

Birdcraze

BIRDON

April 6, 2022

Thank you.

Team Birdcasso is a one-of-a-kind Birdathon team started in April 2020. Our group is united by a shared love of art *and* the outdoors. Our artistic techniques are different of course, but all of our creations are expressions of an artistic spirit. The images included in this story represent the way we each see the birds around us—beautiful, mysterious and filled with unique style.

Some of us drew side-by side while other members worked independently. Our stories are collected in the pages that follow... Enjoy our renderings of local birds, and join us next year as we work to support Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society's education program with art!

Matthew Dodder

Executive Director, SCVAS

Wednesday, April 6, 2022

Our Artists:

72 unique species were drawn today...

Mary Ann Allan
Matthew Dodder
Satomi Fujikawa
Christopher Klein
Carolyn Knight
Shweta Shidhore

Cackling Goose
Canada Goose
Cinnamon Teal
Northern Shoveler
Gadwall
Mallard
Green-winged Teal
Canvasback
Greater Scaup
Lesser Scaup
Surf Scoter
Bufflehead
Common Goldeneye
Hooded Merganser
Ruddy Duck
Wild Turkey
Pied-billed Grebe
Eared Grebe
Western Grebe
Clark's Grebe
Anna's Hummingbird
American Coot
Black-necked Stilt
American Avocet

Killdeer
Marbled Godwit
Long-billed Dowitcher
Greater Yellowlegs
Willet
Ring-billed Gull
California Gull
Forster's Tern
Black Skimmer
Double-crested Cormorant
Snowy Egret
Turkey Vulture
White-tailed Kite
Bald Eagle
Red-shouldered Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Acorn Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Nuttall's Woodpecker
Black Phoebe
Western Kingbird
Warbling Vireo
Steller's Jay
California Scrub-Jay

American Crow
Chestnut-backed Chickadee
Oak Titmouse
Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Tree Swallow
Violet-green Swallow
Barn Swallow
Cliff Swallow
White-breasted Nuthatch
European Starling
Northern Mockingbird
Western Bluebird
American Robin
House Finch
Lesser Goldfinch
Dark-eyed Junco
White-crowned Sparrow
Golden-crowned Sparrow
Song Sparrow
California Towhee
Red-winged Blackbird
Orange-crowned Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Townsend's Warbler



Mary Ann's story

What a sunny, warm day to be out with the birds! I decided to split my 4 hours in half, observing as many birds as I could in the first 2 hours and then drawing as many as I could at my drawing table at home. I focused on Stevens Creek County Park, with quick stops at Gates of Heaven Cemetery, and Los Altos neighborhoods as I drove home. When I opened my car door at Cooley Picnic Area, I was greeted by a symphony of birdsong: Townsend's and Yellow-rumped Warblers, Warbling Vireos, Dark-eyed Juncos, and Song Sparrows were singing in numbers. Getting a look at them, though, took a bit of time. Driving back along the Stevens Canyon Road got me waterbirds and raptors, including an adult Bald Eagle flying high over the reservoir. I picked up more woodland birds at Chestnut Parking lot and the Visitor Center. Hooded Mergansers and Buffleheads were hanging out at the little pond at Gates of Heaven, along with numerous Cliff Swallows. The drive home netted one last species: a pair of Western Bluebirds at Grant Park. I was able to draw 35 out of the 38 birds I saw. Whew!

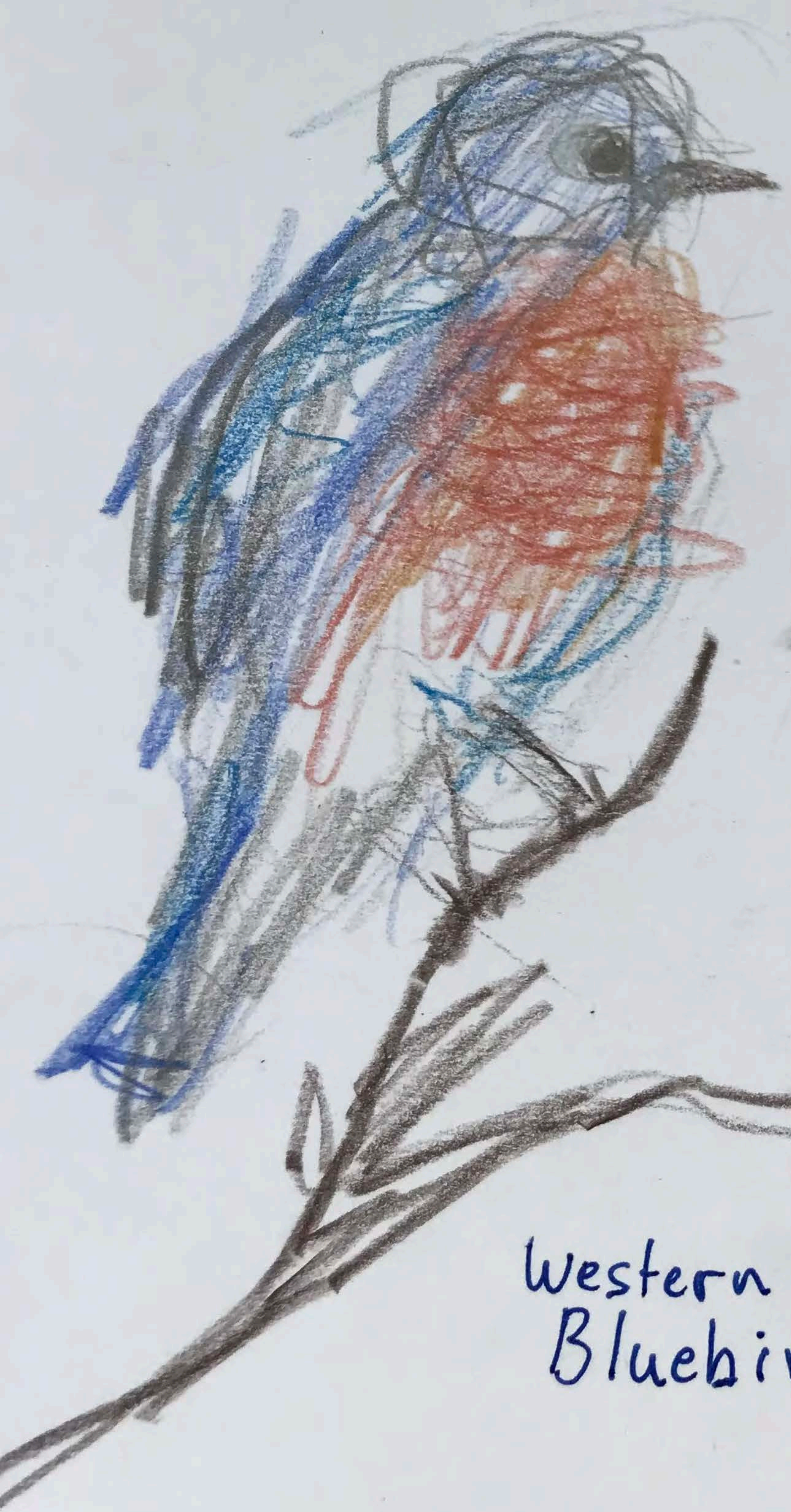
~ **Mary Ann**

“When I opened my car door I was greeted by a symphony of birdsong.”





