



BE A CLEVER Birder



Burrowing owl

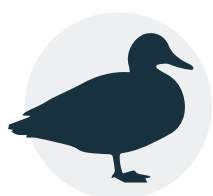
Did you know there are more than 10,000 species of birds in the world? There are so many birds that people have not identified them all. Experts say there may be twice as many species yet to be found!

The study of birds is called **ornithology**, and people who enjoy identifying birds are called **birders**. They often keep a **life list**, which is a record of all the different birds they have identified over time.

Bird watching is a popular pastime that can be enjoyed by everyone — especially kids! No matter how old you are or where you live, there are birds to hear, observe, and identify.

GETTING STARTED

With so many kinds of birds in the world, you may think that it is impossible to tell them all apart. But there are a few simple steps that will help you learn about and identify the birds around you.



DUCKS, GEESE, SWANS



HAWKS AND EAGLES



OWLS



GAME BIRDS



SHOREBIRDS



GULLS



HUMMINGBIRDS



WOODPECKERS



FLYCATCHERS



CROWS AND JAYS



SWALLOWS



SONGBIRDS

[BIRDS NOT TO SCALE]

Age Level: 6-10 (elementary).
Key Definitions: Ornithology, Birders, Life List, Migration, Field Markings, Call, Songs.
Objective: To learn to identify common birds.

First, look at the general shape of the bird and identify its group by using the silhouettes pictured on Page 1. Notice the many differences between song birds, ducks, hawks, woodpeckers, or any other birds you may see. You might find differences in the shape of their beaks or how they perch on a branch. Each species of bird is unique in its physical features and behavior.

Another helpful tip is to make note of which birds you see during the different seasons of the year. You'll see some birds in the summer, but not during the winter — and vice versa. Birds move from one region to another according to the seasons; this is called **migration**. Birders get to see birds from all areas due to migration.

