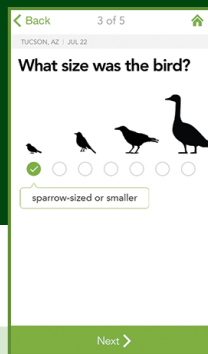




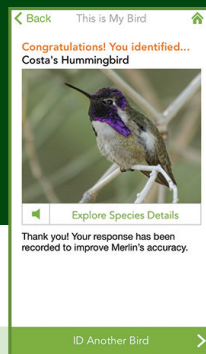
COSTA'S HUMMINGBIRD BY GARY RASMUSSEN



ANSWER A FEW QUESTIONS.



BROWSE POSSIBLE SPECIES.



FIND YOUR BIRD.



READ THE SPECIES PROFILE.

# Merlin a Pocket Birding Coach Wherever You Go

**M**erlin Bird ID is the new app from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology designed to help you answer that one very basic question—“What’s that bird?”

Merlin can identify 400 bird species in the United States, including all of the most common birds. It’s different from other bird ID apps in that it customizes your selection set of possible birds using data submitted to eBird over the past three years from within 30 miles of your location.

More than 150,000 people have now downloaded Merlin to help identify more than 500,000 birds. If you haven’t already, you’re welcome to download it, too—for free! Just visit [allaboutbirds.org/merlin](http://allaboutbirds.org/merlin) and click for the Apple or Android version.

## MERLIN BEYOND THE BASICS

Merlin is designed to be extremely intuitive. It asks you a few simple questions about your bird and then generates a customized set of possible species. But beyond that, there’s a lot more Merlin can do!

**NEW and IMPROVED!**

Since its launch in January, Merlin has been growing. The app now includes 400 North American species, more than 2,000 images, and over 1,000 audio recordings.

### • Browse families and groups to build your bird knowledge

In the “Browse All Birds” feature (accessible from the slide-out menu), you can explore species profiles for all the birds in Merlin. Species are organized by those that are closely related, and also look and behave alike. For example, you’ll find the swimming waterbirds—including grebes, cormorants, and waterfowl—are grouped together. Flipping through pictures and noticing similarities and differences among groups, families, and species is a great way to improve your own bird ID skills.

### • Tune in to the bird songs around you

Each species profile in Merlin comes with a sound file, so you can quickly use the app to verify a bird song ID, too. For example, if you hear “teacher-teacher-teacher” in the woods, and you can’t recall whether that’s a Wood Thrush or an Ovenbird, just pull up each bird’s profile to hear their respective songs.

### • ID birds even when you’re offline

You don’t have to have Wi-Fi or cellular access to use Merlin. Just remember to run through one bird ID session (identify a bird, any bird) within the region while you still have a connection. Then Merlin will remember the birds in that area as you head off onto the trails. Merlin will also remember any of the places previously stored in your list of recent locations without an Internet connection.

### • What if Merlin is stumped?

Try changing some of your inputs, a different set of colors or a notch up or down on the size scale. If these adjustments don’t help, Merlin might not have enough data to make an accurate prediction. Because it relies on eBird data, sometimes Merlin doesn’t work as well in remote and rural areas where there aren’t enough submitted bird observations. But the eBird database is 170 million observations and growing, so most places in the U.S. and southern Canada are covered.

### • Be sure to make Merlin smarter

Machine learning is another unique feature of Merlin. That is, every time somebody identifies a bird using Merlin, the app can later use that information to improve its accuracy for other users. So be sure to click the “This Is My Bird” button when you arrive at your ID.

—Jessie Barry

**CLICK HERE TO WATCH AN INTRODUCTORY VIDEO.**