Bald Eagle



Western
Bluebirds



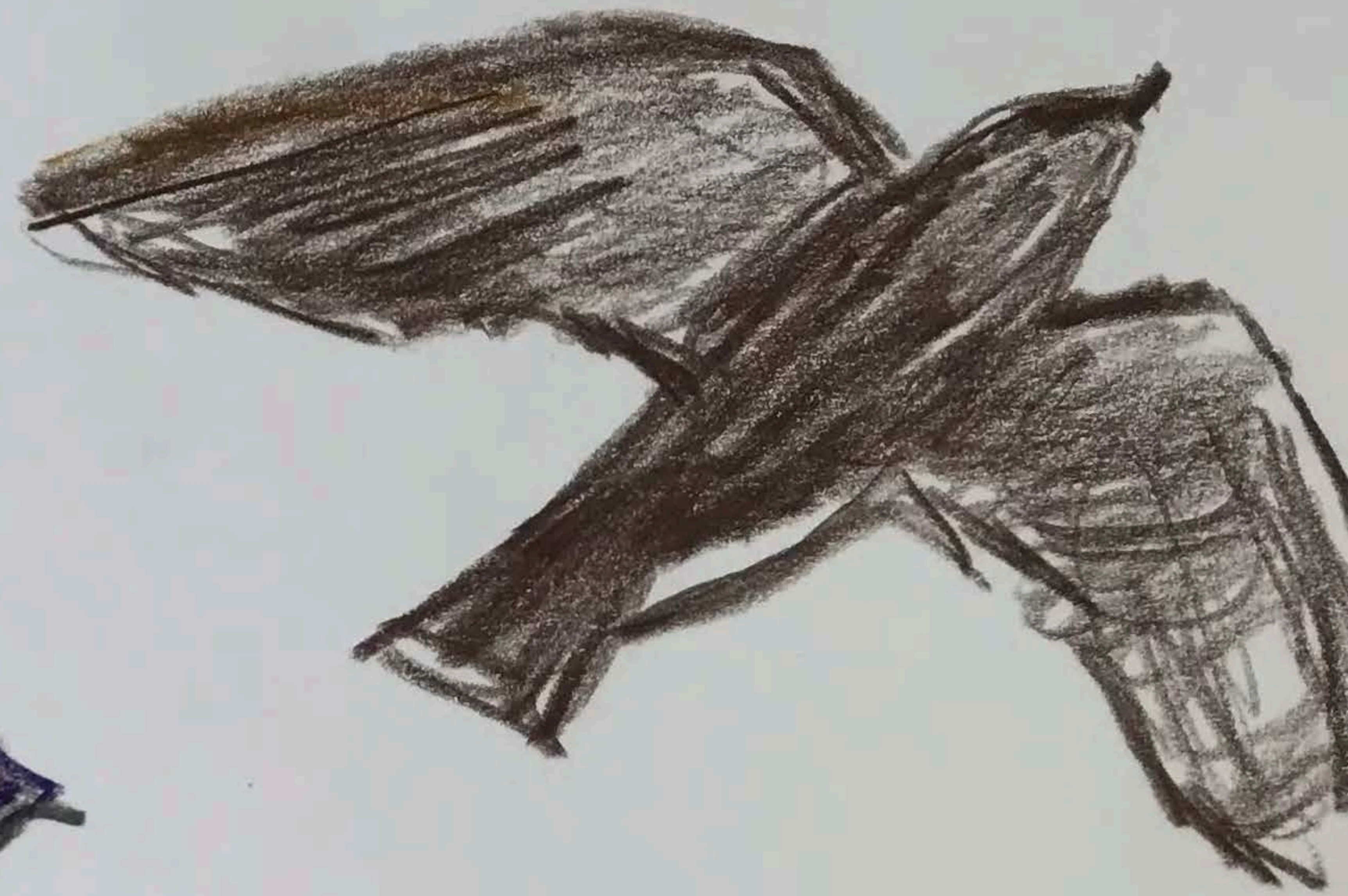
America Robin



Violet-green



Tree



Northern Ruff-wing



Cliff

Swallows



Wild Turkey



European Starlings



California Towhee



Acorn Woodpecker



Orange-crowned



Townsend's



Yellow-rumped

— — — — —
— Warblers —
— — — — —



Warbling
Vireo



Wilson's Warbler



Hooded Merganser



Double-crested Cormorant



Bufflehead



Mallard

Black
Phoebe



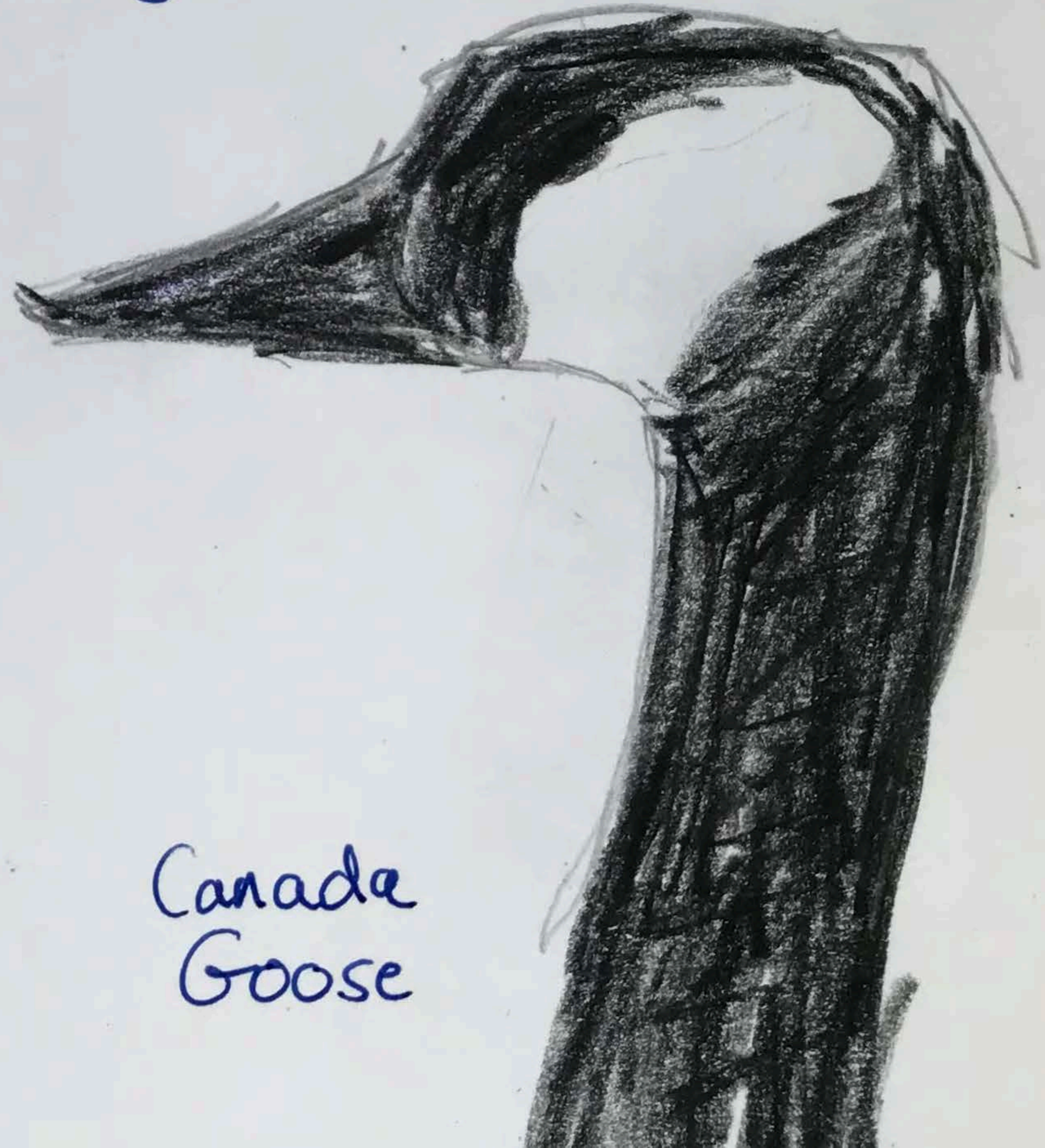
Stellar's Jay



California Scrub-Jay



Dark-eyed
Junco



Canada
Goose



House Finches



Lesser Goldfinch

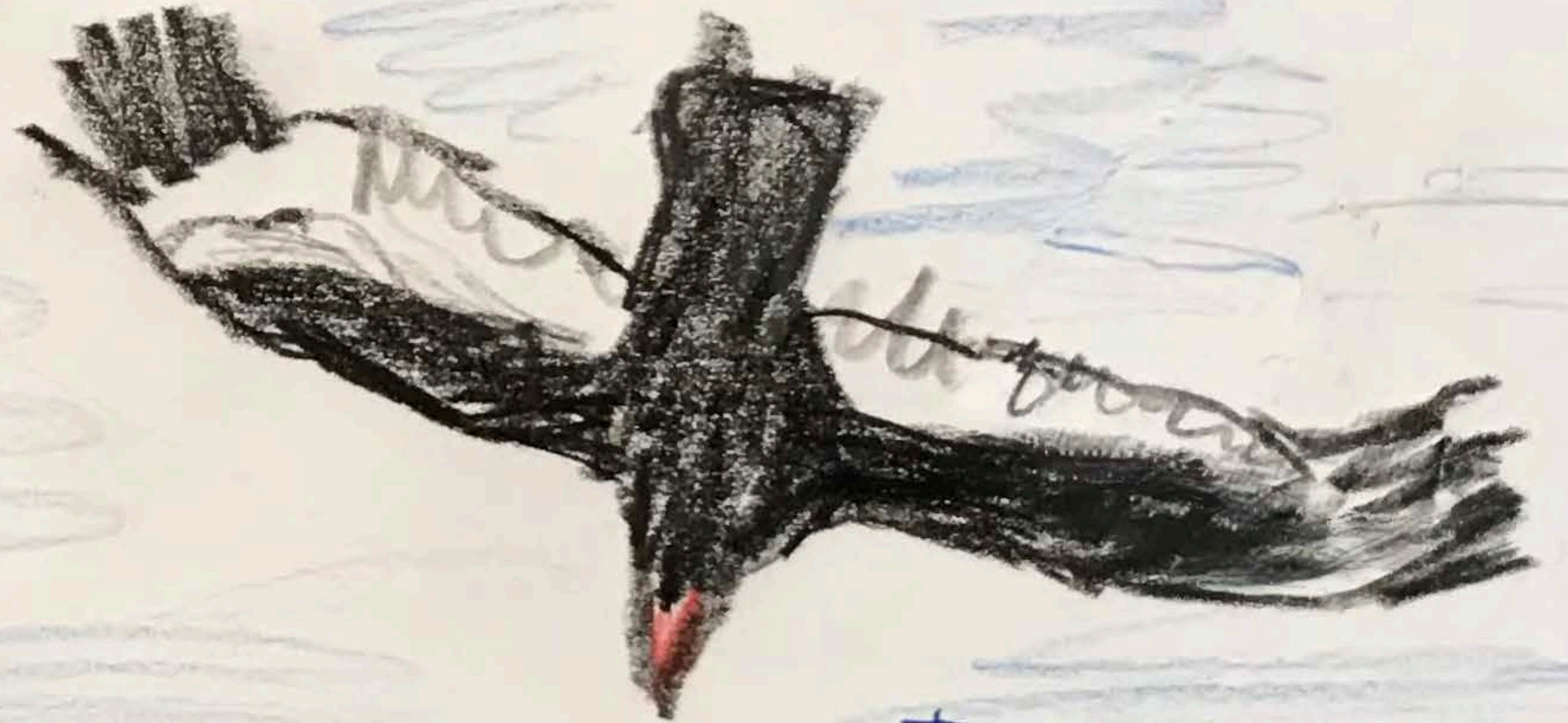


Song Sparrow



Golden-crowned Sparrow

American Crow



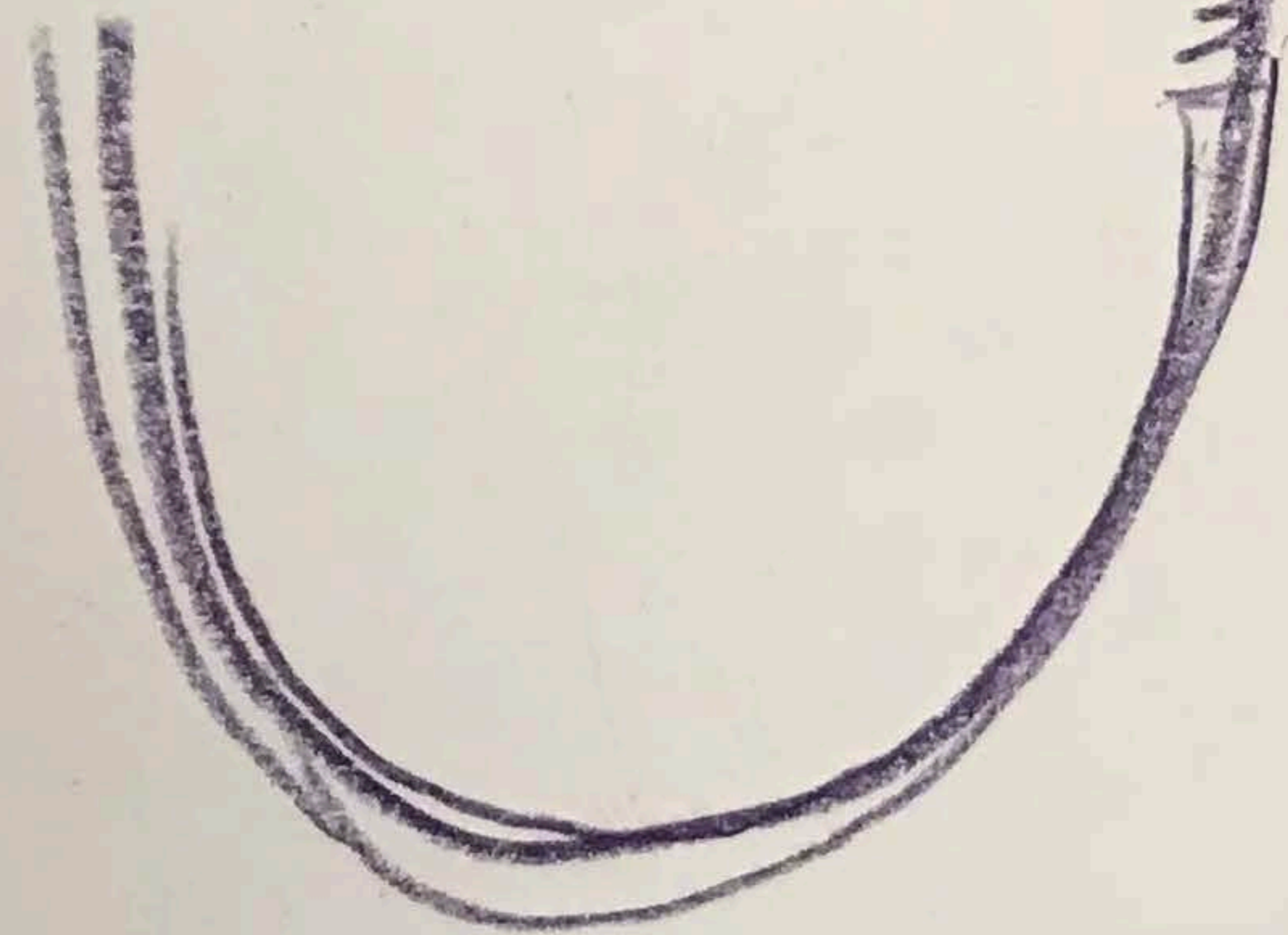
Turkey Vulture



Red-tailed Hawk



Anna's Hummingbird



Chestnut-backed Chickadee



Oak Titmouse





“I think I’m going to have to make this more than an annual thing.”

Matthew’s story

For the third year in a row I spent a morning drawing birds from life. My normal approach is to sit quietly at my drawing desk with a glass of wine and closely examine photographs to make my slow, colored portraits. Today was obviously very different. I set up a tiny folding stool beside my telescope and pencil box, tried with mixed success to balance my tablet on my knees and repeatedly dropped my pencils in the dirt. The effort of drawing from living, moving birds is a welcome challenge for me and helps me grow as an artist. I tried to get out of my obsessive attention to detail and work fast, creating rough, gestural illustrations. My goal was to capture as many species as I could during the 4-hour session. Satomi and Christopher were with me at Shoreline Lake and we had a great time chatting and sketching. I had such a good time drawing with friends. I think I’m going to have to make this activity more than an annual thing...

