

# HOW TO LOOK AT BIRDS

People find that they can get more enjoyment out of seeing birds when they can identify the species they are looking at. At first it can be confusing, but don't worry. All you need to get started are these basic guidelines on how to look at birds. Birds are different from each other in the way they look, the way they act, and the places they stay. These things will help you tell one bird from another.

Birds differ in appearance.

They are different sizes – from very large, to very small.



Birds differ in colour. They may be one colour or many, bright or dull.



Birds differ in shape. They can be plump like a quail or slender like a Jacana. They can have a long or short neck, long or short tail, long or short legs.



Their bills have different shapes, depending on the food they eat.



**Crimson Seed-cracker**  
Seeds



**Sunbird**  
Nectar



**Tit**  
Insects



**Senegal Parrot**  
Nuts



**Saddlebill Stork**  
Fish



**Great Blue Plantain-eater**  
Fruit

Birds' feet are different in sizes and are shaped for different purposes.



**Hawk**  
For capturing prey



**Ostrich**  
For running



**Pelican**  
For swimming



**Parrot**  
For grasping



**Weaver**  
For perching

Birds are different in behaviour. They may be active or quiet, graceful or awkward, noisy or still. Some birds are always singing and chattering, while others are not heard. One bird may sit in plain view, while another hides in the grass.

Some birds stay alone, while others move about together. Some birds stay in pairs, especially when they are building a nest and raising their young.

Birds live in different places.

They may live near water,  
in the forest,  
in the savanna,  
and in town.

Birds perch in trees,  
hide in the grass,  
run on the ground,  
fly from tree to tree,  
soar high in the sky.

The following pages describe some of the birds of West Africa, with Hausa (H), Igbo (I) and Yoruba (Y) names. Find out what they look like, how they behave, and where they can be found. Then look carefully. You will begin to discover the many wonderful birds of our land.