



### Meet Merlin: Bird ID Apps!

Here are some great ways to identify birds in our community, both for those who have read last month's BirdTown posting about home bird feeders, and for those who haven't read that post yet (see it below). Maybe now you are noticing more birds at your feeder and in your yard, and are wondering what kind of feathered friends are around you. There are a number of excellent bird ID and finder apps for mobile devices that can help you identify and recognize birds! You can search for these apps under 'bird id', and find many choices. 'Merlin' is an excellent app, created by the Cornell Ornithology Lab. It's easy to use, and provides ways to search for birds you see or hear by either sound ID, step-by-step observation (size, color, location, activity), or photo ID from your own pictures. It also keeps an inventory of your own recorded bird sounds! Another useful app is Audubon's Field Guide. This one can notify you of nearby birds, if you'd like that feature. The popular app 'iNaturalist' has a related wildlife ID app called 'Seek' that features species near your location and has a January challenge! Try out an app that suits your needs and interests, and learn more about the feathered friends who may be in your yard and around us in our community!

You may also notice 'ebird', another Cornell app. This one is not geared for bird ID, but instead provides account users the ability to report bird observations to a national database. Once you are familiar with birds you are seeing, you may want to provide information to that app, enabling you to become a 'citizen scientist' by contributing to this important work. There's a lot to see and recognize about birds in our community, and the natural world right around us. Maybe this could be a new hobby or skill for you or a family member in 2024!



Top photo: Merlin

Photo at bottom is a Junco, a common bird at winter feeders