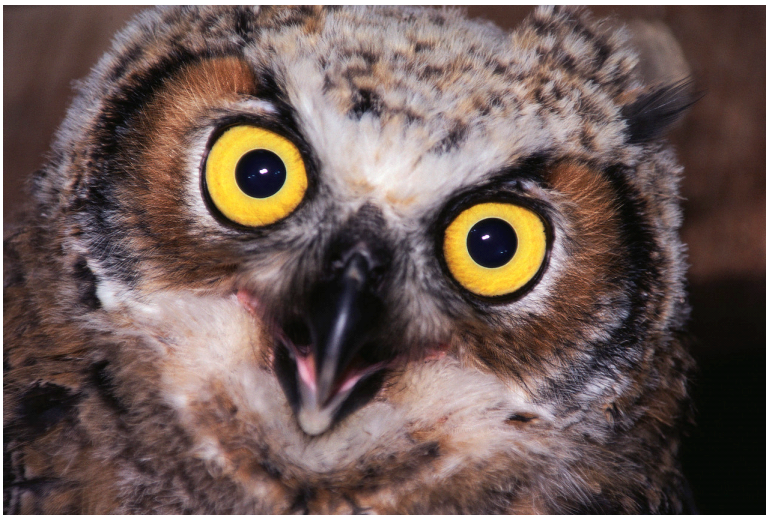
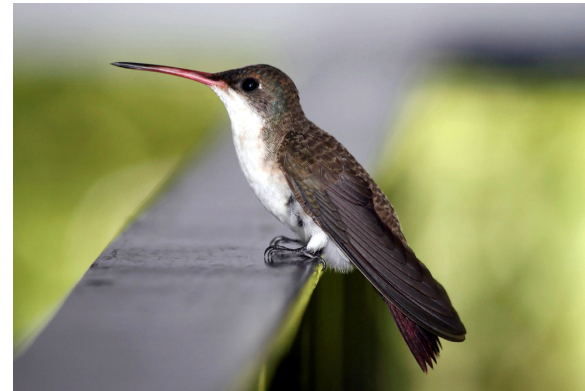


# What Fine Feathers You Have!



California is home to more than 600 different species of birds. We have the rare California condor, bald eagles, about ten different kinds of hawks, and lots more. We even have some that only call California home during certain seasons of the year. Here's your chance to get started doing some bird-watching right in your own neighborhood. With a close eye, you'll be surprised at how many different kinds of birds live right along side of us whether we're in the city, the suburbs, or the countryside.



# What Fine Feathers You Have!

Becoming a bird-watcher is easy! All it takes is a sharp eye, good ears, and lots of patience. You can start your adventure in bird watching right in your own neighborhood. You might find that early morning is a good time to listen to the calls of birds...it's quieter then before all the sounds of busy human life get started. You can also listen for birds at twilight in the evening. Be sure to check out all of the amazing colors of different bird feathers. There is the iridescent green on a hummingbird wing, the bright red of a sapsucker's head, and the stunning blue of a Stellar's jay. What fine feathers they all have!



## Tools:

Bird-watching is super easy to do. All you need to get started are your eyes and ears. You might also find the following things helpful:

- \*A pair of binoculars
- \*A flashlight (for spotting owls in the dark)
- \*A Nature Journal Observation Sheet (from the Kids in Nature webpage)
- \*A pencil

## Activity Ideas:

\*Do you spy a bird? Great! The first thing you can check out is its color. Is the bird's head a different color than its wings? How about the color on its belly?

\*Use your binoculars to get a good look at the bird's beak. Is it narrow and pointy or hooked on the end? Using the shape of the bird's beak, try to guess what it eats.

\*Check out the bird's behavior. Is it able to climb up and down the bark of a tree or does it spend most of its time on the ground? How a bird walks and flies can tell you a lot about where it nests, feeds, and raises its young.

## Fast Facts:

Male ducks are often brightly colored to attract a mate while the females' feathers are less showy so that they can be better camouflaged when nesting.

Swallows can catch bugs in midair and can often be found swooping across ponds where there is good bug hunting.

Lots of birds are lighter on their underside and darker on their topside. Why do you think this is so? (Hint: Think about what an animal that is hunting a bird might see either from above or below the bird.)



# What Fine Feathers You Have!

## Nature Journal Observation Sheet

Your Name: Jasmine

Today's Date: May 16, 2008

Your Location: Orinda

### Describe the weather:

Wow! It's really hot today! The air is hot and the sun is so bright!

### What do you see around you?

I hear a bird but I can't see him yet.

### What do you hear?

I am sitting in the shade of a big oak tree and I can hear a bird squawking really loudly. He sounds mad at something. Ooh! I see him! He is kind of big...sort of the size of a robin but a bit bigger. He has a big bunch of feathers on his head, sort of like a crown. He is deep blue on his belly.

### What do you smell?

It smells like hot, dry dirt and brown grass.

Choose something to study...a bird, a bug, a mammal. Describe it in as much detail as you can here and then sketch it.

This is a picture of the big blue bird that I saw in the oak tree in my neighbor's yard. My uncle thinks that it is a Stellar's jay bird.