~ **Matthew**





CLGR

WEGR

EAGR



AMAU



BNST



PBGR



CITE



MAGO



DCCO



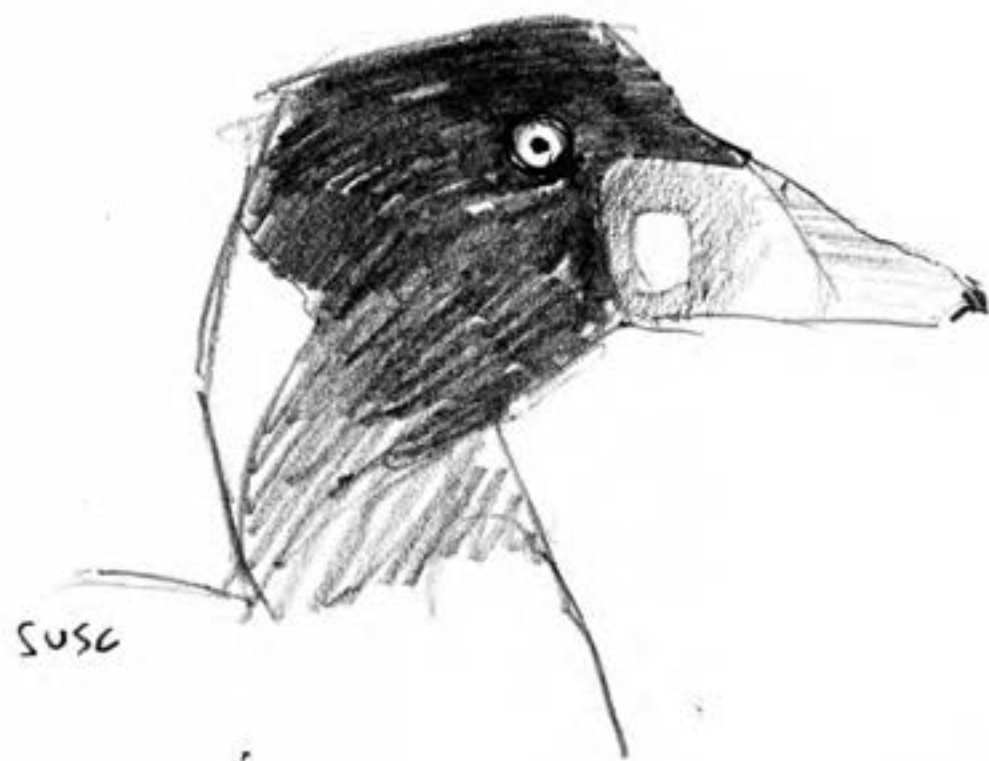
AMCO



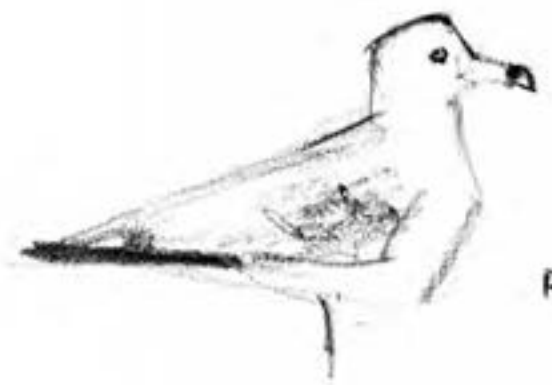
LESC



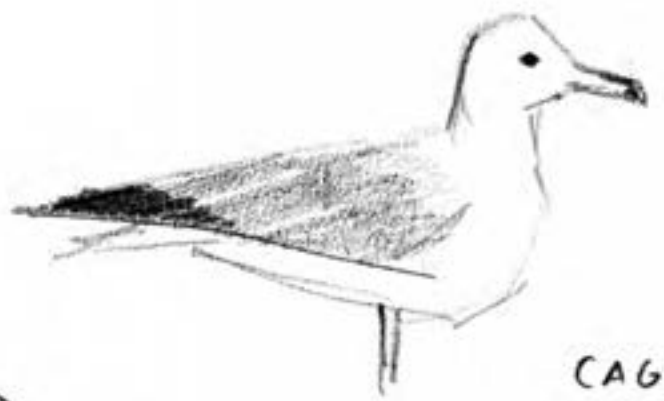
NOSH



SUSC



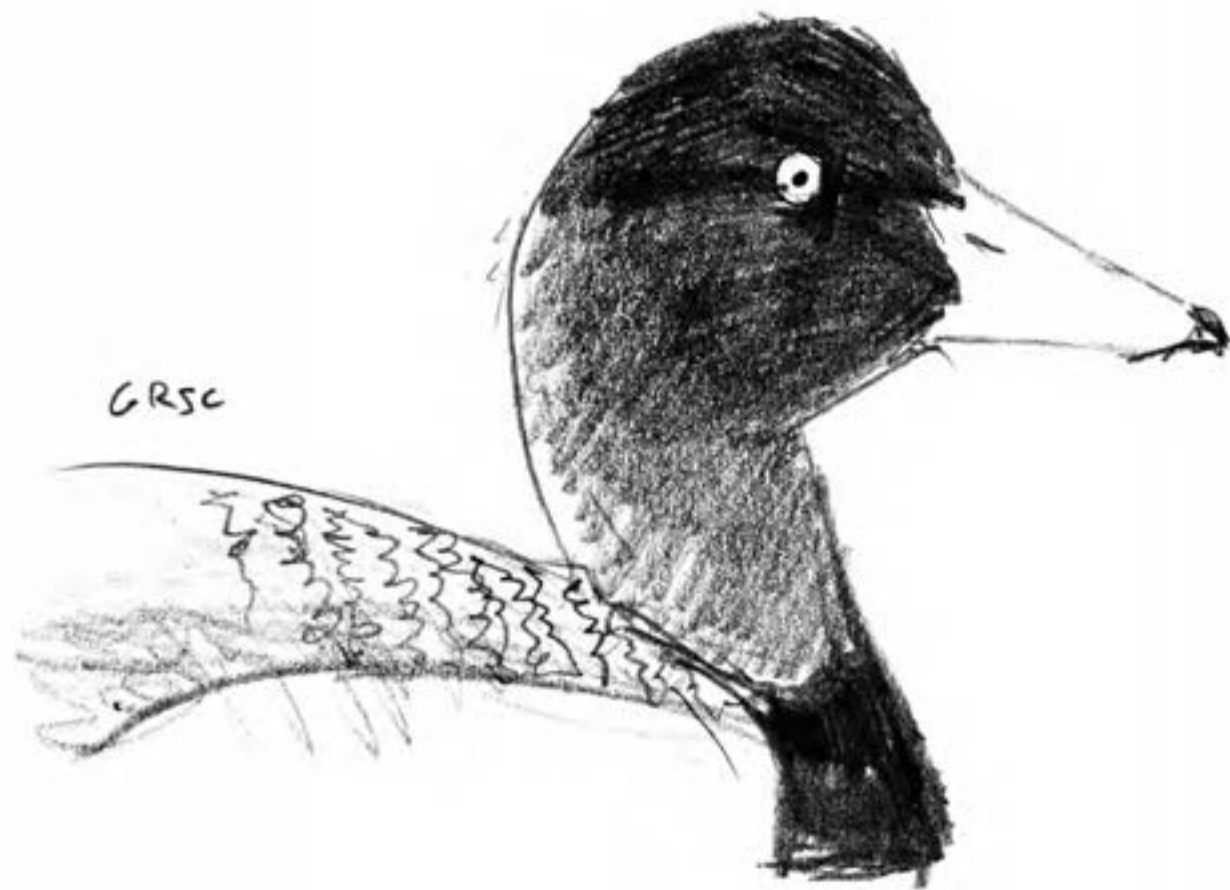
RBGU



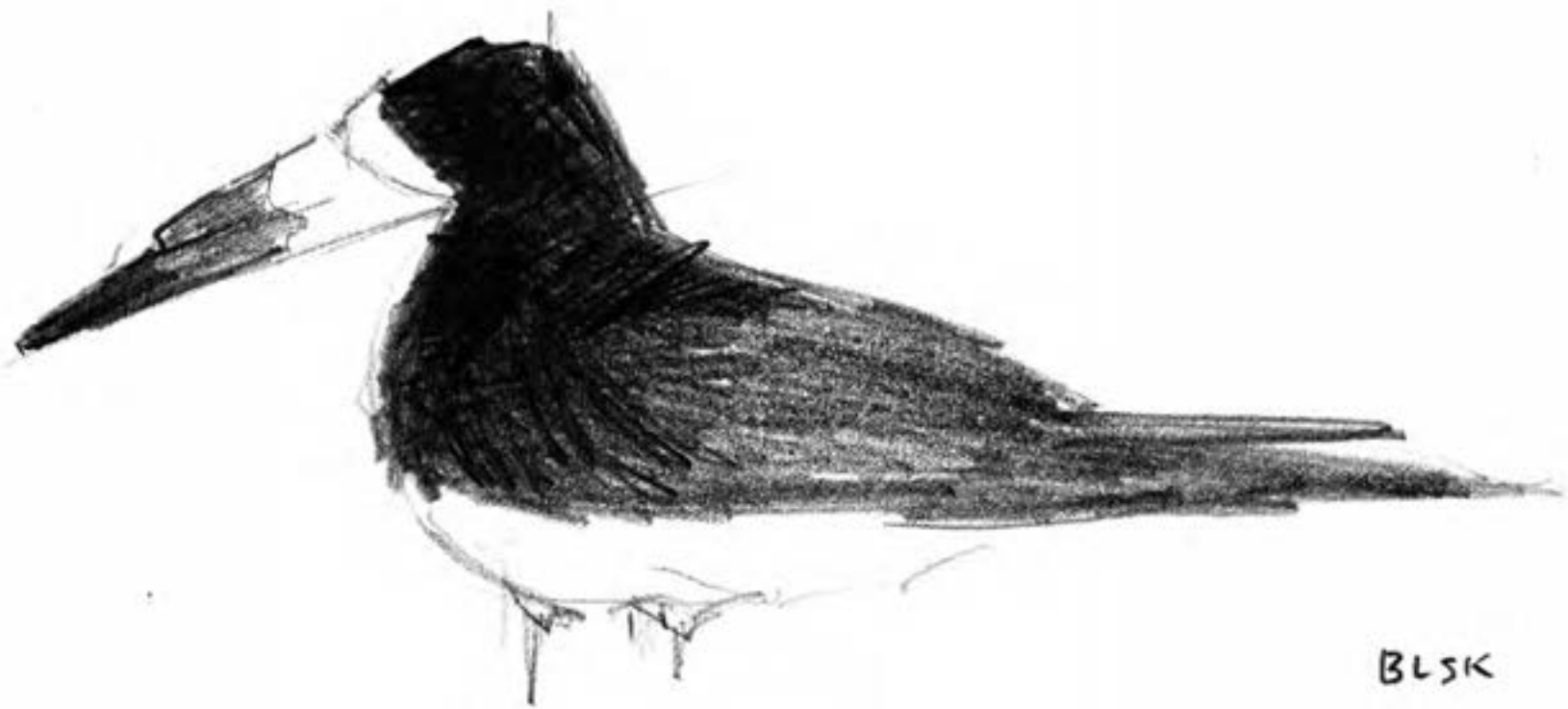
CAGU



WILL



GRSC





GADW



WTKI



CANG



CACG



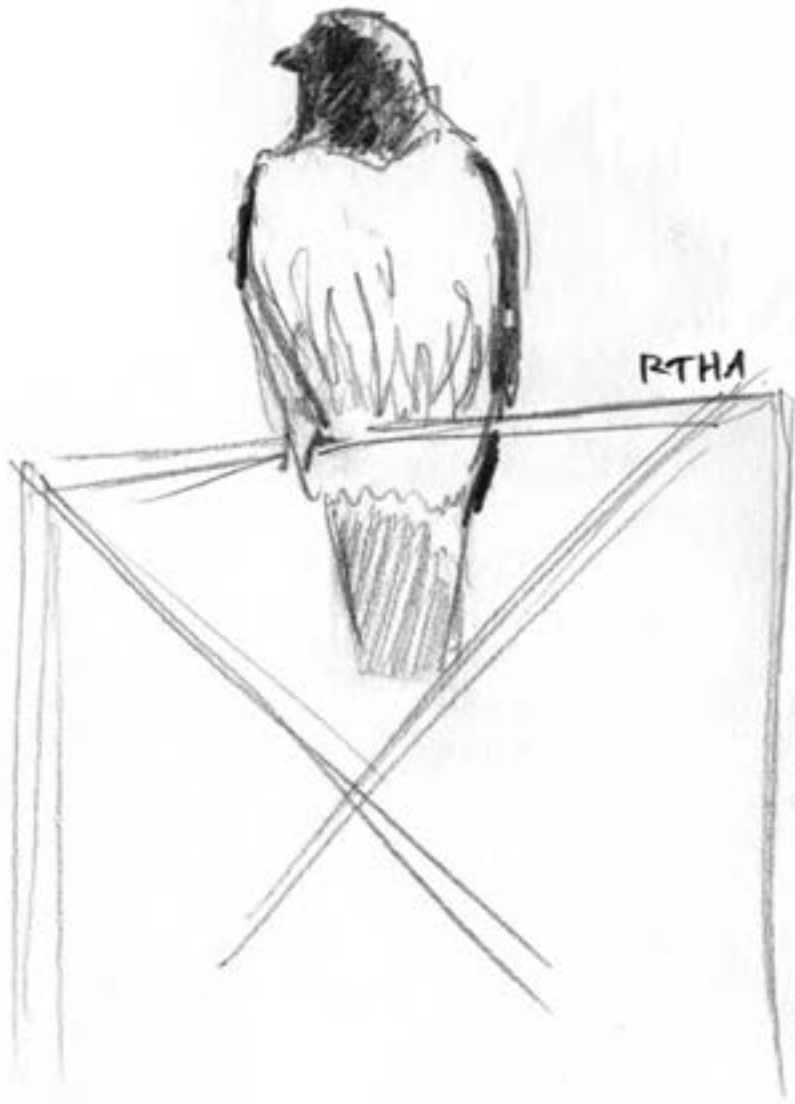
BASW

CLSW

TRSW

VGSW





FOTE



GRYE



LBDO

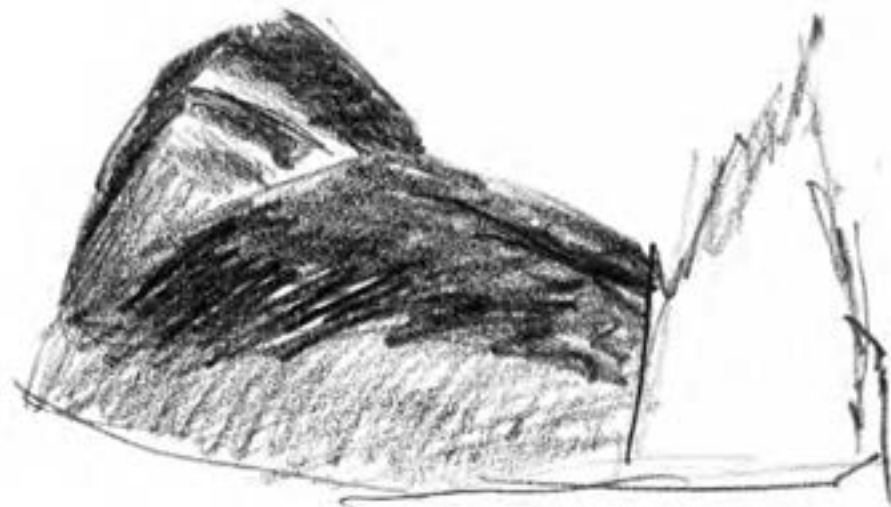


KILL





TUVU



RUDU
FEMALE



GWTE
(MALE DANCE)



NOMO



BLPH



CANV
(FEMALE)

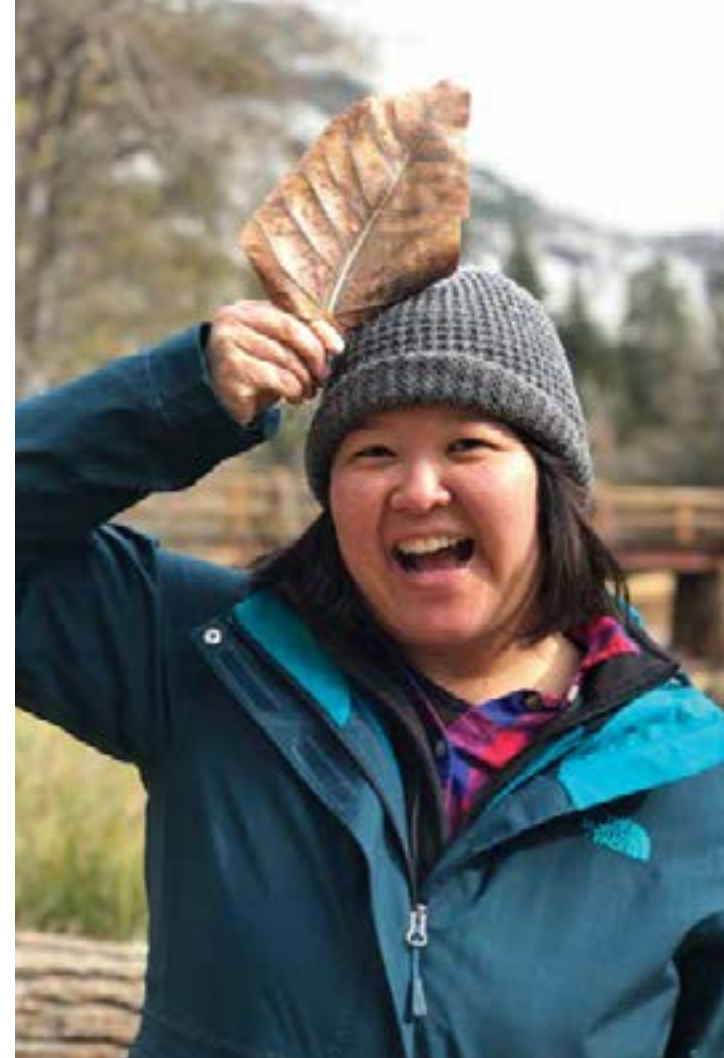


Satomi's story

I usually draw landscapes and flowers, so when I was drawing the birds for the sketch-a-thon, I kept saying, "Can you just stay still?" Most of the time, I was balancing my sketchpad on a fence post with a pencil in one hand and my binoculars in the other. Since I'm fairly new to birding, I appreciated this challenge because it was a great way to practice noticing details of each bird, especially after Matthew gave me advice on accentuating field marks to differentiate species. I added watercolors on top of my pencil drawings the last 30 minutes before my time ran out. The four hours flew by so quickly! I could have stayed out there for four more!

~ **Satomi**

"When I was drawing birds,
I kept saying *can you just stay still?*"



BIRDS OF
SHORELINE
LAKE



MALLARD



PIED BILL GREBE



BLACK SKIMMER



SURF SCOTER



COOT



COMMON GOLDENEYE



CANADA GOOSE



LESSER SCAUP



LESSER SCAUP





DARK-EYED
JUNCO



BLACK
PHOEBE



AMERICAN
CROW



WILSON'S
WARBLER



DOWNY
WOODPECKER



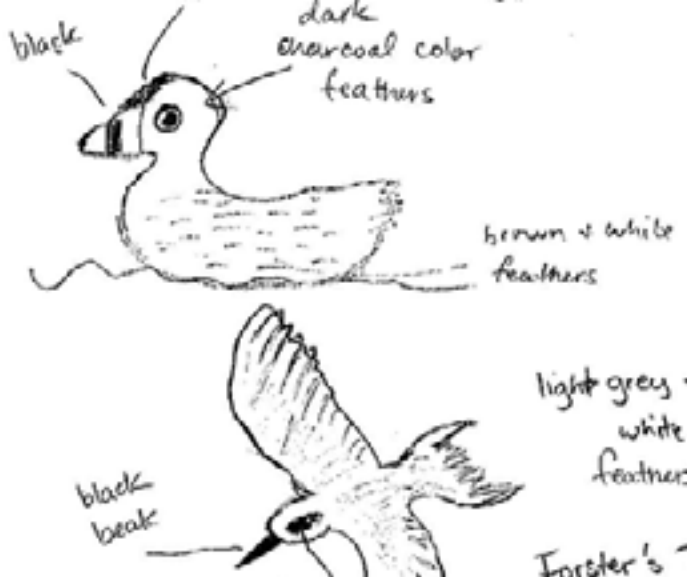
TURKEY
VULTURE



NUTTALL'S
WOODPECKER



LESSER
GOLDFINCH



Christopher's story

So, normally I'd be out 'birding' with my camera or a pair of binoculars but I stepped outside of my comfortable ways to try something new. I'm somewhat artistic but I don't really do 'drawings'... I usually draw intricate mazes. When I was out today, I realized that there were more birds than I expected. I couldn't keep up the talented Mr. Dodder... whom was drawing up a storm.. Overall, I enjoyed my experience, and might try it again next year after getting some more practice at home.

~ **Christopher**

“I stepped outside of my comfortable ways to try something new.”



