





# Merlin

What happens when everyday people build a bird ID tool?

## llow-throated

/aroler

Cameron Rognan

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www.50birds.com/BPProthonotaryWarbler.htm - Cached - Similar

## The "search" for ID help

"small bird with black stripe" "orange birds" "ID of sparrow with red crown" "smoky gray bird with black eyes and black tail" "large hawk with white tail patch" "plump small bird with long straight bill"

"black bird with pointy head"

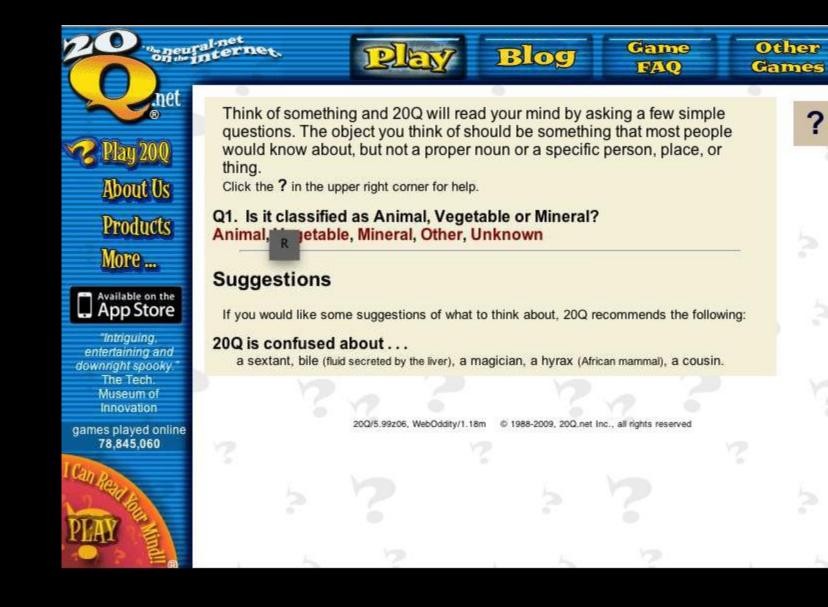
_		Key to the Northern Conifers	
1.	Cr	owns small, or if large then definitely cone-shaped	A HEALT HAVE
	2.	Crown broadly conical, usually rounded tip, branches not prominent	Cedar
	2.	Crowns have a pointed top, or coarse branching, or both	
		Crowns narrow, often cylindrical, trees frequently grow in swamps	Swamp-type black spruce
		Crowns conical, deciduous, very light toned in fall, usually associated with black spruce	Tamarack
		Crowns narrowly conical, very symmetrical, top pointed, branches less prominent than in white spruce	Balsam fir
		Crowns narrowly conical, top often appears obtuse on photograph (except northern white spruce), branches more prominent than in balsam fir	White spruce, black spruce (ex- cept swamp type
		Crowns irregular, with pointed top, has thinner foli- age and smoother texture than spruce and balsam fir	Jack pine
1.		owns large and spreading, not narrowly conical, top en not well defined.	
	3.	Crowns very dense, irregular or broadly conical	
		4. Individual branches very prominent, crown usually irregular	White pine
		4. Individual branches rarely very prominent, crown usually conical	Eastern hemlock
	3.	Crowns open, oval (circular in plan view)	Red pine

## Key-based Approach

# Merlin

- Dynamic Q&A
- Handles "noisy data"
- Gets better with use

## 20Q in action



















#### Where did you see the bird?

(for example: Sapsucker Woods, Ithaca, NY 14850)





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•		-	



click on an answer below to edit it

1. When bird was seen June 10, 2011

## When & Where

1 species (+0 other taxa)	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	Aug	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>
Flammulated Owl (Otus flammeolus)			-									







## eBird

### Indigo Bunting | Full Year

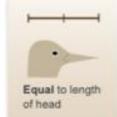


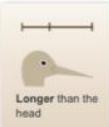


### The Cornell Lab of Ornithology All About Birds













Ø VIEW LARGER



C Keyin Bolton

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Activities

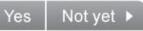
#### O Start Over 🖸 Photo Upload 🏾 🐉 Feedback

#### Has Merlin correctly identified your bird?

Check your answers in Progress area to the right. You can click to edit answers.

#### 91% chance it is a Hooded Oriole















÷

#### Progress

click on an answer below to edit it

1

- 1. When the bird was seen June 10. 2011
- 2. Where the bird was seen Vetana Canyon, Tucson, AZ
- Bird size
  Robin-sized
- 4. Bird Group Songbirds and More
- 5. Bird Shape Blackbirds and Orioles
- 6. Main Colors Yellow and Black

How do novice bird watchers describe birds?

