

How To Draw Birds



**A brief guide
by Michael Terry**

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Welcome to www.performingpencil.com
the site dedicated to drawing.

How to draw birds.

Birds are very rewarding to draw, there is such variety in shape and size from the tiny wren to a magnificent golden eagle. Can you think of any other group of creatures that has such contrast, on the one hand you have the small plain and humble dunnock and on the other a strutting glorious peacock! There is so much to draw here so much to observe and capture.

For the most part being able to draw something is down to careful observation, take time to study what you wish to draw. Look at it's proportions, how big is one part to another, find a part of it that you can compare to the rest . Also look for how things relate, visualize a horizontal line running from lets say the beak that you are drawing across to the back of the head, does it line up like this on the bird you are drawing? Or a vertical line running up from where you are drawing in the legs to the back, do they need to be moved either to the left or right or are they just fine?

But before you start first chose a **soft drawing pencil like a 4B or 8B** and get a **soft putty eraser** rather than a conventional eraser and a good quality **drawing pad**, these will help in achieving the results you are after.

For drawing birds sit at your window and do quick sketches of birds on your bird table, this is a good way to get to know different birds postures and behaviour. Or go to a park with a lake or pond and draw the water fowl and pigeons who can be obliging.

What I am going to show you now is how to start and work through to a finished drawing.



So lets get started.

Start by getting the overall shape of the body, head and tail, the head being the smallest can be used as a measure for the rest.

Here I would like to mention a very useful tool for getting proportions right, its called the '**Proportion Measure**' and is included within the full eBook.

To continue make sure you sketch lightly as you will want to remove any unwanted lines later.

Next sketch in the wings then the beak and legs/feet, once you are satisfied that all these are in proportion you can start defining the bird's shape.

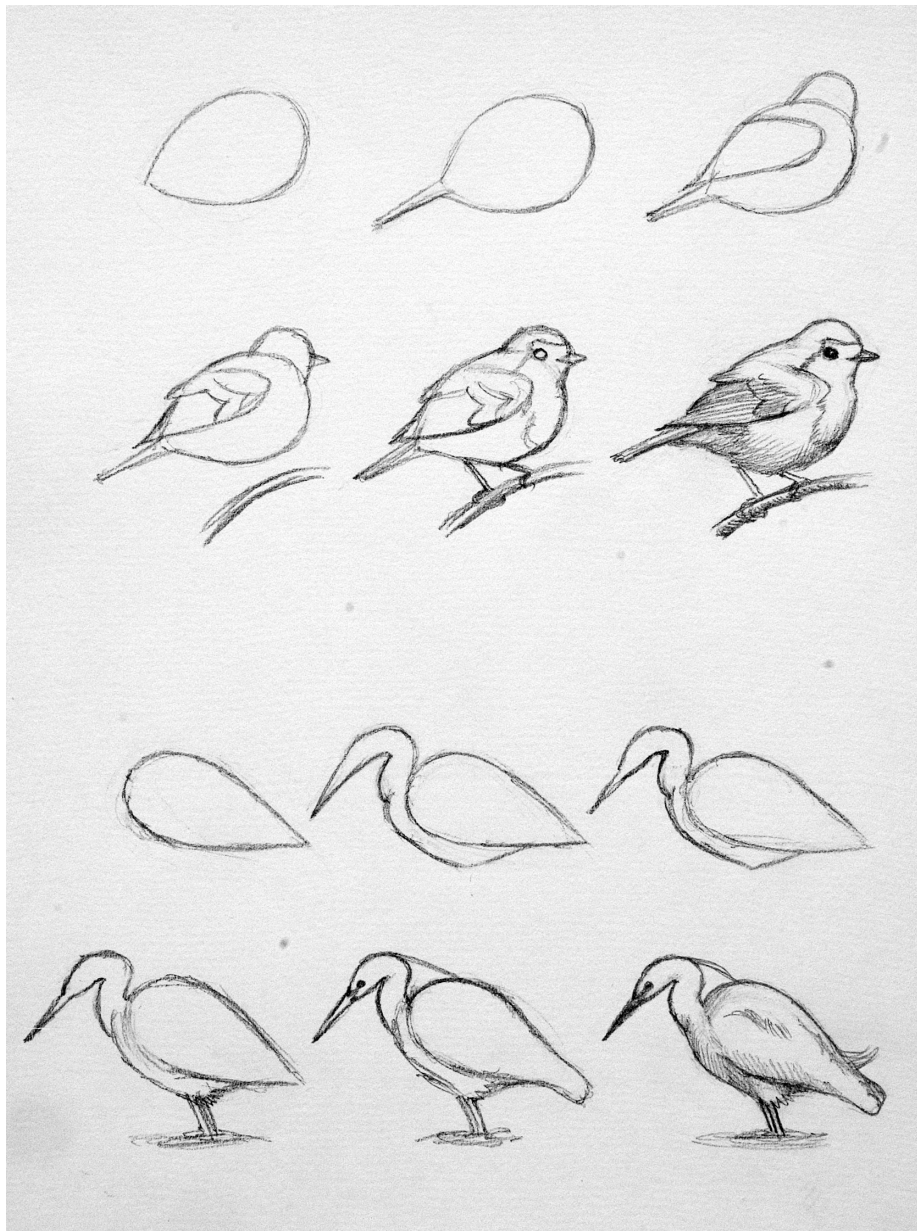
Next you can start on the detail but before you do so you can erase any unwanted lines, other wise it will be difficult once all the details are in place.



