



BLACKWING - PEARL



Birdcons

BIRDON

April 7, 2021

Thank you.

Thank you for supporting Team Birdcasso! This is a one-of-a-kind Birdathon team started in April 2020. It is a group united by our shared love of art *and* the outdoors. Each artist's style is different of course, yet all wonderful expressions of their artistic spirit. The images included in this story represent the way we each see the birds around us—beautiful, mysterious and unique.

We worked independently and wrapped up the day on zoom with a happy exchange of stories and images. You can read where each of the artists went in the pages that follow... Enjoy their artistic renderings of our local birds, and join us next year as we work to support SCVAS's Education Program with art!

Matthew Dodder

Executive Director, SCVAS

Wednesday, April 7, 2021

Our Artists:

Mary Ann Allan
Matthew Dodder
Leena Khanzode
Carolyn Knight
Barry Langdon-Lassagne
Audry Nicklin
Shweta Shidhore
Cristina Thorson
Mary Wisnewski
Floy Zittin



96 unique species were drawn today...

Canada Goose
Cinnamon Teal
Northern Shoveler
Gadwall
Mallard
Green-winged Teal
Greater Scaup
Lesser Scaup
Surf Scoter
Bufflehead
Common Goldeneye
Common Merganser
Ruddy Duck
California Quail
Wild Turkey
Pied-billed Grebe
Eared Grebe
Western Grebe
Clark's Grebe
Rock Pigeon
Mourning Dove
Anna's Hummingbird
Common Gallinule
American Coot
Black-necked Stilt
American Avocet
Black-bellied Plover
Marbled Godwit
Long-billed Dowitcher
Greater Yellowlegs
Willet
Lesser Yellowlegs

Ring-billed Gull
California Gull
Glaucous-winged Gull
Caspian Tern
Forster's Tern
Black Skimmer
Double-crested Cormorant
American White Pelican
Great Egret
Snowy Egret
Green Heron
Black-crowned Night-Heron
Turkey Vulture
Northern Harrier
Red-shouldered Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Western Screech-Owl
Burrowing Owl
Acorn Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Nuttall's Woodpecker
Black Phoebe
Ash-throated Flycatcher
Hutton's Vireo
Cassin's Vireo
Steller's Jay
American Crow
Common Raven
Chestnut-backed Chickadee
Oak Titmouse
Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Tree Swallow

Violet-green Swallow
Barn Swallow
Cliff Swallow
Bushtit
White-breasted Nuthatch
Brown Creeper
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Marsh Wren
European Starling
Northern Mockingbird
Western Bluebird
Hermit Thrush
Cedar Waxwing
House Finch
Purple Finch
Pine Siskin
Lesser Goldfinch
American Goldfinch
Dark-eyed Junco
White-crowned Sparrow
Golden-crowned Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Lincoln's Sparrow
California Towhee
Spotted Towhee
Red-winged Blackbird
Great-tailed Grackle
Orange-crowned Warbler
Common Yellowthroat
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Townsend's Warbler
Wilson's Warbler

Mary Ann's story

I managed to draw 29 species!

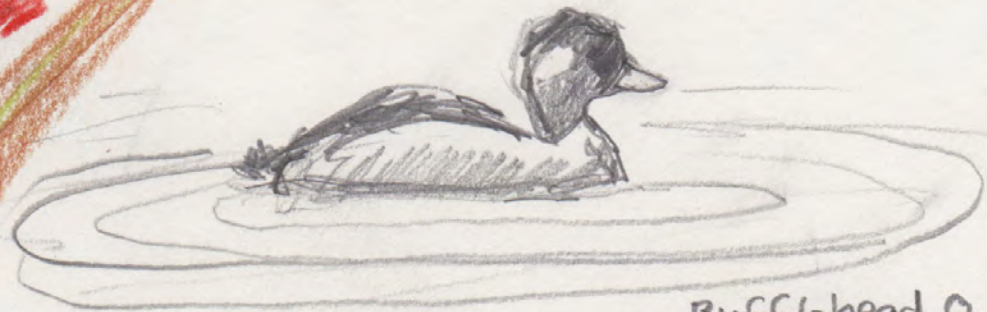
I think I ran over my time limit out in the field. I moved 3 times at Monte Bello and "stopped the clock" for the moves and early morning fog. I also added the names and made a few corrections, erased smudges, and tidied up things when I got home.

~ **Mary Ann**

Mary Ann also found the county's first-of-season Ash-throated Flycatcher and celebrated with a drawing!



RWBL



Bufflehead ♀



AMCO



BLPH



STJA

Common Raven



Am. Crow

PUFI



OCWA



LEGO



YRWA

LISP



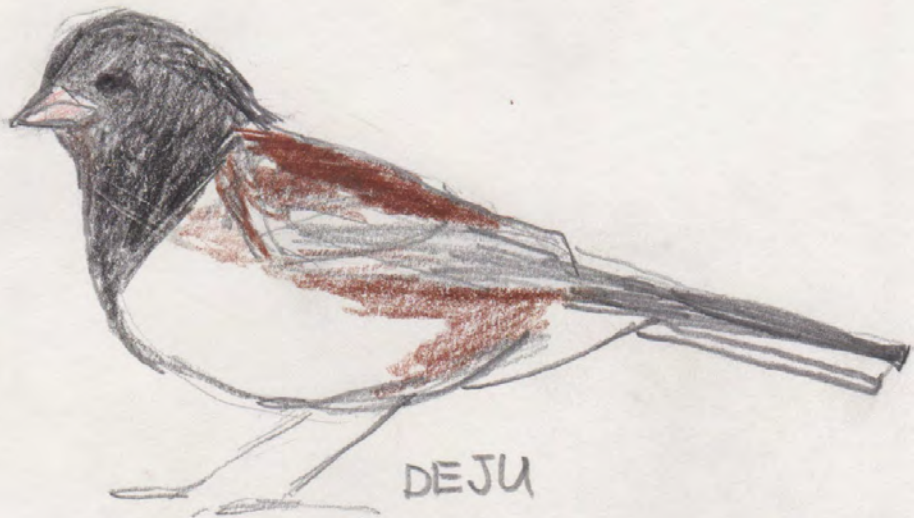
BTPI



ATFL



WEBL



DEJU



CATO

CAVI

spectacles

HUVI



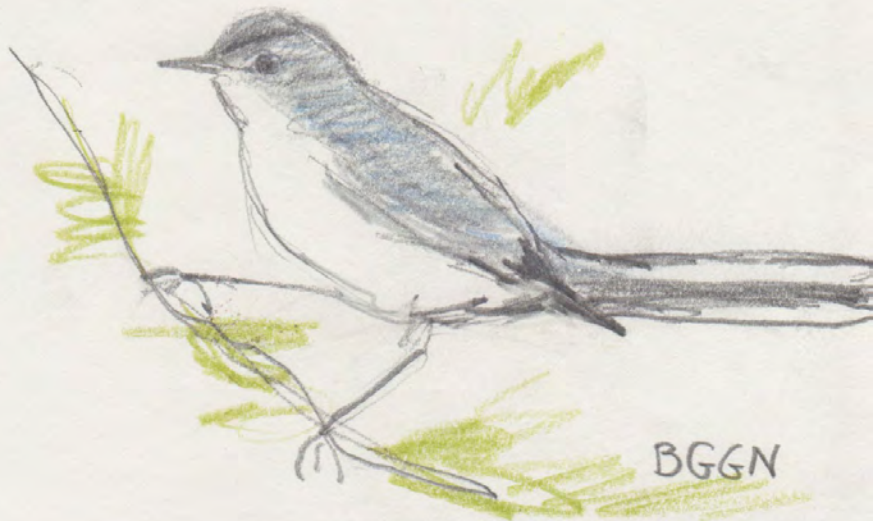
SPTO



Wild Turkey



CAQU



BGGN



AINHA



BUTI

RSHA



RTKA



TUVU



ACWO



“I almost felt sometimes that the pencil was drawing by itself.”

Matthew's story

I love this team! The idea of spending a morning drawing birds... what could be better? For me, it's the best way to enjoy our feathered friends! Working from live (moving) birds is even more fun, but a real challenge! They rarely stand still... Despite my lack of confidence, I kept working and found I was more relaxed this year—even allowed myself to be loose with my drawings and not worry about all the details. At one point I even had a bicyclist stop for a few minutes and watch me while I worked. Talk about pressure! The drawings became more gestural, which was really freeing. And I almost felt sometimes that the pencil was drawing by itself. By the end, there were 45 birds in my sketch book.

No matter what experience you have drawing birds or other animals, even plants, the exercise of observing and recording what you see with your pencil or brush, is invigorating. The fact more folks joined the team this year means others feel the same!

~ **Matthew**









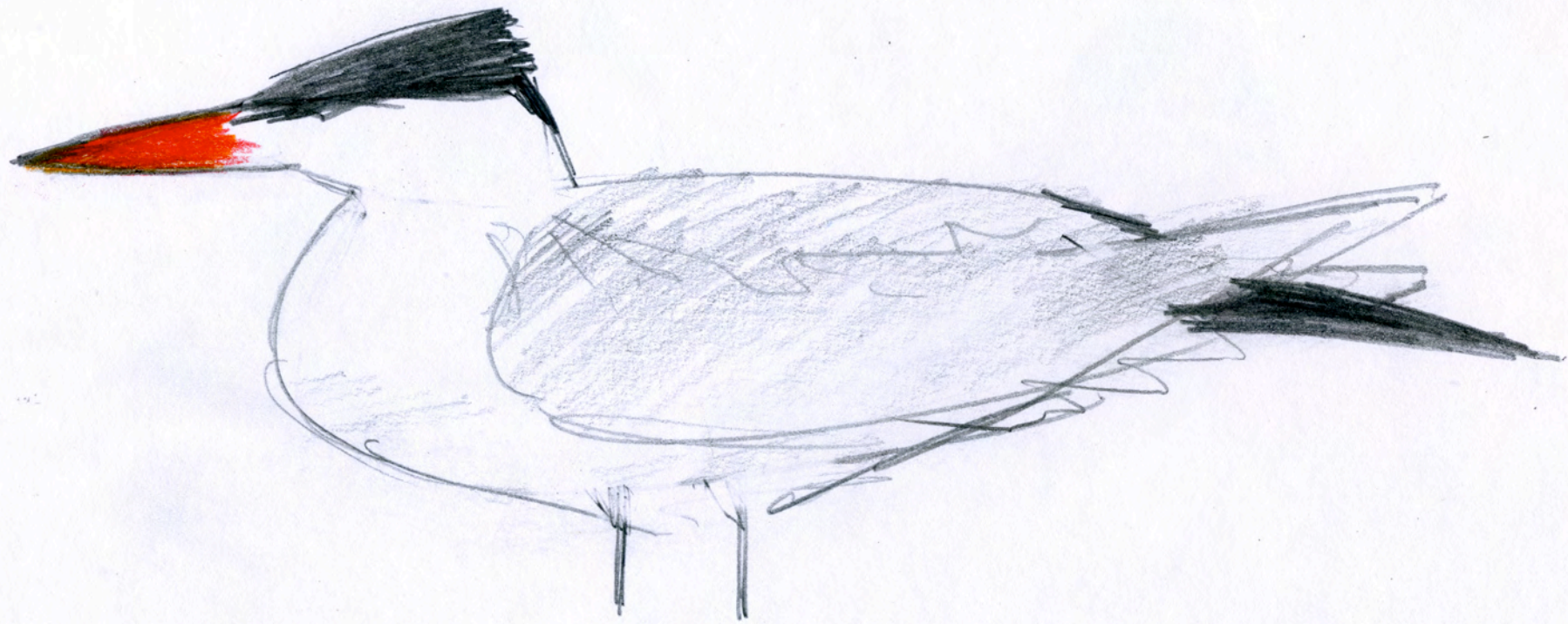


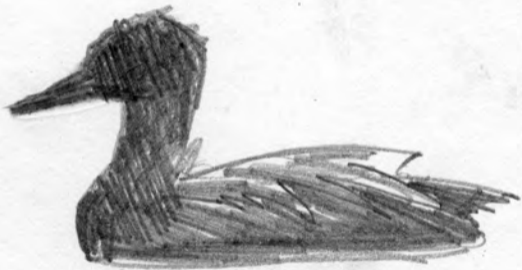


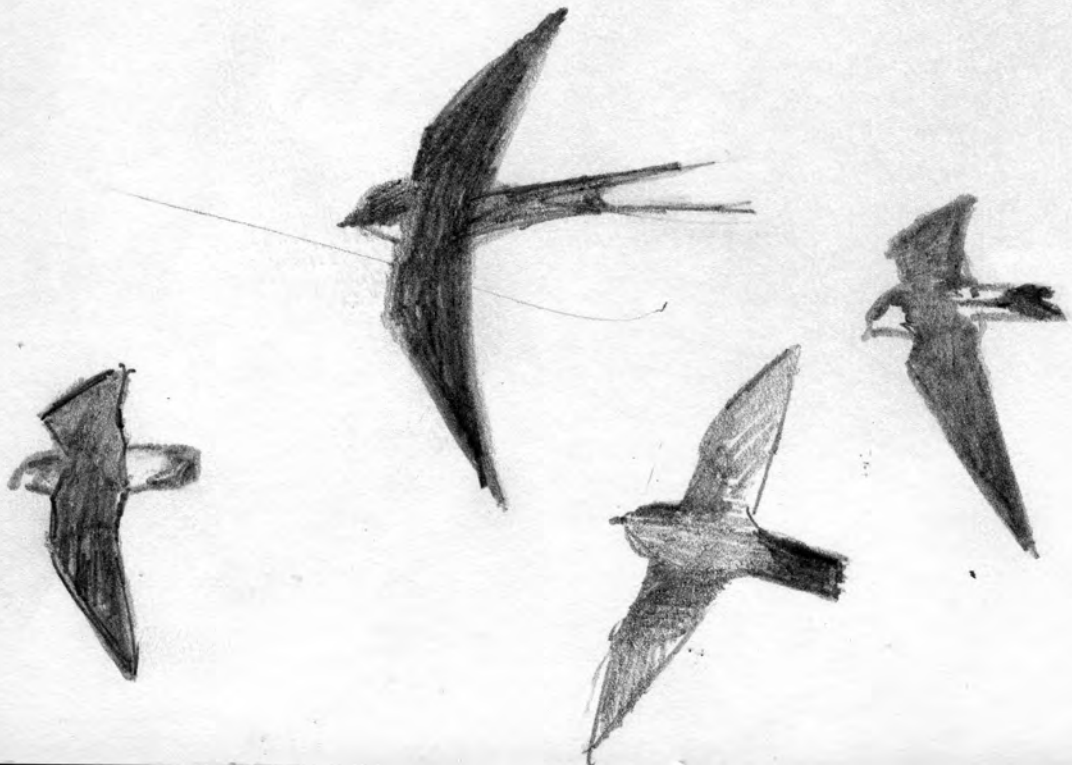










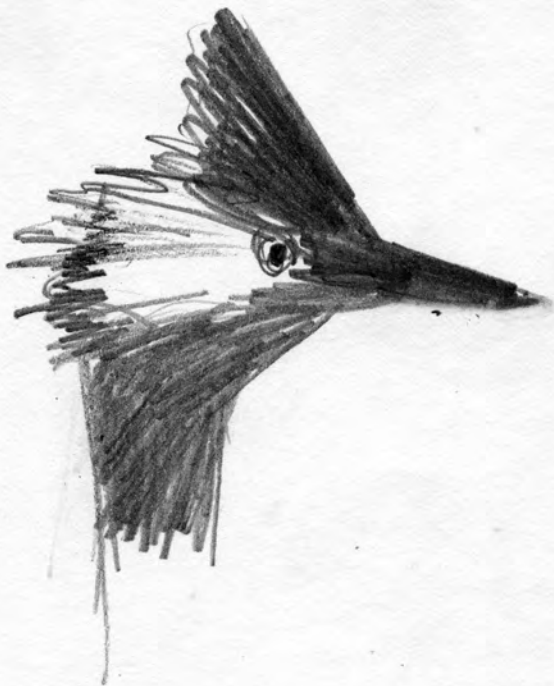












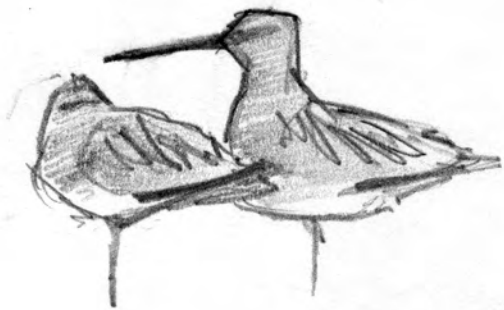
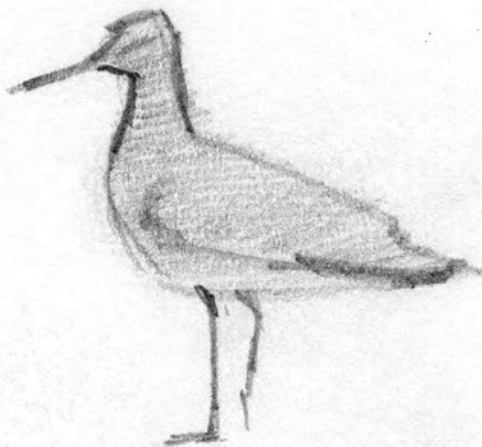


















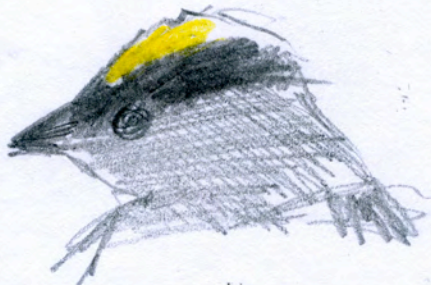
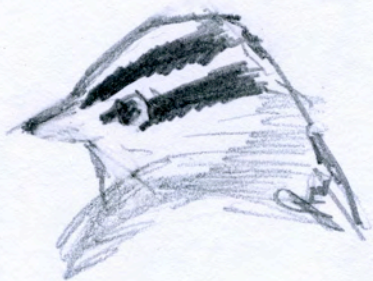
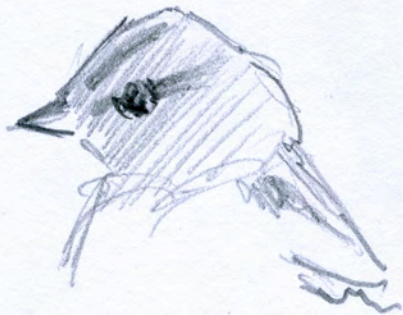


















Leena's story

I have been doing the schedule for the last 4 years. Every year I challenge myself to find more birds and sketch them in the limited time we have. Birds and nature have been an immense source of joy especially in the last year.