Common Golden Eye

Golden Eye

brown

dark brown

white



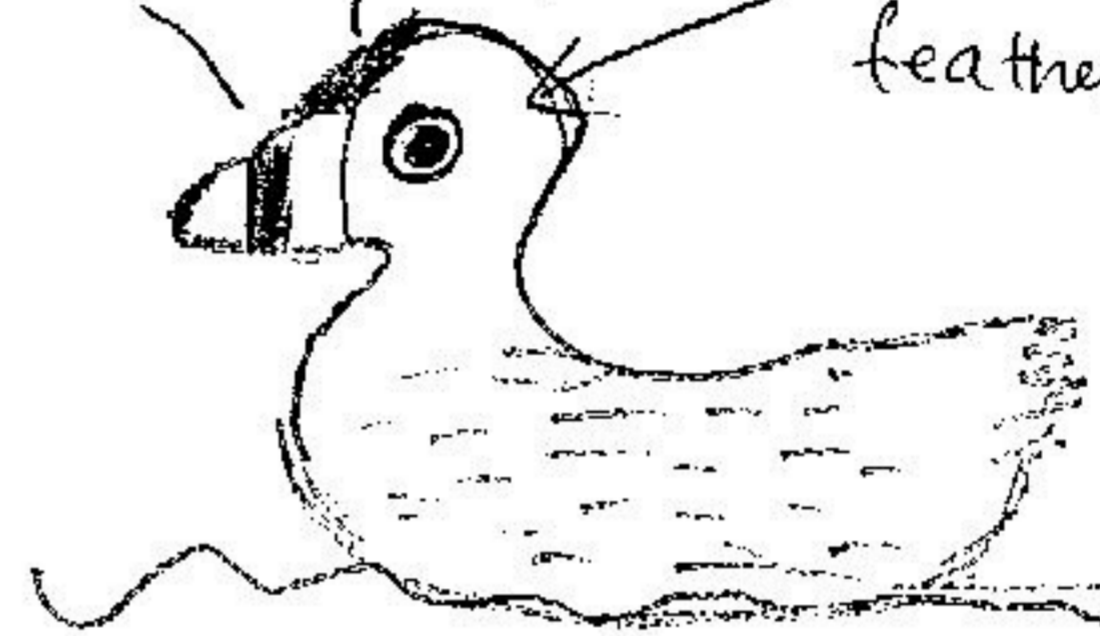
Pie-billed Grebe

black

black

dark charcoal color feathers

brown + white feathers



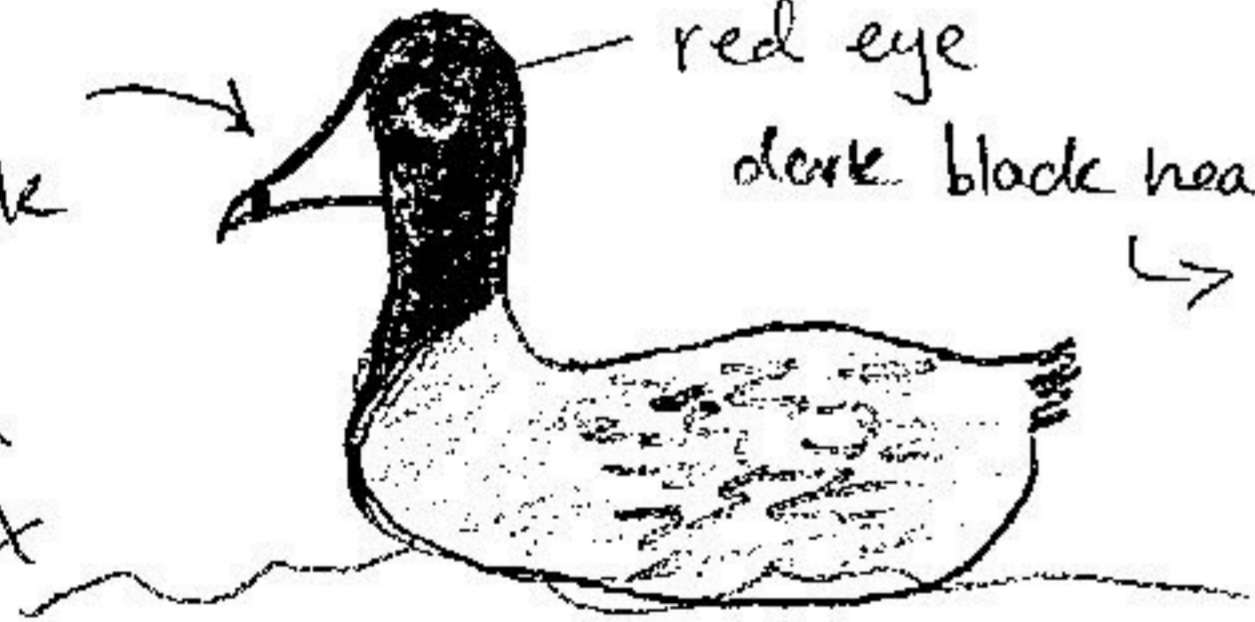
white beak

red eye

dark black head

fades to charcoal gray