Now you can render in some shading, this will give it a more three dimensional appearance.

Now I want to show you the different stages of producing a drawing.

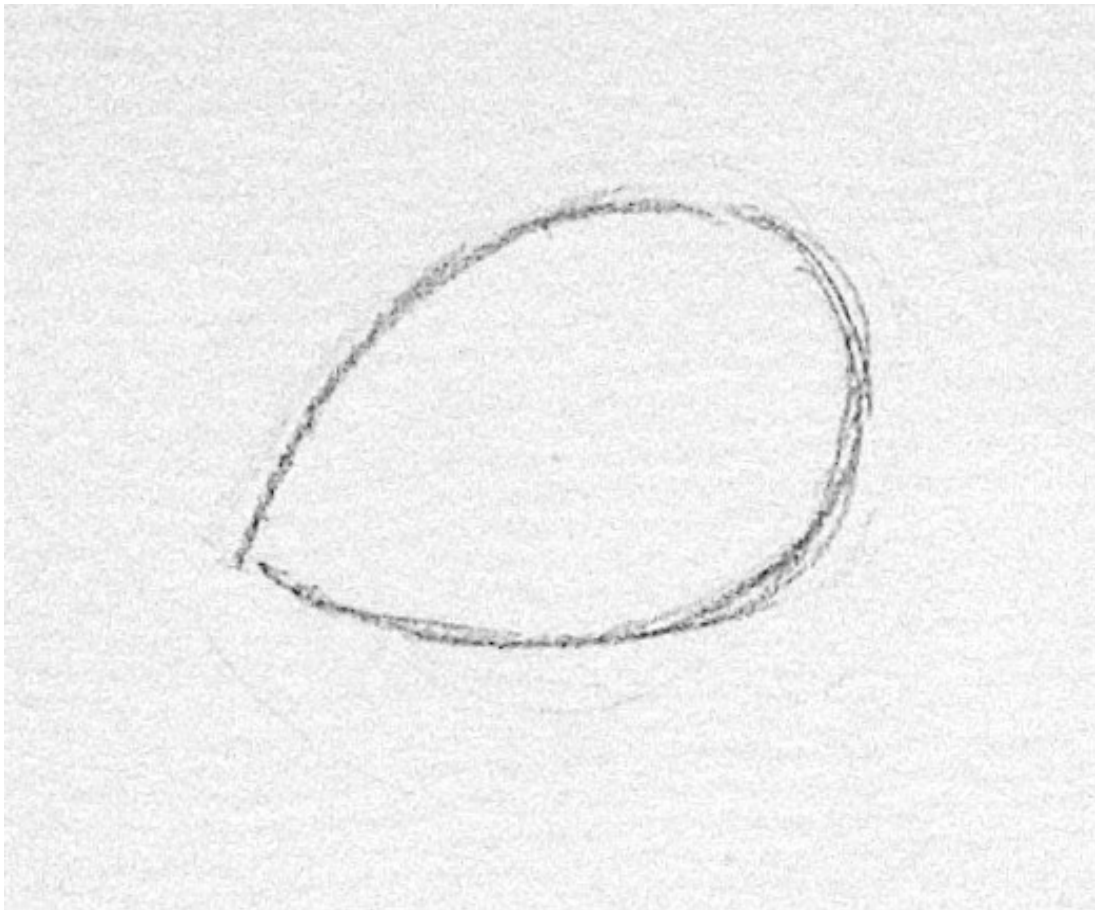
First here is an overview of the process.