This year, due to work, I had to bird in the late afternoon. Even though it is not the best time to bird, I was able to secure 42 species around my house and Shoreline Park/Terminal Rd. Cold and wind made it difficult to draw and put watercolor down on paper. Given this, I had to improvise and had to do quick sketches and only to paint the key identification marks.

Even though there were no Peeps on the mud flats at Shoreline/Terminal Rd, I was very lucky to see the Black-bellied Plover! The Avocets in breeding plumage are always a delight!

I cannot wait to this again! I hope that our group can go out sketching together next year!

Thank you Team Birdcasso! for inspiring and encouraging us to do this!

~ Leena

“Birds and nature have been an immense source of joy especially in the last year”





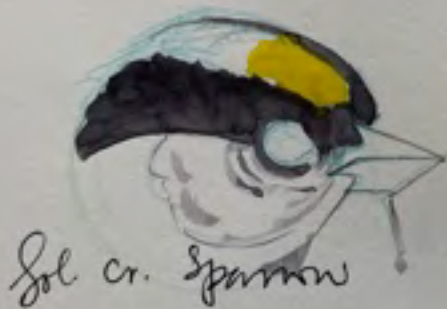
Ame.
Avocet.



Black necked
Stilt









Mourning Dove



Red winged
tailed Hawk



Cedar Waxwing



Rock
Pigeon



Red billed Grebe.



Bufflehead.



Eared Grebe



Common Goldeneye



Surf Scoter



Ruddy Duck



Am. Coot



Mallard



Lesser
Yellowlegs



Ring billed
Gull



Turkey
vulture



Canada Goose



northern
Shoveler



no. Harrier



Barn Swallow



lg. b. Diver



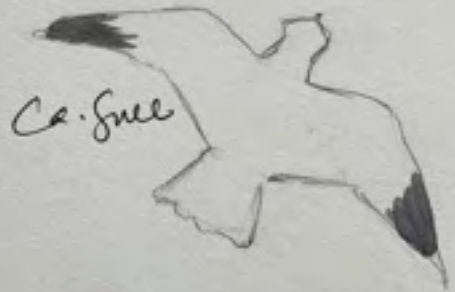
Song Sparrow

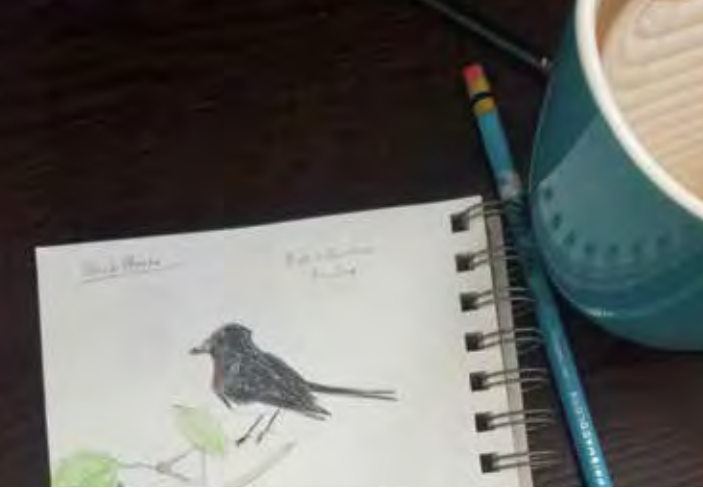


Black-cr.
Nightheron



Green winged teal





“I did my birding from my window.”

Carolyn's story

I did my birding from my window. Living in downtown San Jose, this meant I got a lot of pigeons and a Black Phoebe that treats the parking lot as its throne. But the trees outside have grown their leaves again for a flock of Bushtits to make a ruckus in at least once a day, and there's a male Anna's who has decided to make his displays at the top of the closest tree (don't ask me what species). I wish him the best, because if nothing else he keeps at it. The day ended with a fleeting glimpse of a Crow making its way down the street, but it was a great way to appreciate some of our more common birds, all through my window.

~ Carolyn





Anne's Hummingbird ♂



Bush Tit ♀



Rock Pigeon

American Crow





Anna's Hummingbird ♂



Bushtit ♀



Rock Pigeon

Rock Pigeon

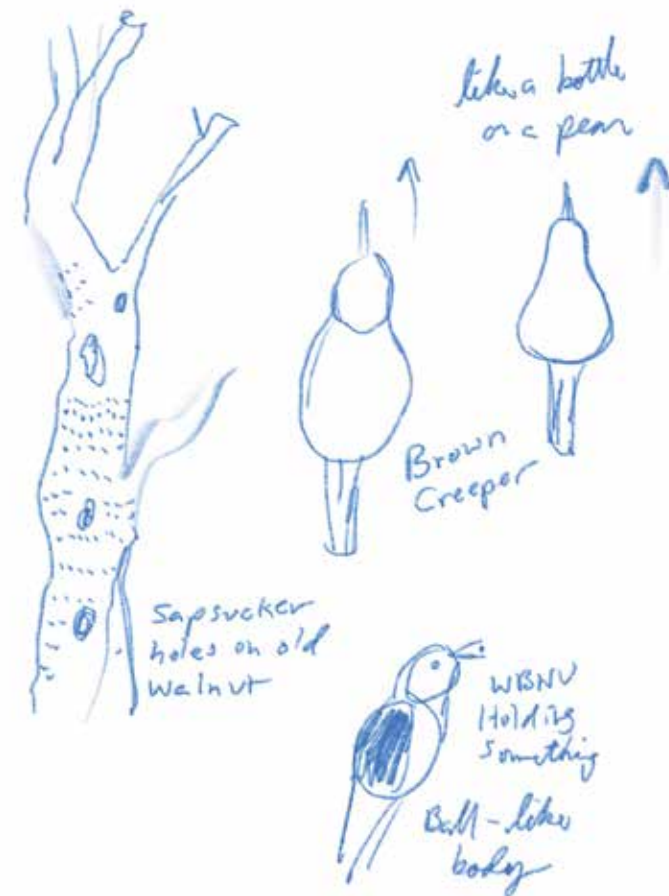


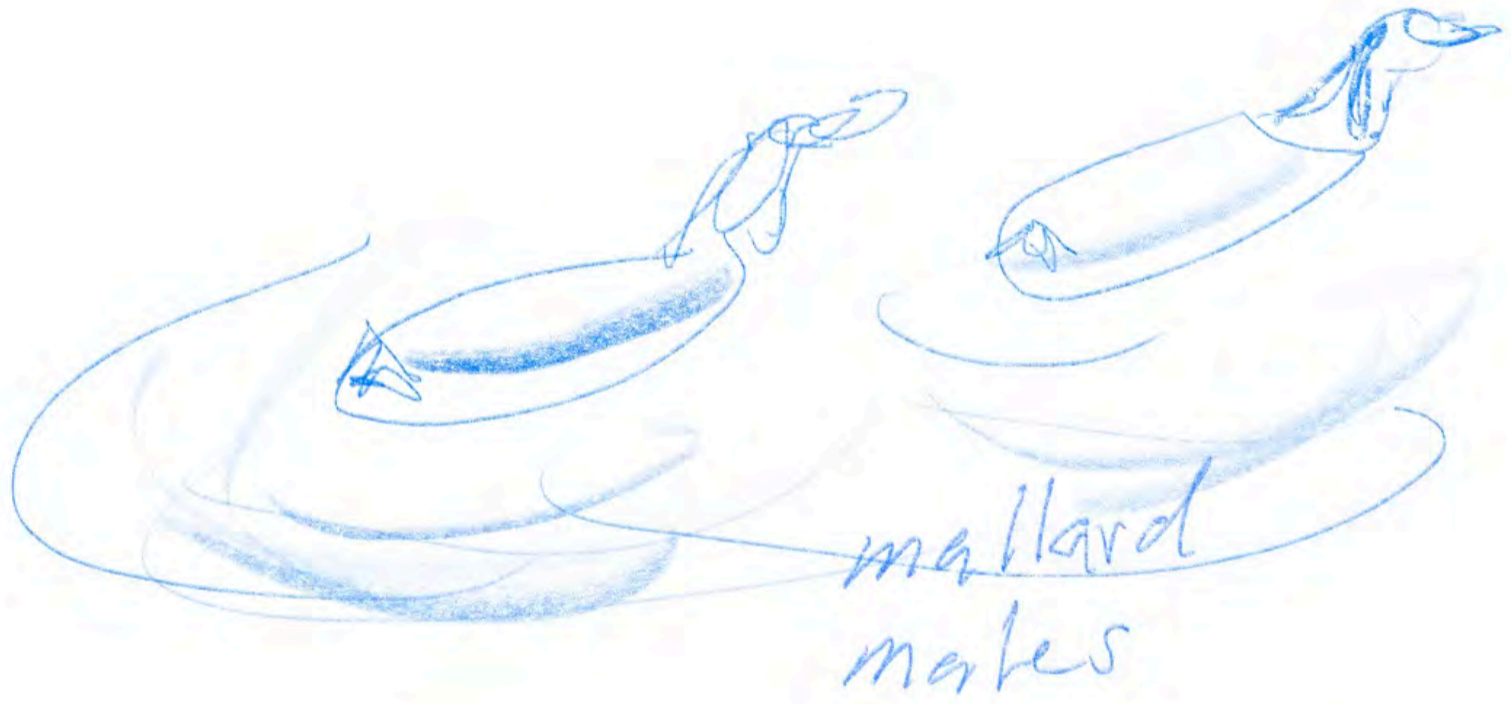
Barry's story

Today I birded the trail between Blackberry Farm and McClellan Ranch for two hours and was reminded just how hard field sketching is. It'd been a long time since the last time I tried this, and last time I was drawing flowers which pretty much just stayed in one place as I sketched them. Field sketching of birds is so different — they don't stand still and you may only get a moment in which to make sure you take in every field mark in those precious few seconds before the bird disappears. I used an iPad and Apple Pencil and the technology worked most of the time. I was much more frustrated at the birds than I was at the electronics anyway :-). Even the birds that didn't instantly flee, like a male Mallard on Stevens Creek, still presented me with challenges by changing positions every time I glanced away and back again. I did my best to get the sense of each bird I sketched. I still have so much to learn.

~ Barry

“Birds don't stand still and you may only get a moment to make sure you take in the field marks before they disappear.”





