuthatch**
Tooting of an old fashion toy tin horn **on one high-medium pitch**.
two two two two
27. **White-breasted Nuthatch**
Like Morse code telegraph key with dots and dashes.
yank, yank, yank yank, yank
OR
wood wood wood wood wood
28. **Brown Creeper**
Note, a single long thin *seeee* that is similar to the quick trebled note (*see-see-see*) of Golden-crowned Kinglet. Song is weak but has vibrant quality. [R. T. Peterson]
see-ti-wee-tu-wee

Wrens

29. **House Wren**
pass-see-del-a, pass-see-del-a, pass-see-del-a, weed-del-a, weed-del-a, wheat.
30. **Winter Wren**
Long sustained, continuously, whistled tinkling twittering of many notes (100+). It ends with a very high soft trill. Longest wren songs in Michigan.
31. **Sedge Wren**
Like a Field Sparrow.
tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, ticker
32. **Marsh Wren**
It sounds like an old-fashion foot-run treadle sewing machine. A guttural rattle.
tick'-a, tick'-a, tick'-a, turrrrrr-ur

33. **Carolina Wren**
Loud and repetitive song usually repeated in threes.
tea-kettle, tea-kettle, tea-kettle
OR
wee-del, wee-del, wee-del

Gnatcatchers

34. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**
Song, a **thin squeaky, wheezy** series of notes, easily overlooked. [R. T. Peterson]

Kinglets

35. **Golden-crowned Kinglet**
Song, a series of **high thin notes** (*see-see-see*) rising up the scale then dropping into a **chickadee-like chatter**. [R. T. Peterson]
36. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**
Variable song starts with three or four high *tees tees tees*, then several low *tews tews*, and ending in a repetitious chant. [R. T. Peterson]
tee tee tee tew tew tew tew, ti-dadee, ti-dadee, ti-dadee.

Thrushes

37. **Eastern Bluebird**
A soft song that sounds a long distance away while perched or in flight.
true-ly true-ly true-ly true-ly
OR
chur-we chur-we chur-we chur-we
38. **Veery**
Like whistling into a **rain barrel** or through a **plastic drainpipe**. Call, a raspy *phew* or *view*.
vee-ree reer-ee reer-ee reer-ee
39. **Gray-cheeked Thrush**
Like a rising ↑ Veery
40. **Swainson's Thrush**
A Veery in reverse ↓ where the phrasing goes upward.
41. **Hermit Thrush**
Like an **ethereal flute**.
42. **Wood Thrush**
Mellow flute-like phrases.
Call, a rapid *pip-pip-pip-pip*.
ee-o-lay ee-o-lay
43. **American Robin**
Song; a long, caroling, emphatic staccato cadence.
Call note; *tut-tut-tut*.
get-em, kill-em, cure-em, give-em physis

Mimic Thrushes

44. Gray Catbird

Like Brown Thrasher but with non-repeated couplets. Call note: **Mewing like cat cry**.

plow it! hoe it! seed it! weed it!

45. Brown Thrasher

New couplets each time.

plow it!-plow it! hoe it!-hoe it! seed it!-seed it! weed it!-weed it!

46. Northern Mockingbird

Mimics other birds and has thrasher quality, repeating phrases several times (3 or more).

Starlings

47. European Starling

A series of **whistles, pops, and squeaks**. Mimics other birds: Killdeer, Yellowlegs.

Pipits

48. American Pipit

A thin *jee-eet* or *pi-pit*, thus suggesting its name. [R. T. Peterson]

jee-eet

OR

pi-pit

Waxwings

49. Cedar Waxwing

A thin series of *zeee zeee zeee* notes. [R. T. Peterson]

zeee zeee zeee

Wood-Warblers

50. Ovenbird

Begins *softly* and ends **louder**.

teach'er, teach'er, teach'er, teach'er.