American Coot

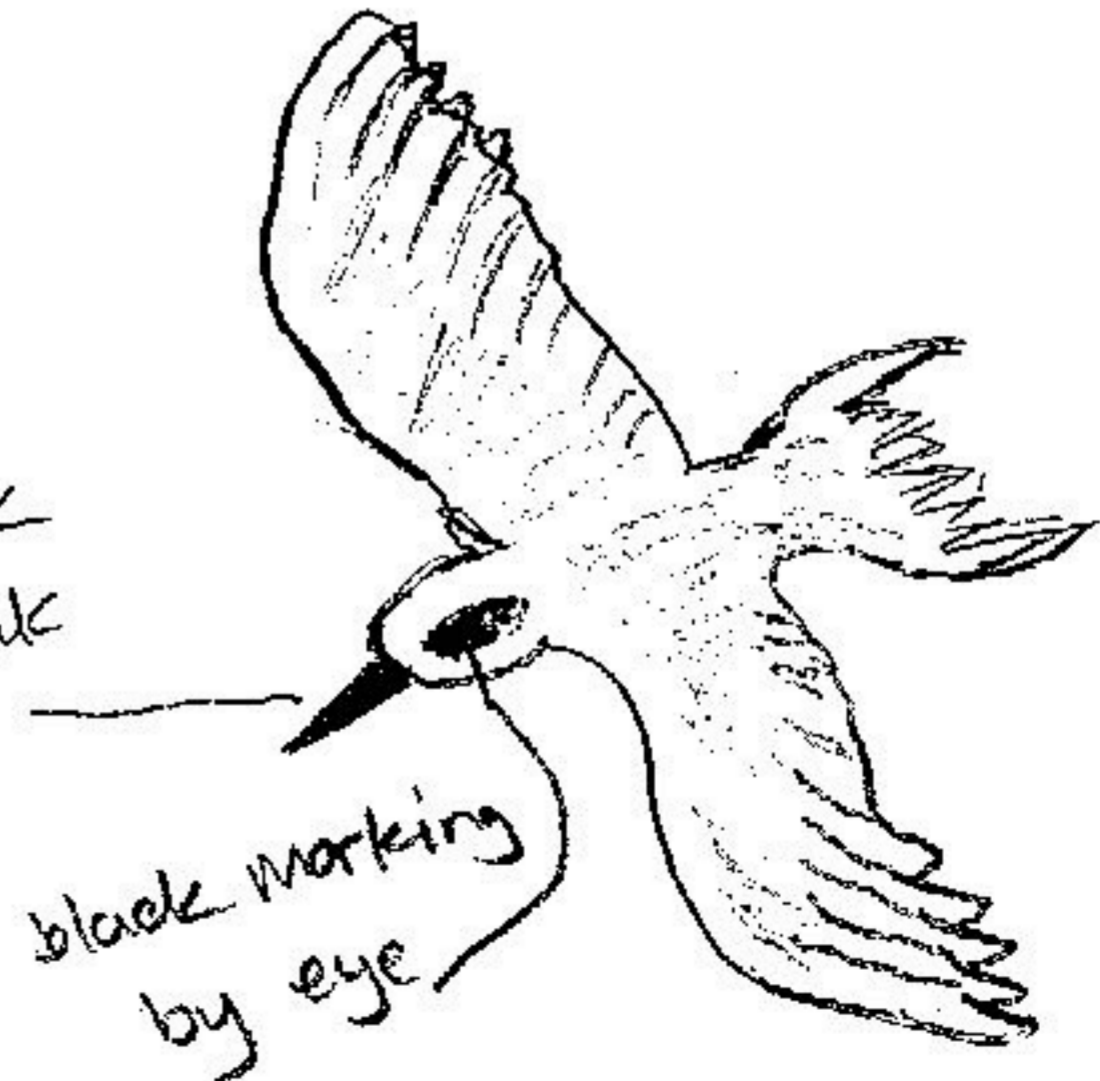


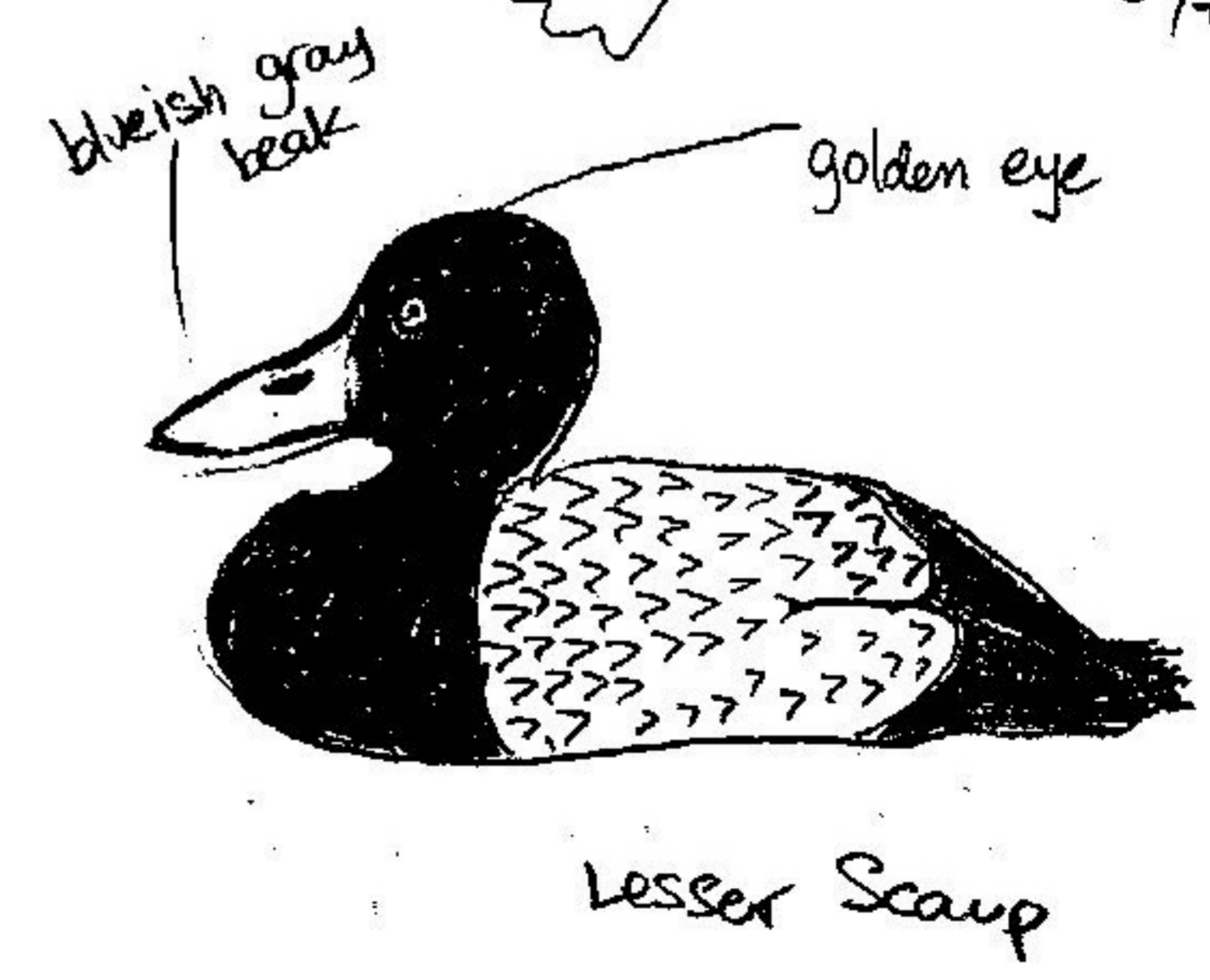
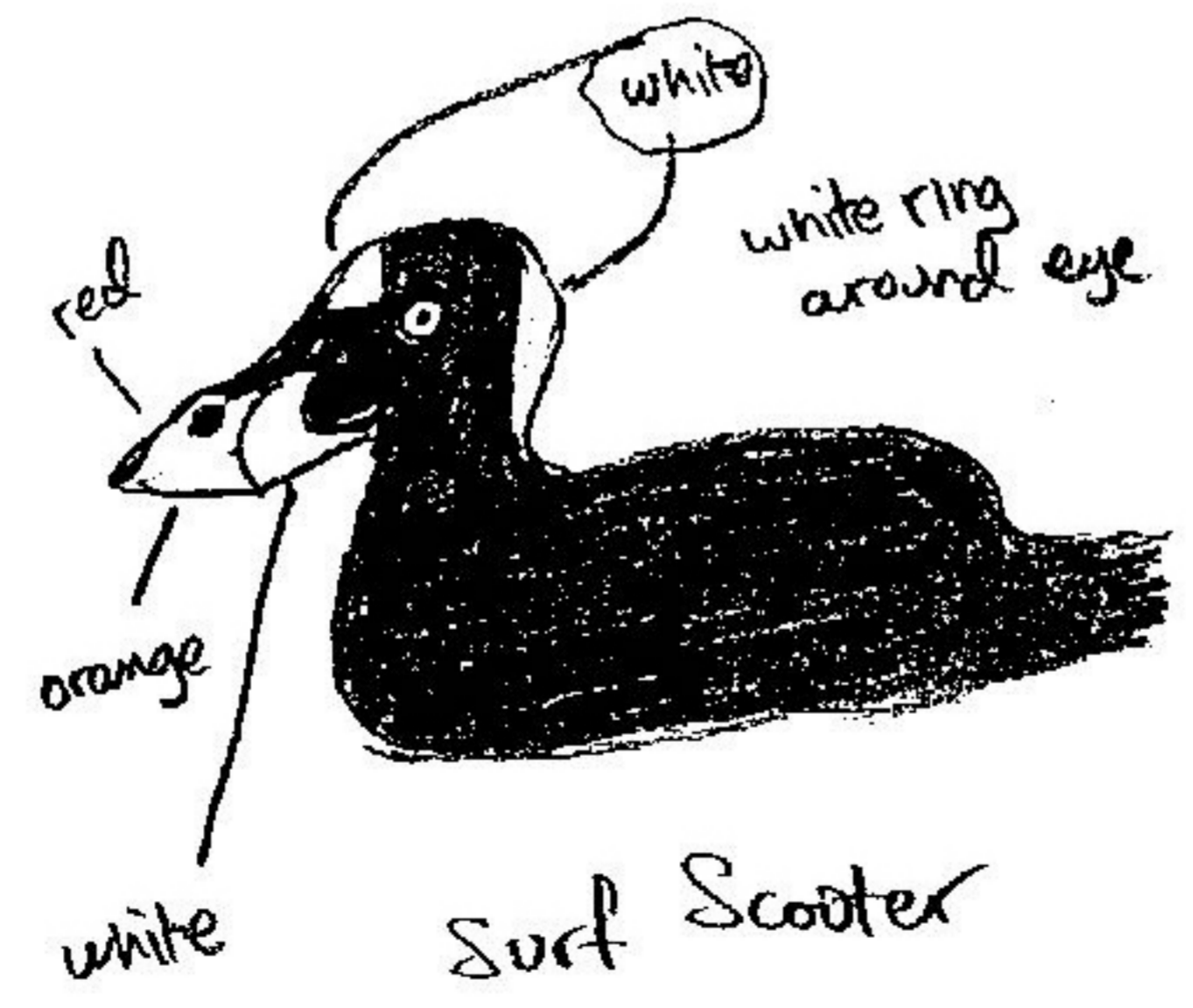
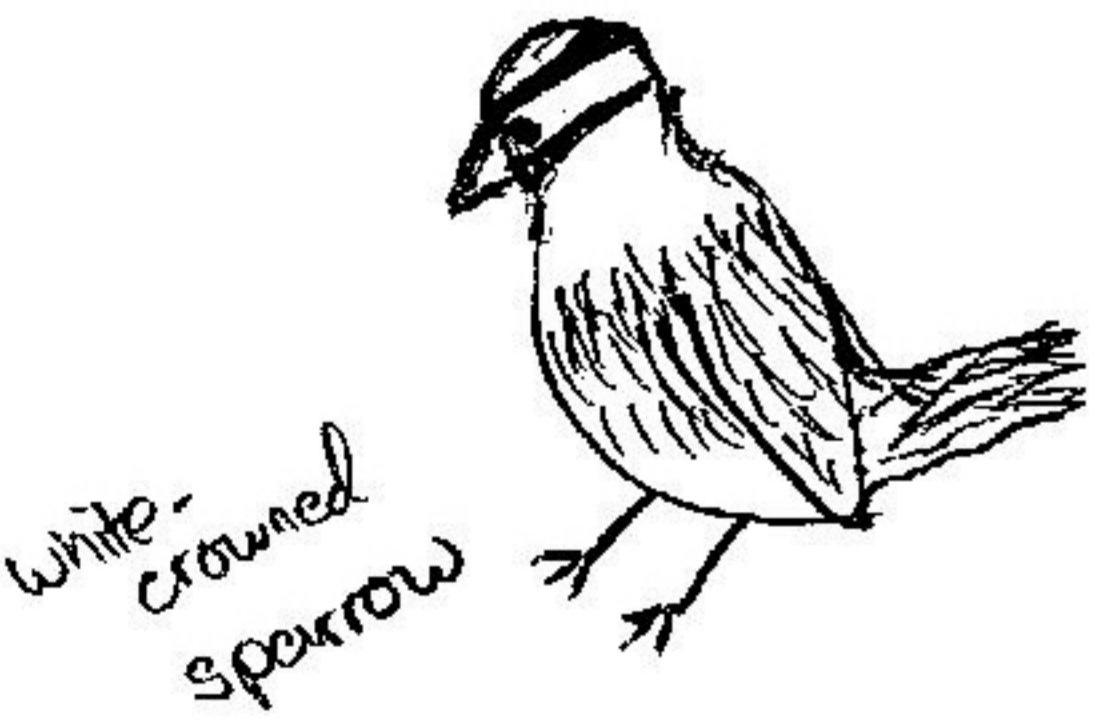
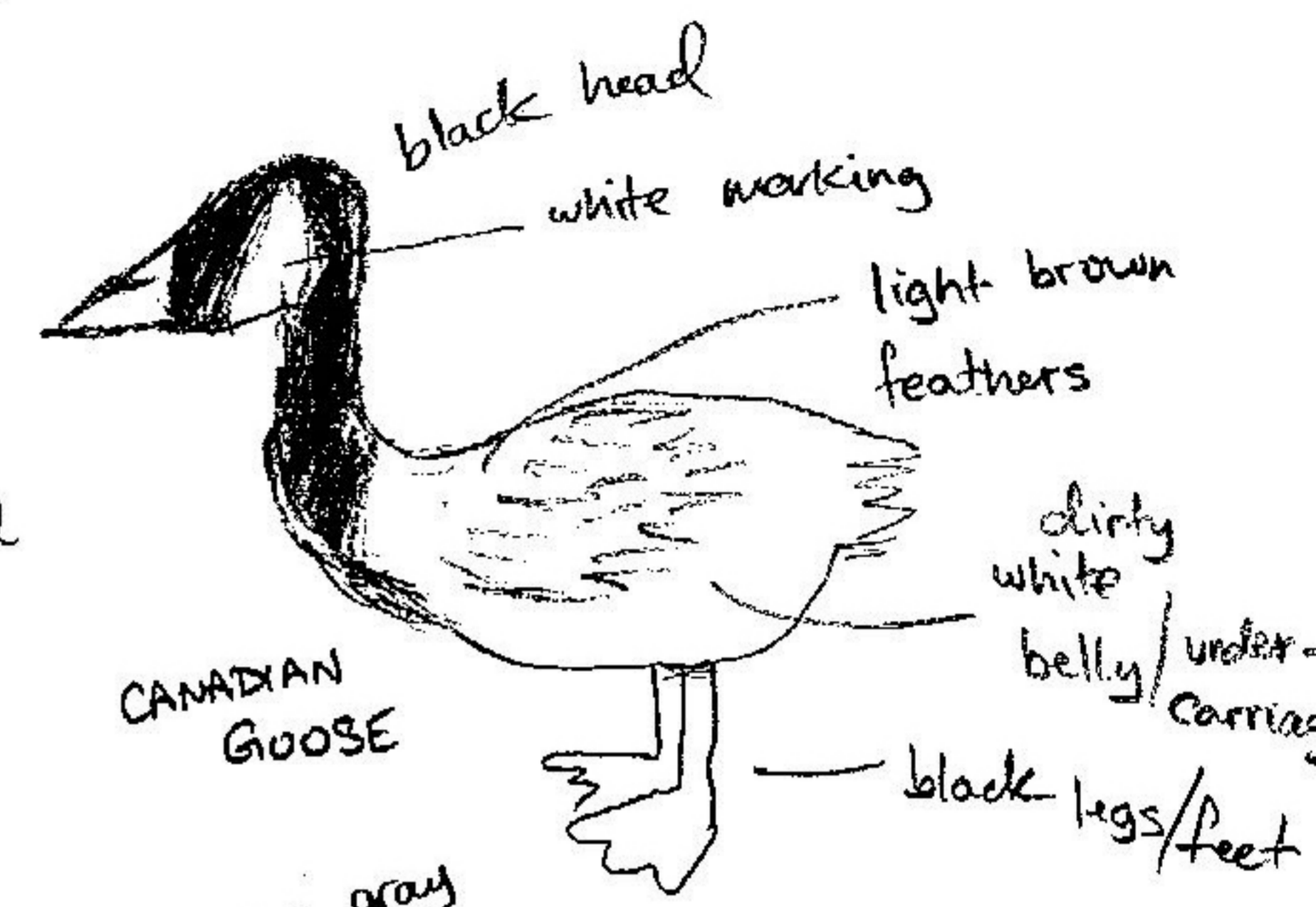
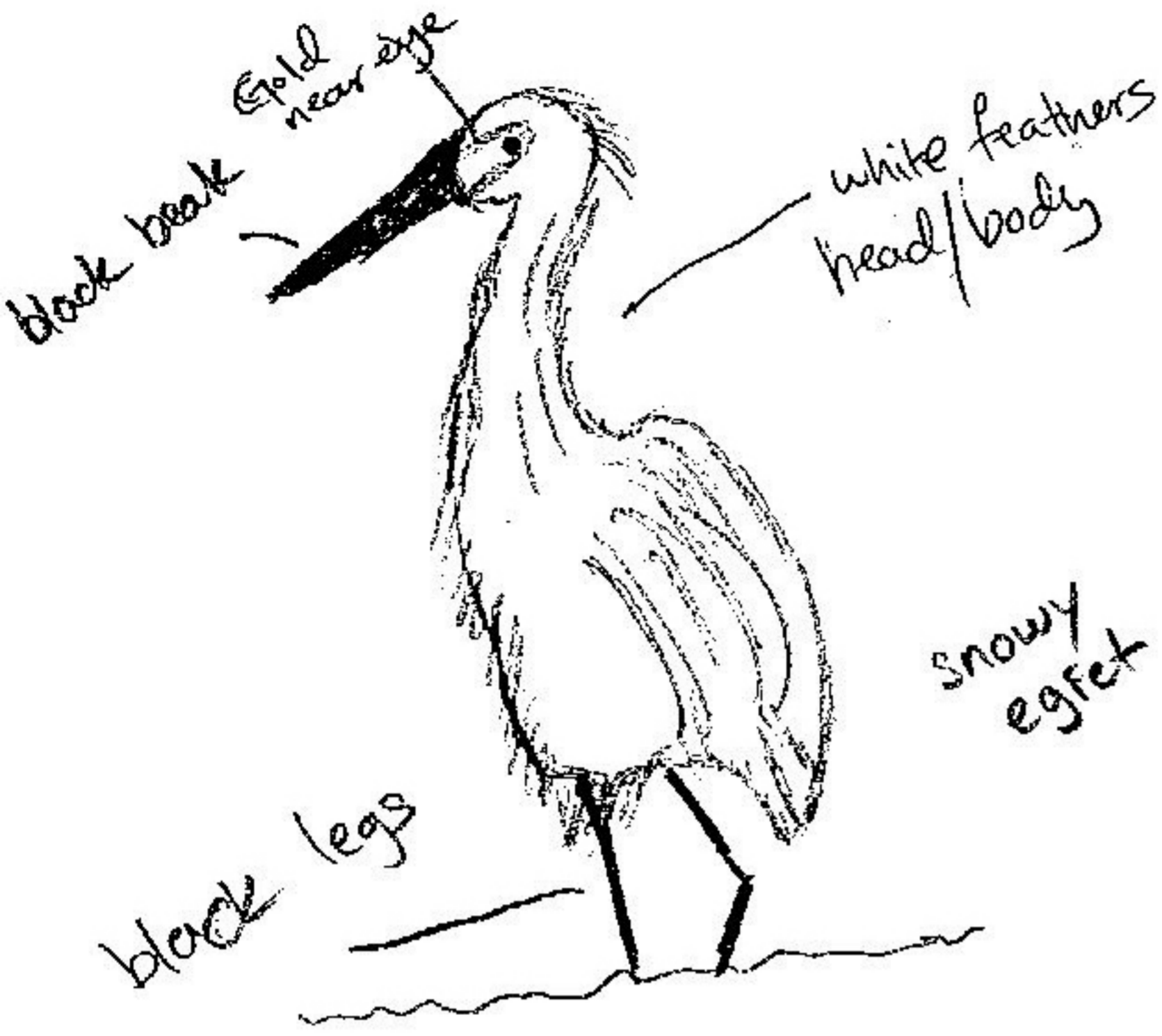
black beak

