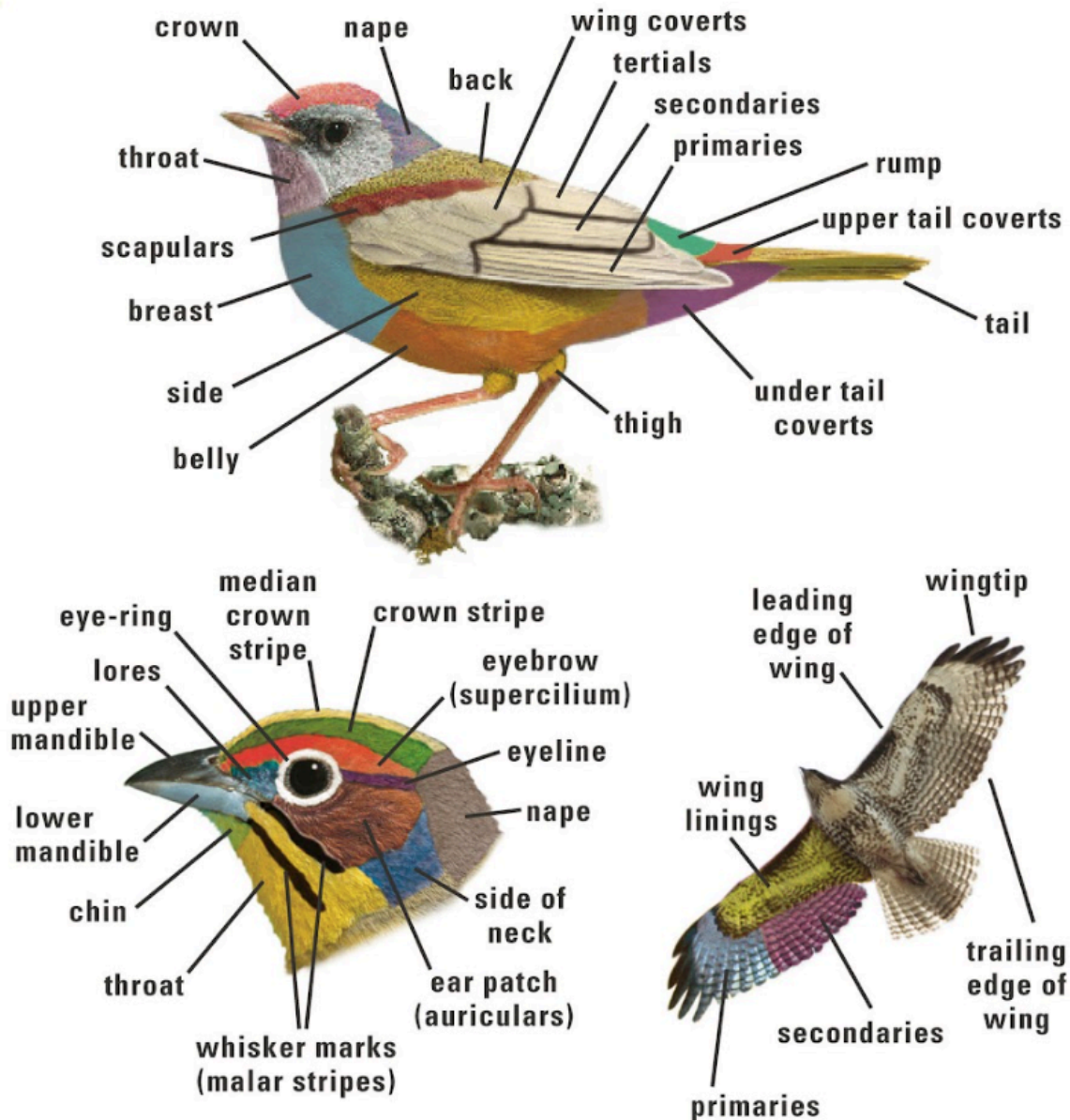


A beginner's guide to birdwatching in the UK

Tips for getting started with birdwatching



Do some research before you leave the house



If you want to begin your birdwatching adventures with a little knowledge under your belt, start by researching the location and season you're in to help you understand which birds are likely to be around and what behaviour they might be exhibiting (the [RSPB website](#) is a reliable source for this). Many birds in the UK are migratory so you could have a completely different experience with encounters in the spring and summer vs the autumn and winter.

Get some binoculars

Whilst you can go birdwatching without any equipment at all, having a pair of binoculars will make the experience all the more enjoyable. When it comes to birdwatching, the most powerful binoculars aren't always the best because they'll require a tripod to get a steady view. The most suitable for birdwatching will be something lightweight with 8x or 10x magnification – this will make it easier for you to quickly view a bird in flight.



Use a bird book or app



The best way to learn to identify different species in their natural habitats and discover interesting facts about them is to have a handy book or app that you can refer to when you're out and about. [Merlin Bird ID](#) is an excellent free app that'll help you to identify birds by their songs and chirps as well as their appearance.

Make a record of your sightings

Keeping a notebook about the birds you've noticed each time you go out will help you retain knowledge about the different species and their unique behaviours and habitats, as well as picking up on seasonal patterns. You could write about the bird's location, the date and time, whether alone or with a flock, what it was doing and how it was interacting with its surroundings. You could even make this a creative practice and sketch your sightings. As an added benefit, [journaling](#) like this will help you to cultivate mindfulness, too.



Be a responsible birdwatcher

Some three million people go birdwatching every year in the UK –in full [here](#) but in a nutshell, the important things to remember are:

- Avoid getting too close to birds or disturbing their habitats. If a bird flies away or makes repeated alarm calls, you're too close.
- Be an ambassador for birdwatching, helping others to foster a greater appreciation of wildlife.
- Consider the interests of wildlife and local people before passing on news of a rare bird, especially during breeding season.



Stay still



Birds are easily startled so staying still, quiet and patient will increase your chances of seeing them. In that sense, birdwatching provides the perfect opportunity for you to benefit from some truly peaceful time amongst nature too, enjoying your surroundings whilst you keep a lookout. Dawn is a particularly good time of day to do this – birds are often more active when there are fewer people around and less disturbances in general, so it's worth setting your alarm and [getting up a little earlier](#).

Make your garden more bird-friendly

What better way to increase your sightings than by attracting birds to your own garden? There are multiple ways you can do this including setting up bird tables and feeders, providing a birdbath for them to clean their feathers and drink from, or installing a nest box somewhere suitable and safe.