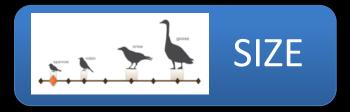






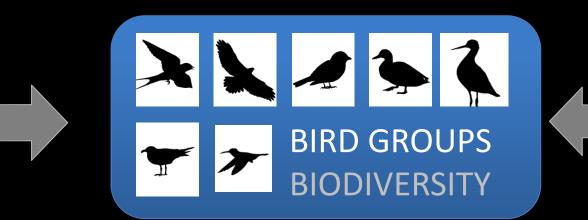
### **Novice Birders**

### **Expert Birders**



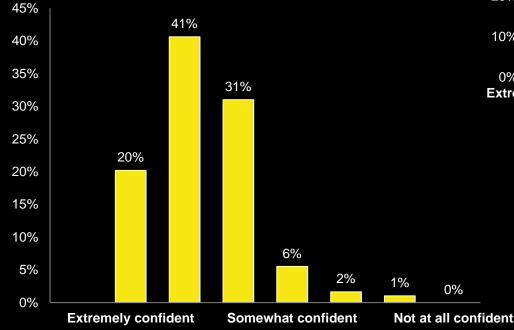




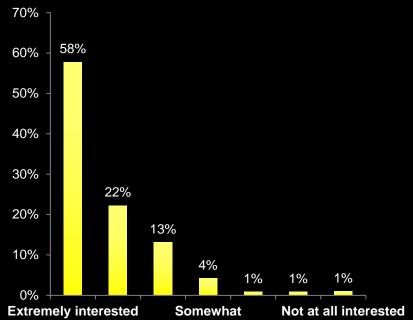


## **Formative Testing**

#### Confidence Level Using MMB



## Interest in completing another session of MMB



#### Usability Testing of Mark My Bird

In-person think aloud & interview (n=28) Web based survey (n = 540)

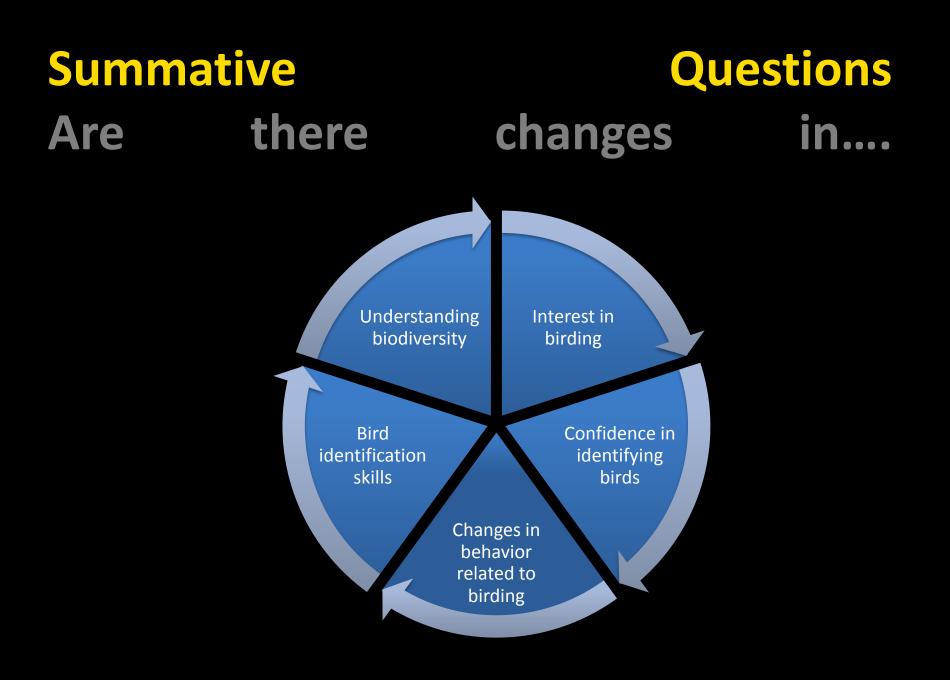
## **Unintended Outcomes**

*"The questions guide the user through a very complete species observation."* 

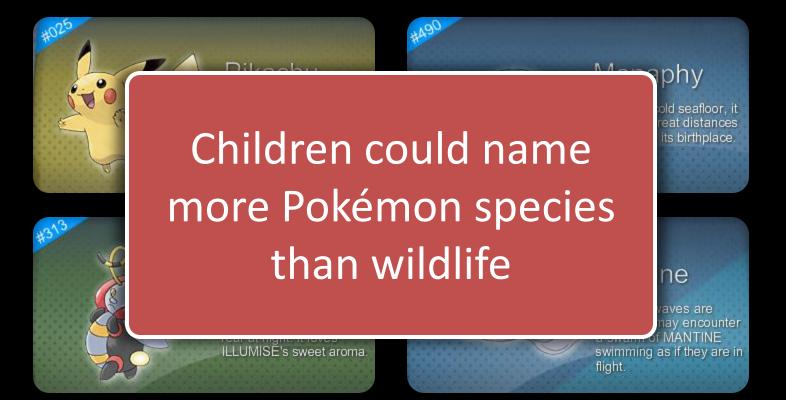
"A great way to learn what is important in reviewing birds descriptions, and how to see a bird-by sections!"

*"FUN!!! Helps me to hone in on each defining characteristic of the bird."* 

"Learning how to be more organized when describing characteristics of a bird for identification."



# Why conservationists should heed



### undescribed species





## Savannah Sparrow

the second second and the

### Blackburnian Warbler

## Yellow-headed Blackbird Black Skimmer

## At your fingertips...



Mobile devices

Classrooms

Museums

Butterflies

Plants...

## The Cornell Lab of Ornithology

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