FIELD MARKS

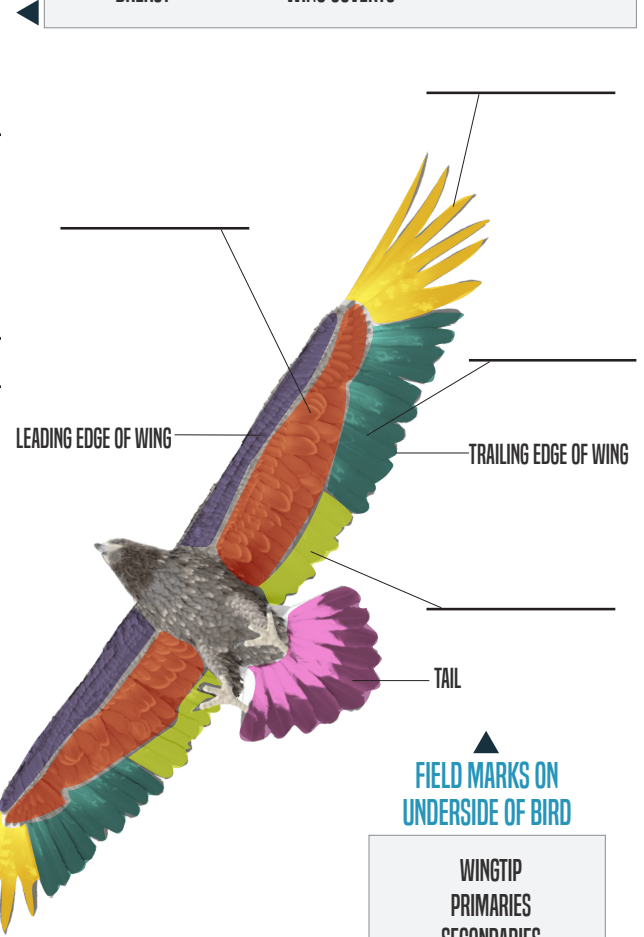
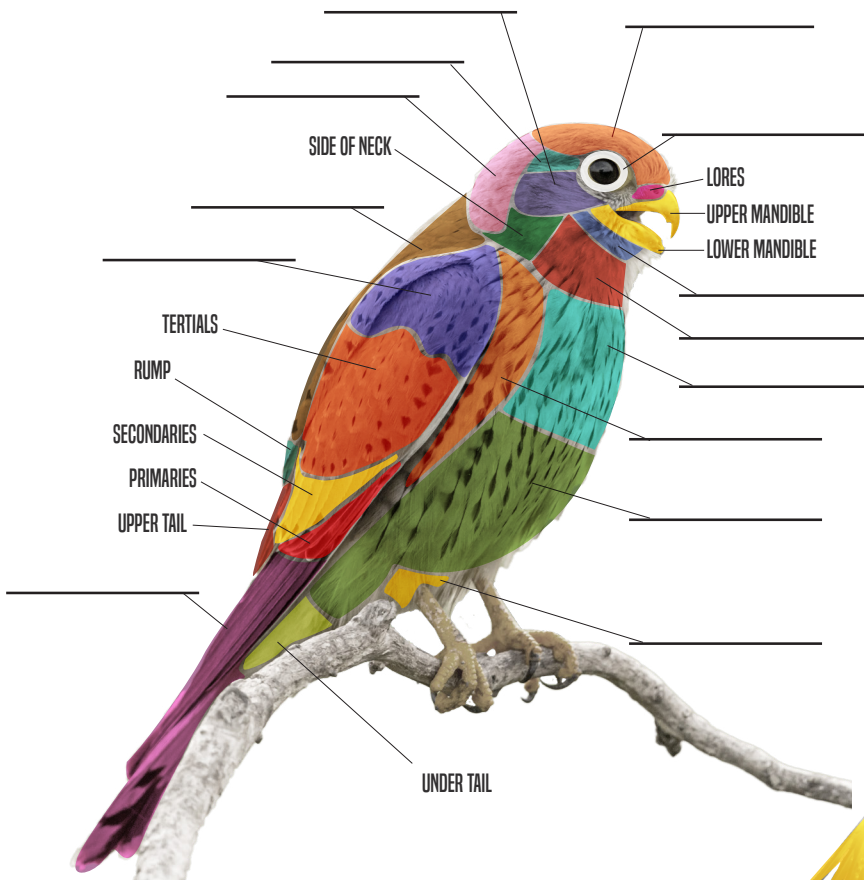
Once you have identified groups of common birds, you can use **field marks** to help identify the specific bird you have spotted. Field marks are the specific spots, stripes, and colors that make birds unique. Look for marks on the bird's head, throat, wings, and tail. There are many books and phone apps available that describe the field marks of birds. To learn more about field marks, fill in the blank from the word lists below.

