

# BIRDS *of* BIG WHITE



## YOU ARE ONE STEP CLOSER TO BIRDING AT BIG WHITE!

Going birdwatching is a great way to get out into nature, and keep in touch with the awe and mystery of the natural world. Enjoy some mountain air, sniff the wildflowers and enjoy watching how simply getting outdoors lifts your energy. In this Field Guide you will find information about the local species including the Steller's Jay, Whiskey Jack, Red-tailed Hawk and the Pine Siskin.



### WHAT YOU NEED:

Two feet and a heartbeat is enough to explore the birds of Big White! If you have a pair of binoculars handy, bring them along for easy viewing.

## WHISKEY JACK (CANADA JAY)

*Perisoreus canadensis*

**Size & Shape:** Whiskey Jacks are stocky, fairly large songbirds with short, stout bills. They have round heads and long tails, with broad, rounded wings.

**Colour Pattern:** These birds are dark gray above and light gray below with a black patch on the back of the head that forms a partial hood. Juveniles are grayish black overall, and usually show a pale gape at the base of the bill.

**Behaviour:** These fluffy jays seem fearless, and they can be a minor nuisance around campsites and cabins, stealing food and thus earning the nickname "camp robber". This bird usually flies slowly, gliding with its wings angled downward; it is also capable of fast, maneuverable flight when escaping a predator or disputing territory with another jay.

**Diet:** Omnivorous. Their diet is remarkably varied, includes insects, spiders, berries, seeds, fungi, small rodents, birds' eggs and carrion. An opportunist in its foraging, flying from tree to tree searching for food.

## STELLER'S JAY

*Cyanocitta stelleri*

**Size & Shape:** Steller's jay are large songbirds with large heads, hefty bodies, rounded wings, and a long, full tail. They have a prominent triangular head crest that often stands nearly straight up.

**Colour Pattern:** Half charcoal black and half blue; birds in the Interior have white streaks on their crest.

**Behaviour:** Bold, inquisitive, intelligent and noisy. These birds spend much of their time exploring the forest canopy, flying with patient wingbeats.

**Diet:** Omnivorous. Diet is roughly 2/3 vegetable and 1/3 animal matter. They feed heavily on pine seeds and acorns while also eating many berries, wild fruits and many insects.



 Whiskey Jack



 Steller's Jay

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📷 Pine Siskin

## PINE SISKIN

*Spinus pinus*

**Size & Shape:** Pine Siskins are very small songbirds with sharp, pointed bill and short, notched tails. Their uniquely shaped bill is more slender than that of most finches. In flight, look for their forked tails and pointed wingtips.

**Colour Pattern:** These birds are brown and very streaky with subtle yellow edgings on wings and tails. Flashes of yellow can erupt as they take flight or when they flutter.

**Behaviour:** Pine Siskins flit about in the topmost canopy of seed-bearing trees. They'll often cling upside down to branch tips to empty hanging cones of their seeds. Abundant seeds or tender shoots lure them to the ground to feed.

**Diet:** Omnivorous. Mostly seeds and other vegetable matter, some insects. These birds feed on seeds on alder, birch, spruce and many other trees, also those of weeds and grasses; eats buds, flower parts, nectar, young shoots.

## RED-TAILED HAWK

*Buteo jamaicensis*

**Size & Shape:** Red-tailed hawks are large hawks that are very broad, with rounded wings and a short, wide tail. An adult hawk can stand over 60cm tall, and the females are bigger than the males.

**Colour Pattern:** Typically rich brown above and pale below, with a streaked belly and, on the wing underside, a dark bar between shoulder and wrist. The tail is usually pale below and cinnamon-red above, though, in young birds it's brown and banded.

**Behaviour:** You're most likely to see red-tailed hawks soaring in wide circles high over a clearing. When flapping, their wing beats are heavy. In high winds they may face into the wind and hover without flapping, eyes fixed on the ground. They attack in a slow, controlled dive with legs outstretched.

**Diet:** Carnivore. Mammals make up the bulk of most red-tailed hawk meals; frequent victims include voles, mice, wood rats, rabbits, snowshoe hares and ground squirrels. These hawks also eat birds, including pheasants, starlings and blackbirds. Individual prey items can weigh anywhere from less than an ounce to more than 5 lbs.



📷 Red-tailed Hawk



Along our alpine hiking trails we have added birdhouses for our friends in flight. Be sure to keep an eye out while you hike and see if you can spot any birds getting comfy in their new homes!

Please observe birds from a respectful distance and do not feed wildlife.



We respectfully acknowledge that we live, work, and play on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Sqilx'w/ Syilx (Okanagan) Peoples.

Don't forget to share your adventures on social and tag us. Use the hashtags **#birdsofbigwhite** **#summerbigwhite**

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