



PA BIRD ATLAS

Guide to the Singing Bird Code (S)

The S code is used for a bird singing or an adult producing other sounds that are associated with breeding (i.e., not regular vocalizations that are used year-round).

Species that Don't Sing; Use the Habitat (H) Code Instead!

- Waterfowl
- Chimney Swift
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird
- Shorebirds, Wading Birds, Gulls, and Terns
- Raptors (Vultures, Hawks, Falcons)
- Belted Kingfisher
- Corvids (Jays*, Crows, Ravens)
- Red-breasted Nuthatch
- Cedar Waxwing

**Blue Jays can give a whisper song (https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Blue_Jay/sounds). The S code can be used for this vocalization, but it is very quiet and infrequently heard.*

Use S Code with Caution: Only When Singing

These species are frequently heard calling, which warrants the H code. The S code should only be used when they are heard singing. See the provided links to listen to songs and calls for each species.

- Yellow-billed Cuckoo (https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Yellow-billed_Cuckoo/sounds)
- Black-billed Cuckoo (https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Black-billed_Cuckoo/sounds)
- Great Crested Flycatcher (https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Great_Crested_Flycatcher/sounds)
- Eastern Kingbird (https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Eastern_Kingbird/sounds)
- Black-capped Chickadee (https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Black-capped_Chickadee/sounds)
- Carolina Chickadee (https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Carolina_Chickadee/sounds)
- Purple Martin (https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Purple_Martin/sounds)
- Tree Swallow (https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Tree_Swallow/sounds)
- Northern Rough-winged Swallow (https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Northern_Rough-winged_Swallow/sounds)
- Bank Swallow (https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Bank_Swallow/sounds)
- Barn Swallow (https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Barn_Swallow/sounds)
- Cliff Swallow (https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Cliff_Swallow/sounds)
- White-breasted Nuthatch (https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/White-breasted_Nuthatch/sounds)
- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Blue-gray_Gnatcatcher/sounds)

Do Use S Code For:

- Rail vocalizations
- Owl hooting
- Woodpecker drumming (if you can confidently ID to species)
- Common Nighthawk booming
- Wild Turkey gobbling