51. Louisiana Waterthrush

Song doesn't end with Northern Waterthrush's diagnostic *chew-chew-chew*. Louder and more musical than Northern Waterthrush; 3 or 4 shrill, slurred, descending notes followed by a variable warbling twitter. [J. Curson, *et. Al*]

52. Northern Waterthrush

Song begins with 3 or 4 loud, emphatic notes (*twit twit twit twee twee twee*) and ends in a **diagnostic** rapid series of notes that drop in pitch *chew-chew-chew* or *weedleoo*. [J. Curson, *et. Al*]

wit twit twit twee twee twee chew chew chew

OR

swee swee chit chit weedleoo

53. Golden-winged Warbler

Not as throaty as Blue-winged Warbler. The **2-3 buzzes** are rapidly delivered.

bee, buzz-buzz-buzz (pause) bee, buzz-buzz-buzz

54. Blue-winged Warbler

One buzz, throaty and insect-like. The *buzz* is drawn-out. See Golden-winged Warbler.

bee, buzzz (pause) bee, buzzz (pause) bee, buzzz

55. Black-and-white Warbler

If you leave the pizza in the oven too long it becomes black and white (ash). Song is **softly given**. Look for the bird gripping the side of trunk or branches like nuthatches.

pizza, pizza, pizza, pizza, pizza

56. Tennessee Warbler

Listen closely, this is a name-sayer. Look high in the trees.

ten, ten, ten, ten, see, see, see, see

57. Nashville Warbler

Common migrant and good singer. Watch the cadence.

see-bit, see-bit, see-bit, tea dee dee dee dee

58. Mourning Warbler

First two notes higher pitched followed by lower pitched notes.

cheery, cheery, choory, choory

59. Common Yellowthroat

Song is distinctive, rapid, and well enunciated. Think witches at Halloween and black mask over the eyes.

witchity-witchity-witchity-witch

60. Hooded Warbler

A loud whistled song. The *wee* is higher and the *tee-o* is slurred. Like the Magnolia's song but more ringing.

weeta-see-tee-o

61. American Redstart

Song may be confused with some songs/calls of Chestnut-sided Warbler. Redstart song is loud rapid, and emphatic.

zee, zee, zee, zip

62. Kirtland's Warbler

Song resembles that of Northern Waterthrush's.

It starts with three low staccato notes; the first introductory notes are a quick *tutt tutt* the second notes are double notes done twice (*chē-rr chē-rr*), the third group are two higher single notes (*chew chew*) and the last are a double rapid resounding notes on a higher pitch uttered twice (*whe-eat whe-eat*). The whole series ends abruptly. [J. Van Tyne in R.T.Peterson]

wh-t chē-rr chē-rr chew chew whe-eat whe-eat

Two typical songs of KIWA [R.T.P.]

<i>tup tup tup</i> (staccato)	<i>checheche wiwi</i> (resounding)
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OR

<i>tup tup tup</i> (staccato)	<i>cheche whew</i> (resounding)
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63. Cape May Warbler

Very high pitched. (Older male humans can use this bird for a hearing test.) Monotone.

seet seet seet seet (pause) seet seet seet seet

- 64. Cerulean Warbler**
During migration look high in the trees for this bird.
Throaty song beginnings on one pitch then moving upward and higher at the end.
zray, zray, zray, zreeee
- 65. Northern Parula**
Song a buzzy trill or rattle that climb the musical scale and abruptly snaps over the top. Also a second version with a series of buzzy notes that end in the familiar rising trill.
zeeeeeeeeee-up
OR
zh-zh-zh-zheeeeeee
- 66. Magnolia Warbler**
Song suggests Yellow Warbler's but is shorter. Yellow Warbler would not be heard singing in evergreen woods. The last note is **rising** ↑.
weeta weeta weetee
OR
The last note is **dropping** ↓.
weeta weeta weeto
- 67. Blackburnian Warbler**
The last portion is being stretched as it is sung upward ↑ and is very diagnostic if detectable.(↑ *tseeeeeeeeeee*)
zip zip zip titi tseeeeeeeeeee
- 68. Yellow Warbler**
Learn this song well since this is a common spring and summer bird and it will help in learning other members of its genus.
sweet, sweet, sweet, i am so sweet
OR
sit sit sit-suue-wheat
- 69. Chestnut-sided Warbler**
A very emphatic song with the ending dropping suddenly.
pleased, pleased, ta meet miss beech'er!
OR
pleased, pleased, pleased, ta meet' cha!
- 70. Blackpoll Warbler**
A rapid series of 6-18 extremely high-pitched 'si' notes, often sounding slightly staccato. The speed is variable but the notes are always on one pitch and the middle notes are usually emphasized. [J. Curson, *et. Al*]
si si si
- 71. Black-throated Blue Warbler**
Slightly nasal in tone with slurred notes the last note rising.
i am lay-zee
OR
beer-beer-beer, bee
- 72. Palm Warbler**
Song, a chippy-like series of weak notes. [J. Curson, *et. Al*]
thĩ thĩ thĩ thĩ thĩ thĩ thĩ thĩ