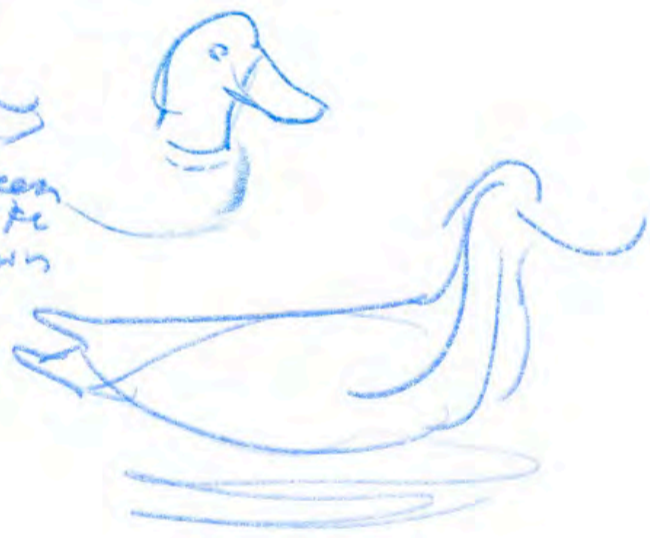
mallard
markes

2:30pm
4/7/21





Green
White
Brown



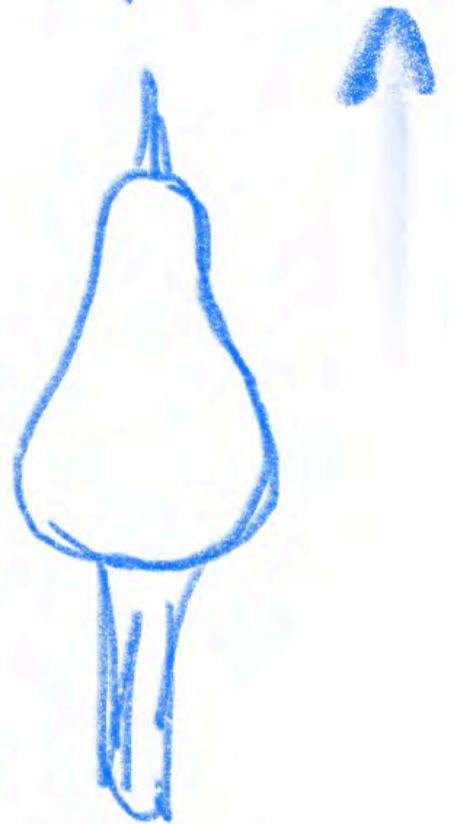


Sapsucker
holes on old
Walnut

like a bottle
or a pear

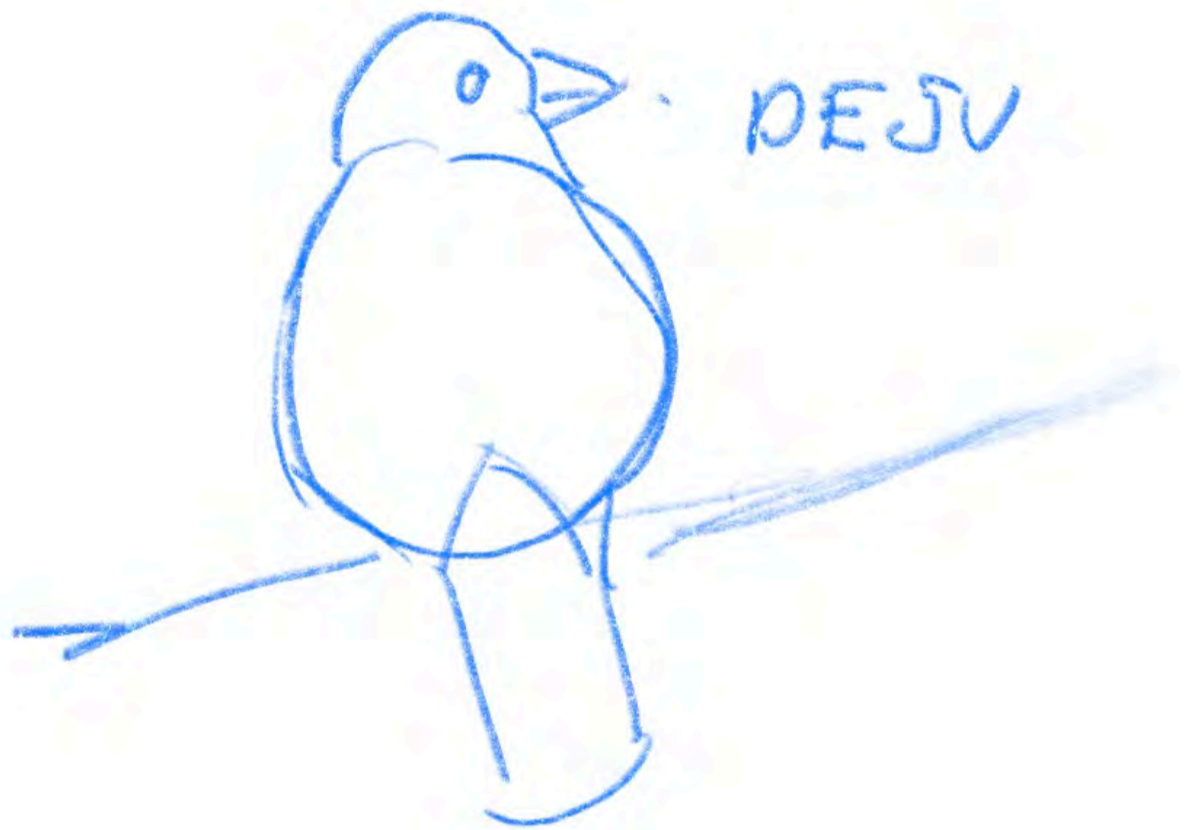
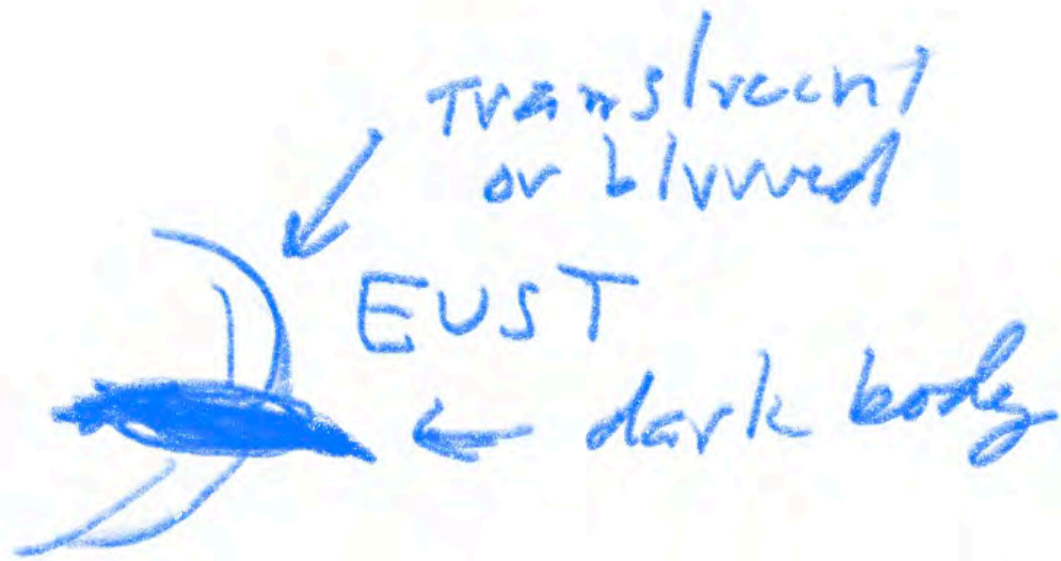


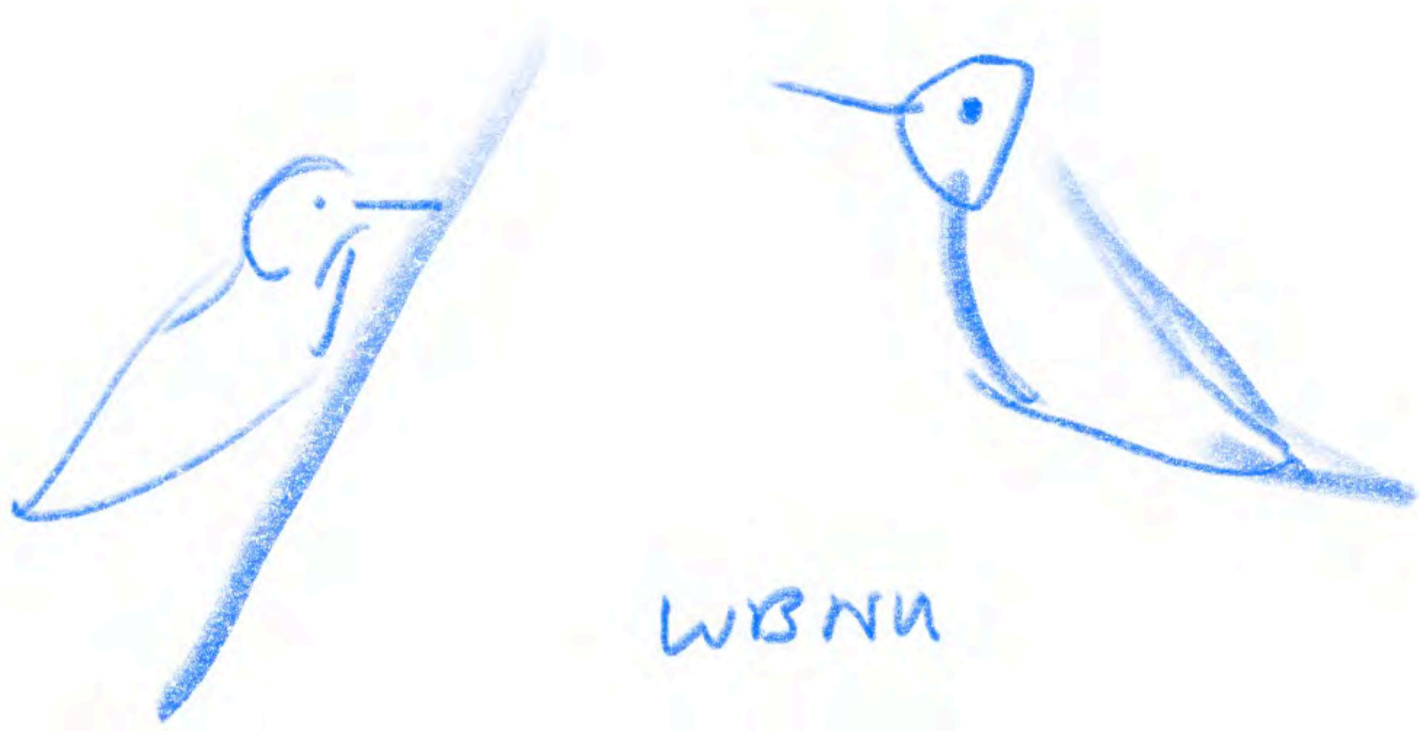
Brown
Creeper



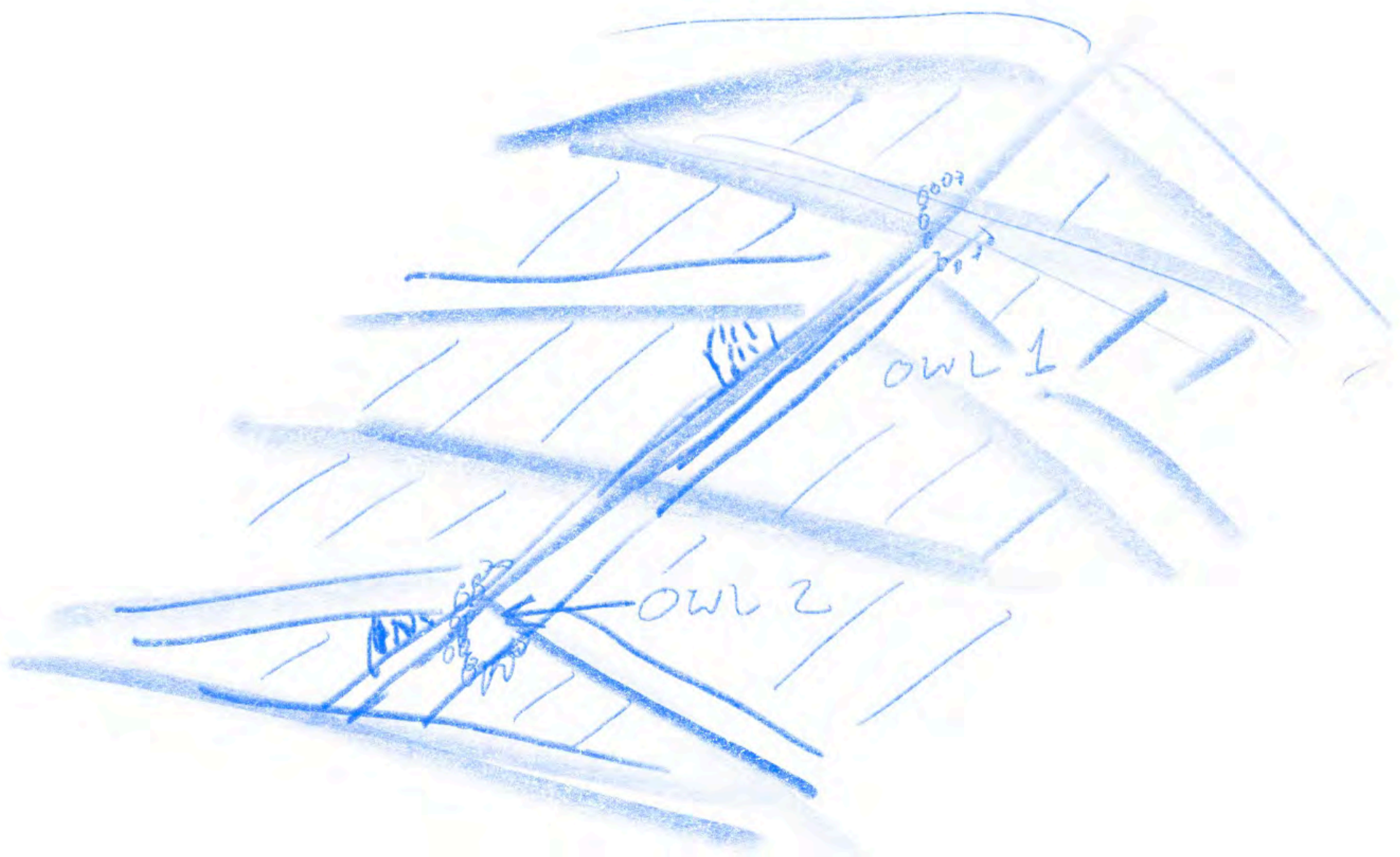
WBNU
Holding
Something

Ball-like
body





WBNU



owl 1

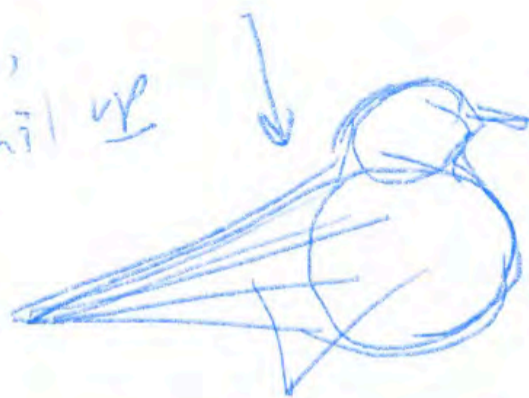
owl 2

WESO

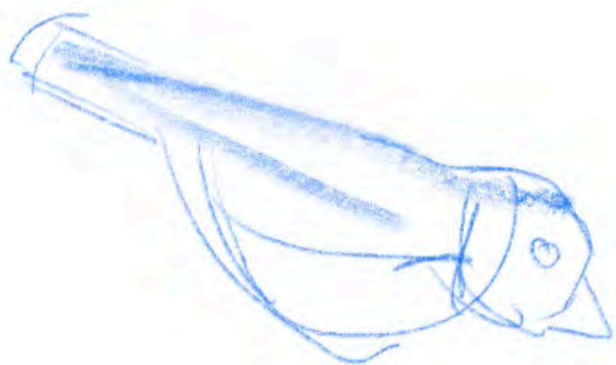


wings down,
Flicks Tail up
BURPH

wings down



BURPH



DESV

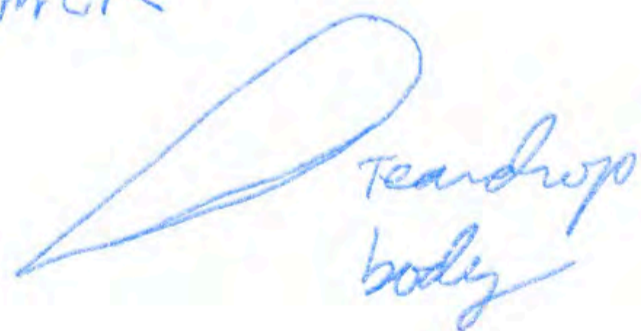
pale



U-shaped



AMCR

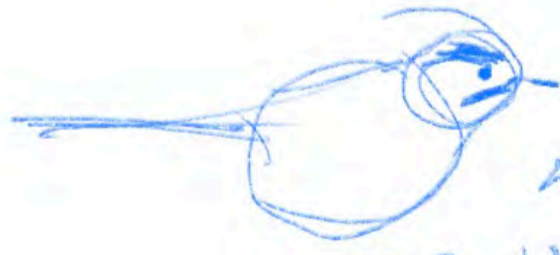


teardrop body

crow on
treetop



Bold Face Patterns
more delicate than DEJV
CBCH



Hummingbird
& cottonwood
fluff
Blurred
wings look
like two pairs



all stripes
& spots



Song
Sparrow

vatty-looking



HETH

4:23 pm
4/7/21



Acorn
woodpecker

4:30pm



“It was a challenge,
but fun to see how quickly
I could sketch!”

Audry's story



My initial plan was to draw at Don Edwards in the late afternoon. On the day we were all drawing, something came up, so I went to Vasona instead. I spent 1.5 hours closer to the north end of Vasona lake before leaving to take care of an appointment. Then I returned to the southern end of Vasona and was able to draw another 1.5 hours before heading home. When I go out to draw I usually use watercolors. Instead I decided to bring my iPad because it was more portable and less susceptible to wind. I'd never done live drawing digitally before! I use Procreate to do all my drawings and used the Studio Pen for the linear and the Watercolor brush for color. I drew close to every bird I saw. I heard several more, but couldn't see them to observe them for a drawing. Any mistakes in the bird markings are due to my personal challenge of trying to draw the birds from memory rather than refer to a photograph if they disappeared before I'd finished. It was a challenge, but fun to see how quickly I could sketch!