FIELD MARKS ON SIDE OF BIRD

CROWN
EYE-RING
CHIN
THROAT
BREAST

SIDE
BELLY
THIGH
TAIL
WING COVERTS

BACK
NAPE
EYELINE
EAR PATCH



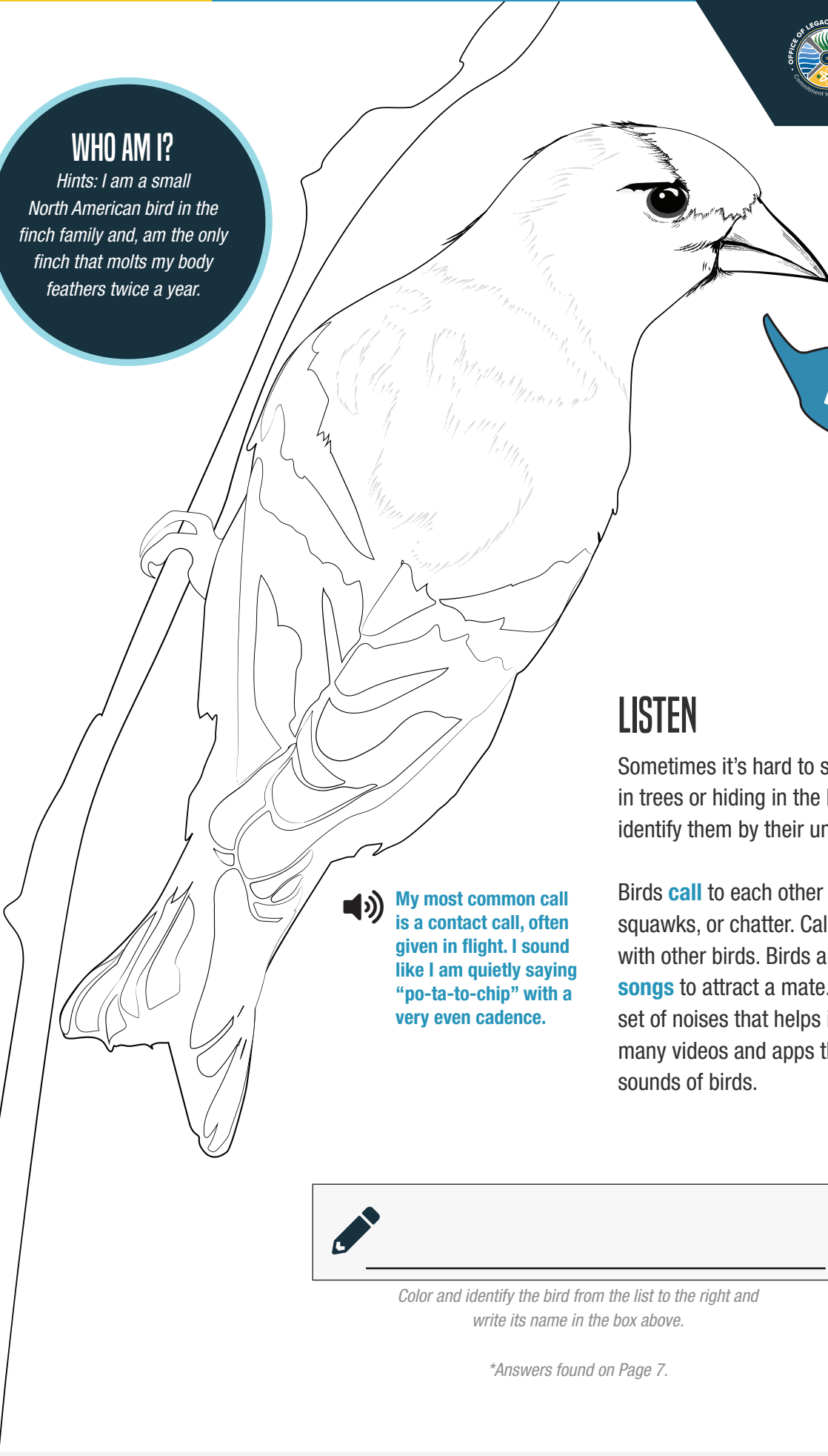
FIELD MARKS ON UNDERSIDE OF BIRD

WINGTIP
PRIMARIES
SECONDARIES
WING LININGS

**Answers found on Page 7.*

WHO AM I?

Hints: I am a small North American bird in the finch family and, am the only finch that molts my body feathers twice a year.



po-ta-to-chip



My most common call is a contact call, often given in flight. I sound like I am quietly saying “po-ta-to-chip” with a very even cadence.

LISTEN

Sometimes it’s hard to see birds perched high in trees or hiding in the brush, but you can still identify them by their unique sound.

Birds **call** to each other by making short peeps, squawks, or chatter. Calls are used to communicate with other birds. Birds also make musical noises or **songs** to attract a mate. Each species has a unique set of noises that helps identify them. There are many videos and apps that can help you learn the sounds of birds.

Color and identify the bird from the list to the right and write its name in the box above.

**Answers found on Page 7.*

WHICH BIRD AM I?

