

**9. Bird Together-** Join on birding field trips to learn from other birders. All Rochester Birding Association field trips are open to new birders and experienced birders alike. You'll be surprised what you'll learn. Visit [www.rochesterbirding.com](http://www.rochesterbirding.com) to learn more and to become a member.

**10. Have Fun-** Most importantly, have fun! Birding is a great hobby that gets you outside and is a great activity for the entire family. No one has ever become a great birder overnight, so take your time and make it enjoyable.



*For information on where to bird this month and a list of free field trips visit:*  
[www.rochesterbirding.com](http://www.rochesterbirding.com)

*Happy birding!*



The Rochester Birding Association is for all people interested in birdwatching in the Rochester area. We bring together people at all levels of knowledge and experience. Consider becoming a member today!

Photographs courtesy of: Andrea Patterson, Candace Giles, Dick Horsey, Jeanne Verhulst, Kevin Farrell, and Lindsay Recktenwald.

ROCHESTER BIRDING ASSOCIATION  
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## 10 Tips For Beginning Birders

Short and easy tips to help you learn about local birds and become a birder



**Black-throated Blue Warbler**



Pileated Woodpecker

**1. Start Small-** It's easy to get overwhelmed learning about birds. Start by being able to identify one or two birds in your backyard or at a local park. Don't get frustrated, it takes time!

**2. Find the Best Spots-** Join local birding groups on field trips to find the best spots for seeing birds. Some great spots to visit around Rochester include Braddock Bay Park, Durand Eastman Park, Mendon Ponds Park, and Cobb's Hill Park.

**3. Go Slow-** When you see a bird, start by spending time just looking and listening. What colors can you see on the bird? How is it behaving? What sounds is it making? Your field observations are very important to help identify birds.

**4. Dress for the Weather-** Before going outside make sure to check the weather. Be prepared by bringing sunscreen, bug repellent, water-resistant footwear, hat, and a rain jacket. Dressing in layers allows for flexibility in all weather conditions. Some of our best birding spots can be windy, and trails can be wet in the spring and fall.

**5. Field Guide-** A good field guide is important. Find a guide that is specific to your area like *The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America*. Field guides with illustrations rather than photos are helpful because they show field marks that help distinguish birds from each other.

**6. Binoculars-** Binoculars are a great tool to help you see birds. If you are purchasing a pair, talk with experienced birders to learn what features to look for, or for opportunities to borrow a pair.



Although binoculars are a great tool, you do not need them to have fun watching birds.

By using only your eyes you can observe what the bird is doing, where they are (like on the top of a tree or on the ground), and the way they fly. These observations can all help identify the bird without binoculars.



**7. Digital Tools-** Smart phone apps including Merlin, iBirdPro, eBird, and the websites of Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Audubon and others are great resources for learning to identify birds, bird songs, bird behavior and more.

**8. Best Time to Bird-** The best time to see songbirds is in the morning, especially during the spring and fall when birds are migrating. Spend time looking at trees that are in the sun; that's where birds are finding their breakfast. Ducks and geese are active all day long, and are easy to find on local ponds and lakes in any season - even winter. Keep an eye on the sky for raptors during daylight hours, and on muddy shorelines for wading birds from sunrise to sunset.



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher