**AUDIO SCRIPT: Birding for Beginners: Common Backyard Birds of Western Pennsylvania**

October 31, 2022

This script is written for a web-based training with each screen of the course having multiple audio files. Please use the file name in the first column to save and title each audio clip. The script for each audio file is in the second column.

**Output:** .wav

**Contact:**

Katie Orbison

Email: [katieorbison@westinghouse.com](mailto:katieorbison@westinghouse.com)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **File Name** | **Screen Number** | **Audio Script** |
| 1a01 | 1 | Welcome to the Birding for Beginners: Common Backyard Birds of Western Pennsylvania course! |
| 1a02 | 1 | This course is designed for anyone new to birding, but if you’ve been bird watching for years, please stick around. You might learn something new! |
| 1a03 | 1 | By completing this training, you will learn how to identify ten common backyard birds of Western Pennsylvania by sight and sound. You will also learn something interesting and unique about each of these ten birds. |
| 1a04 | 1 | This course has audio, so be sure to have speakers or headphones/earbuds available. |
| 1a05 | 1 | We’ll check in on your learning along the way, but a final quiz will need to be passed at the end in order for you to get credit for the training.  Let’s get started! |
| 1b01 | 2 | Have you ever seen a bird doing something interesting and later tried to tell someone about it? Without knowing what type of bird it was, maybe you described it as “a little gray bird.” Unfortunately that won’t help specifically identify it because there are many different little gray birds. If you noticed that the little gray bird had a spiky mohawk, that would help narrow it down. |
| 1b02 | 2 | This course isn’t designed to teach you everything there is to know about identifying birds, but if you start with these few common birds, you can expand from there. |
| 1b03 | 2 | For example: Once you know how to recognize what a tufted titmouse looks like, then you can say whether that little gray bird was or *was not* a tufted titmouse. Sometimes knowing what a specific bird looks like can help you narrow down the options to figure out what another bird is. |
| 1c01 | 3 | Time for our first bird! Do you recognize it? This is a Northern cardinal. |
| 1c02 | 3 | Let’s take a closer look. Both the male and female keep their coloring all year, regardless of the breeding season. The male is bright red, and the female is a brown-gray color to help her stay hidden when sitting on the nest. |
| 1c03 | 3 | Take a moment to really look at the cardinal, including the size, colors, and even bill shape. Adult cardinals have orange bills, but juveniles have black bills. All Northern cardinals have a crest on their head, but sometimes it’s not easy to see because it is lowered when they are feeling relaxed. |
| 1d01 | 4 | Our next bird is a small one with lots of personality! This is a chickadee. Western Pennsylvania has both black-capped chickadees and Carolina chickadees, but they are very difficult to distinguish between the two. We’re going to group them together in this course and just call them “chickadees.” |
| 1d02 | 4 | Male and female chickadees look alike. These birds are quite small, and move quickly. Their head is large compared to their body, and they are mostly black, white, and gray. They have very tiny bills. |
| 1e01 | 5 | This bird is a tufted titmouse! You’ll often see them near chickadees. Like chickadees, male and female titmouses look the same. |
| 1e02 | 5 | A tufted titmouse has a smooth gray color, white belly feathers, and a small smudge of peach coloring on its sides. |
| 1e03 | 5 | Their bill is black, and they have a crest on their head. Like the cardinal, you may not always notice their crest. |
| 1f01 | 6 | Our next bird is a white-breasted nuthatch! You’ll often see them near chickadees and tufted titmouses. Like those birds, male and female white-breasted nuthatches look the same. |
| 1f02 | 6 | The colors of a white-breasted nuthatch are gray, white, and black, with a touch of rusty coloring on its underside. Its face is white and it looks like it wears a black cap.  Their bill is long and thin. |
| 1g01 | 7 | Do you recognize this bird? The name is easy to remember because of its color: the blue jay. Blue jays are a large bird that shine bright blue in the sunlight. |
| 1g02 | 7 | Males and females look similar. Their bright blue feathers are on top and their bellies are a soft gray. Like the cardinal and tufted titmouse, they have a crest on their head. |
| 1h01 | 8 | Our next bird is the mourning dove. It’s a plump, larger bird that bobs its head when it walks. The males and females look the same. |
| 1h02 | 8 | Mourning doves are light brown and are often seen in pairs or even larger gatherings. While you might imagine a bird called a dove would be peaceful and full of grace, these birds are often a bit clumsy and awkward. |
| 1i01 | 9 | Being in Western Pennsylvania, you might want to think of this small bird as the Steelers bird to help you remember it. The American goldfinch is bright yellow and black during breeding season, like the Steelers’ colors. |
| 1i02 | 9 | When breeding season is over, both the males and females transition to duller colors for the winter. |
| 1i03 | 9 | The American goldfinch has a pinkish-orange bill in the summer, but it turns grayish-brown in the winter. |
