

SHOREBIRDS CHEAT SHEET		TOP 3 ID POINTS			BODY SIZE COMPARISON WITH REFERENCE BIRDS (not including bill and legs)
ID GROUP	NAME				
1 Distinct Shorebirds	Black-necked Stilt	long legs	black & white	"marsh poodle" yapping	body slightly larger than Killdeer
	American Avocet	tan & white	upcurved bill	long neck	large
	American Oystercatcher	big orange bill	black & white		large
	Ruddy Turnstone	short, chisel bill	"I turn stones"	black & ruddy brown	similar to Killdeer
2 Big Plovers	Black-bellied Plover	sturdier bill & build	black armpits	white undertail coverts	larger & sturdier than Killdeer
	American Golden-Plover	daintier bill & build	longer, more attenuated	stronger patterned face	similar to Killdeer
	Mountain Plover	fawn color	black lores	unique habitat	similar to Killdeer
3 Ringed Plovers	Killdeer	2 bands	long tail	cinnamon rump	reference bird, 10.5 inches
	Wilson's Plover	"Great honkin bill" & big head	wet sand (darker)	dull legs	smaller than killdeer
	Semipalmated Plover	stubby bill	wet sand (darker)	yellowish legs	1/2 again larger than Least
	Piping Plover	stubby bill	dry sand (lighter)	yellowish legs	1/2 again larger than Least
	Snowy Plover	medium, thin, black bill	dry sand (lighter)	gray legs	1/2 again larger than Least
4 Calidris Peeps	Baird's Sandpiper	wings extend past tail	fine-tipped, very slightly drooping bill	brown bird with buffy breast band	slightly larger than short-winged peeps
	Least Sandpiper	yellow legs	fine-tipped, drooping bill	small round head	reference bird, 4.75 inches
	Semipalmated Sandpiper	black legs	straight, blunt bill	thick neck, round head	very slightly larger than Least in direct comparison
	Western Sandpiper	black legs	long drooping bill	square-ish head	very slightly larger than Least in direct comparison
	White-rumped Sandpiper	wings extend past tail	triangles on flanks & breast (breeding)	obvious white supercilium	slightly larger than short-winged peeps
5 Calidris Bigs	Stilt Sandpiper	long legs & neck	pale supercilium, patterned underneath in breeding plumage	medium, drooping bill	slightly smaller than Killdeer, but longer neck & legs
	Red Knot	medium, straight bill	horizontal posture	chunky build	similar to Killdeer, but much stouter, weighs twice as much
	Dunlin	long, down-curved bill	rufous back, black belly (breeding)	dull brown with brownish head (non-breeding)	a bit smaller than Killdeer, but stouter
	Sanderling	short, straight bill	frosty white coloration	wave runner	not as long as Killdeer, but heavier
	Pectoral Sandpiper	very large "Least"	brown wash with sharp demarcation on breast	yellow legs, slightly down-turned, medium bill	not as long as Killdeer, but heavier
6 Tringa + Spotted	Spotted Sandpiper	teeter-tottering	white spur at shoulder	stiff-winged flight	2 inches shorter than Killdeer
	Solitary Sandpiper	most noticeable eye-ring or "spectacles"	dark brown with small white spots	very dark shoulder	similar to Killdeer, just smaller
	Lesser Yellowlegs	"I yellow my legs"	bill same length as head	slim, dainty body	very similar to Killdeer, but longer legged
	Greater Yellowlegs	"I yellow my legs"	slightly up-turned bill longer than head	bulkier body	3 inches longer than Lesser Yellowlegs and twice the weight
	Willet (Eastern & Western)	large gray sandpiper	straight, stout bill of medium length	black & white when wings open	large

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7 Godwits & Curlews	Whimbrel	shorter curved bill	striped head	patterned belly and flanks	large
	Long-billed Curlew	huge curved bill	plain buffy belly	cinnamon underwings	very large
	Hudsonian Godwit	long up-turned bill	black tail, white rump	black underwings	smaller than Marbled Godwit
	Marbled Godwit	long, 2-toned, up-turned bill	buffy coloration		large
8 Dowitchers	Long-billed Dowitcher (calls: high keek)	bill is long and uniform, may be gently arced in outer 3rd	much wider black tail bands, than white	dark bars on breast sides (breeding). Smooth gray head and neck like dipped in soot (non-breeding)	similar in length to Killdeer, but stouter & heavier
	Short-billed Dowitcher (calls: mellow tu tu tu)	thick-based bill, tapers on outer half, often kinked near end	equal black & white tail bands	dark spots on breast sides (breeding). Head & neck have white background with spots & streaks (non-breeding)	similar in length to Killdeer, but stouter & heavier
9 Grass-pipers	Upland Sandpiper	short, straight bill	tiny head on long neck	fly-over call	2 inches larger than Killdeer and 2x as heavy
	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	unique warm buffy color	dove-like head with patterned top	yellow legs	2 inches smaller than Killdeer
10 Other Shorebirds	American Woodcock	long bill, large eyes dominate face	pale orange buff coloration	erratic flight often with whistling wings	very stout, twice as heavy as Killdeer
	Red-necked Phalarope	shorter, needle-like bill	smaller than Wilson's	stripes on back, black auricular patch	noticeably smaller than Wilson's Phalarope
	Wilson's Phalarope	medium needle-like bill	swims in circles	white throat	just smaller than Killdeer, but similar weight
	Wilson's Snipe	boldly striped back	cryptic coloration	alarm call when flushed	noticeably larger than Killdeer