This first example is of a robin.

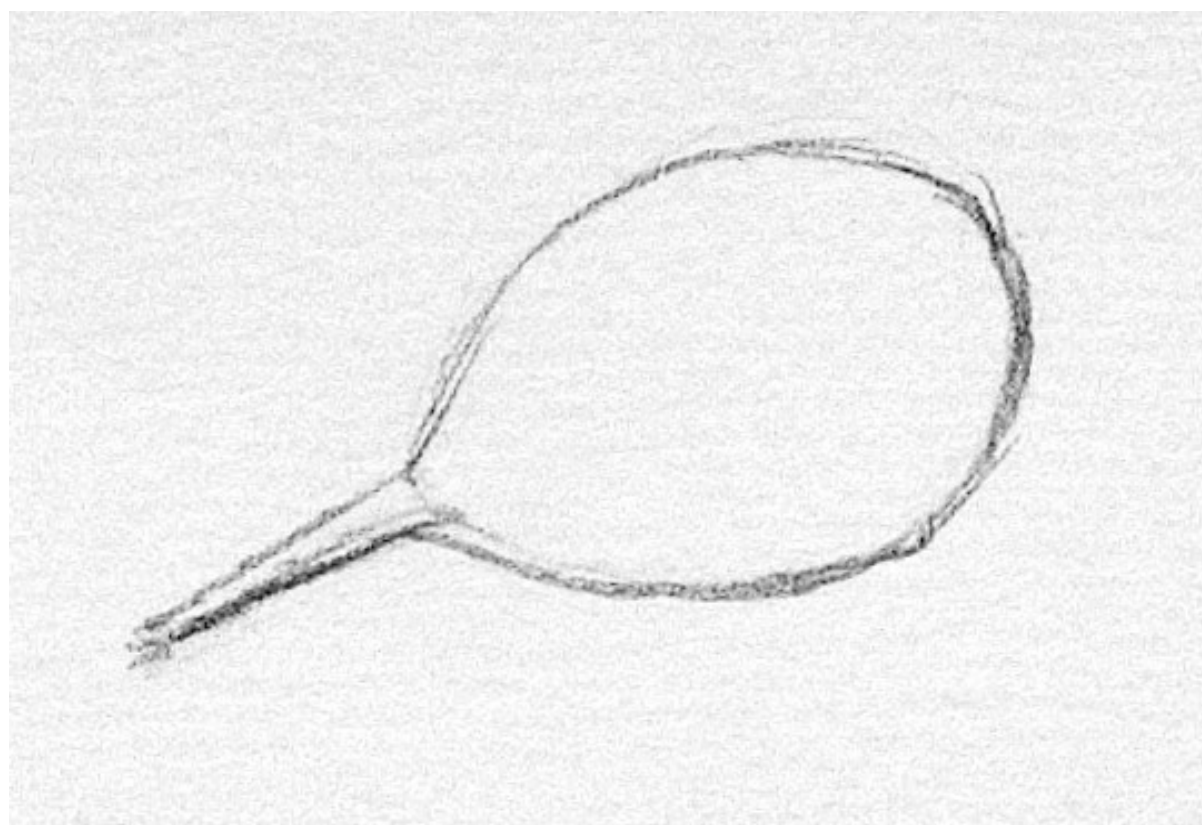
Stage One

The first stage is to get the overall body shape, once you are happy with this then you can move to the next.



