

## **RECORDING BIRDS – HINTS AND TIPS FOR BIOBLITZ**

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A basic photo showing key features of bird is fine. The photo doesn't need to be of publication quality.

Take multiple photos, if possible. For species that are harder to identify, or those in cryptic habitats, having 2+ photos of the same individual can assist with identification. Similarly, if there are multiple individuals, taking a photo of more than one can be helpful (e.g., take a photo of both male and female birds, assuming there is sexual dimorphism).

External iNaturalist identifiers (i.e., those people who will confirm or dispute a species' identification from your submissions) are generally reluctant to distinguish between Little Raven and Australia Raven based on photographs alone. A raven photo accompanied by a recording of its call is much more likely to be accepted to a species-level identification.

Many iNaturalist identifiers are skilled at identifying birds to species-level based only on their calls. As such, recording a sequence of their call on your phone, and then uploading it to iNaturalist (i.e., in the absence of a photo), has a good chance of being identified. Particularly if it is accompanied by a short description of the habitat.

Bird photos taken from a dedicated camera are generally of a better quality (for identification purposes) than photos taken from a phone camera.

Before uploading photos from a camera to iNaturalist, consider improving the quality of the photo on a computer (or within a phone app) before submitting. For example, using a basic (and free) photo editing program such as Microsoft Picture Manager, Windows Photo Viewer or Paint, you can make some minor adjustments to increase the likelihood that it is identifiable:

- Zoom in closer to the bird by cropping out unnecessary edges of the picture (e.g., culling away the surrounding habitat, with the bird filling more of the frame). Both the original photo, and the edited photo can be separately uploaded as part of the submission.
- Slightly increase the brightness level if bird was in shadow when photographed, or if it was in dawn/dusk/dull light conditions.
- Conversely, reduce the brightness level if photo taken in very bright light conditions.

Provide a short description of the bird's habitat to accompany the photo or sound recording that is uploaded to iNaturalist.

Rarely will photographs of feathers or nests on their own (that is, without the bird itself) be verified by external iNaturalist identifiers. You may occasionally come across a largely intact deceased bird (e.g., roadkill) – which can still be included as a photograph for iNaturalist (assuming that it's not too damaged or decomposed).

External iNaturalist identifiers are cautious about verifying sightings of Pacific Black Duck, given the high level of hybridisation with Mallard. If you are taking a photo of a possible Pacific Black Duck, it can be helpful to take photos of multiple individuals, and also at least one photo of them out of the water (to show leg colour).

However, as noted in ethical birding document, you shouldn't disturb the behaviour of the bird in order to get a better photo. If you can't get the photo you want, either wait patiently at a discrete distance – or accept that it can't be taken.

Many birds are cautious around humans. It is usually better to sit or stand still and quietly for a period, and then the birds will get used to you, less cautious, and more likely to come into open space where you can get a clean photo. Chasing after birds has both adverse ethical implications, and also rarely gives a better photo than staying still and waiting for the bird to move itself to a better position.