



Mitchell Beazley BIRD Guide for iPod

Notes, images and songs for 250 British and European Birds

For iPod, PC and Mac.

Installation instructions

The program and data are provided on the CD as a zipped folder. To install follow these steps:

1. Copy the file 'MB BIRD guide.zip' onto your desktop.
2. Double click to expand the file (creates a folder called 'MB BIRD guide')
3. Drag the folder 'birdsongs' from this folder to iTunes*
4. Copy the folder 'BIRDnotes' from this folder to the notes section on your iPod hard disk**

To open the BIRD database open the MB BIRD guide folder and for PC click on STARTbirdguidePC, for Apple Macintosh click on STARTbirdguideMAC.

Once everything is working, the zip file may be discarded and the MB BIRD guide folder stored wherever you wish on your hard disk.

* The default settings are to copy across all music files to your iPod, but if you have altered this, you may have to allow the playlist 'BIRD' to be synchronized in iTunes in the iPod options panel in iTunes manually.

** This action requires the setting 'enable disk use' to be set in the iPod options in iTunes (the default setting is off, so it will need to be changed if it has not been done before). This makes the iPod visible as a disk on the desktop.

Operating the BIRD notes on the iPod

From the iPod menu select 'Extras' and 'Notes' (the first time you access the Notes section, they have to load into memory. This process takes a minute or so to do, but afterwards the access is more immediate).

To use the notes, you can scroll through the entire bird listings by Common Name or Species (latin name) or you can select lists of birds by Category (book category), Family, Order or Habitat.

When you select a note about a particular species, information is listed in the following way:

Common name (TITLE)
SPECIES
LINK to picture & song (in the music section)***
FAMILY: (LINK to family list)
ORDER: (LINK to order list)
Bird description: (text detailing the birds appearance, habits, voice, migration and where commonly seen)
file number
>> next (LINK to next bird in library)
<< previous (LINK to previous bird in library)

To select a link use the scroll wheel to highlight the link underline in blue and click the centre button.

When selecting the link to a picture & song, the screen shows a small image of the bird and plays the birdsong. Clicking the centre button twice again reveals the full-size image on the screen. Click again and the VOICE description is listed. Click the Menu button to back up the display to the bird notes again.

Note: If you leave the birdsong playing, the iPod will return to showing the bird image and song currently playing after a short period of inactivity. To prevent this pause the song after you have finished listening to it before returning to the BIRD notes.

Hints for effective use

A good way to identify a bird is to think of a bird which is most similar to the one you are looking at. Then you can compare it to other birds in the same family (by clicking on the family list and checking with each member), taking into account the visual appearance and the birdsong, if heard, to make a better guess. Also take into account the location and the habitat, which should match, but may not prove conclusive. When attempting to identify a bird from its song, bear in mind that some species show considerable variations in their song, but that the voice should be distinctive.

In the birdsong section for each bird, you can apply a rating (1 to 5 stars). This can be used as a tally for indicating which birds you have spotted and what confidence you would have in their identification.

Identifying birds is a skill that improves with experience, and involves using all the available lines of evidence supplied by the bird in question to identify it correctly. Birdsong is an invaluable aid in this process, especially when its source is hidden or poorly visible, and it can bring to your attention an interesting or unknown bird that you might otherwise walk by. Memorising birdsongs at first seems a daunting task, but by choosing a single birdsong at a time and listening out for it in the field, it is quickly memorised and soon you will find yourself paying greater attention to the birdsongs around you.

I hope that you find this aid as useful and enjoyable as I have in its development.

Anatole Beams (BIRD guide for iPod, designer and developer) — June 2007 

User FAQs

Common problems that may be experienced with operation of the BIRD guide for iPod.

1/ The file 'MB BIRD guide.zip' will not open.

This file is a zipped folder that needs to be copied onto your hard disk. Double-clicking the file should then expand it into a folder called 'MB BIRD guide'.

2/ The application 'STARTbirdguideMAC' or 'STARTbirdguidePC' will not open.

Make sure that you are choosing the correct start file for your computer. If you are running a PC, you may get a dialogue asking for you to approve the opening of the application 'BIRDguide.exe'.

If you get the error 'Can't get file'. Make sure that you have not moved any of the files inside the MB BIRD guide folder. To be certain you should discard the 'MB BIRD guide' folder and copy over the 'MB BIRD guide.zip' file from the CD and expand again to re-install.

3/ The BIRDguide application runs but the search function returns an error '*This action cannot be performed because this file is not modifiable*'.

The disk that the BIRDguide is installed on only has read privileges. Copy the entire MB BIRD guide folder onto a disk with read and write privileges.

4/ The BIRDguide application runs but will not play any bird songs.

Check that your computer's sound volume is turned up and not muted.

If you are running on a PC, the sound files are played using iTunes. You should check that iTunes is installed and that it is able to play music files audibly. iTunes is available for free download from Apple Inc. at <http://www.apple.com/itunes/>

If you are running on a Mac, the sound files are played using QuickTime. You should check that QuickTime is installed and able to playback sound or movie files with audible sound content.

5/ I cannot find the iPod disk when it is connected to the computer.

Open iTunes and click on your iPod in the left hand column.

(If the iPod is not listed in the left hand column then it is not connected properly).

In the OPTIONS tab, make sure that the setting for 'enable disk use' is checked. Then the iPod disk should be visible on a Mac desktop and available in 'my Computer' on a PC.

6/ The notes are installed and working on my Ipod, but when I select the 'picture & song' for a particular bird, nothing happens.

Navigate to the music section on your iPod and look for a playlist called 'BIRD'. If it is not available, then the birdsongs have not been copied to the iPod during synchronization. Connect the iPod to the computer again and check in the iTunes options for your iPod that the playlist 'BIRD' has been allowed to be synchronized. After changing or selecting the BIRD playlist to be permitted to synchronise, reconnect the iPod and try again.

7/ When I stop using the BIRDnotes for a short while, the screen returns to the image of a bird and a birdsong that I have just looked at.

You left the birdsong playing when you listened to it and the songs have continued playing. The iPod will show the song currently playing after a short period of inactivity. To prevent this make sure you pause a song after listening to it before returning to the BIRD notes.

8/ When I play a birdsong in iTunes or on the iPod after playing the song it goes on to playing other birdsongs

It is recommended to switch on the song repeat function on iTunes to prevent this happening. It should not happen on the iPod unless default data for the song has been changed.

9/ The music library in iTunes or on my iPod has multiple copies of songs for the same birds.

The birdsongs have been copied over more than once and iTunes has kept them all. To solve this select all the songs with the album 'BIRD' in the music library in iTunes and delete them. Then copy over the birdsongs folder again from the MB BIRD guide. When you synchronise the iPod again, it will be updated to reflect the songs saved in iTunes.

10/ The BIRDguide application window is too small or too big for my computer screen.

The application has two sizes - 100% and 150%, which you can choose under the 'about' tab. Check that your monitor resolution is set to at least 1024 x 768.

If none of these FAQs provide a solution to your problem, please check that your computer fits the minimum specifications for the relevant software and check our website for any further FAQs, updates and user support.

System Requirements

iPod (5G) Video (with 200MB disk space free for full installation)

iPod Nano (with 200MB disk space free for full installation)

[Please note that due to the small screen size of the iPod Nano, the bird images will not be ideal for identification purposes].

PC with Windows XP or Vista

or Mac with OSX 10.3.9 or above;

iTunes 6 or above.

Mitchell Beazley

<http://www.mitchellbeazley.co.uk/BIRD/support.html>

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