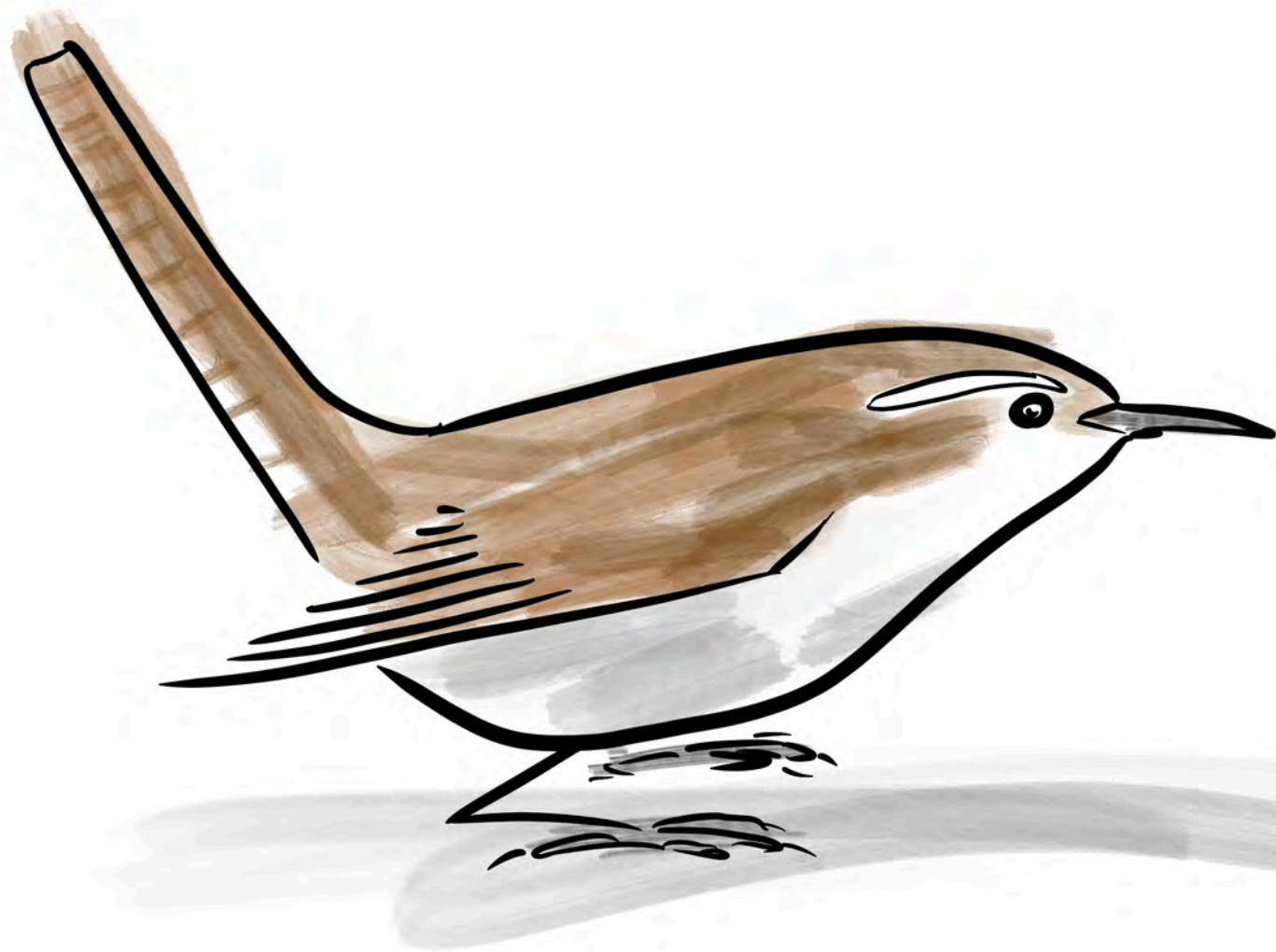
~ Audry



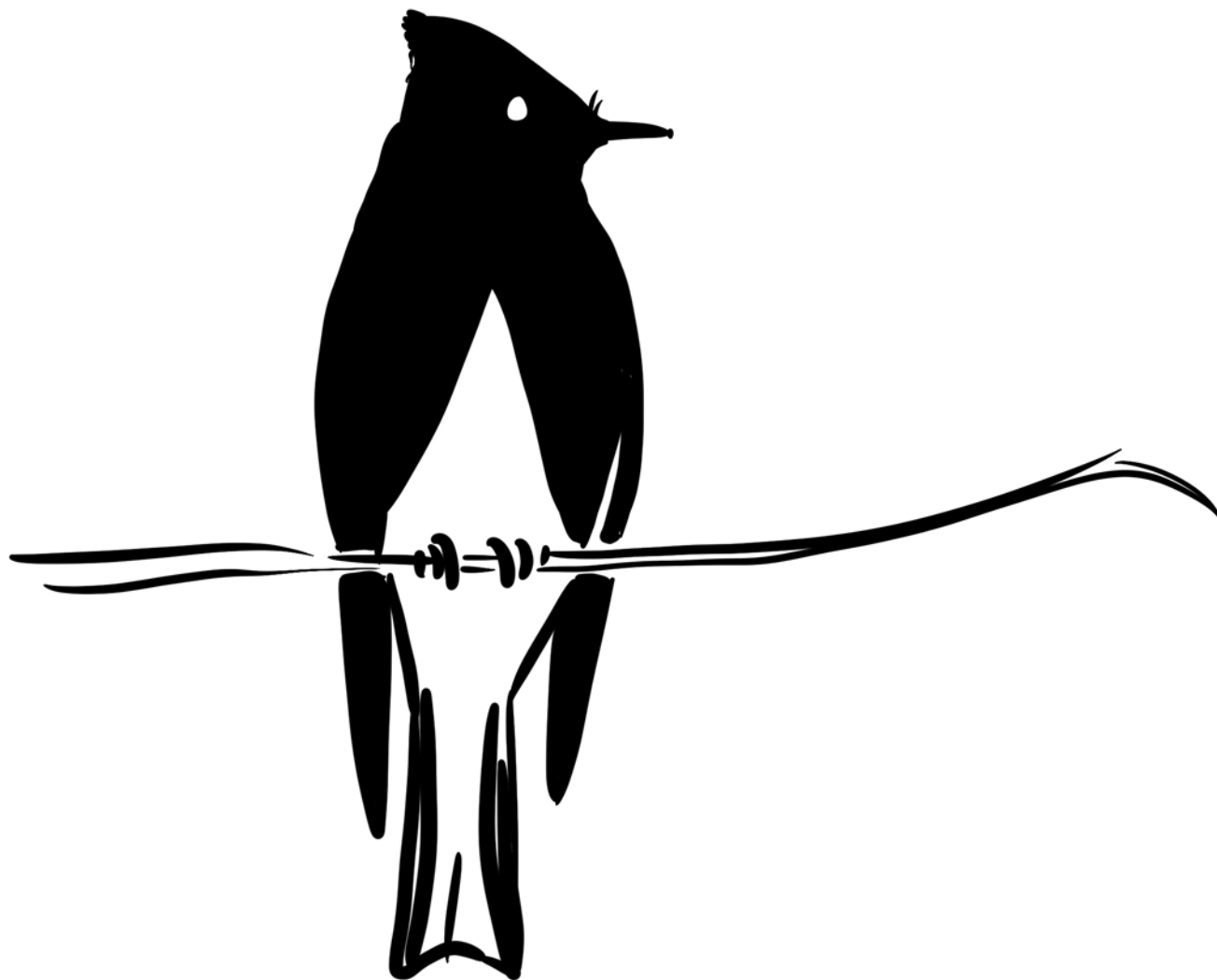




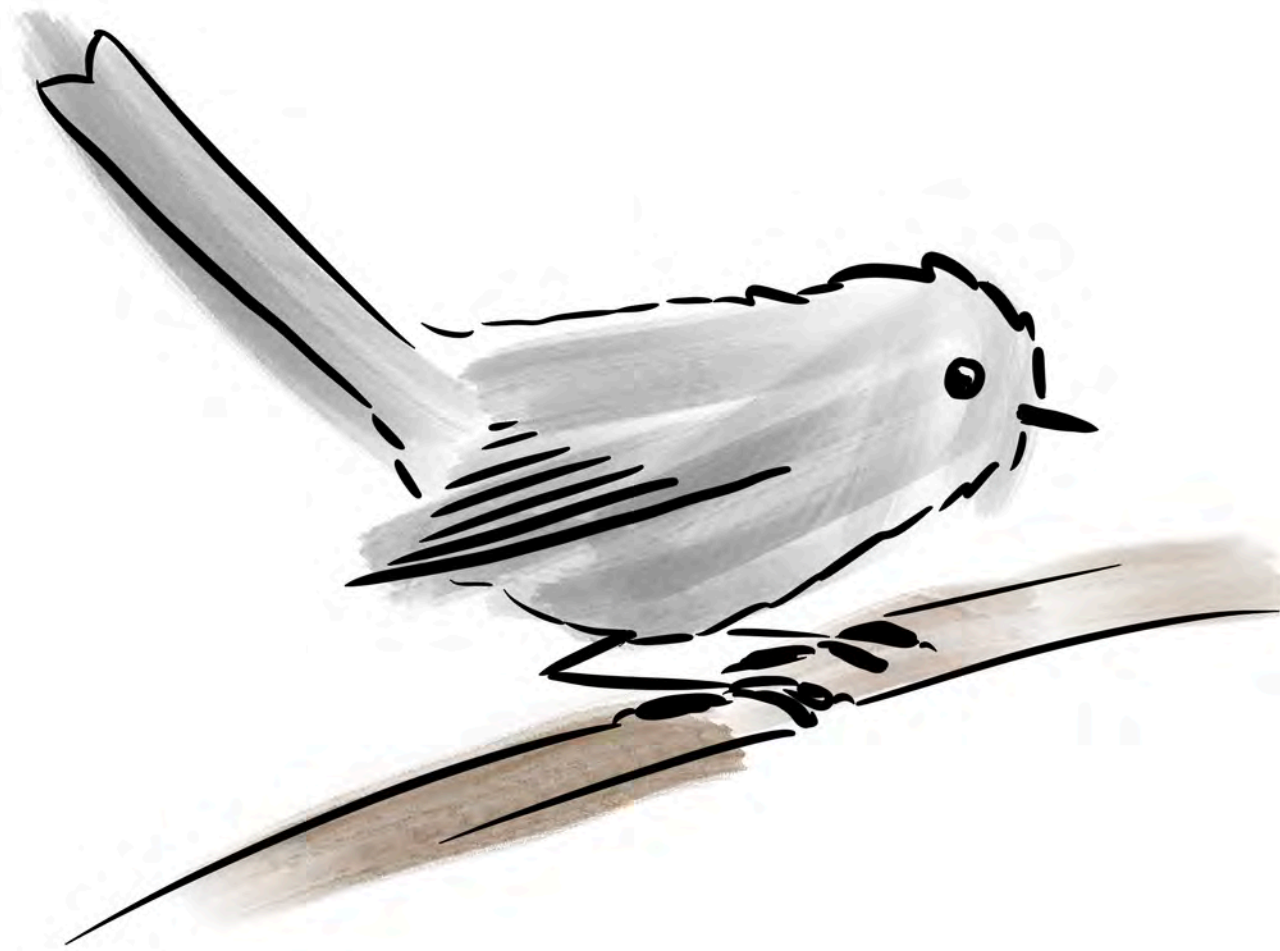






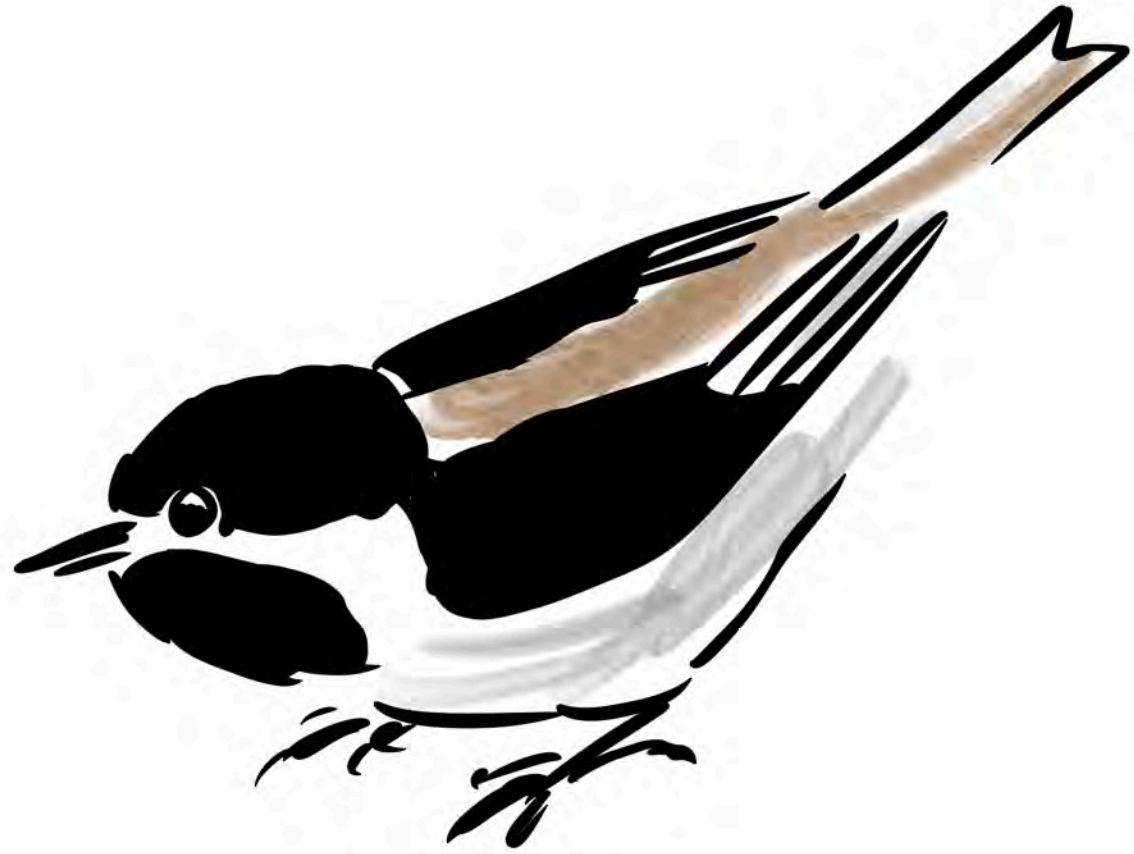


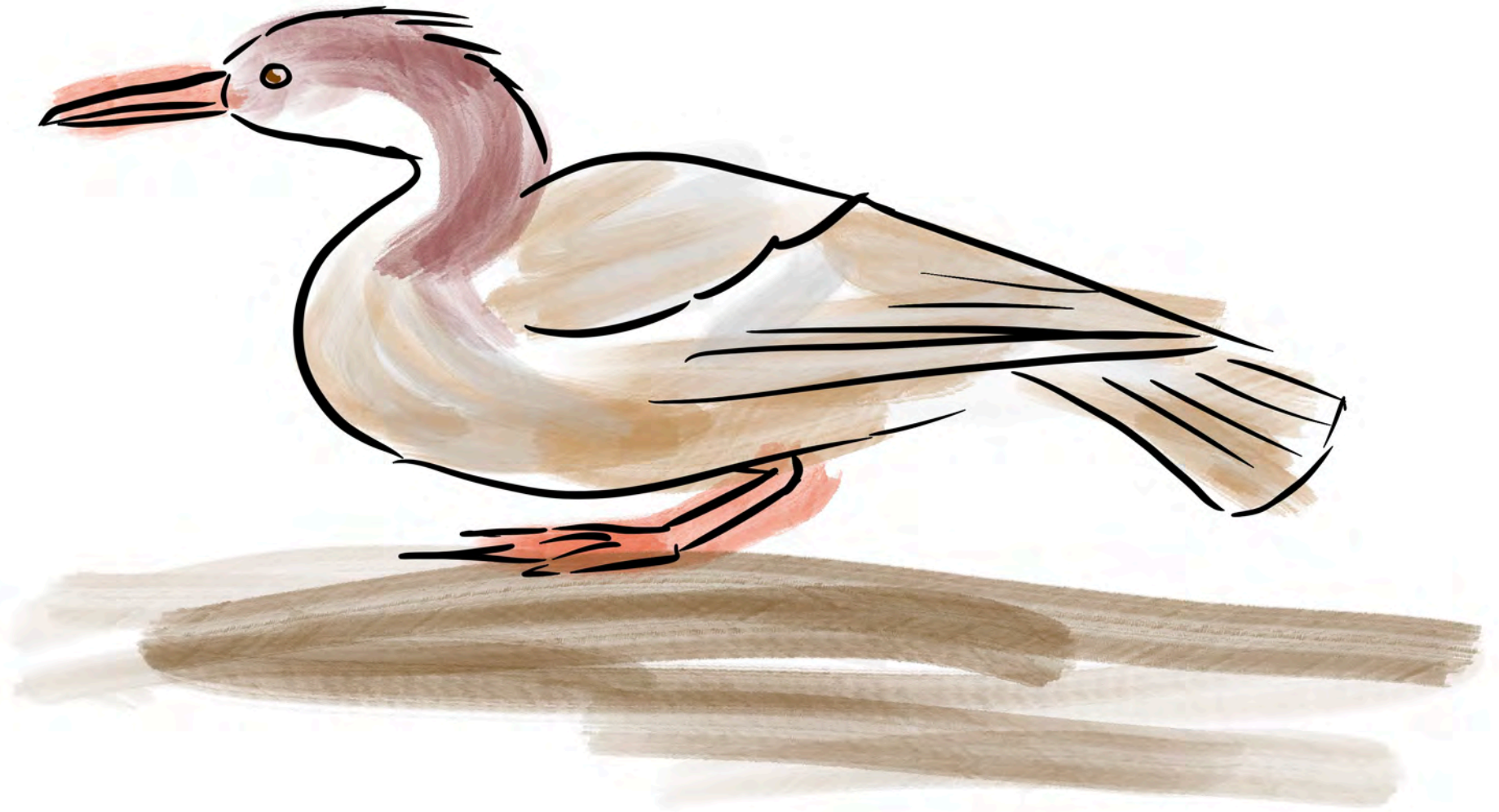


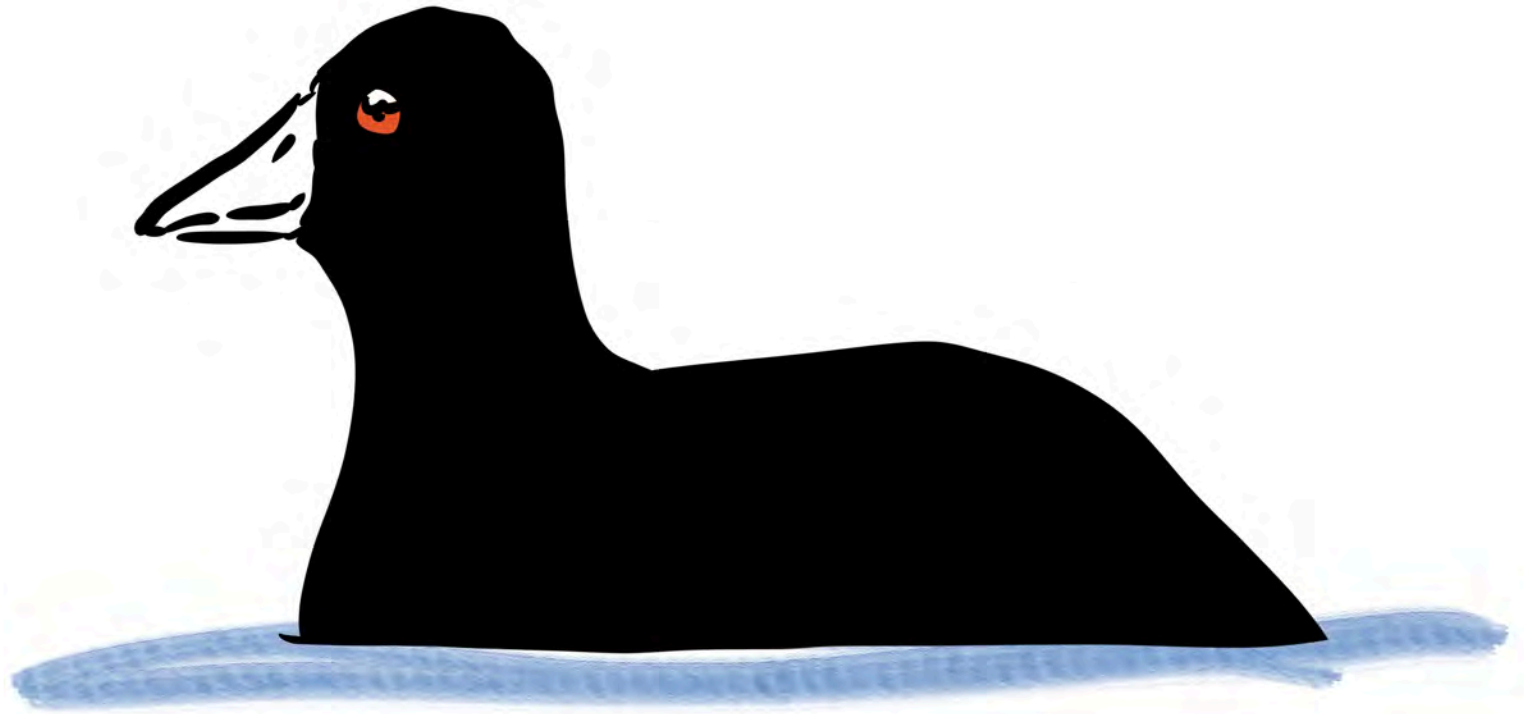


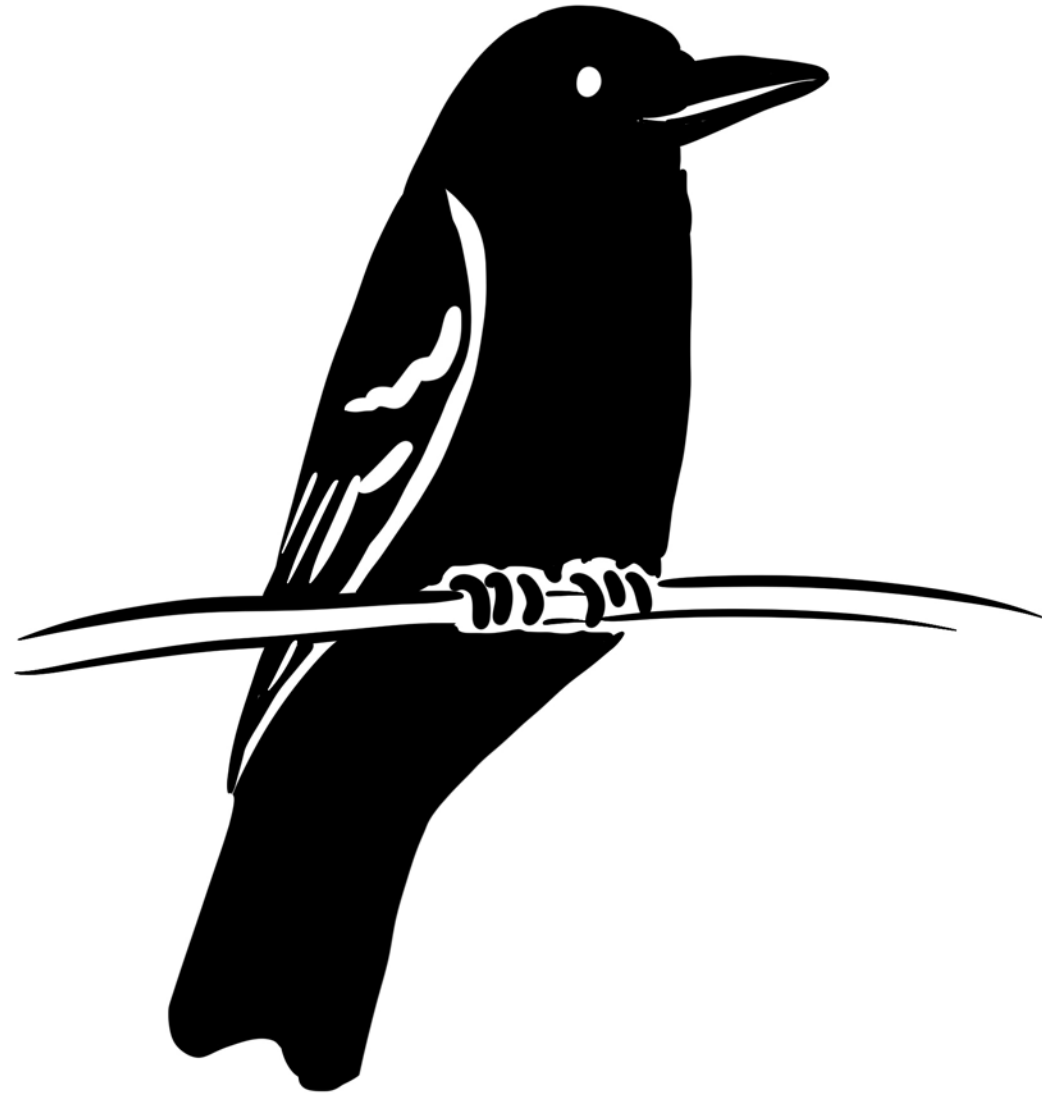




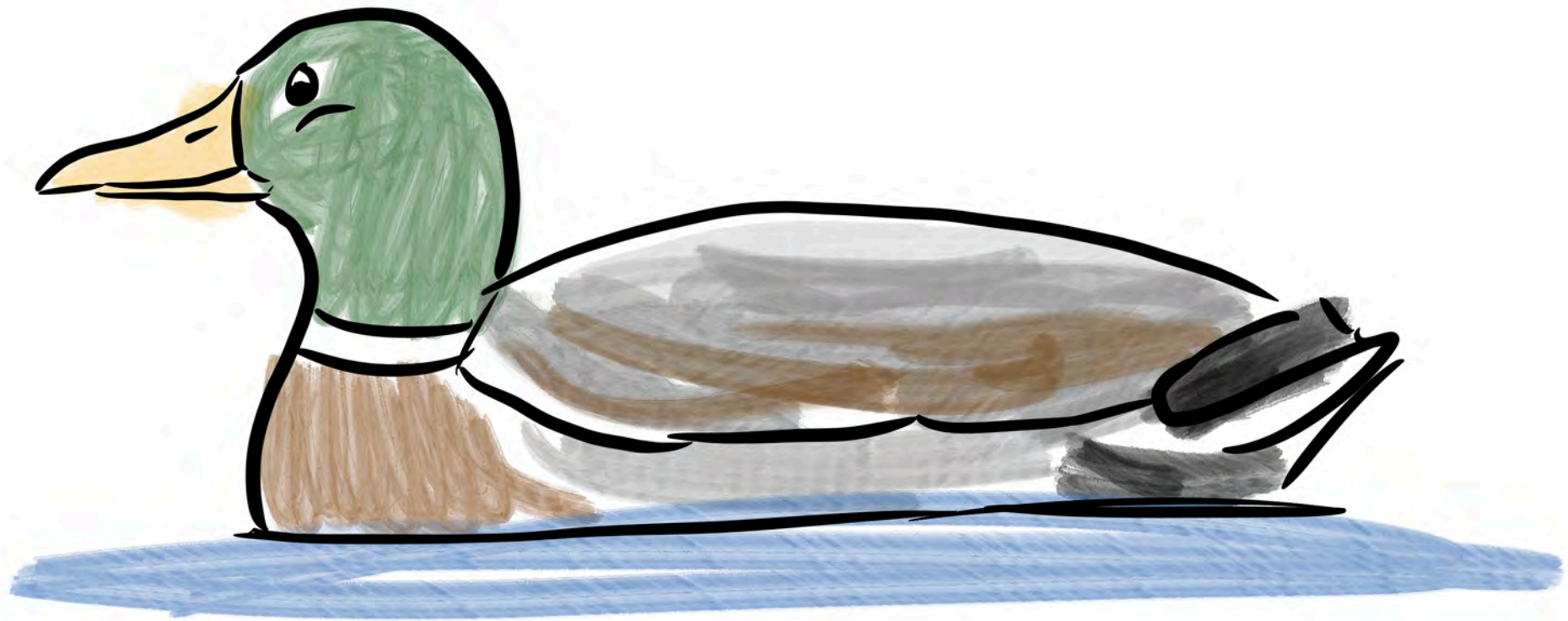


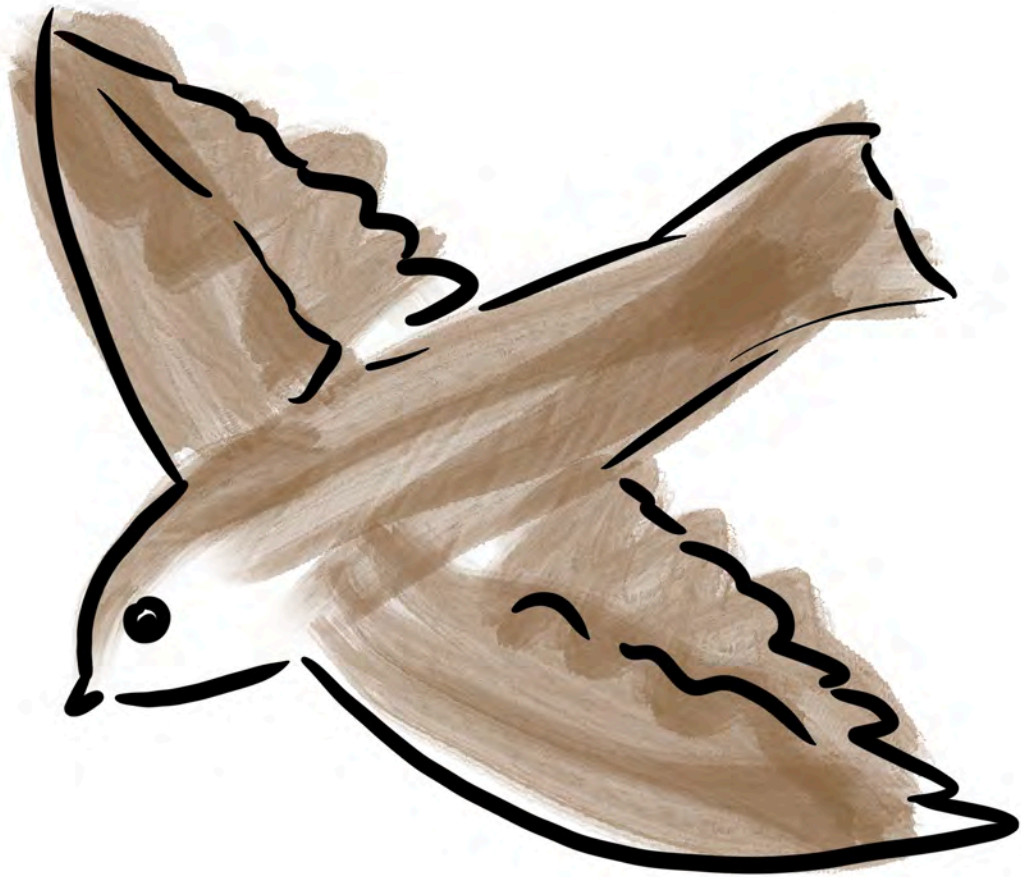












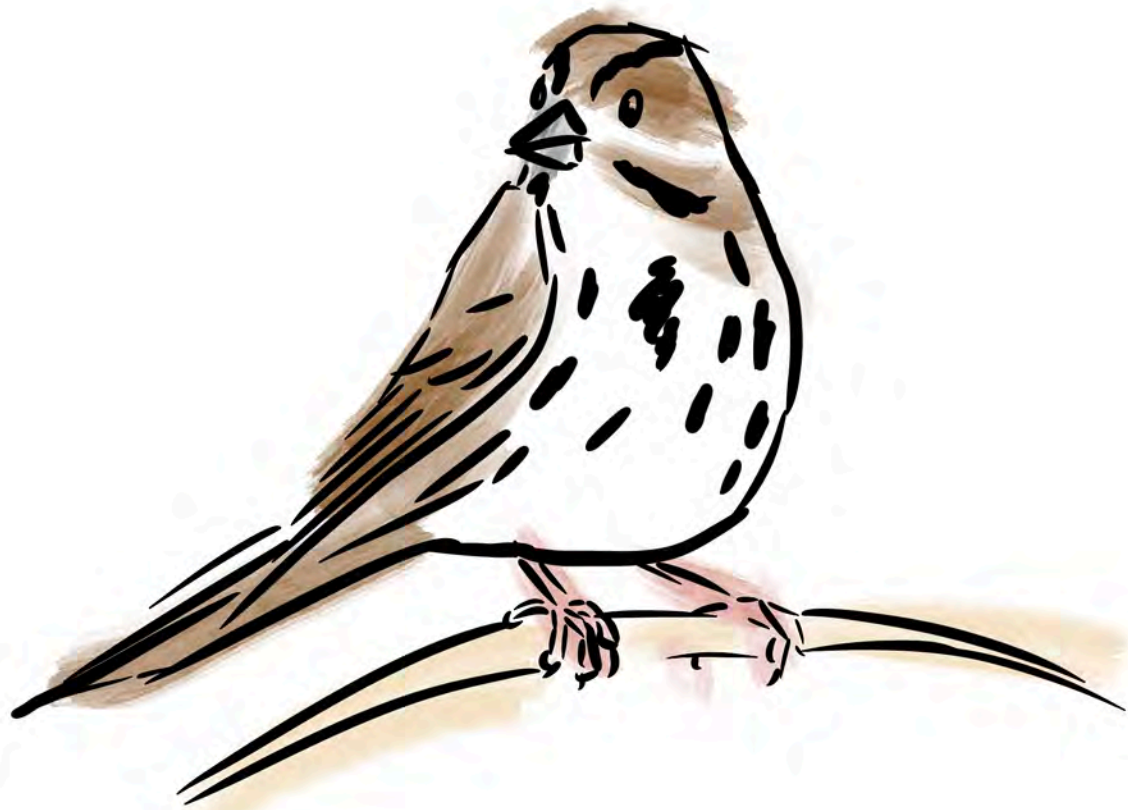


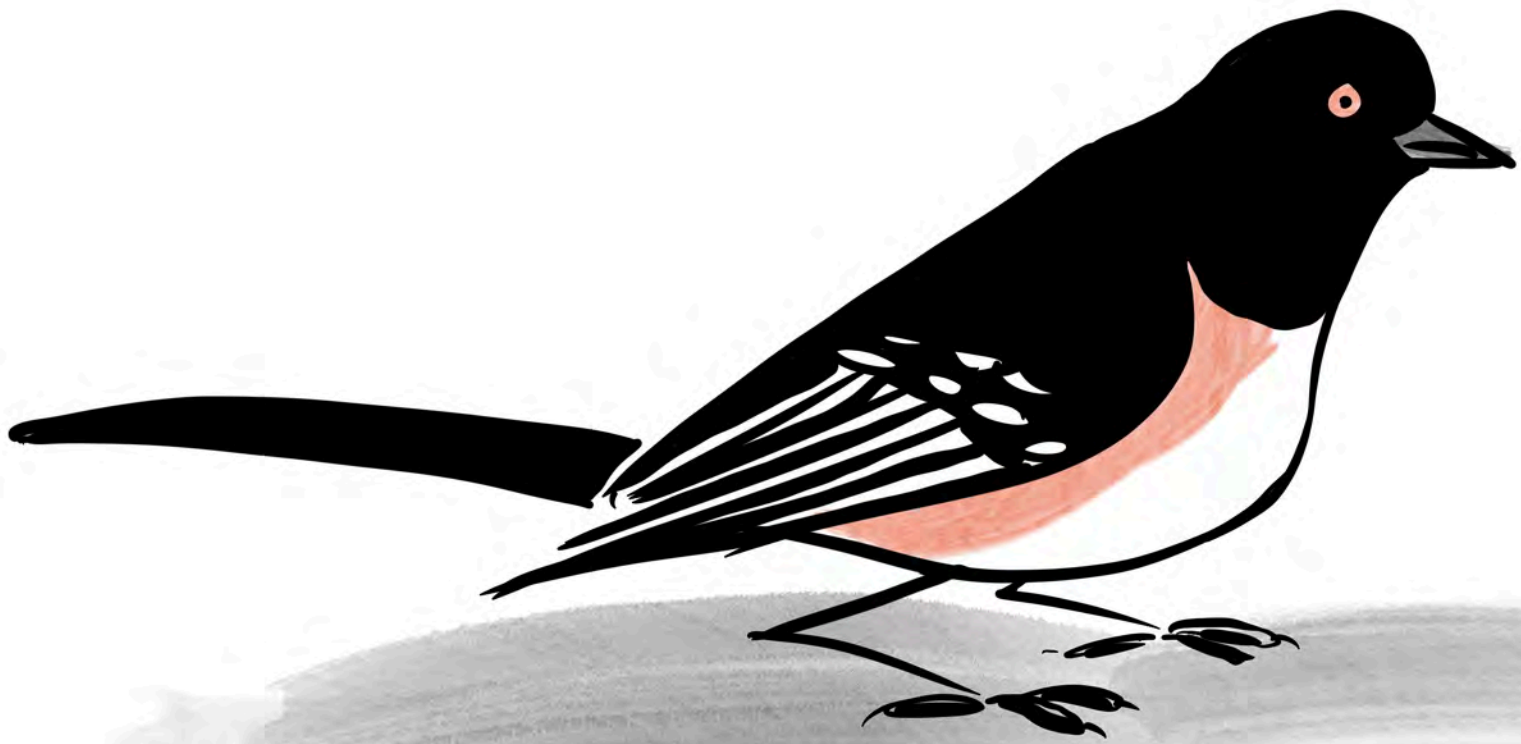
















