

Alaska Spill Response Wildlife ID Aid

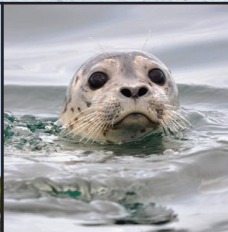
TAKE A “WILDLIFE MINUTE” AND RECORD WHAT YOU SEE



istock



Katmai NPS/D.Kurtz



Creative Commons/Mike's Birds

During an active spill, report wildlife observations or other wildlife related concerns to your supervisor or Incident Command. At any time, you can also report to:



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Spill Response Team

907.242.6893

fwsakspillresponse@fws.gov



HOW TO USE THIS FIELD AID *We want to know what you see!*

This guide contains basic characteristics of **6 Bird groups** and **7 Marine Mammal groups**

- No wildlife ID experience needed
- No binoculars needed

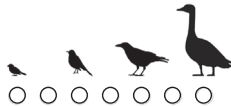
You can use a **permanent marker** to record your wildlife counts right on the **Field Aid**. (Marks can later be erased with rubbing alcohol and the **Field Aid** can be reused.)

STEPS

Each time you see an animal or group of similar animals:

- ❑ **Notice the shape & appearance** of the animal (body shape, wing size, leg length, etc.).
- ❑ **Notice the behavior** of the animal (swimming, flying, wading, etc.) and **the habitat** that surrounds it (ocean, tundra, wetland, etc.).
- ❑ If more than one animal, **estimate the number** of animals of that type you see.

- ❑ Flip through your **Field Aid** to **find the page** of the group that best matches your animal in its shape, appearance, habitat, and behavior.
- ❑ **Record the number** of animals you see in the “Count” box, on that group’s page. Use your permanent marker!
- ❑ As you see more animals, **continue recording their numbers** on the correct pages.
- ❑ On the **last page** of the **Field Aid**, **tally and record the total number** of individuals you have seen in each group.
- ❑ **Record notes** of important observations on the last page.
- ❑ **Report your counts and notes** to a supervisor or to the USFWS Spill Response Team.
- ❑ **Size charts** in the bottom right corner of bird ID pages show the **general size** of birds in that group as compared to a sparrow, robin, raven and a goose.



Cornell Lab of Ornithology/Merlin Bird ID App

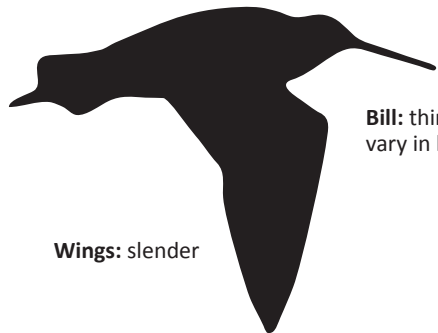
Thank you for helping us take care of Alaska’s wildlife.

SHOREBIRDS

Sandpipers, Plovers, Oystercatchers, Phalaropes

SHAPE & APPEARANCE

Bird illustrations courtesy of David Sibley



Wings: slender

Bill: thin,
vary in length



Often form tight flocks



Body: slender



Legs: relatively long, often visible in flight



HABITAT

- Inhabit aquatic areas: coastlines, bays, river deltas, interior wetlands.
- Nest on the tundra or in boreal forest close to water.



Lucas DeCicco



Christopher Barwood



Milo Burcham

BEHAVIOR



Lucas DeCicco



- Excellent waders, rarely swim.
- Scurry in or near shallow waters.

SHOREBIRDS Sandpipers, Plovers, Oystercatchers, Phalaropes



LONG-WINGED SEABIRDS

Gulls, Terns, Petrels, Albatross,
Shearwaters, Cormorants

SHAPE & APPEARANCE

Bird illustrations courtesy of David Sibley

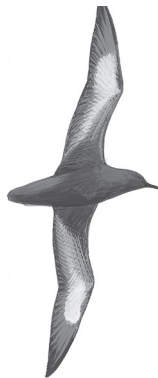
Wings: long, narrow



Bill: slender, short
to medium length



May flock to feed



Body: streamlined



HABITAT



- Inhabit deep ocean environments.
- Gulls frequently come to land.
- Most nest on islands, often in colonies.



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BEHAVIOR



- Soar over water.
- May congregate to feed on schools of fish.
- Some dive into water.



