

# An Introduction to Bird Identification

Bird identification is like detective work - you need to put all the clues together to solve the mystery.



## 1. The first tip is to relax and take your time.

Remember to enjoy being outside listening to birds, seeing their colours and their flight, even if you can't identify them.



## 2. Tools and equipment

If you really want to know who's who, a good **bird ID book** is essential. **Binoculars** or a **scope** will help you to see birds without disturbing them. A **camera** is useful to zoom in on traits to help you identify a bird or to capture their beauty and movements.



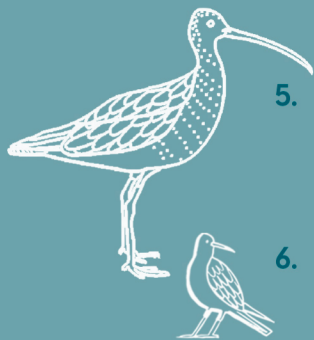
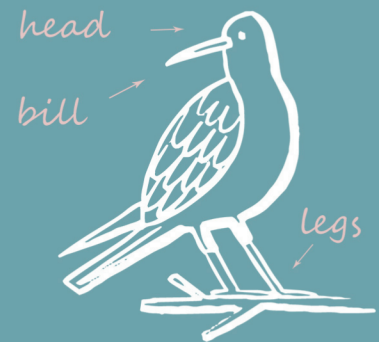
## 3. Listen carefully for bird calls and songs.

Record them to listen back later.



## 4. To identify a bird, break it down into sections, starting at the top.

What colour is the head? What shape is the bill? Is the neck long or short? What colour are the legs?



## 5. Big or small? Near or far?

It can be tricky to gauge what size a bird is if you have no reference nearby. Try to get a sense of how big familiar birds are, such as blackbirds, oystercatchers, or robins, and use them as comparison.

## 6. Watching a bird in flight is mesmerising and can give you more clues:

Are there colours on the underside of the wings? Do they glide smoothly or frantically flap? Does the bird travel alone or with a flock?



## 7. Some birds are resident and others are seasonal.

Winter migrants visit from September to March, summer breeders are here between March and September, many others just make a stopover while en route elsewhere.



## 8. Where is the bird?

Some birds always stay near the edge of the water, others dive in deeper waters, some are common in woodland and others near bogs. Note the habitat to give you more clues.

## 9. Still don't know?

Why not reach out to the birding community on Iveragh. Share your image or description on social media to help solve the riddle. Asking questions is often the easiest way to learn.

**Birdwatch Ireland:** [www.birdwatchireland.ie](http://www.birdwatchireland.ie) - local groups and volunteer surveys

**Ireland's Wildlife:** [www.irelandswildlife.com/bird-watching-ireland](http://www.irelandswildlife.com/bird-watching-ireland)

**Kerry Birding** (rarer birds and bird news): [www.kerrybirding.blogspot.com](http://www.kerrybirding.blogspot.com)

**Xeno-Canto** (bird calls): [www.xeno-canto.org](http://www.xeno-canto.org)

**RSPB:** <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/>