| 1j01 | 10 | This next bird is one that brings joy to some as a sign of spring toward the end of winter. The American robin is a medium-to-large sized bird with gray feathers, an orange chest, and a black head. Males and females look the same. It is often seen hopping along the ground, pulling up worms from the grass. |
| 1k01 | 11 | This is the largest bird we will talk about in this course. This is a red-tailed hawk. These birds are not always easy to identify by sight, especially when soaring overhead or diving at their prey. |
| 1k02 | 11 | These hawks have dark feathers on top and mostly white feathers underneath. One distinct feature to look for is the “belly band”: a dark band of feathers that span across its white middle on adult red-tailed hawks. They also, of course, have a red tail. |
| 1k03 | 11 | To keep things confusing, young red-tailed hawks do not have a red tail. Hang in there though, these birds will be easier to identify by their sounds, which we’ll cover soon. |
| 1l01 | 12 | Our last bird in this course is another hawk. This one is a Cooper’s hawk. You’re a lot less likely to see these birds soaring like the red-tailed hawk. They often hide in trees and shrubs waiting to attack their prey. |
| 1l02 | 12 | Cooper’s hawks are much smaller than red-tailed hawks.  These hawks have gray feathers on top, and the adults have white and orange streaked feathers underneath. Adults have orange-red eyes, but juveniles have yellow eyes. |
| 1m01 | 13 | Now that we’ve discussed what these ten common backyard birds look like, it’s time to review what you’ve learned so far. Click and drag the name of the bird to the picture of that bird. When you are done, click the Submit button. |
| 2a01 | 14 | Now that you are getting comfortable identifying a few birds by sight, what happens when you can hear the bird but cannot see it? |
| 2a02 | 14 | In this section, you’ll listen to songs and calls that these birds make and learn tips about how to remember them. |
| 2a03 | 14 | Birds can do a lot more than sing. They also have calls, alarm calls, and other shorter sounds they use to communicate. This course will not cover all sounds made by these ten common backyard birds; just a few to help you get started. |
| 2b01 | 15 | Click on each bird to learn more about the sound it makes. |
| 2b02 | 15 | Now that we’ve discussed what these ten common backyard birds sound like, it’s time to review what you’ve learned so far. It’s time for a knowledge check! |
| 2c01 | 16 | Click and drag the name of the bird to the picture of that bird. When you are done, click the Submit button. |
| 2d01 | 30 | Here’s how you did! |
| 2d02 | 30 | If you did not score 80% on your first attempt, you did not pass and you must give the questions you missed a second try. |
| 2d03 | 30 | If you would like to try the whole quiz again just for fun, click the **Retry** **Quiz** button. Otherwise, click the **Continue** button to move to the final section of this course. |
| 3a01 | 31 | Now that you are getting comfortable identifying a few birds by sight and sound, let’s learn some fun facts about each one. The more you learn about a particular bird, the more likely you’ll be able to identify it.  Let’s get started! |
| 3b01 | 32 | Northern cardinals are crepuscular, which means they can be seen feeding at dawn and dusk when the light is low. They may be the first and last birds you see at backyard feeders. |
| 3b02 | 32 | During the mating season, a male cardinal will feed a female. This is a way for the male to prove that he will be able to take care of their future offspring. This is especially important since cardinals mate for life! |
| 3b03 | 32 | Check out the videos of cardinals shown here. You don’t need to watch them the entire way through, but at least take a quick look of the birds in action. |
| 3c01 | 33 | Remember how the chickadee sings “chick-a-dee-dee-dee?” Interestingly, when a predator is nearby, the chickadee will add extra “dees” to the end of the call to let other birds know how large the predator is. If you hear a chickadee calling with a lot of “dees” at the end, keep your eye out for a hawk or cat nearby! |
| 3c02 | 33 | When young chickadees hatch, the parents only feed bugs and caterpillars to their young (rather than seeds). If you have birdfeeders, you may see them visiting a lot less than normal in the spring and early summer. This is why! |
| 3c03 | 33 | Check out the videos of chickadees shown here. You don’t need to watch them the entire way through, but at least take a quick look of the birds in action. |
| 3d01 | 34 | The tufted titmouse may be tiny, but it’s mighty! |
| 3d02 | 34 | If there’s a predator nearby, like a cat or a red-tailed hawk, titmouses will scream to warn others about the danger. Sometimes multiple types of birds will join together and attack the predator to chase them away. The titmouse usually leads the charge. Impressive, right?! |
| 3d03 | 34 | Check out the videos of tufted titmouses shown here. You don’t need to watch them the entire way through, but at least take a quick look of the birds in action. |
| 3e01 | 35 | The white-breasted nuthatch gets the name “nuthatch” from the fact that it uses its beak like a hatchet to break seeds open. You’ll likely find it walking up or even down a tree. A white-breasted nuthatch is unique in the fact that it can walk head-down vertically, while most other birds cannot. |
| 3e02 | 35 | A white-breasted nuthatch is also sometimes seen trying to scare away other birds from a food source by spreading its wings out and swaying from side to side. It thinks this will intimidate the other birds, leaving all the food for itself. It seems to get mixed results though. |