Stage Two

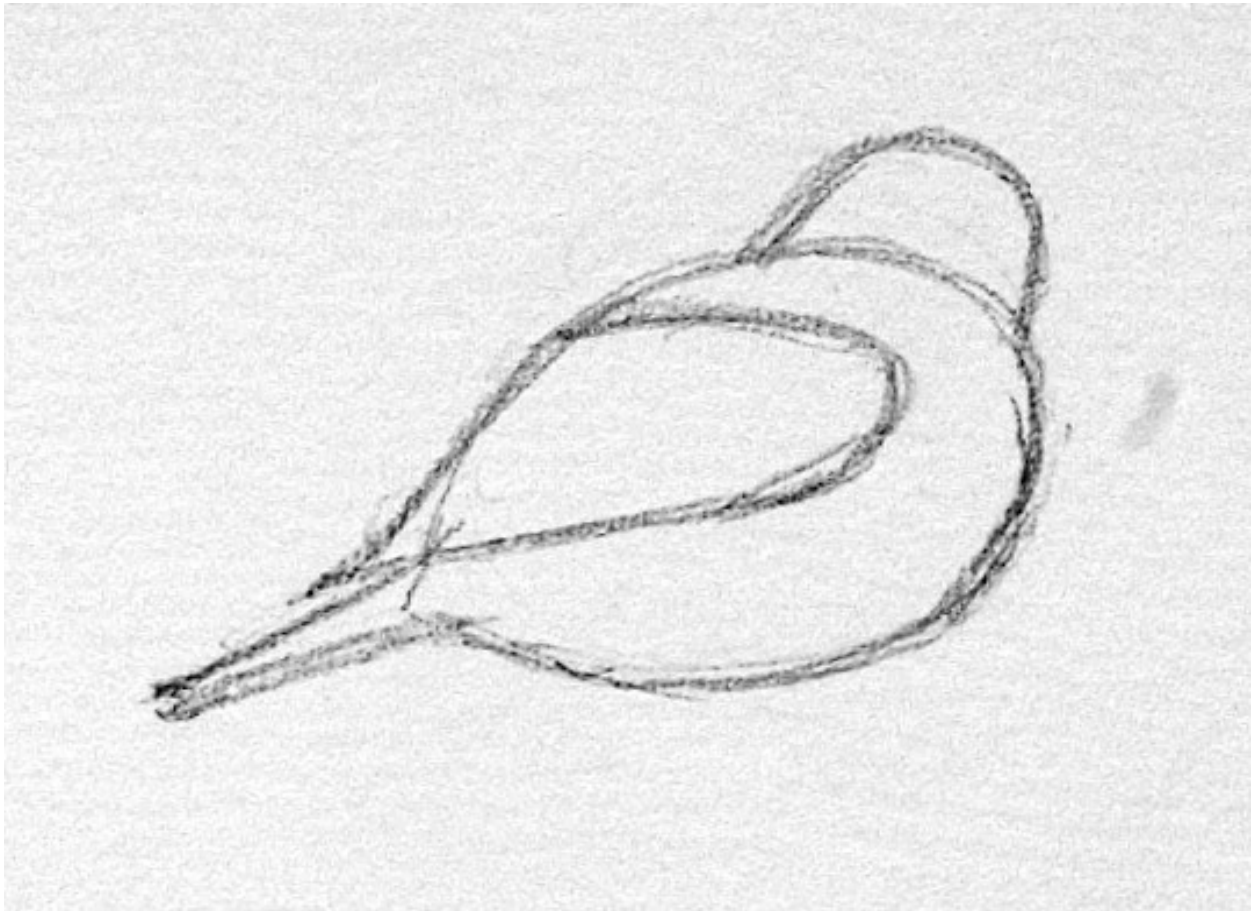
I have now added the basic shape of the tail.