- 73. Pine Warbler**
There are several birds with similar 'trilling' songs. They include the Pine Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, and to some degree the Yellow-rumped Warbler and the Swamp Sparrow.
The Pine Warbler has two common alternating song patterns (fast and slow trill) given by one individual bird. This is an identification clue, as the other trilling species sing only one song type and do not alternate.
The songs of Pine Warbler have the most gentle and musical-sounding overall quality of the group. This is a result of relatively simple whistled phrases, with less dramatic changes in pitch and less complexity. In the slower song here a clear up slur can be heard, as the ending of each phrase is distinctly higher-pitched than the beginning. No other species in this group (Pine, Chipping, Junco) commonly uses phrases that sound up slurred (Chipping Sparrow is just too fast and noisy to hear the pitch change), and that, combined with the musical whistled quality of the song, will allow you to identify most Pine Warblers with confidence. Mostly found in tall pine trees. [See online reference Sibley] Include Yellow-rumped Warbler with this trilling group.
chip chip chip chip chip chip chip chip
- 74. Yellow-rumped Warbler**
A loose Junco-like **trill**. Weak song.
- 75. Prairie Warbler**
Soft, high pitched, going up the scale and becoming quieter toward the end. **Uphill** ↑
zee, zee, zee, zee
- 76. Black-throated Green Warbler**
Nasal, breezy, and **rapid**.
trees, trees, whispering trees
OR
zoo-zee, zoo-zoo-zee
- 77. Canada Warbler**
Hard to describe; lacks distinctive pattern; a jumble of emphatic musical notes, no two on same pitch, but often ends in an forceful *wip*.
- 78. Wilson's Warbler**
Song, a thin rapid little chatter dropping to pitch at the end.
chi chi chi chi chi chet chet.
- 79. Yellow-breasted Chat**
Song is a remarkable variety of whistles, rattles, squeals, rebukes, and meows.

Towhee, Sparrows, and Junco

- 80. Eastern Towhee**
Call note, *Chew wink*.
Drink-your-teahehehe.

- 81. Chipping Sparrow**
The trill of Chipping Sparrow is nearly twice as long as that of any other species, and this is a consistent and very useful clue. In addition, the overall quality of the sound is usually mechanical and rattling, due to the complexity of each individual phrase. Long series of monotone chips somewhat musical. See **Pine Warbler summary**. Found in your yard.

chip chip chip chip

- 82. Clay-colored Sparrow**
Raspy insect-like series of notes. Like vibrating your tongue while growling.

fееeed me. fееeed me. grassy areas.

- 83. Field Sparrow**
Like a steel ball bouncing on a marble floor. Found in fields.

Q, Q, Q, Q, D, D, D, D, D

- 84. Vesper Sparrow**
Song Sparrow like but loud and fewer introductory notes. Breezy. Found near fields.

- 85. Savannah Sparrow**
The first notes may be difficult to hear. Roadside fields.

teesit, teesit, teesit, teeseeee, tasaaaay.

- 86. Grasshopper Sparrow**
Monotone, unmusical, insect-like, buzzing. Found in fields.

- 87. Henslow's Sparrow**
Almost an inaudible call quickly stated with long pauses between songs. Insect-like song.

tease-lick tease-lick

- 88. Le Conte's Sparrow**
A short, one-second, insect-like song burst, sounding as if it begins and ends by a click of a switch. [J. D. Rising]

reese-reese, z-z-z-buzz

OR

tzeeh-tzzzz tick

- 89. Song Sparrow**
madge! madge! madge!
put on the tea kettle, eekettle.

- 90. Lincoln's Sparrow**
Sweet and gurgling song with a quality of Purple Finch or House Wren. [J. D. Rising]

churr-churr-churr-wee-wee-wee-wah-wah

OR

ootle ootle weetle weetle eeteeteetyaytoo.

- 91. Swamp Sparrow**
Like a slow and loud Chipping Sparrow. Waterways and marshes.

chip, chip, chip, chip, chip, chip

- 92. White-throated Sparrow**
old sam, peabody-peabody-peabody. or oh!
sweet canada-canada-canada.

- 93. White-crowned Sparrow**
The song is variable with many regional dialects, but distinctive. In the east and north it is characteristically two (one to four) clearly whistled notes, the second slightly lower than the first, followed by three descending buzzy or husky notes. [J. D. Rising]

dear-dear buzz buzz buzz.