| 3e03 | 35 | Check out the videos of white-breasted nuthatches shown here. You don’t need to watch them the entire way through, but at least take a quick look of the birds in action. |
| 3f01 | 36 | The blue jay will sometimes bully other birds away from food, and even eats the eggs of other birds from their nests. These birds are very intelligent. They will sometimes imitate the calls of birds of prey, like a red-tailed hawk, near a birdfeeder to scare away the competition. |
| 3f02 | 36 | Brutishness aside, blue jays have tight family bonds and remain monogamous for life with one mate. Blue jays also have a large throat pouch used to temporarily store and carry extra food in while foraging. They can fit up to 5 acorns inside it! |
| 3f03 | 36 | Check out the videos of blue jays shown here. You don’t need to watch them the entire way through, but at least take a quick look of the birds in action. |
| 3g01 | 37 | Mourning doves eat a lot. Each day they consume between 12-20% of their body weight. To put that in perspective, if a human weighs 150 pounds, they’d be eating 18-30 pounds of food per day to keep up with the mourning dove respectively. |
| 3g02 | 37 | Mourning doves don’t seem to be bothered by humans when deciding where to nest. They often nest in planters, gutters, or behind window shutters. |
| 3g03 | 37 | Check out the videos of mourning doves shown here. You don’t need to watch them the entire way through, but at least take a quick look at the birds in action. |
| 3h01 | 38 | American goldfinches are unique in that they tend to breed in late summer and early fall rather than in the spring like other songbirds. They depend on the thistle plant for food and down to line their nests, which becomes more readily available as autumn approaches. |
| 3h02 | 38 | American goldfinches weave nests lined with soft thistledown and use spider silk to attach their nest to supporting twigs. |
| 3h03 | 38 | Check out the videos of American goldfinches shown here. You don’t need to watch them the entire way through, but at least take a quick look at the birds in action. |
| 3i01 | 39 | American robins have traditionally been a sign of spring, but in Western Pennsylvania, not all robins migrate for the winter. They tend to flock together and retreat into the woods. When they separate from the flock in the spring is when they become more common in yards and on sidewalks. |
| 3i02 | 39 | Unfortunately, light and noise pollution that comes with urbanization affects robins. Robins who live in the city start singing their dawn songs long before first light and have become more high-pitched in order to be heard over traffic noise. |
| 3i03 | 39 | Check out the videos of American robins shown here. You don’t need to watch them the entire way through, but at least take a quick look at the birds in action. |
| 3j01 | 40 | Red-tailed hawks prefer eating rodents (like mice and voles), but will also eat some other birds and snakes. They prefer to hunt in clearings and need open space to swoop in for the attack. They usually gobble their prey down whole. |
| 3j02 | 40 | A red-tailed hawk’s vision is eight times more powerful than a human’s. This is where the saying “eyes like a hawk” came from.  Can you believe the oldest known hawk in the wild was over 30 years old?! |
| 3j03 | 40 | Check out the videos of red-tailed hawks shown here. You don’t need to watch them the entire way through, but at least take a quick look at the birds in action. |
| 3k01 | 41 | Unlike red-tailed hawks, Cooper’s hawks actually prefer eating songbirds and are often found stalking backyard birdfeeders. They will sneakily wait in nearby trees or shrubs and then dart out a short distance to attack. |
| 3k02 | 41 | Also unlike the red-tailed hawk, a Cooper’s hawk does not eat its prey whole. It will sit and pluck the feathers off a songbird before eating it. If you find a mysterious pile of feathers in your yard, a Cooper’s hawk may be to blame. |
| 3k03 | 41 | Check out the videos of Cooper’s hawks shown here. You don’t need to watch them the entire way through, but at least take a quick look at the birds in action. |
| 3l01 | 42 | We have just barely begun to scratch the surface of interesting things about these ten birds. The more you learn about what makes birds unique, the more appreciation you will have for them when you see or hear them. |
| 3l02 | 42 | Now it’s time to test your knowledge about some of the facts you just learned. |
| 3m01 | 53 | Here’s how you did! |
| 3m02 | 53 | If you did not score 80% on your first attempt, you did not pass and you must give the questions you missed a second try. |
| 3m03 | 53 | If you would like to try the whole quiz again just for fun, click the **Retry** **Quiz** button. Otherwise, click the **Continue** button to move to the final section of this course. |
| 4a01 | 54 | This course has taught you how to identify ten Western Pennsylvania backyard birds by sight and sound, along with unique facts about each type of bird. Hopefully this will just be the beginning of your birding journey! |
| 4a02 | 54 | There are so many free resources online if you’d like to continue learning. The free Merlin app is available on mobile devices. It is a wonderful resource for identifying birds by sight and sound, as well as learning more about each one. Also check out the Macaulay library and Audubon resources. |
| 4a03 | 54 | You’re almost finished with the course, but it’s time for a final quiz before you go! You must pass the quiz to receive credit for this course. Good luck! |