Stage Three

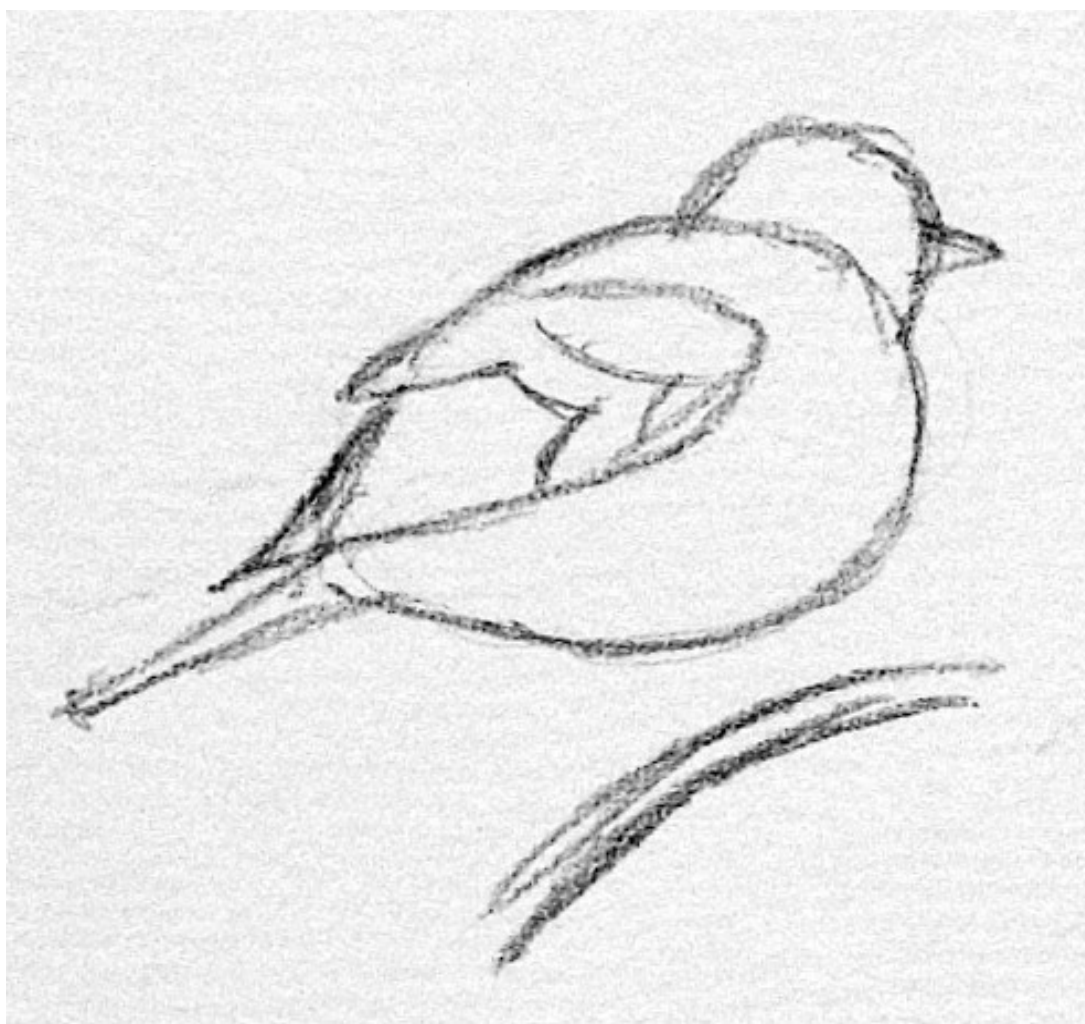
Now I have added the head and the wing, the width of the head is the same as the length of the tail.

Measuring one shape against another will help you get shapes the right size.