LONG-WINGED SEABIRDS

Gulls, Terns, Petrels, Albatross,
Shearwaters, Cormorants

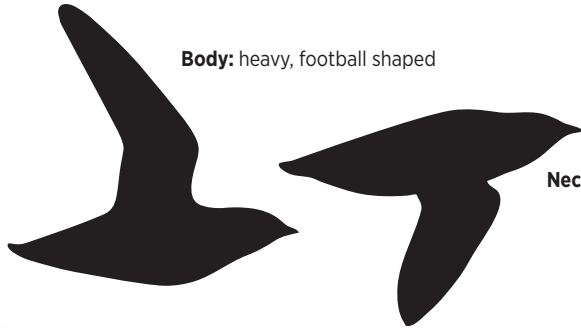


FOOTBALL-SHAPED SEABIRDS

Puffins, Auklets, Murrelets,
Murres, Guillemots

SHAPE & APPEARANCE

Bird illustrations courtesy of David Sibley



Body: heavy, football shaped

Neck: thick



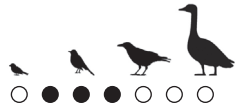
Head: large



Bill: blunt
or pointed



Feather shading: dark colored back, light colored chest



HABITAT

- Inhabit ocean environments.
- Many nest on island cliffs, often in colonies.



BEHAVIOR

- Spend more time swimming than long-winged seabirds.
- “Run” across water to take flight.
- Flight is fast, straight, and low over the water.
- Swims underwater.



FOOTBALL-SHAPED SEABIRDS

Puffins, Auklets, Murrelets,
Murres, Guillemots

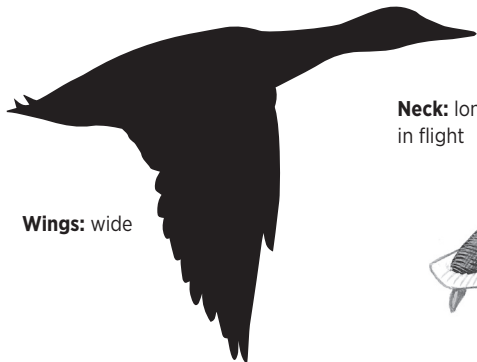


WATERFOWL

Ducks, Geese, Swans, Loons

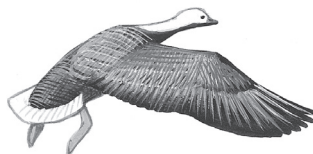
SHAPE & APPEARANCE

Bird illustrations courtesy of David Sibley

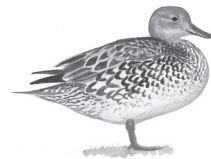


Wings: wide

Neck: long
in flight

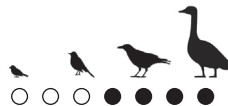


Often fly in V-formation



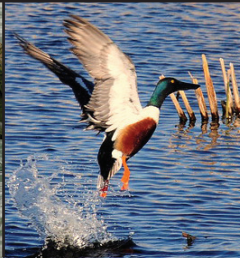
Body: rounded

Head/bill: distinctive shape



HABITAT

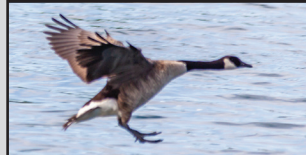
- Inhabit coastlines and wetlands.



BEHAVIOR



- Fly with fast wing beats, don't soar.
- Often vocal in flight.
- Feet are often visible during water take-off and landing.
- "Run" across water to take flight.
- Sea ducks dive underwater.



WATERFOWL Ducks, Geese, Swans, Loons



BIRDS OF PREY

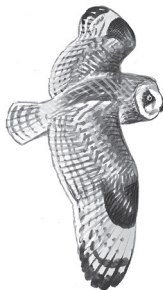
Eagles, Falcons, Hawks, Owls

SHAPE & APPEARANCE

Bird illustrations courtesy of David Sibley



Wings: long



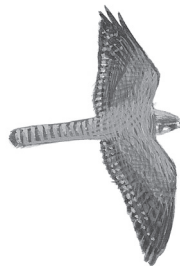
Head: owl - rounded,
others - triangular



Neck: short
in flight



Bill: short,
hooked



Tail: fanned or
squared in flight



HABITAT



- Inhabit coastlines, tundra and inland environments.

BEHAVIOR

- Often soar over land or sit on exposed perches.
- Hunt in open country or over water.
- Usually solitary.