Shweta's story

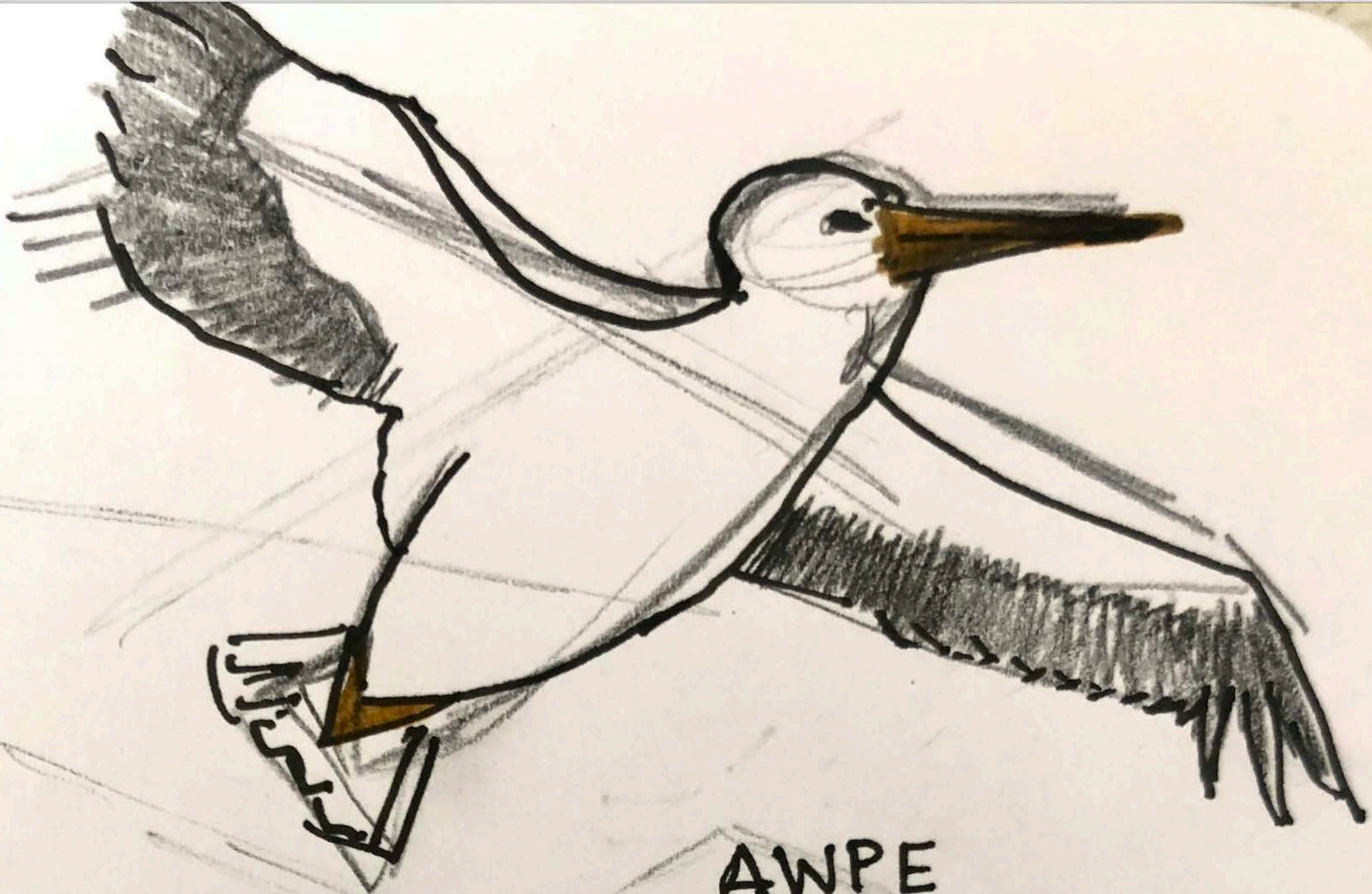
Armed with my sketchbook, colored pencils, watercolor pens, binoculars, camera, and water bottle, I headed to my first spot—Mountain View Shoreline Lake. The highlight of the morning was all the Eared Grebes in breeding plumage with their bright red eyes and golden feathers behind the eyes.

Through sketching, I felt like I paid more attention to certain features that I had overlooked before—like the white stripe above the eye of a Common