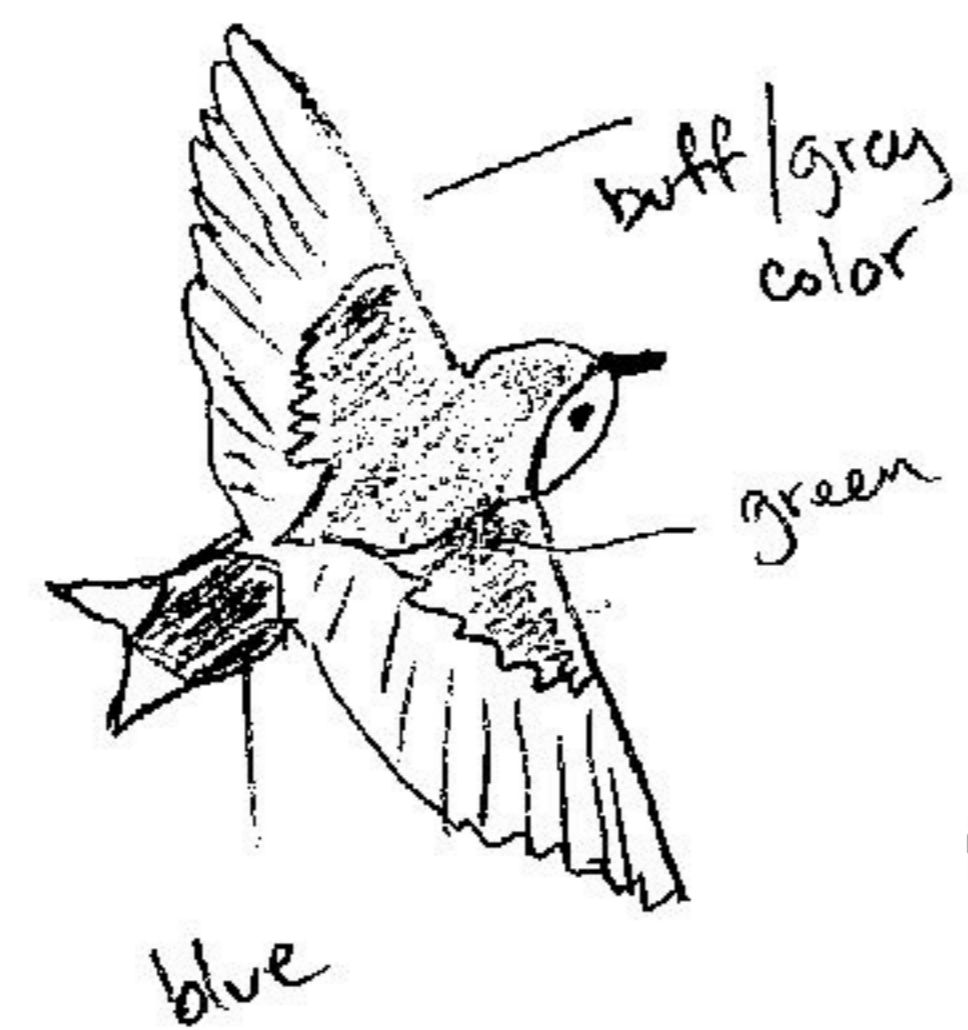
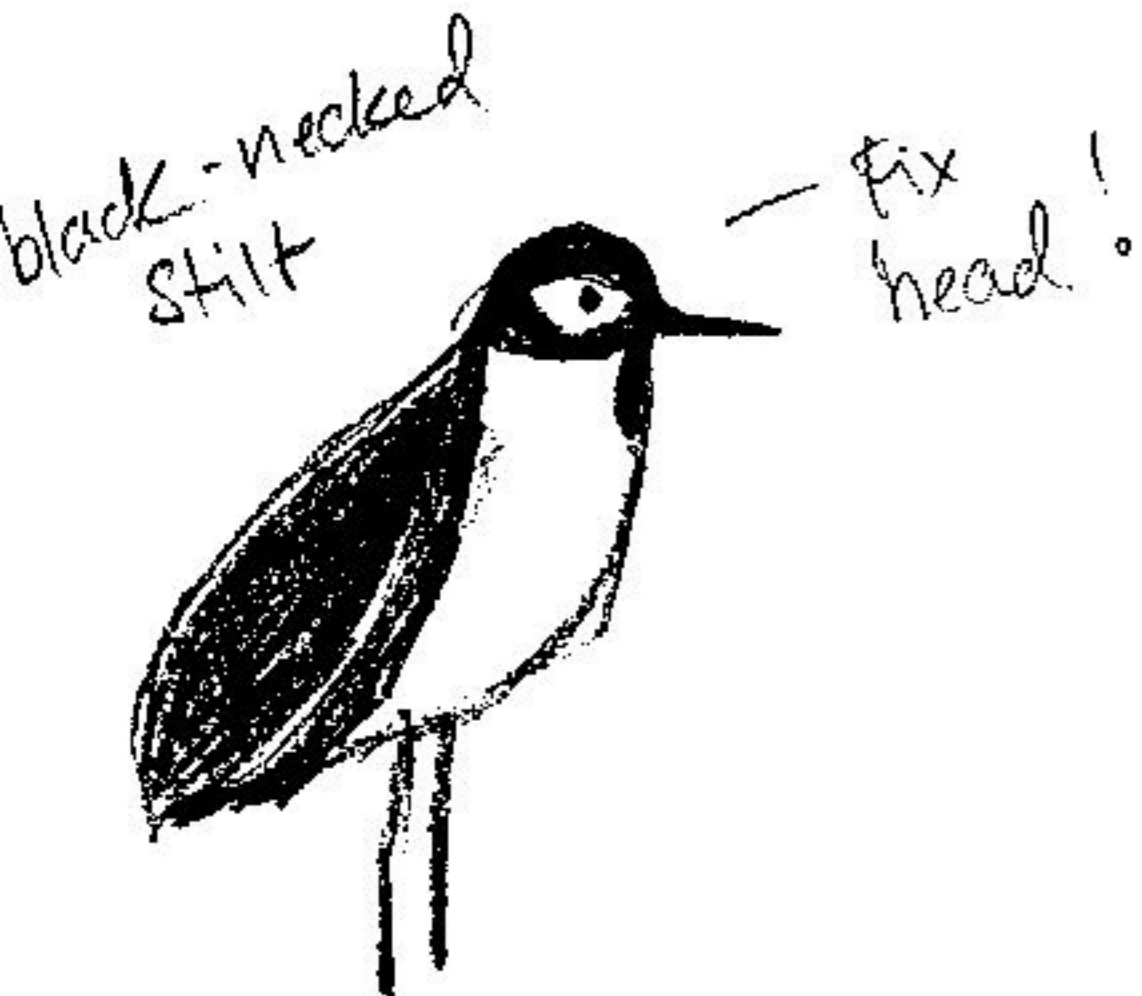
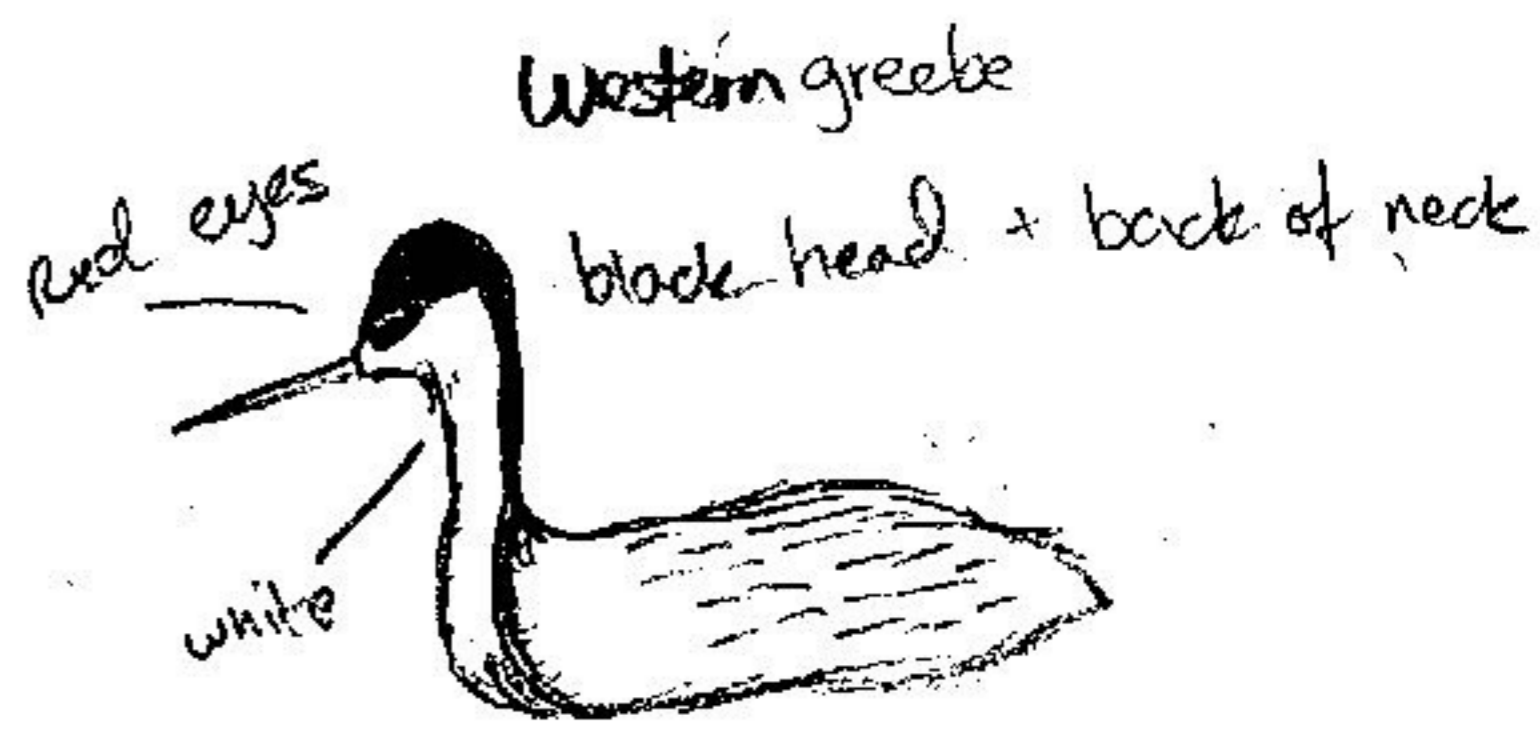
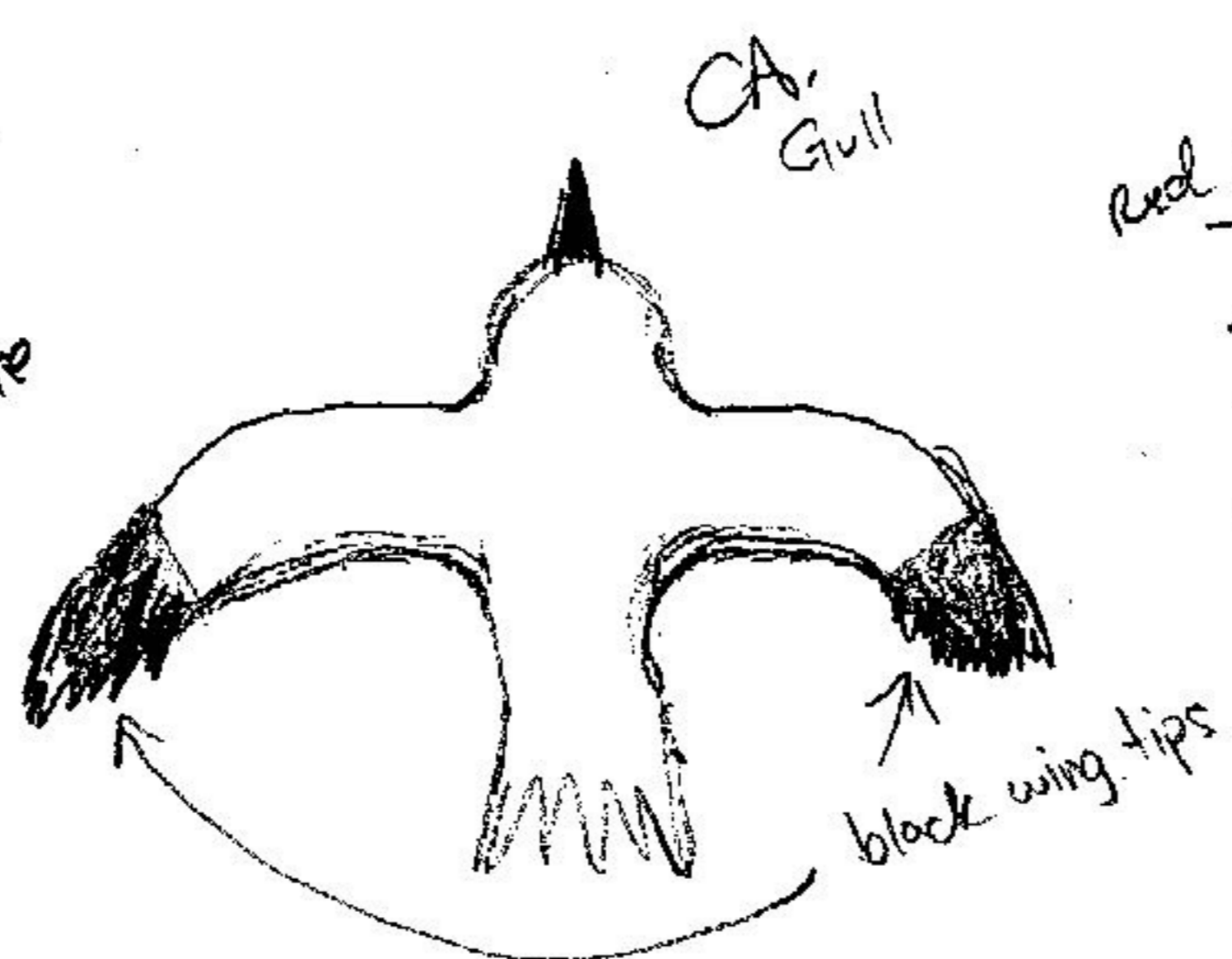
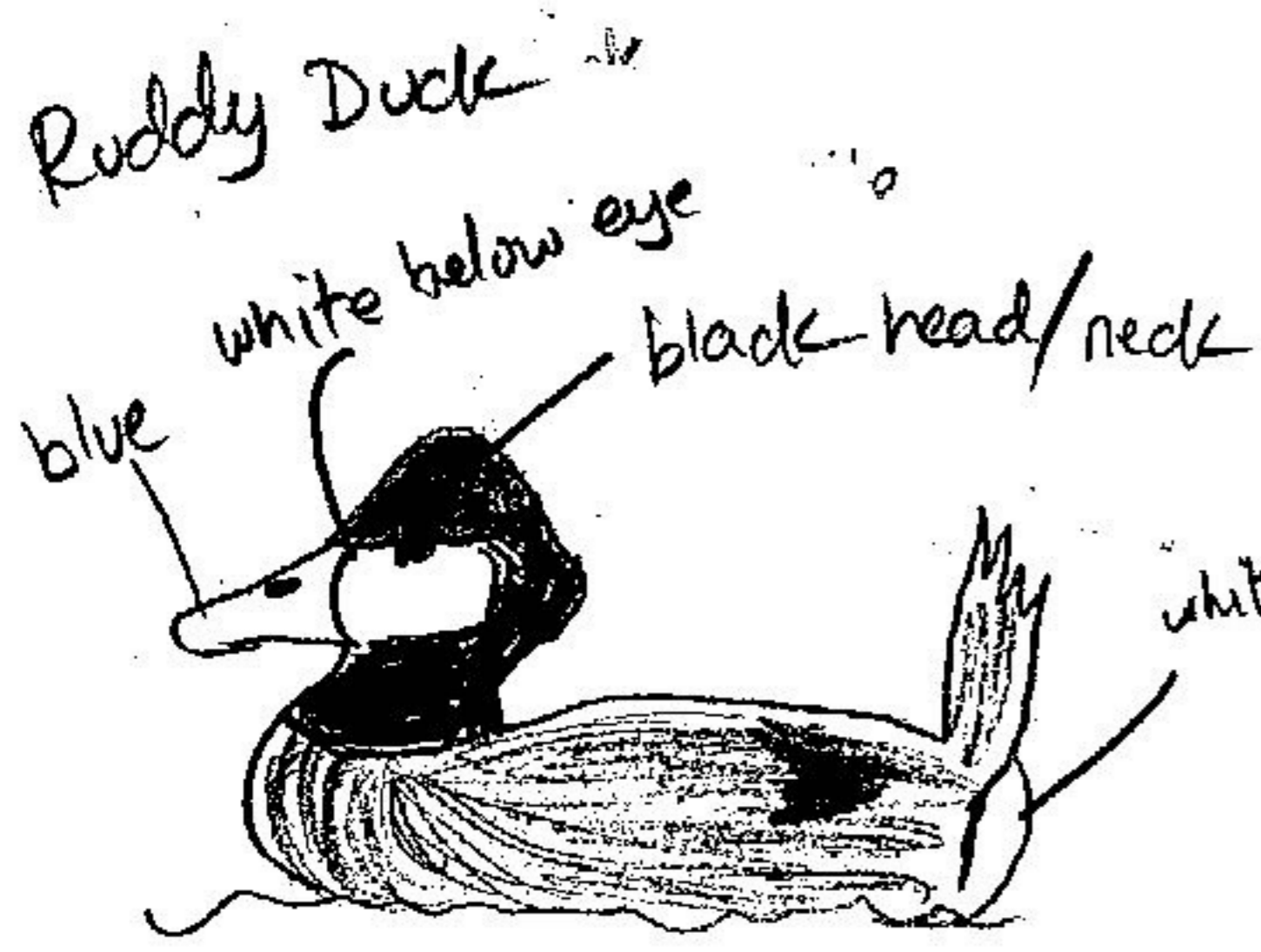
black marking by eye

