



Common Birds of Georgia

How many bird species can you identify in your area?

So Many Birds...

More than 300 species of birds can be seen across Georgia during the year. Whether you live in the mountains, on the coast, or somewhere in between, birds are everywhere. From hummingbirds, to hawks, to herons, these diverse animals have fascinated humans throughout history. How many birds can you find right outside your door?



Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Where Do I Start?

Field guides are publications that help you identify something in the natural world. A bird guide in the form of books, smartphone applications, or website is a useful tool to learn more about the many birds in your area before, during, and after birdwatching.

Guides are often **classified**, or organized, by **family**. However, the word “family” is not used the same way we describe our relationship to our parents, siblings, or cousins. Birds in a family share characteristics you can observe, such as similar body and beak shapes, behaviors, or habitats. Get to know a field guide by flipping through one! Notice that families like ducks are arranged together, as are other families like hawks and hummingbirds.

What's in a Field Guide to Birds?

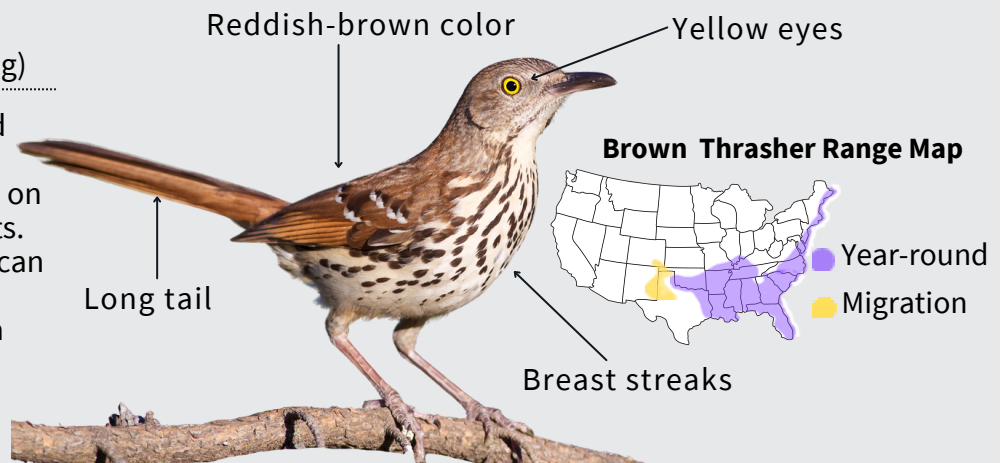
In addition to providing illustrations or photographs, field guides usually highlight:

- **Field Marks** (physical traits): colors and markings; length and shape of beak, legs, and tail
- **Habitat**: where a bird meets its survival needs—food, water, shelter, and nesting space
- **Behavior**: actions related to feeding, flying, flocking, and other activities
- **Voice**: vocalizations, including songs and calls
- **Range Maps**: maps indicating where species are found at different times of year
- **Measurements**: body length, wingspan, and weight. (Length is measured from the tip of the beak to the tip of the tail. Wingspan is the length between wingtips when the wings are fully extended.)
- **Conservation Status**: population abundance, usually noted as common, uncommon, or rare. The status of a species can change over time

Brown Thrasher

L 11.5" WS 13" WT 2.4 oz (69 g)

Solitary species usually found hiding in dense vegetation or hopping in the grass. Forages on the ground, looking for insects. Mimic with large repertoire—can have more than 1,000 songs. Repeats phrases twice, with a pause between each set.



Did you know? Georgia's state bird, the Brown Thrasher, gets its name from the "thrashing" it does while foraging. They use their pointed bill to toss around leaves and dirt in search of food.

What to look and listen for when birding:

- **Field Marks**: what features stands out?
- **Behavior**: what is the bird doing?
- **Voice**: what does the bird sound like?