Yellowthroat or the yellow base of the black bill of a Snowy Egret. While I have drawn at leisure before, this Birdcasso Birdathon was such a great way of observing birds keenly, capturing the finer details and learning much more in the process. Look forward to participating again next year.

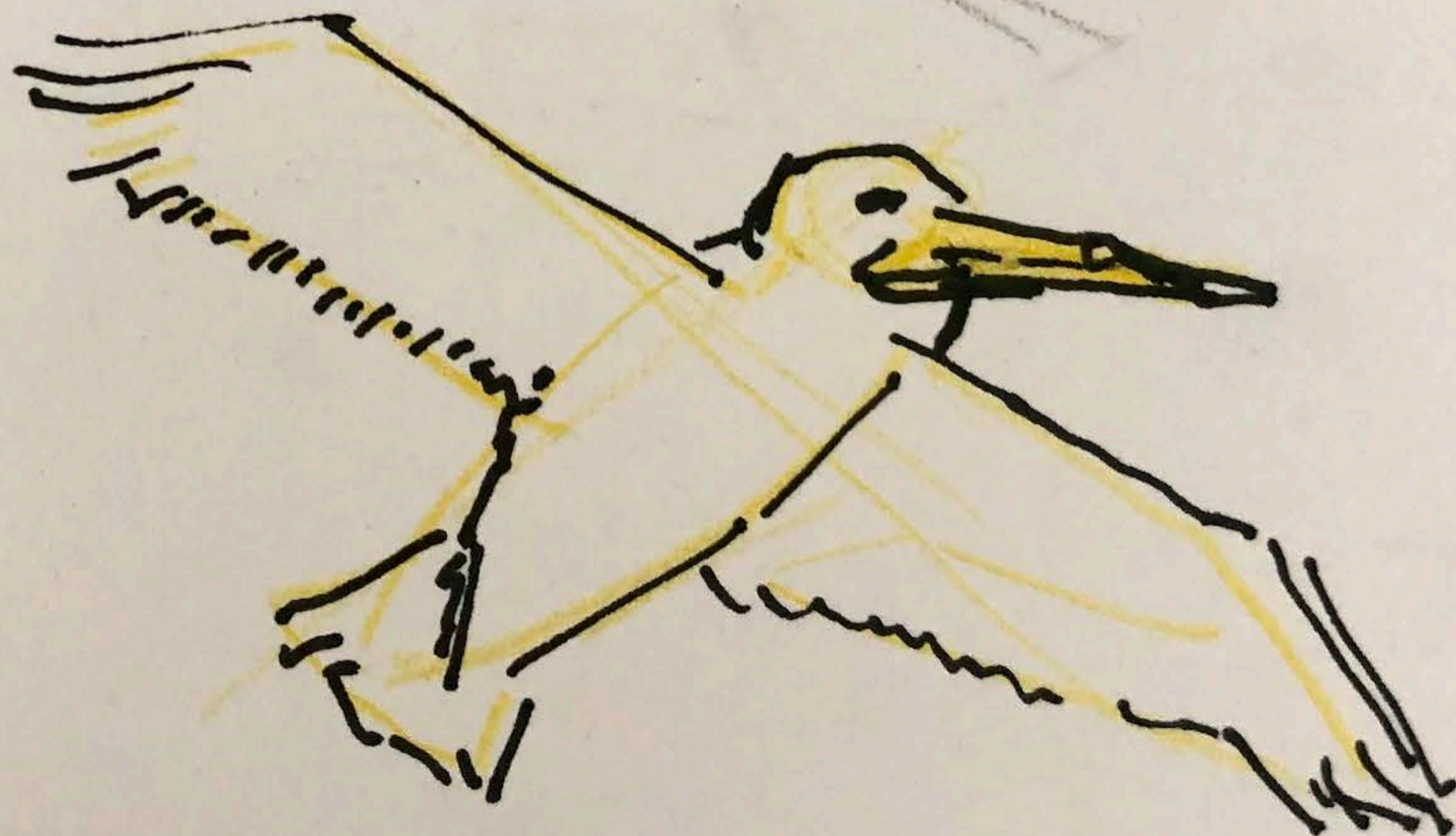
~ Shweta

“Birdcasso was such a great way of observing birds keenly.”





AWPE





SNEG

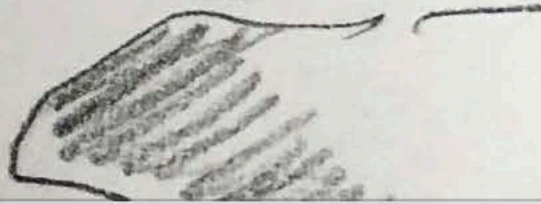
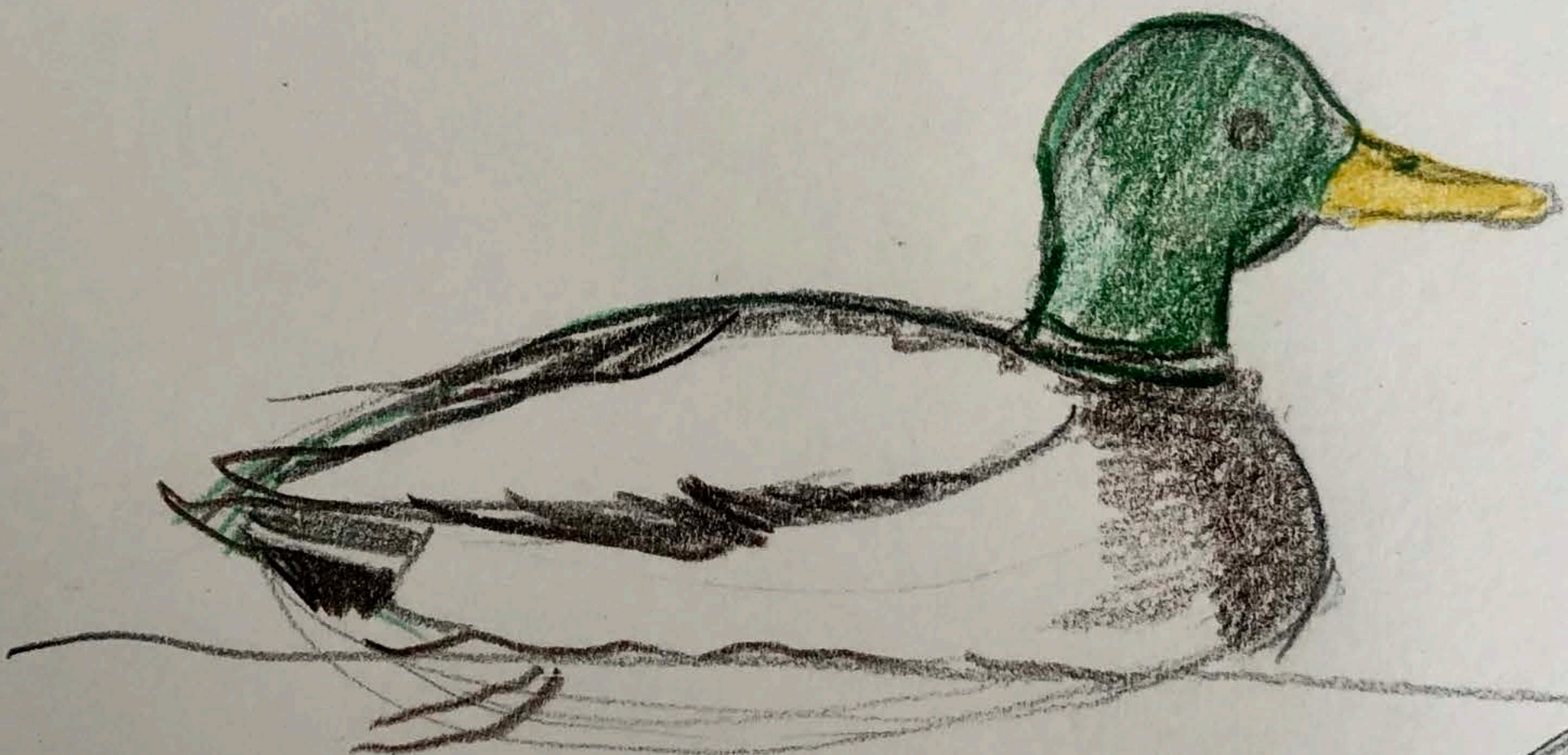