light grey + white feathers

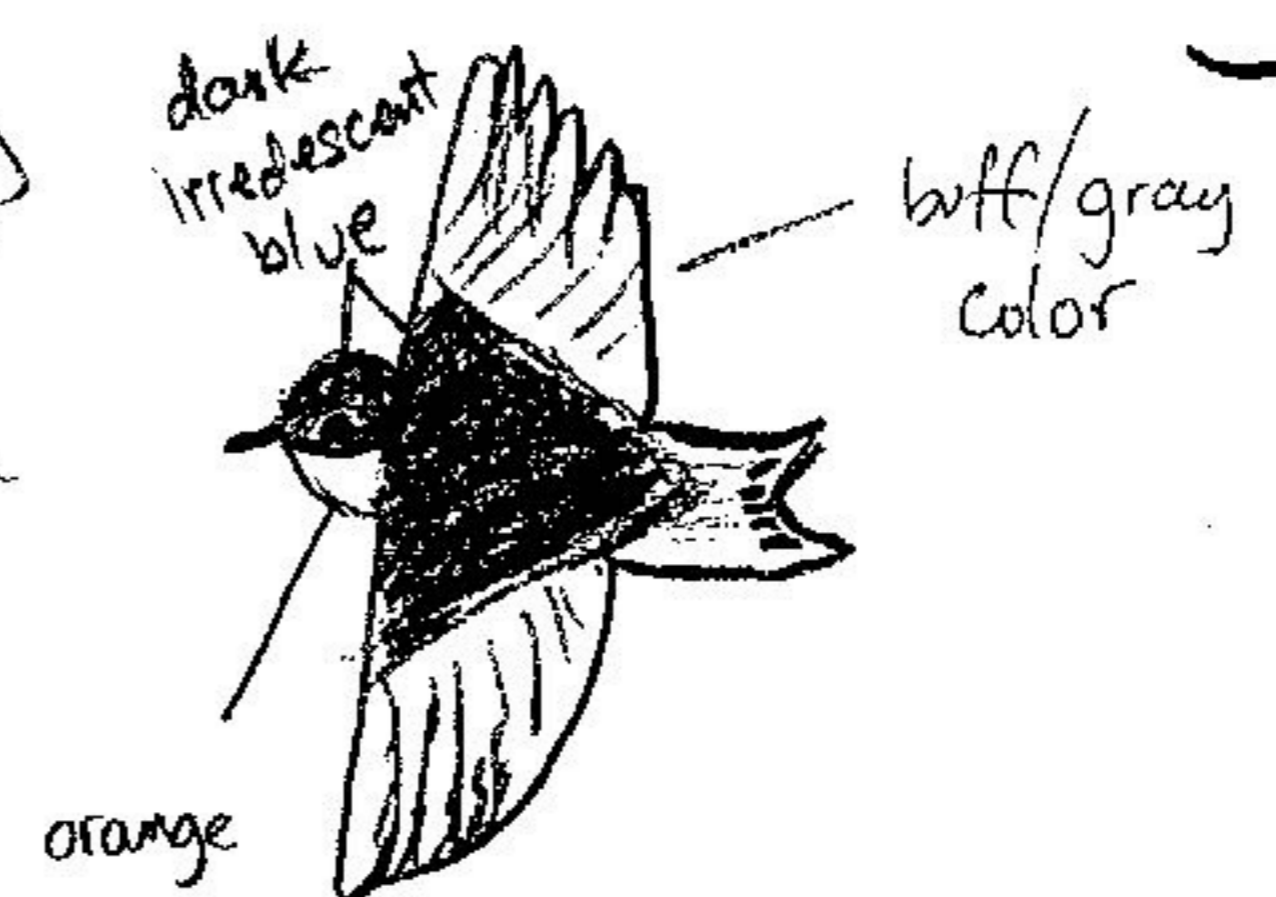
Forster's Tern in flight



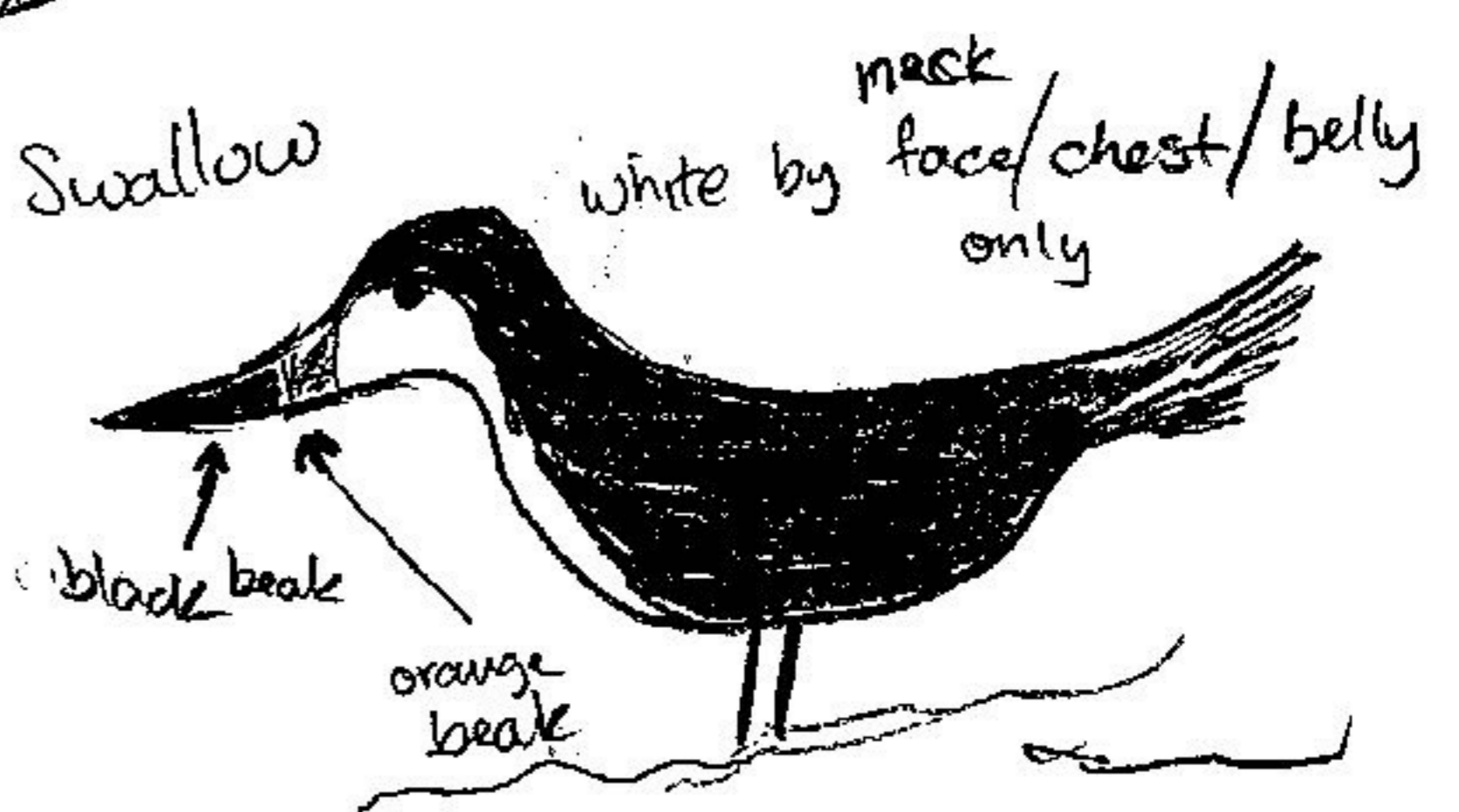
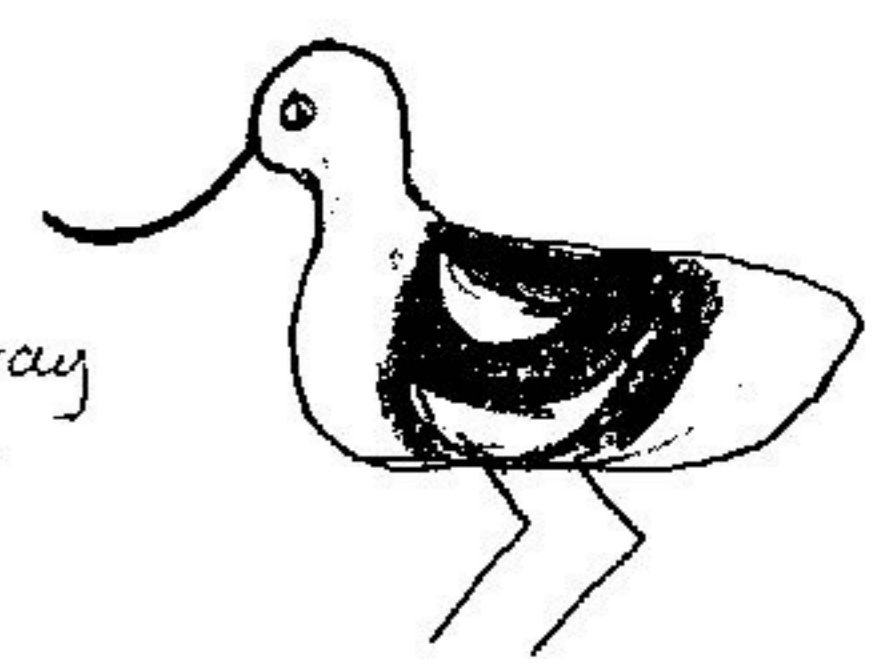




Violet-green Swallow



Barn Swallow



“We spotted a female Wild Turkey slinking through the knee-high grass...”

Carolyn's story

Today's birding was for a three-transect survey of the birds in the North Coyote Valley, as part of our Oak Savanna Community Science Project. The OSCSP is a three-year project funded by OSA in which we get to explore this restricted-access part of the valley to help us develop an environmental science curriculum for local high schoolers, with the intent of introducing them to field biology, the challenges of introduced species within a habitat, and hopefully helping them develop a connection to the open spaces of south Santa Clara County.

The survey started at 7:30 and wrapped up at 11:00 am, so I had 30 minutes to draw at least some of the species we found. My favorite for the day is probably the most confusing. We spotted a female Wild Turkey slinking through the knee-high grass across Fisher Creek. She was keeping her head low, not trying to attract any attention, and the grass was fairly high, so the only thing really visible was the top of her back and head. The movement put me in mind of seeing the raptors stalking through the kitchen in Jurassic Park, and while her intent wasn't nearly so nefarious, it was fun to see such a purposeful walk from a bird like a turkey.

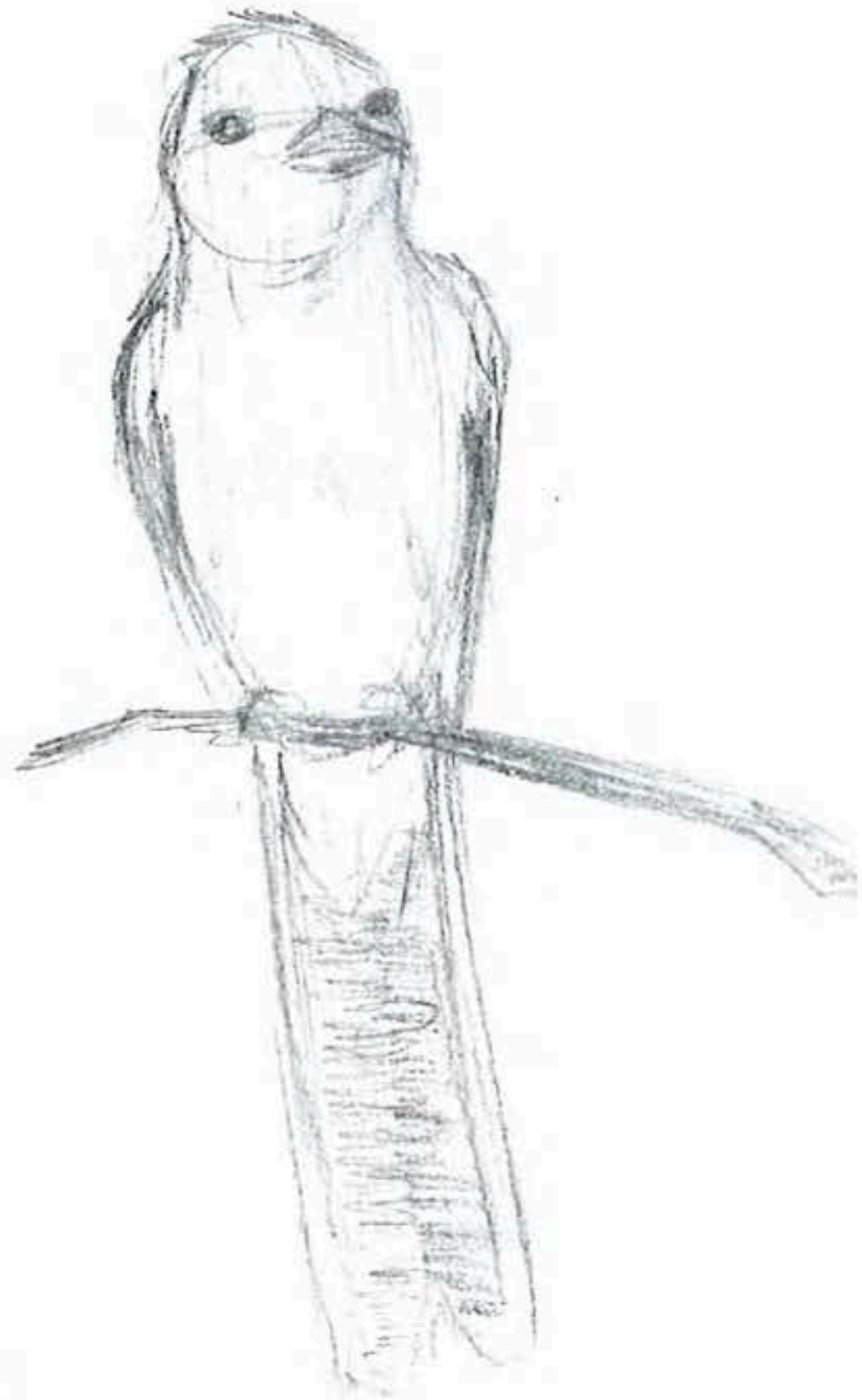
~ Carolyn



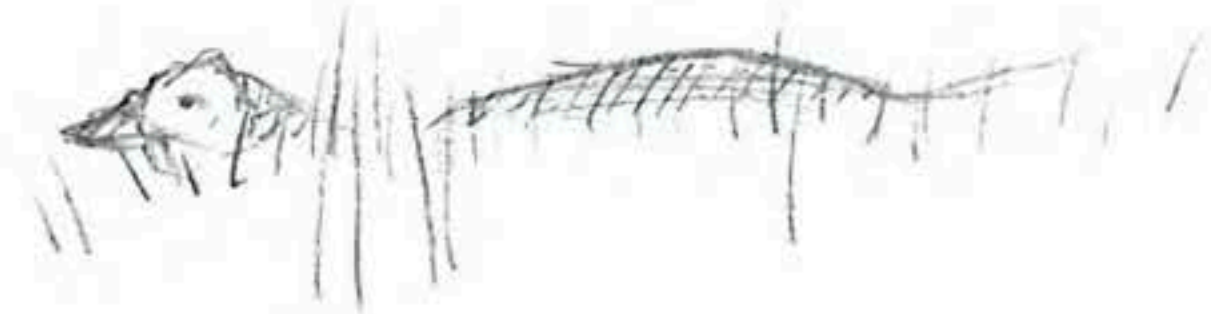
BLPH
K. J. G.



VERT



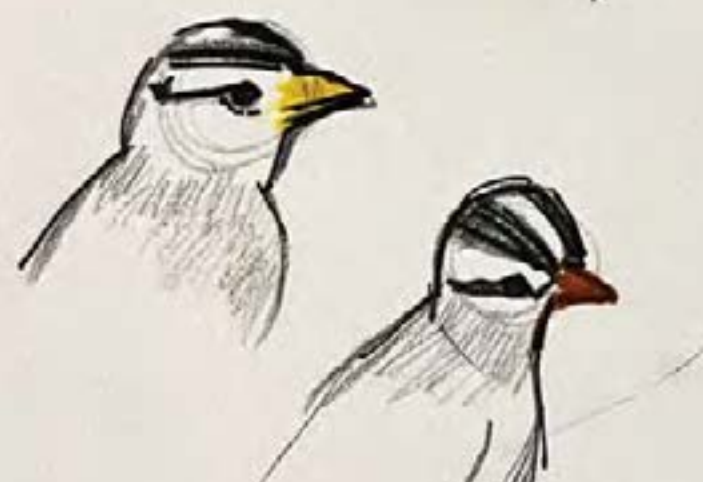
♀ WITU



Screaming RWBL



Birds @ North Coyote Valley



“It was my way to pause and converse with nature!”

Shweta's story

This is my second year participating in Birdcasso. My goal this year was to sketch the birds in their context. My kit included color pencils, water color sketch pens, micro-tip pens, sketchbook and binoculars. I generally start drawing with lighter tone colored pencils, then add in more details with pencils or sketch pens.

I started out at McClellan Ranch Preserve in the morning. Later, while walking towards Blackberry Farm, I heard Acorn Woodpeckers chatter. I looked up and saw they were mobbing a couple of American Crows. I immediately stopped and started drawing the crows. I noticed that they were stealing acorns stashed by the woodpeckers.

Further on my walk, I stopped by the picnic area near Blackberry Farm. It turned out to be a nice spot to sit and sketch birds. It was interesting to watch that some species seemed to frequent similar trees. On my way back, I saw a California Scrub Jay sitting in the tree shade and a Red Shouldered Hawk perched on tree top nearby.

