

# Information For Those New To Bird Watching

## Bird watching field guides:

Field guides for birds that have paintings rather than photographs of birds are better, since the paintings typically provide the key aspects of each species important to bird identification. I recommend guides that are specific to the area or region where one is bird watching. I find **The Sibley Field Guides To Birds** to be most helpful, in particular **the guides for Eastern North America (and Western North America)**. For Florida, I find most helpful the guide **Birds Of Florida** by Bill Pranty.

## Birding hot spots (best locations to see rare birds) guides:

**Birding Hot Spots in Sarasota and Manatee Counties** that may be purchased from Sarasota Audubon, PO 15423, Sarasota, FL 34277, (941) 364-9212 or <http://www.SarasotaAudubon.org>

**A Birder's Guide To Florida** by Bill Pranty, available via Amazon.com

## Binoculars:

There is a vast number of choices of binoculars, but most bird watchers prefer binoculars that are eight power with a field of view of 42 (aka **8 X 42**), younger bird watchers might prefer 10 X 42, that require a steadier hand. The more expensive the binoculars the better, but beyond \$250 the differences are small. There are few quality new binoculars for less than \$100.

## Bird watching Email list services:

SRQ bird alerts: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SRQbirdAlerts> Manatee, Sarasota, northern Charlotte, Hardee, and DeSoto Counties

SW Florida Birdline <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SWFLBirdline/> Charlotte, Lee, and Collier Counties

FLARBA Archives: <http://listserv.admin.usf.edu/archives/flarba.html> FL state wide reports of rare birds

BRDBRAIN list service: <http://listserv.admin.usf.edu/archives/brdbrain.html> FL state wide bird watching information

## SW Florida bird watching organizations:

The Audubon Society chapters of the SRQ area and several bird watching clubs have meetings and field trips typically from October to May that all are welcome to join.

Some may ask for a small donation to support the field trips, typically a couple dollars. Information about their activities is available at their Internet sites (see addresses below) and from time to time I send out Emails with summary information.

Manatee Audubon Society <http://www.manateeaudubon.org/>

Sarasota Audubon Society <http://www.SarasotaAudubon.org>

Venice Audubon Society <http://www.veniceaudubon.org/>

Caloosa Bird Club (Ft. Myers, FL) <http://www.caloosabirdclub.org/>

Peace River Audubon (Charlotte County, Florida) <http://www.peaceriveraudubon.org/>

### **Some miscellaneous suggestions for those new to bird watching:**

\* Regarding species where the males look a lot different from the females (e.g. ducks) or the young birds look a lot different from the mature ones (e.g. gulls), don't allow yourself to get frustrated or confused. Concentrate on identifying the adult males first... the other variations will come in due time.

\* Try to spend as much time observing the bird without the binoculars to observe how it relates to its habitat, interacts with other birds, feeds, etc.

\* If you plan to become a "lister" (one who as a hobby makes a list of all bird species seen, perhaps of all birds seen, date, location, number, gender, etc.) don't get so preoccupied with ticking off a particular species that you neglect to "learn the bird."

\* Work with a checklist so you get an idea of the scientific relationships amongst the species.

\* Consider joining an organization dedicated to enjoying and promoting birds, e.g. **American Birding Association**, or protecting and preserving birds, e.g. **American Bird Conservancy**.

\* Backyard bird watchers might consider subscribing to **Bird Watcher's Digest** and/or **Birds & Blooms Beauty In Your Backyard**.

\* For a check list of birds of Sarasota County, visit:  
<http://www.sarasotaudubon.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/AUD-0027-1307checklist-2.pdf>