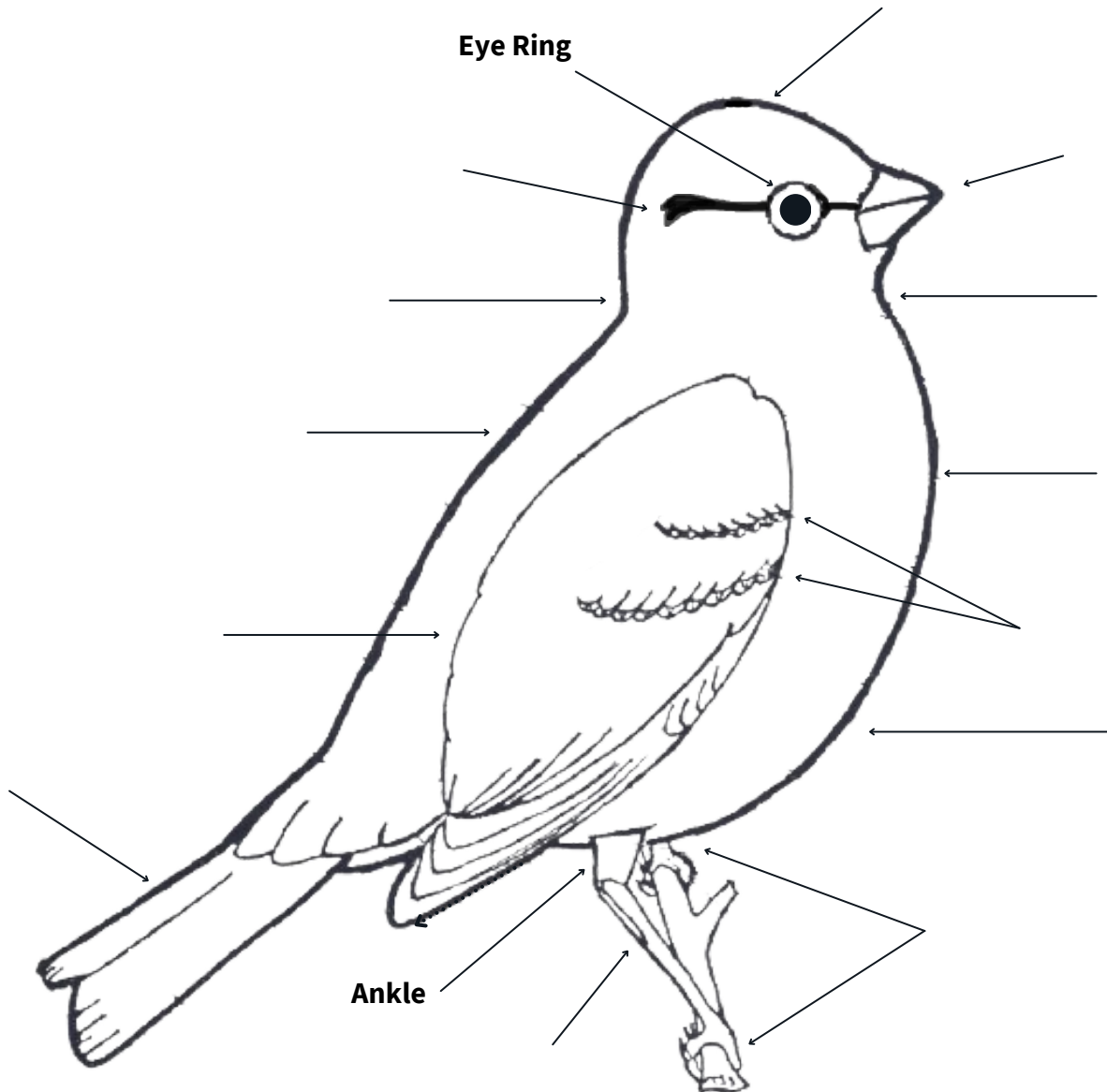
A bird **checklist** is another useful tool to learn about birds local to your area. Checklists outline the species that occur in a specific location during different seasons.

Bird Bodies

Birds are one of the most diverse groups of animals on Earth. Unlike other animals, birds live on every continent, including Antarctica! Yet birds share a general body shape despite variations in size, habitat, diet, and behaviors. When learning to identify birds, it is useful to know their various body parts to help you better describe their **field marks** more accurately.

Instructions: Label the diagram using the vocabulary list. Think about the body parts of other animals, including humans, to help you. Then answer the questions below the diagram.

Nape	Throat	Bill (Beak)	Foot	Eye Line	Back	Eye Ring
Crown	Wingbars	Belly	Breast	Toes	Tail	Wings



1) Choose one body part and describe its function.

2) Other than the wings, name two body parts that help birds to fly. Explain how.