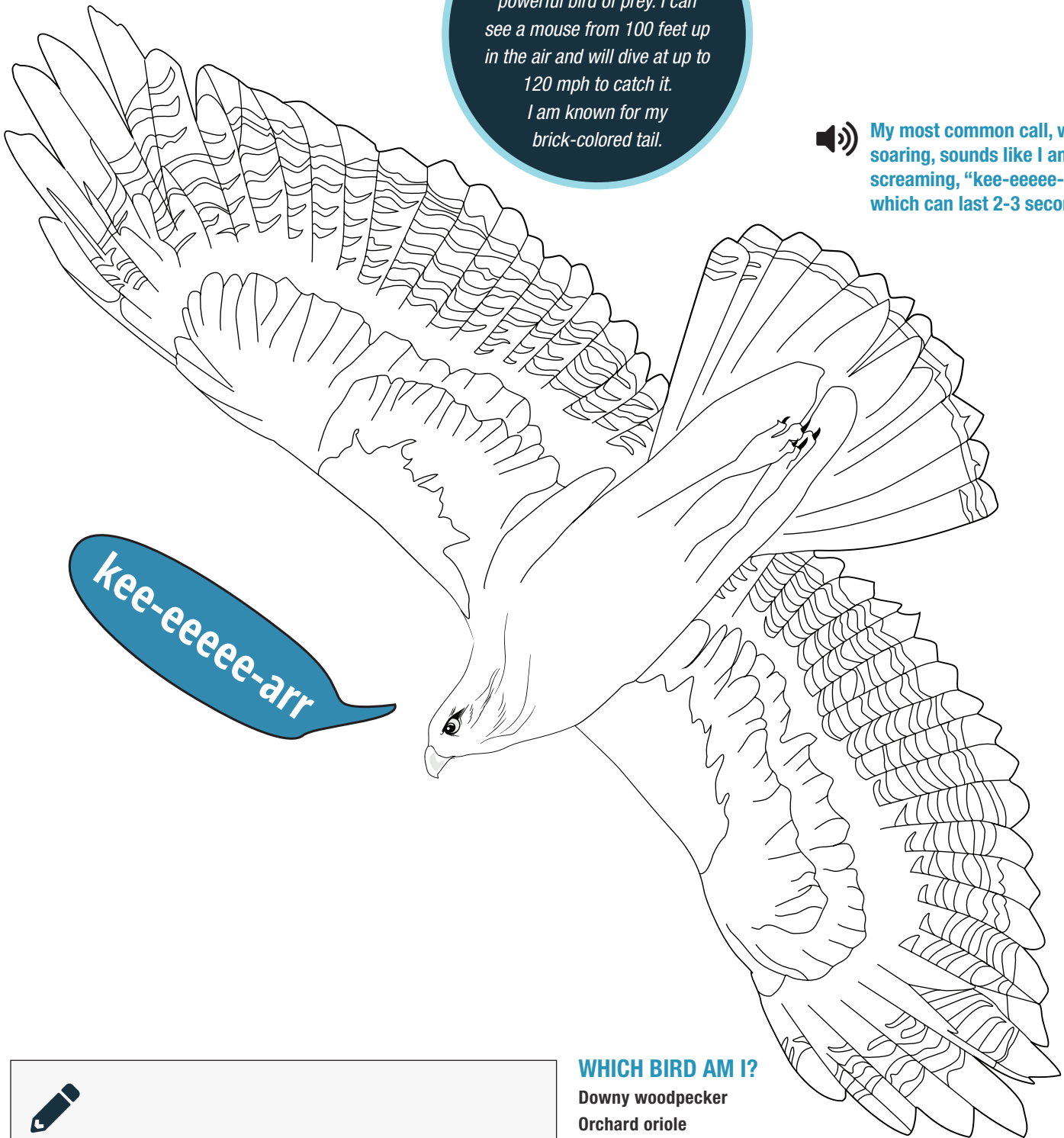
- Downy woodpecker
- Orchard oriole
- Wood duck
- American goldfinch
- Mallard
- Bald eagle
- Kestrel
- Red-tailed hawk

WHO AM I?

Hints: I am a strong and powerful bird of prey. I can see a mouse from 100 feet up in the air and will dive at up to 120 mph to catch it. I am known for my brick-colored tail.



My most common call, while soaring, sounds like I am screaming, “kee-eeee-arr,” which can last 2-3 seconds.