BIRDS OF PREY

Eagles, Falcons, Hawks, Owls



LAND BIRDS

All other land birds you see, record here!

SHAPE & APPEARANCE

Bird illustrations courtesy of David Sibley



Highly variable in size and shape



HABITAT

- Throughout Alaska.



BEHAVIOR

- Many leave Alaska during winter months.



LAND BIRDS All other land birds you see, record here!



SEA OTTER OR RIVER OTTER?



Barry Troutman

SEA OTTER

- **Swim:** belly up, floating
- **Inhabit:** salt water
- **On land:** rarely, awkward movement



Deanna Lynch/USFWS

COUNT

RIVER OTTER

- **Swim:** belly down, body low
- **Inhabit:** fresh and salt water
- **On land:** often, agile movement



COUNT



Burkanov/NOAA



SEALS

- **Head:** No external ear flaps
- **On land:** Scoot on belly
- **Group size:** Solitary or a few
- **Vocalizations:** Soft, quiet grunts
- **Body:** Spots, rings, or patches



COUNT

SEA LIONS

- **Head:** External ear flaps
- **On land:** Walk on front and hind flippers
- **Group size:** Large groups
- **Vocalizations:** Bark or roar
- **Body:** No patterns



COUNT

WALRUS

- **Head:** No visible ears, large tusks
- **On land:** Walk on front and hind flippers
- **Group size:** Small to large groups
- **Vocalizations:** Variety of sounds



COUNT

SEALS, SEA LIONS, WALRUS



NOAA
FISHERIES



WHALES AND DOLPHINS



International Whaling Commission

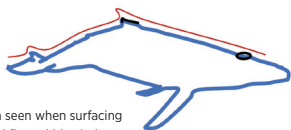


International Whaling Commission



LARGE WHALES

- **Size:** large
- **Dorsal fin:** small, if any
- **Surfacing movement:** slow, tail visible



- Often seen when surfacing
- Dorsal fin and blowhole

COUNT

SMALL WHALES AND DOLPHINS

Porpoise, Dolphin, Killer Whale, Beluga

- **Size:** smaller
- **Dorsal fin:** generally visible, more pronounced
- **Surfacing movement:** more rapid, smaller arch



- Often seen when surfacing
- Dorsal fin and blowhole

COUNT

OTHER WILDLIFE IDENTIFICATION RESOURCES

Merlin Bird Identification App

<http://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/download/>

Inputs to this app are basic – your location, bird size, and bird color. These are used to quickly narrow down who you’re looking at.

Seek App

https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/seek_app

This app uses image recognition technology. Simply take a picture of the plant or animal you are trying to identify, and let Seek figure out what it is!

Even if you don’t have these apps, taking pictures of wildlife that you see while responding to a spill is an excellent way to report wildlife observations.

This aid was created by:

Claire Montgomerie / USFWS (editor), Eric Cline / Terragraphica (design)

All bird illustrations courtesy of David Sibley unless otherwise noted.

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Produced by:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service,
and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game

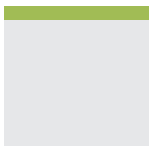


NOAA
FISHERIES

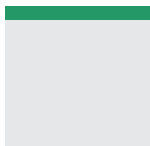


TOTAL COUNTS

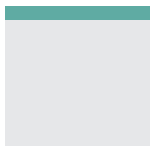
Shorebirds



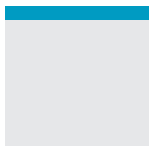
Long-winged
Seabirds



Football-shaped
Seabirds



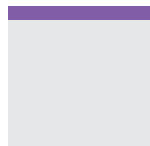
Waterfowl



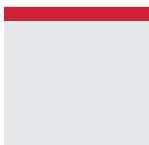
Birds of Prey



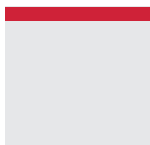
Land Birds



Sea Otters



River Otters



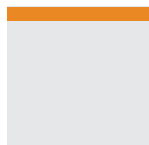
Seals



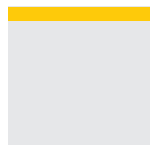
Sea Lions



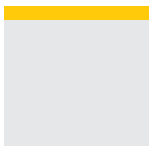
Walrus



Large Whales



Small Whales
and Dolphins



Notes: (For example: Are animals oiled? Are young present? Are there dead animals?)