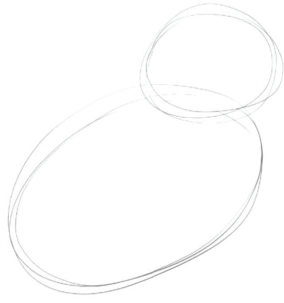


How to Draw an American Goldfinch with David Sibley



1 Start with an oval for the body, angled just a little bit above horizontal. Then add a smaller circle balanced on top of the body.



2 Next add a long narrow rectangle shape for the tail, extending out the back of the body and along the same angle as the oval for the body. The wing is folded up against the side of the body. To draw it start just below the head and draw a long narrow oval that comes out just above the tail.



3 The bill is a small triangle right on the front of the head. Next you can draw smooth curves to show the outline of the body. Use your circle and oval as a guide, and imagine all of the feathers pointing to the rear and forming a smooth, streamlined shape to help the bird move through the air. The feathers are a little bit fluffy at the back of the body near the tail.



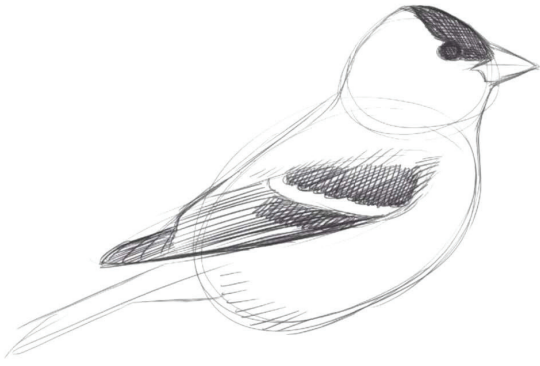
4 Imagine a line along the middle of the bill coming back into the head. The eye is just above this line and just forward of the middle of the head.



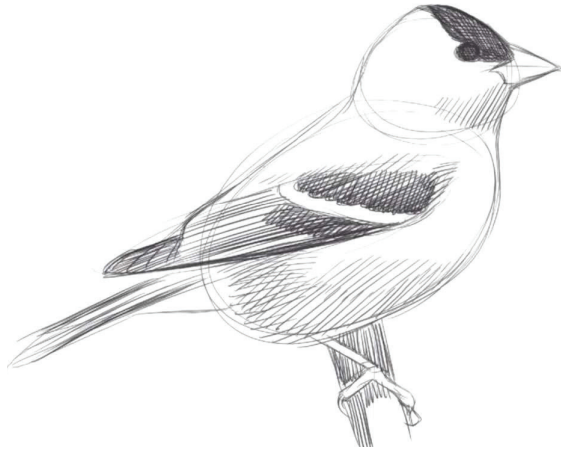
5 Male goldfinches have a black cap. Draw a line connecting the bill to the lower edge of the eye, and then a line from the top of the eye up to the top of the head. The eye and all of the feathers above these lines are black.



6 On the wings, the tips of the wing coverts form a diagonal line across the middle of the wing, and on the American Goldfinch the tips of these feathers are white forming a narrow white band across the wing. Feathers from the breast overlap the front of the wing, and feathers from the back overlap the top of the wing.



7 Color the wing coverts black (except the white tips you outlined in the previous step). The back half of the wing is formed by the long, straight flight feathers, which you can draw as parallel lines pointing back toward the tail. The base of these feathers, next to the wing coverts, are darker, so you can color in a blacker area there. The narrower point of the wingtip is formed by the longest feathers.



9 To add the legs and feet, imagine where the bird would balance (remember that the tail weighs almost nothing), and put the feet right under that spot. The legs angle back from there and into the feathers.



8 Add some parallel lines on the tail to suggest the long tail feathers, and some shading under the belly and under the chin.

Have fun, and please share what you've created.
#sketchwithsibley

Drawings by David Sibley

