



# The Scientific Nomenclature of Birds in the Upper Midwest (Bur Oak Guide)

*James Sandrock, Jean C. Prior*

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The translation and explanation of genus and species names yield markers to help us identify birds in the field as well as remember distinctive traits. Having a basic understanding of the scientific and common names of birds reveals insights into their color, behavior, habitat, or geography. Knowing that *Cyanocitta* means “blue chatterer” and *cristata* means “crested, tufted” or that *Anas* means “a duck” and *clypeata* means “armed with a shield” tells you just about everything you need to identify a Blue Jay or a Northern Shoveler. In this portable reference book, James Sandrock and Jean Prior explain the science and history behind the names of some 450 birds of the Upper Midwest states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Since many of these birds occur throughout the United States, this handbook can also be used by birders in other parts of the country.

The authors examine the roots, stems, and construction of scientific names from their classical Latin and Greek or other linguistic origins. The translations of these words and insights into their sources yield quirky, tantalizing facts about the people, geography, habitat, and mythology behind bird names. Each entry also includes the bird’s common name as well as local or regional names. Beginning birders confused by scientific names as well as more experienced birders curious about such names will find that the book opens unexpected connections into linguistic, historical, biological, artistic, biographical, and even aesthetic realms.

Highlighting the obvious and not-so-obvious links between birds and language, this practical guide continues a long scholarly tradition of such books by and for those afoot in the field. Whether you are hiking with binoculars or watching a backyard bird feeder or reading at home, *The Scientific Nomenclature of Birds in the Upper Midwest* will greatly enhance your appreciation of birds.

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