After spending a couple of hours, I went back home and sketched a few more birds who frequent our feeder. I had a great time, not just looking for and sketching birds but also thinking about their habitat, behavior and noticing their details. It was my way to pause and converse with nature! Happy birding!

~ Shweta



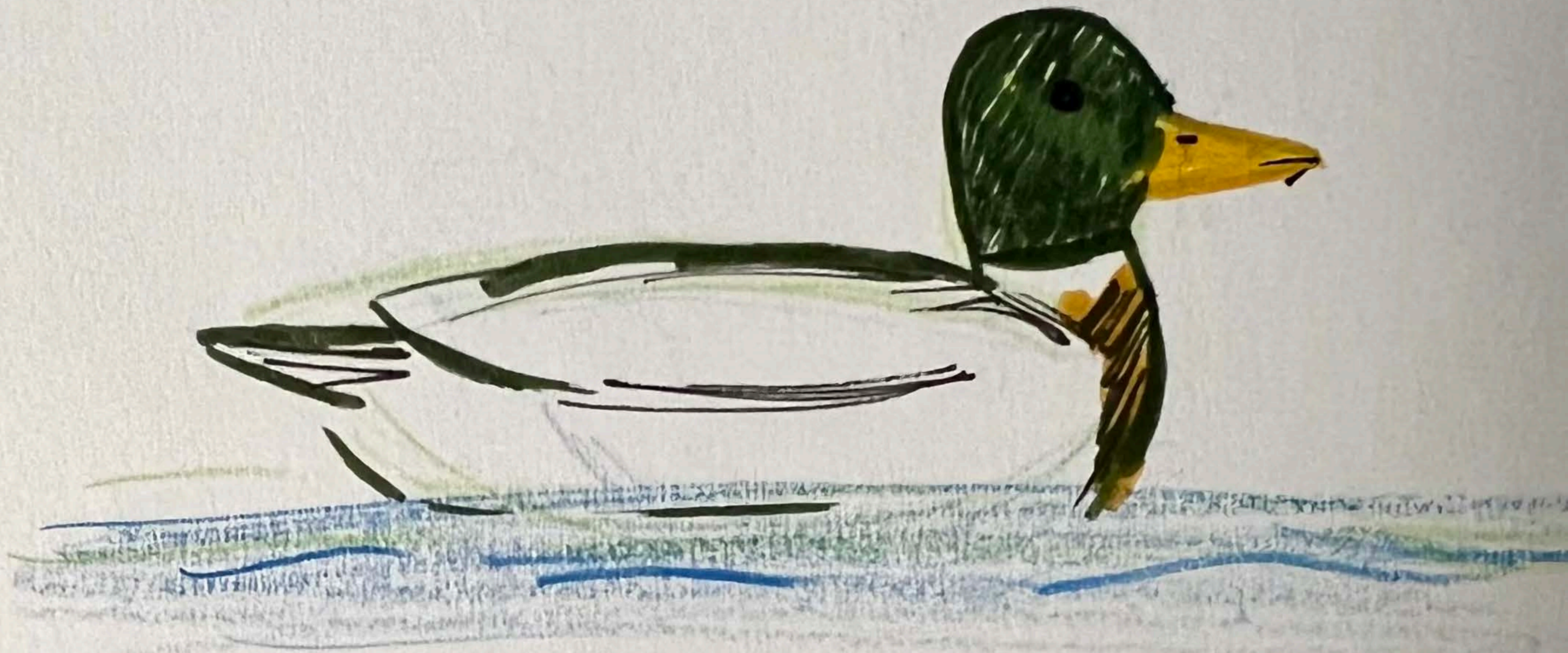
RSHA

- Red Shouldered Hawk
- pair-sitting on Treetop
- Bombing by Crows
- ~~Pottery~~ Short beak
- Yellow above beak
- Orange/brownish



~~MALL~~
Mallard

- Male -
- Green head
- Yellow beak
- White patch on the neck
- was with female



EUST

European Starling



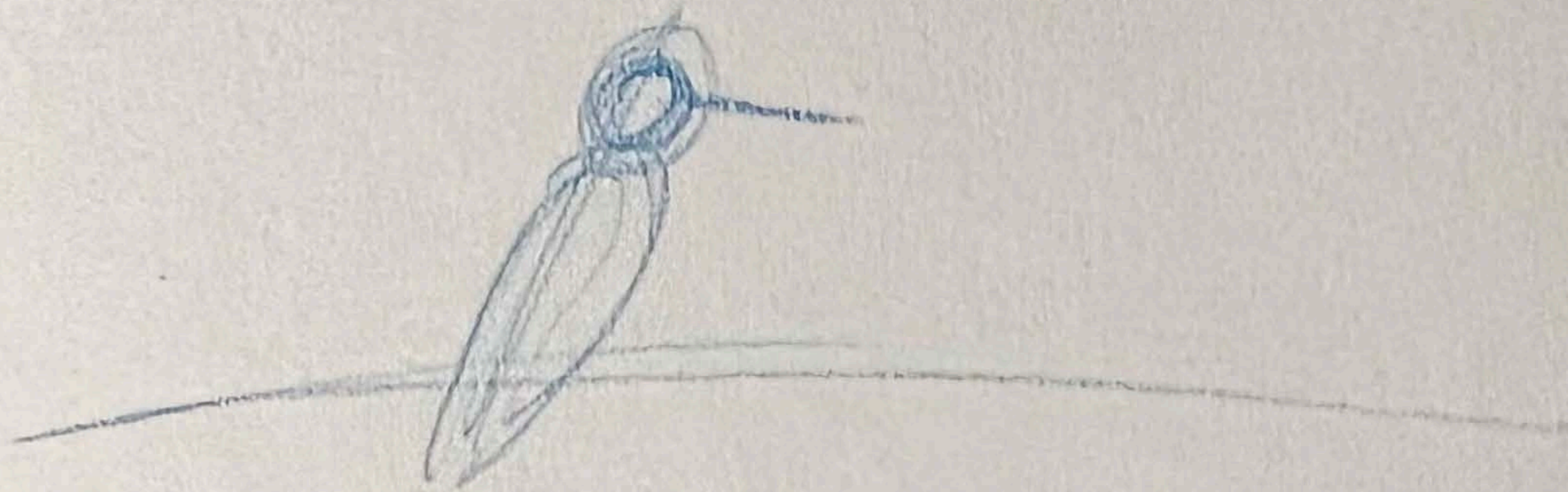


TRSW

TREE SWALLOW

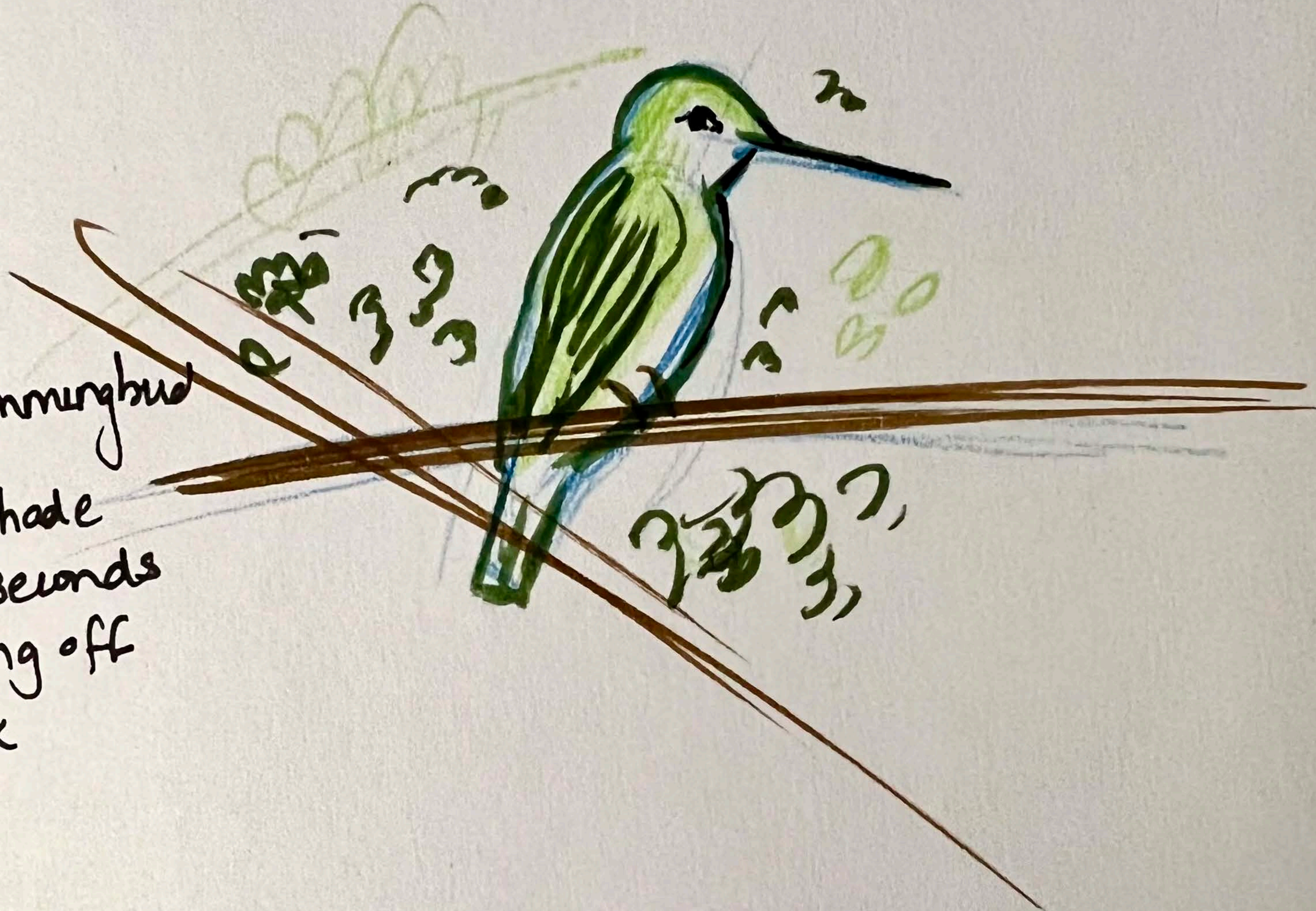
white belly

light brown tail



ANHU
Anna's Hummingbird

- Sitting in shade for few seconds then flying off
- Sharp, beak pointy





AMCR
American Crow

- Acorn Woodpecker harrising
- 2 AMCR stealing acorns
- Thick beak



NUWO

Nuttall's Woodpecker

- B & W pattern
- female - Black head
- Tail takes support of the tree
- Back pattern - lines
- Side - dotted

AMRO

American Robin

◦ Orange belly

◦ Yellow beak





WBNU
White Breasted Nuthatch

CATO

California Towhee

- Orange under neck
- Orange near tail
- Long tail
- Slight necklace - Spring?
- Ground feeder - Quick



HOFI

House Finch

- In Flocks
(3-5 at a time)
- Pink head - Male
pink belly



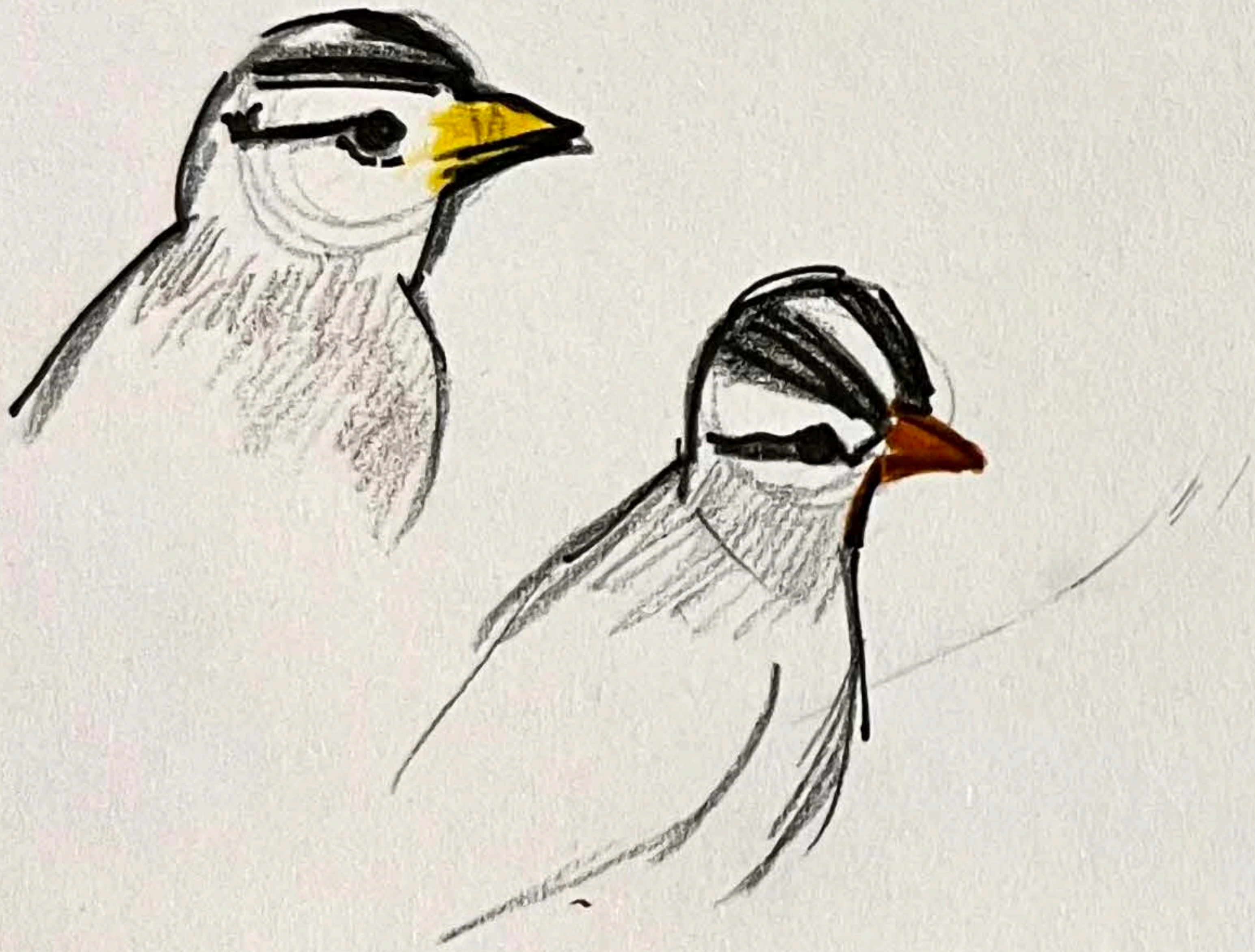
LGFF1

Lesser Gold Finch

◦ pale / greenish yellow back

◦ black head
wing pattern





WCSP
White Crowned Sparrow
Feeding on ground near
feeder
black & white stripes on head
yellow beak
grey chest

See you again in 2023...

Don't be timid. We hope more of you will join Team Birdcasso next year. Each one of us has an artist inside, just waiting for an invitation to create!

Birdcasso



The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society promotes the enjoyment, understanding, and protection of birds and other wildlife by engaging people of all ages in birding, education, and conservation.

scvas.org



A huge thank you to all our artists!
Your perspective on the natural world inspires us all
and helps us see things anew.