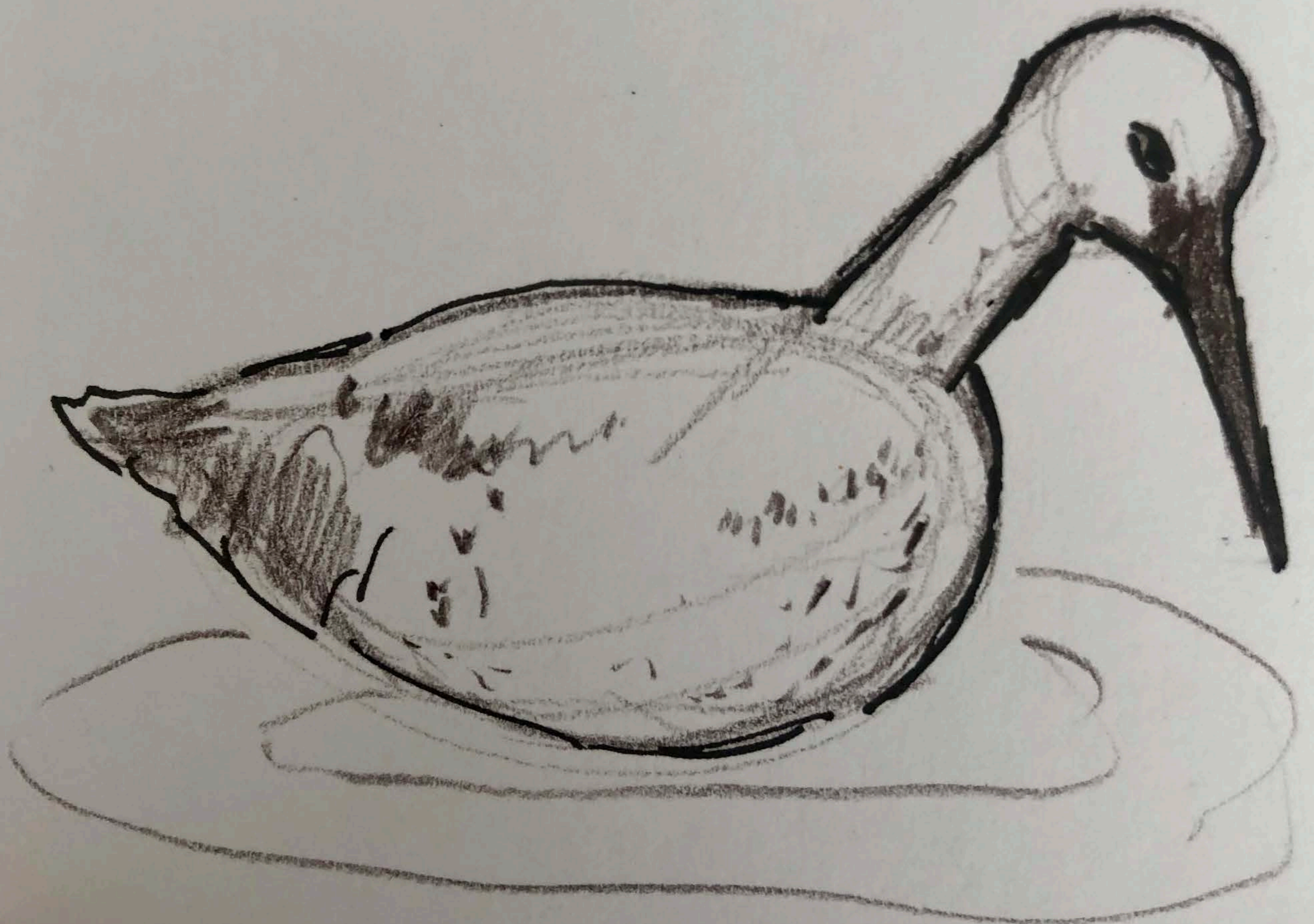
BCNH



COYE

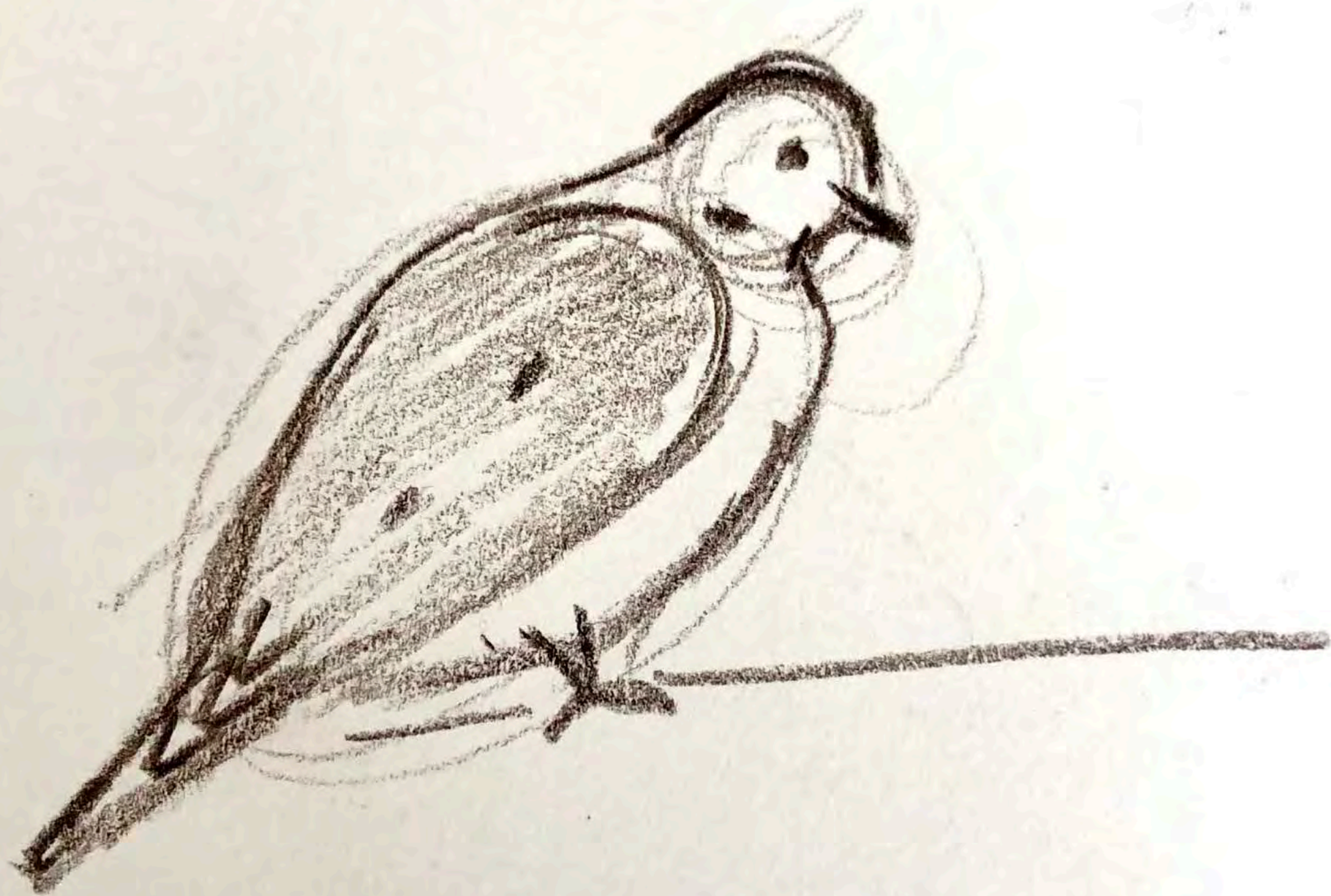














“Keeping a nature journal sparks curiosity and sharpens appreciation.”

Cristina's story

I stopped at the deck near Adobe Creek, and noticed someone there with a sketch pad and box of art supplies. I had wondered if I might meet another member of the Birdcassos at some point. It turned out to be Matthew! It was good to meet him, especially after he shared a few of his sketches. They were great, big and loose and quick. I was inspired to get over my obsess-y need for detail, useless in the field anyway, and went off to the lake to give big and loose a whirl. I was much happier with the results, and managed to bang out some satisfactory sketches without the Inner Critic yammering at me.

The thing about sketching nature and keeping a nature journal is that it really helps you observe and focus in ways that you don't normally, right? It helps you learn more about what you're observing, it sparks curiosity and sharpens appreciation. And it's kept me sane and engaged during this tough, crazy year. It was really good to join the Birdcassos, take up the challenge, and have fun with it. Onward and upward with ducks and art!

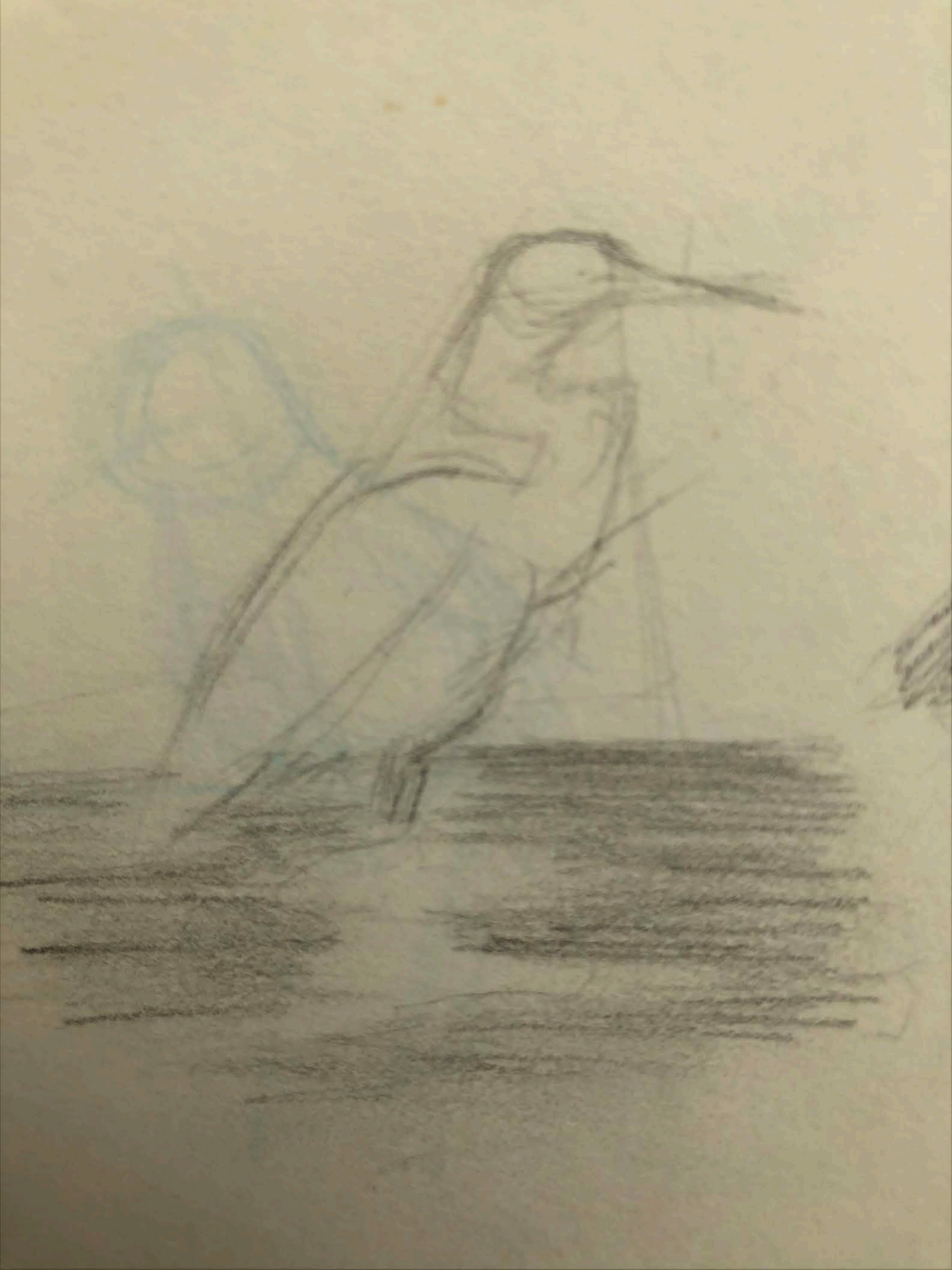
~ **Cristina**





JUNCOS







CASPIAN
TERNs



♀

SURF SCOTER

♂

♀



BLACK NECKED STILT



MOURNING DOVE NESTING ON TOP OF LADDER



WILLETS



YELLOW
LEGS

-DON'T
WALK
AWAY!

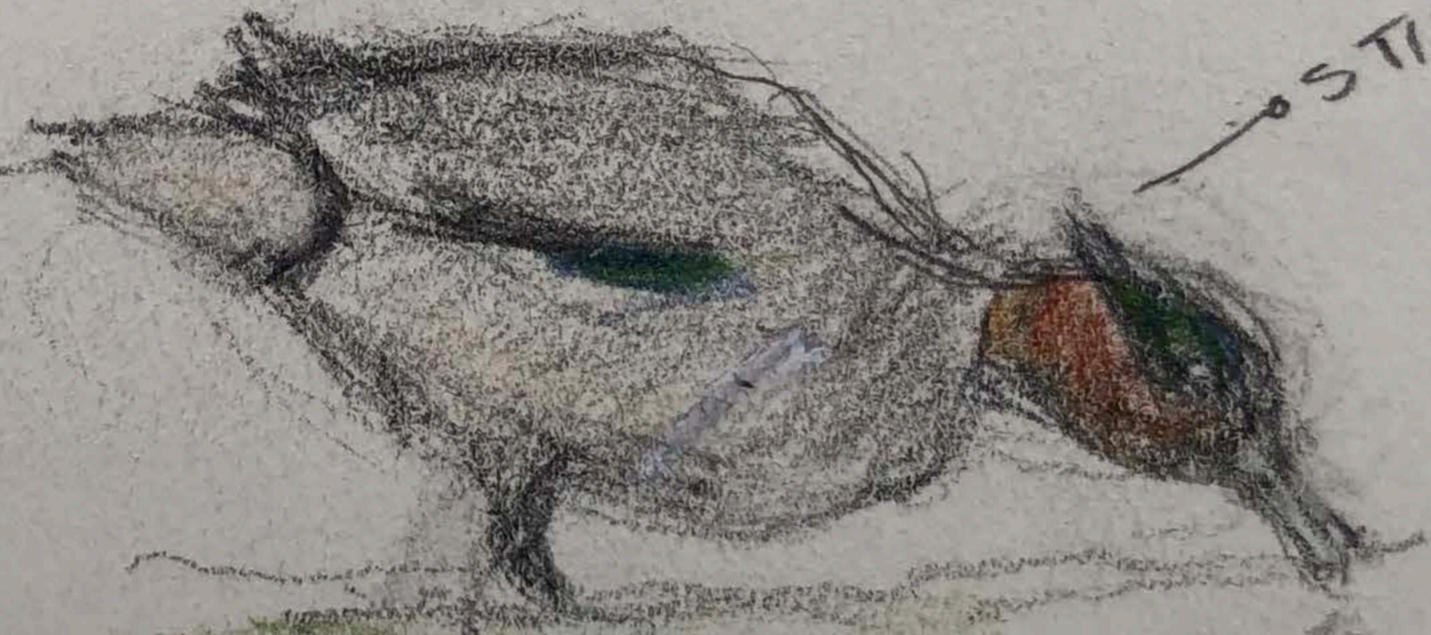
LOW IN
THE
WATER
SKIMMING
AHEAD



GREEN
WINGED
TEAL



WHITE



STICKS
UP
WHEN
BENDS
DOWN
OH, WAIT
OPTICAL
ILLUSION

SONG
SPARROW



RUNNING
FEET



EARED
GREBE





“Sitting in one place proved a good way to see comings and goings of different individuals and groups of birds.”

Mary's story

I decided to go to Ed Levin after checking with Matthew about which areas were already covered and which kinds of species might be missing and because Ed Levin is so beautiful while the grass is green. I was able to draw for 90 minutes and sitting still in one place proved a good way to see comings and goings of different individuals and groups of birds. I chose three different drawing locations with different habitats so I would encounter different birds. I very much enjoyed the chance to focus on the birds, the wind, and the plants of Ed Levin for our Birdcassos outing.

~ Mary



BIRDCASSOS
SPRING BIRDATHON
APRIL 7, 2021

BIRDS OF ED LEVIN



Can you find the
Common Grackle?
Me, neither! Wait



Golden -
crowned
sparrow.
under oleander



Lesser Goldfinch
in redwood

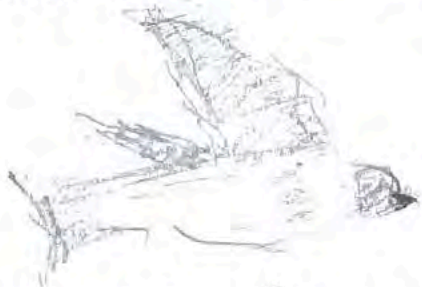


5 Common
ravens
over the
glider launch



TURKEY VULTURE and shadow
along the hillside

low over the lake,



NORTHERN ROUGH-WING SWALLOW



15 RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS claim a bare tree by the lake

TUFTED TITMOUSE in a redwood



WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW



is suspicious of me



light shines through band at end of BARN SWALLOW tail.



Glossy electric blue TREE SWALLOW over the lake



AMERICAN COOT

attack posture



CALIFORNIA TOWHEE

hop-scratching near the
bunch grass ...
with plastic easter eggs

Floy's story

This morning Dave and I birded Stevens Creek County Park for an hour and a half. I did not have high expectations for seeing much because the day before was pretty quiet along Stevens Creek. But what a surprise - we recorded 25 species! What particularly thrilled me was finding so many warblers and vireos which I concentrated on for this sketch. I tried to portray them actively foraging in the oak trees.