- 94. Dark-eyed Junco**
Song a simple musical, metallic trill similar to Chipping Sparrow and Pine Warbler.

Tanager, Cardinal, and Allies

- 95. Scarlet Tanager**
Like a hoarse Robin. Call note; *Tick-burr*

- 96. Northern Cardinal**
what! what! what!, cheer, cheer, cheer.

- 97. Rose-breasted Grosbeak**
Mellow Robin that swallows the last note. Call note; *Kick.*

- 98. Indigo Bunting**
Each couplet is given as a series of phrases.

one, one; two, two; three, three; four, four

OR

fire! fire! where? where? here! here! see? see?

Blackbirds

- 99. Bobolink**
Sounds like a rubber band stringed banjo.

bob-o-link-spink-spank

- 100. Red-winged Blackbird**

oak-la-ree

OR

aura-lee.

- 101. Eastern Meadowlark**
May be given in flight.

tee-yah, tee-yair

OR

spring is here

- 102. Western Meadowlark**
A tumble of flute-like notes. Heard in western vintage movies.

- 103. Brown-headed Cowbird**
Male bows forward. Sounds like an old-fashioned water whistle.

glug-glug-glug-gleeee.

- 104. Orchard Oriole**
A fast warbling song. Suggests Purple Finch's song.

105. Baltimore Oriole

A series of piping whistled notes.

Finches

106. House Finch

Fast lively warble with diagnostic notes at the end; *surreeeee*. May be given in flight.

107. Purple Finch

A fast lively warbling song. Look for the bird singing at the top of the tree. See Orchard Oriole.

108. Pine Siskin

Long buzzy notes.
surreeeee.

109. American Goldfinch

Also given in flight so it has the dip to go with it (song).

potato chips, potato chips

OR

virginia virginia

110. Evening Grosbeak

Song, a short uneven warble. Call note, a ringing finch-like *chirp*. [R.T.Peterson]

cleer

OR

cle—ip

Old World Sparrows

111. House Sparrow

seal-it, seal-it, seal-it, seal-it.

Some Song References

The material contained in this document has been gathered from personal observations, from conversations with fellow birders, and from the following published and internet sources.

J. D. Rising, A Guide to the Identification and Natural History of The Sparrows of the United States and Canada, 1996.

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<http://bna.birds.cornell.edu> (The Birds of North America Online)

NOTES:

Words Used To Describe Bird Sounds

Most of these words are from *Ornithology in Laboratory and Field* by O. S. Pettingill 1985, Academic Press.

abrupt	discordant	laughing	rattle	stuttering
alarming	disjointed	liquid	rattling	suggesting
alternated	distinctive	lispy	raucous	sweet
ascending	double-toned	lively	rich	thin
babbling	double-noted	long	ringing	thready
bell-like	down	low	rising	throaty
bickering	dreamy	loud	reedy	throbbing
breezy	dropping	mellow	resonant	ticking
broken	dry	melodious	repeated	tinkle
bubbly	effervescent	metallic	repetitious	tinkling
burry	emphatic	mewing	repetitive	tirelessly
buzzing	energetic	mimic	reverberant	tremulous
buzzy	ethereal	mimicking	rollicking	trill
canary-like	explosive	moderate	rounder	trilling
carol-like	faint	modulated	screaming	tumble
caroling	fast	monosyllabic	screeching	tumbling
cat-like	fife-like	musical	short	twittering
chant	flowing	nasal	shrill	ululation
chip	flute-like	nasally	sibilant	up
chips	forced	noisy	sighing	unmusical
chipping	gabbling	oinking	similar	varied
chirping	gibbering	outburst	sipping	vibratory
chattering	grasshopper-like	owl-like	sliding	ventriloquial
cheeping	grating	paired	slow	voluble
chinking	gurgling	pealing	slurring	warbling
chuckles	gushing	peeping	smacking	watery
chucking	guttural	penetrating	soft	weak
churring	harsh	piping	sonorous	wheeling
choppy	hiccupping	piercing	sputtering	wheezy
circular	hoarse	plaintive	squawking	whining
clear	hollow	pulled	squeaking	whirring
clicks	hooting	puttering	squeaky	whistling
coarse	hurried	quacking	squealing	whooping
continuous	husky	quawking	quelch	yelping
cooing	insect-like	quivering	staccato	zesty
couplets	instrumental	ambling	stentorian	
creaky	intoned	rapid	strained	
crescendo	introductory	rapidly	stretched	
descending	jabbering	rasping	strident	

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