kee-eeee-arr



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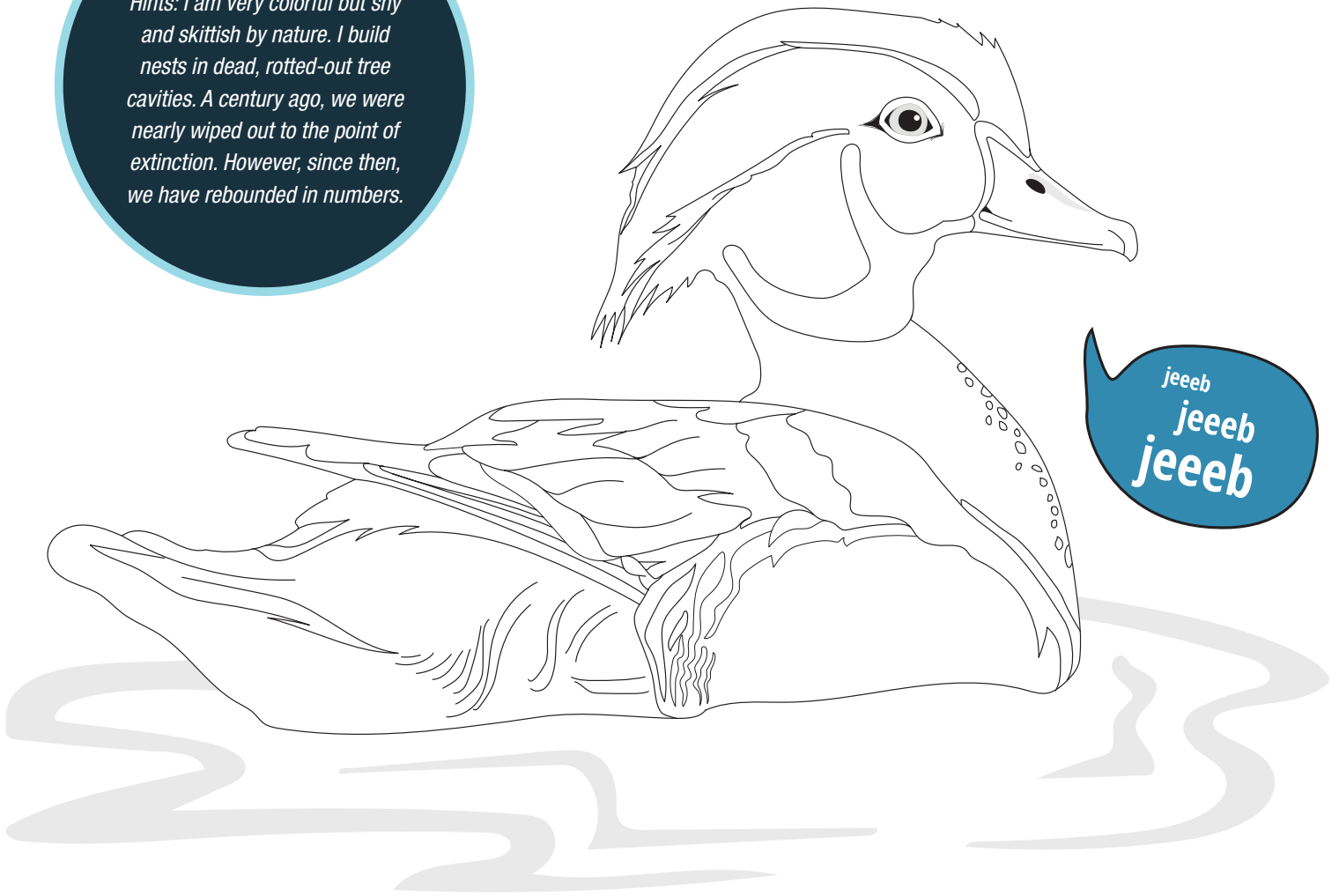
**Answers found on Page 7.*

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WHO AM I?

Hints: I am very colorful but shy and skittish by nature. I build nests in dead, rotted-out tree cavities. A century ago, we were nearly wiped out to the point of extinction. However, since then, we have rebounded in numbers.



I am not incredibly vocal. And what little sound I make depends entirely on whether I am a male or female. A female will make squealing calls, sounding like “oo-week.” A male makes soft wheezing whistles that rise in pitch, sounding like “jeeeb.”