~ Floy

“There were so many
Warblers and Vireos!”



April 7th 2021 9-10:30 am
Stevens Creek County Park

Villamaria • Chestnut Picnic Areas -

Banner Day for warblers
and vireos



Wilson's
warbler



orange-crowned
warbler



warbling
vireo



Hutton's
vireo

yellow-
rumped
warbler



Townsend's
warbler



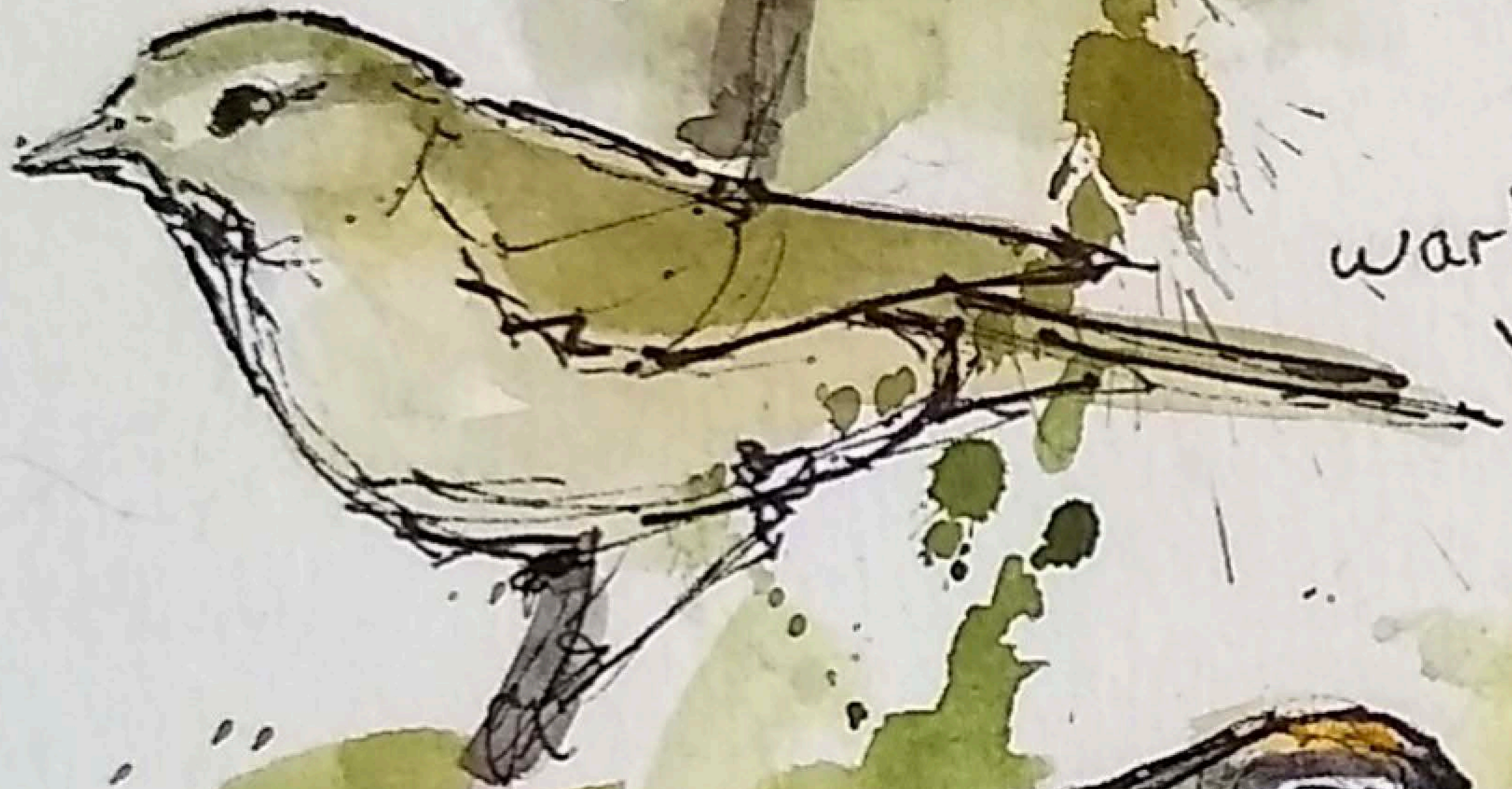
wilson's
warbler



orange-crowned
warbler



Hutton's
VIREO

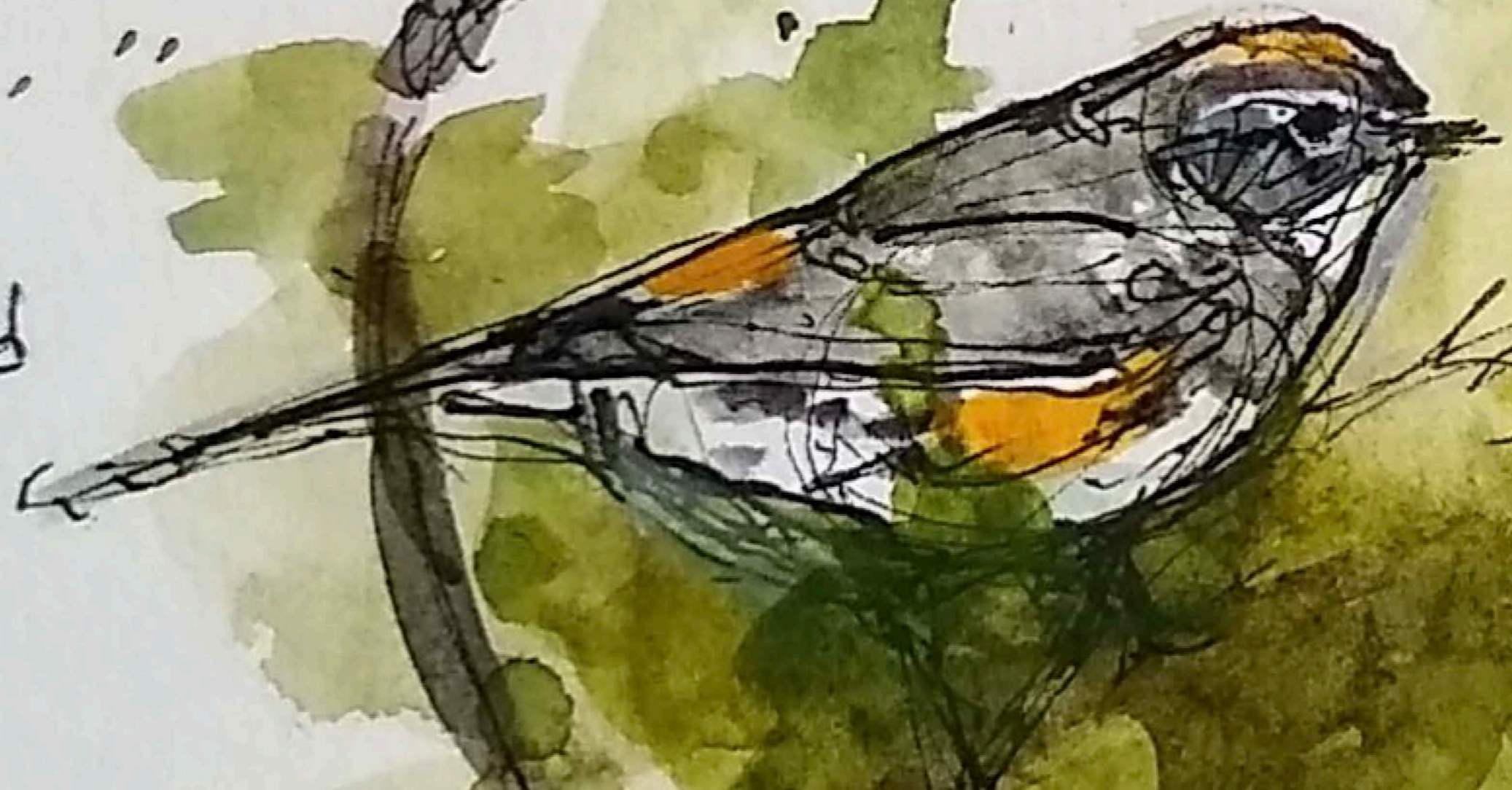


warbling
VIREO





warbling
VIREO



yellow-
rumped
warbler



Townsend's
warbler



Kids' join the fun...

SCVAS member MaryAnn Allan invited the children in her neighborhood to send her their bird drawings for the birdathon. Enthusiastic artists submitted six drawings and earned \$25 in pledges. Great job everyone!

Parents comments:

“Thank you for the awesome project!”

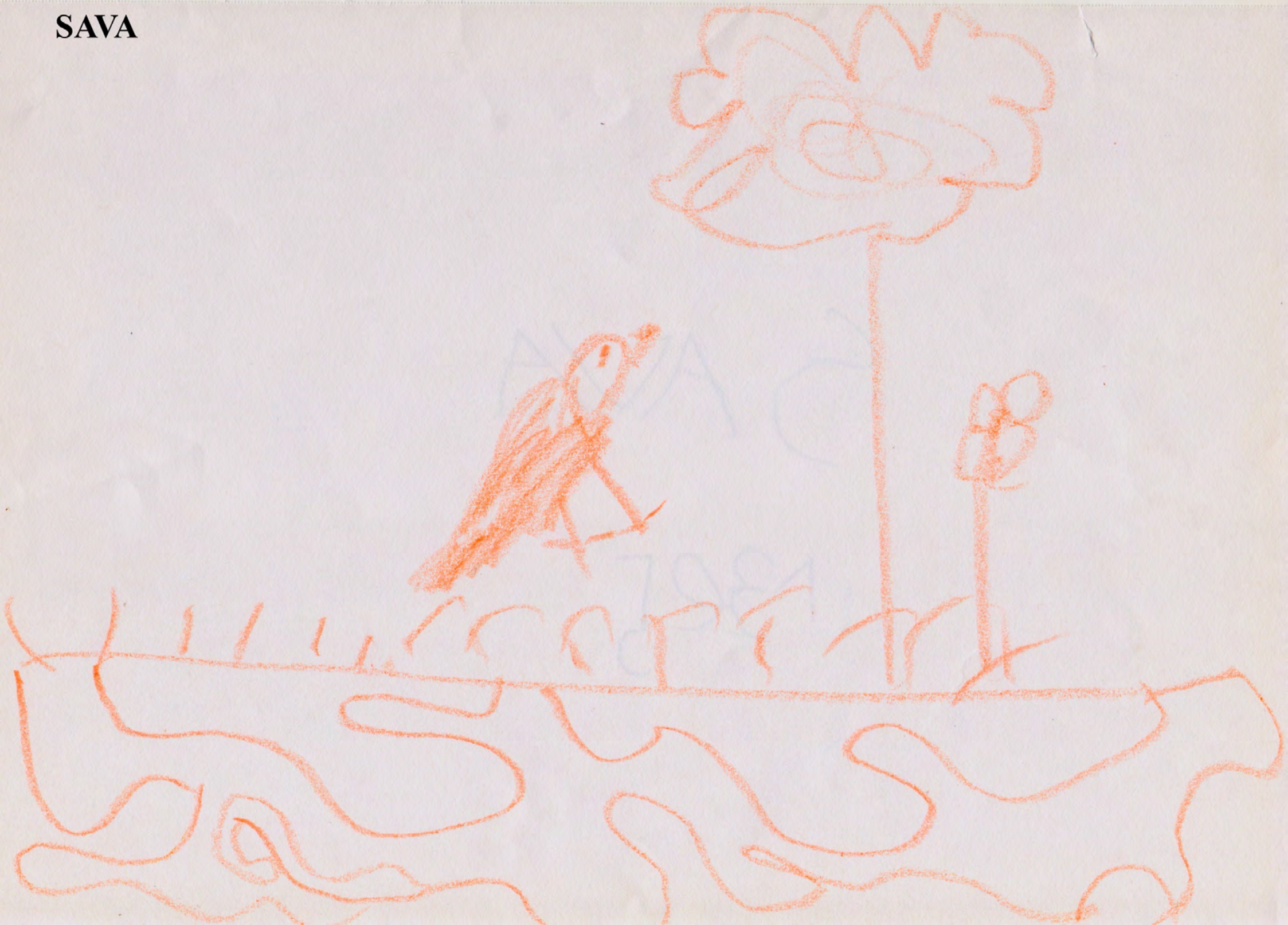
“We have a 6.5 year old who adores birds. Most animals but especially birdies.”

“My daughter drew a hummingbird that made its nest outside her art room windows.”

“They loved doing it!”



SAVA



Ellis
6 years
old



Ellie 6 years old



ANNA'S

humming

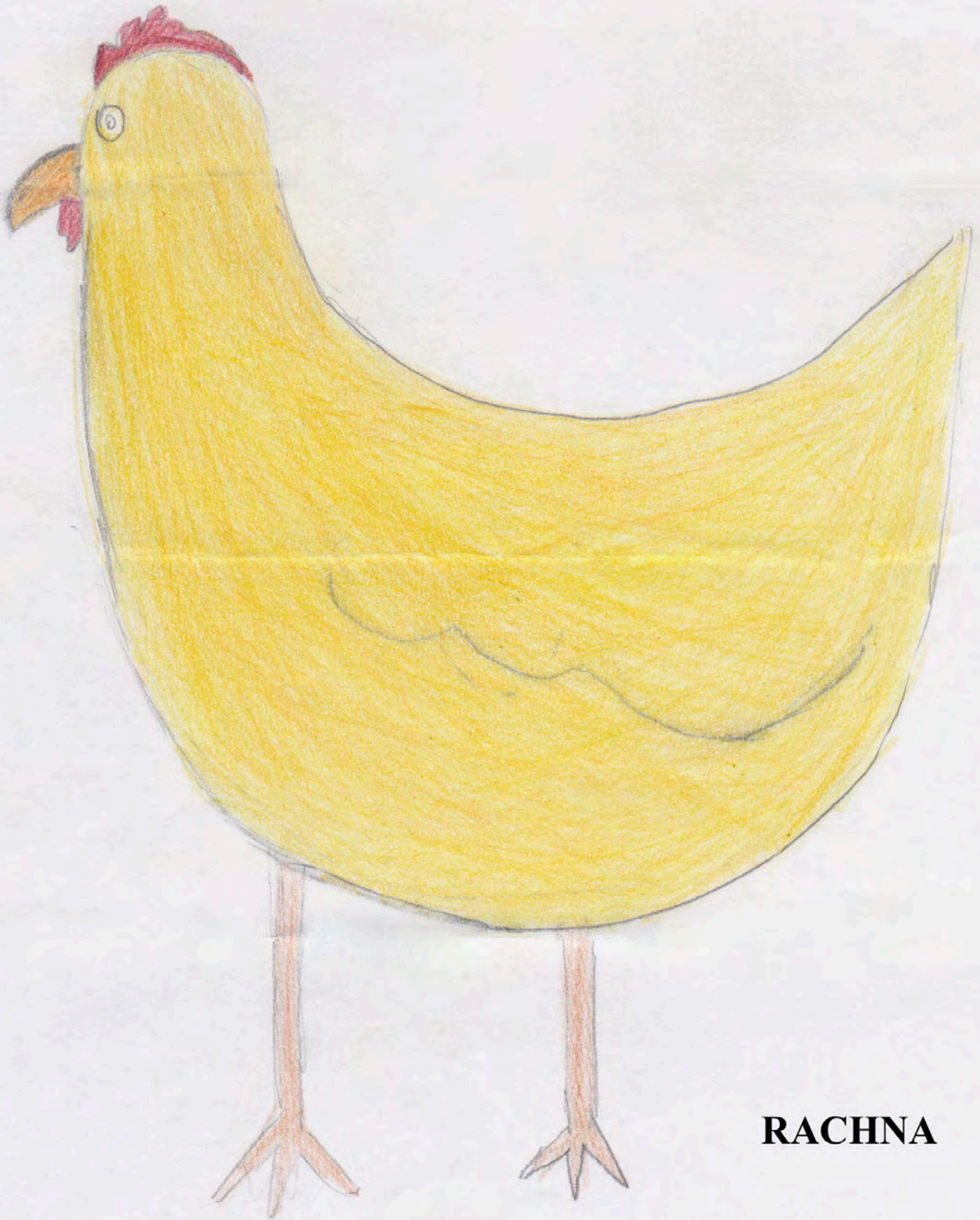
bird





SAVA'S MOM

Chicken- Buff Orpington



RACHNA

Sparrow



ROHAN

See you again in 2022...

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

Thank you to all our artists, both young and young at heart.
You stand for something. You are important. And your passion
is beneficial to the environment and our birds.



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