



How to Use the Peck Application to
Improve Your Bird Recognition Skills

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| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. Overview | 2 |
| 2. Train with Slide Show | 2 |
| 3. Train with Play List..... | 3 |
| 4. Train with Pecking Form..... | 4 |
| Appendix. Change Log | 4 |

1. Overview

an advantage of field guide applications : tireless trainers

Field guide applications can play the role of repetitive quizzer to help train the user's bird recognition skills.

2. Train with Slide Show

You can use the Peck application's slide show like flash cards to sharpen your visual recognition skills. To access the slide show options, shown in Figure 2-1, select the document list's 'Select/Slide Show Options' menu item, and check the 'random', 'hide & check', '4 seconds', and '4' repetitions.



Figure 2-1. Slide Show Options

Check the species in the document list that you want to see as 'flash cards',¹ and select the 'View/Run Slide Show' menu item to start the slide show. Each species will be displayed for four seconds (i.e., the slide duration option). Initially the title is hidden, but you can tap the title to unhide the name of the species and see if you correctly identified it. Because the 'hide & check' slide show option is enabled, the hiding and un hiding of the species name in the title affects whether the species is checked in the document list:

- If you correctly identify a species, leave the title displayed and this will uncheck the species in the document list and therefore remove the species from subsequent slide show repetitions.
- If you incorrectly identify a species, hide the species name again (by tapping in the title area) and this will leave the species checked in the document list and therefore it will remain in subsequent slide show repetitions.

¹ You may want to focus your identification training on just certain families of species by using the AOU list's filter capabilities.

3. Train with Play List

In the task of learning bird songs, there is no escaping repetition. Most bird song CDs include some repetition in their presentation. But how much repetition is the correct amount? Some users may already be familiar with a particular song and may not want any repetition of it, while other users may have difficulty learning a particular song and want lots of repetition. Bird song CD producers attempt to compromise: typically repeating a bird song two or three times.

The Peck application offers a little more customization and has several features useful in learning bird songs:

- a play list that plays only the checked recordings – so you can uncheck a bird song when you are confident in your ability to identify it, and that bird song will no longer be played in the subsequent repetitions of the play list,
- a play list that can repeat – to configure the Peck application’s play list to repeat, select the audio list’s ‘Select/Play List Options’ menu item, and check the list repetition ‘...’ checkbox,
- a play list that can randomize the order of play – to configure the play list to randomize the order (so your bird song recognition skills are not dependent upon play list order), select the audio list’s ‘Select/Play List Options’ menu item, and check the list order ‘random’ checkbox.

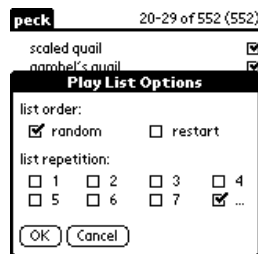


Figure 3-1. Play List Options

After you configure the play list, play it by selecting the ‘View/Run Play List’ menu item. Listen to the recordings without initially looking at the highlighted species in the audio list. When you think you can identify the species of a recording, look at the audio list to confirm that the species you identified is indeed the species of the recording. If your identification is correct, uncheck that recording. As you correctly identify more species, the list of recordings in the play list gets smaller.

an advantage of field guide applications : optimal training

Field guide applications can use feedback (e.g., clearing checks by species) to focus training repetition precisely where the user needs it.

4. Train with Pecking Form

The namesake feature of the Peck application is the pecking form, the drawing area in which a user draws a rendition of a bird song so that it can be used to sort the audio list's recordings to help identify it. Mastering the pecking form definitely takes some training, but the training has more to do with listening than drawing. For example, does the undulation stay on one pitch or does it alternate between two pitches?

To help with this training, the pecking form has an option to randomly select and play a recording from the audio list. To enable/disable this option, select the pecking form's 'View/Toggle Peck Trainer' menu item. When the training option is enabled, an 'A' (for audio) icon appears in the title bar. Tap the 'A' to randomly select a recording from the audio list's checked recordings. Proceed as you normally would to identify the song (i.e., peck the song, tap the 'OK' button, and select the 'View/Run Play List' menu items to listen for the recording that most closely matches). To verify the correct answer, select the 'Select/Highlight Peck Trainer' menu item and the Peck application will highlight and scroll to the recording that was played in the pecking form.

Appendix. Change Log

2008 June 01

- Changed 'View/Highlight Peck Trainer' menu item to 'Select/Highlight Peck Trainer'.

2008 January 11

- Fixed mislabeled figures.
- In Section '3. Train with Play List', removed reference to an out-dated method of playing the play list.