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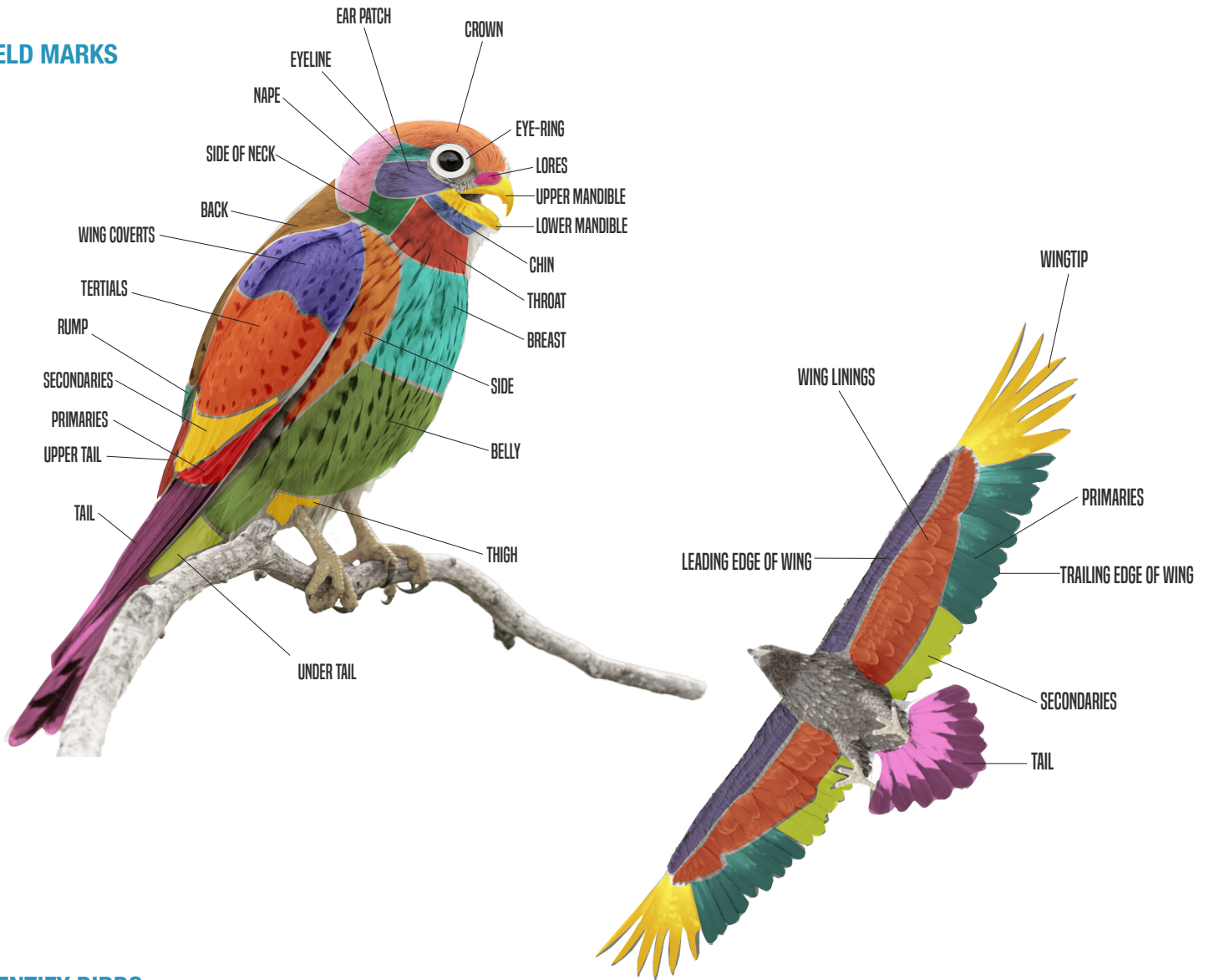
DRAW AND COLOR YOUR OWN BIRD

My bird's name is:



ANSWERS:

FIELD MARKS



IDENTIFY BIRDS



1

American goldfinch

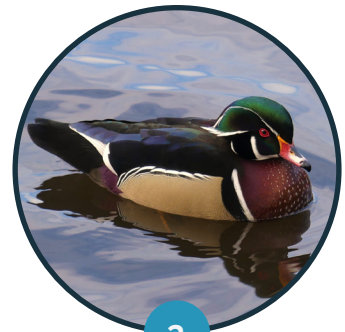
Bird #1 (Page 3)
Photo by Tom Murray/Flickr



2

Red-tailed hawk

Bird #2 (Page 4)
Photo by Andrew Redding/Flickr



3

Wood duck

Bird #3 (Page 5)
Photo by Michael Klotz/Flickr