Shorebird Identification Webinar 2: Other Important Clues
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Sponsored by Celestron

How do you identify shorebirds?
• Size
• Shape
• Color pattern
• Markings
• Behavior
• Habitat
• Calls

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Ruddy Turnstone © Jay W. McGowan
Wing Stripes

- Black necked Stilt
- American Avocet

Color Pattern

- Black patches

White Rump

- Red knot
- American woodcock
- Ruddy turnstone
- White rumped sandpiper
- Hudsonian godwit
- Black bellied plover
- Wilson's phalarope
- White rumped sandpiper

Black striped plover

- Semipalmated plover
- American golden plover
- Surfbird
- American oystercatcher
- Stilted plover
- Red knot
- Lesser yellowlegs
- Ruddy turnstone

Not Quite-White Rump

Plover Rumps

Color Pattern

• Dark/light back
How do you identify shorebirds?

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• **Markings**
• Behavior
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• Calls
Markings

- Plain

  - Ringed Plover © Kevin J. McGowan
  - Willet © Kevin J. McGowan

Markings

- Bars and streaks

  - Whimbrel © Jay W. McGowan
  - Marbled Godwit © Jay W. McGowan

Markings

- Spots

  - Black-bellied Plover © Kevin J. McGowan
  - Spotted Sandpiper © Kevin J. McGowan
Markings
• Scaly feather edging

Snipe Stripes

Markings – where some count
How do you identify shorebirds?

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- **Habitat**
- Calls

**Habitat**

- Mudflats
- Pond edges
- Grass and fields
- Beach
- Rocky intertidal
- Open water

Markings – where some don’t
Rocky Intertidal

- Black Turnstone
- American Oystercatcher
- Red Phalarope
- Least Sandpiper
- Red-necked Phalarope

Open Water

- Red Phalarope
- Wilson’s Phalarope
- Greater Yellowlegs

Habitat

- Upper, drier areas
- Edge
- Shallow water
- Deep water
- Open water
Habitat

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Calls

- Whistled notes
  - Slurred whistles
  - Single, repeated whistles
- Loud calls
- Chips and kips
- Kreeks and rattles
Calls – Least Sandpiper

- Identify one shorebird at a time
- Use shape to narrow to group
- Compare size with other birds
- Watch for color patterns, especially when it flies
- Notice how it forages
- Notice where it forages
- Listen for calls

http://macaulaylibrary.org/guide/voices-of-shorebirds