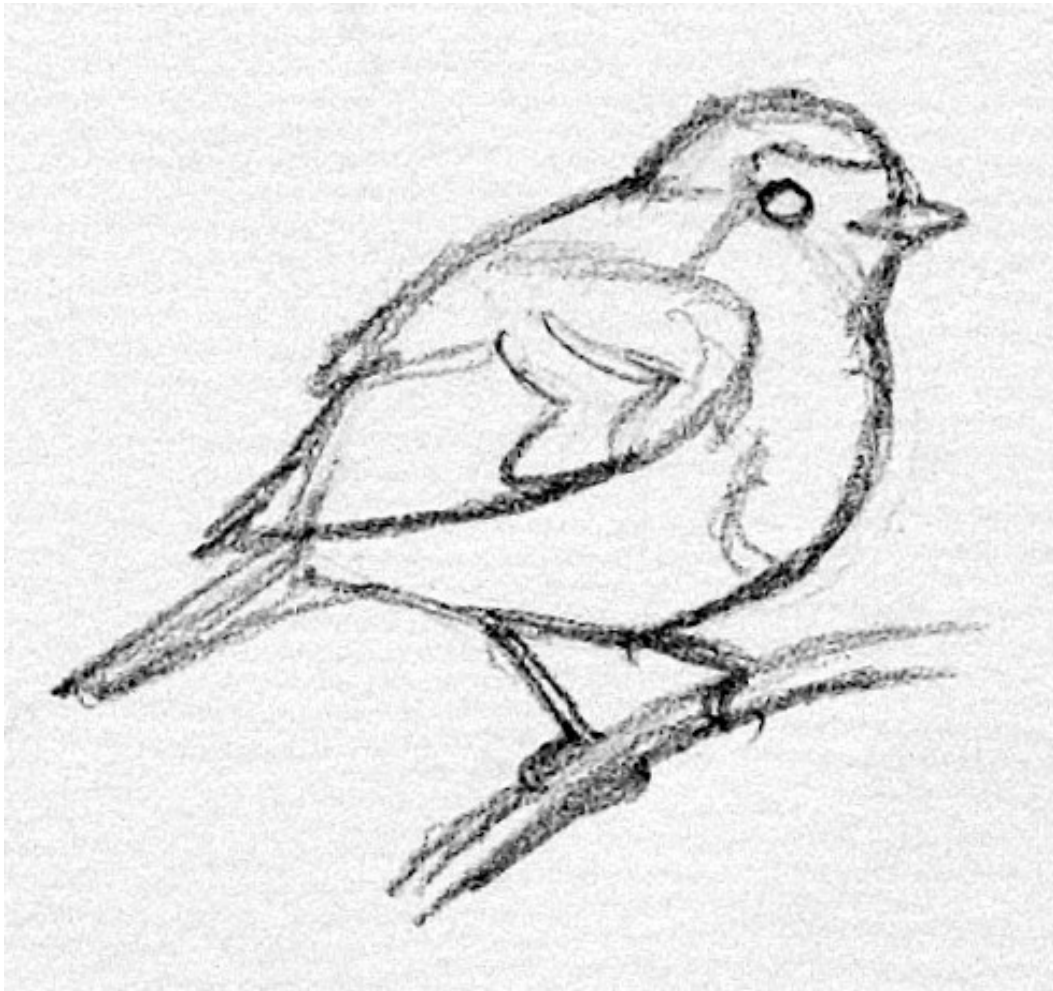
Stage Four

Here I have added the beak, feather areas on the wing and a branch.



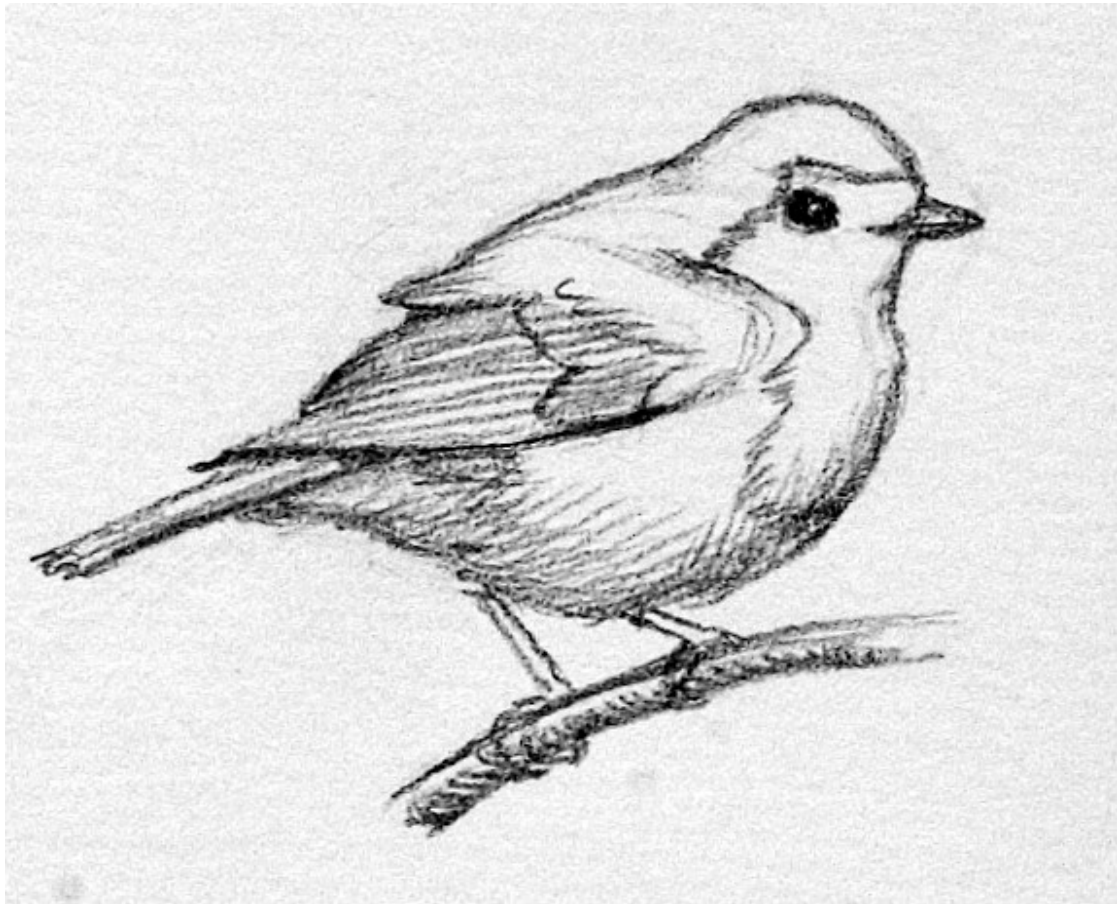
Stage Five

I have added the eye, legs and more detail to the drawing, this is the refining stage.



Stage Six

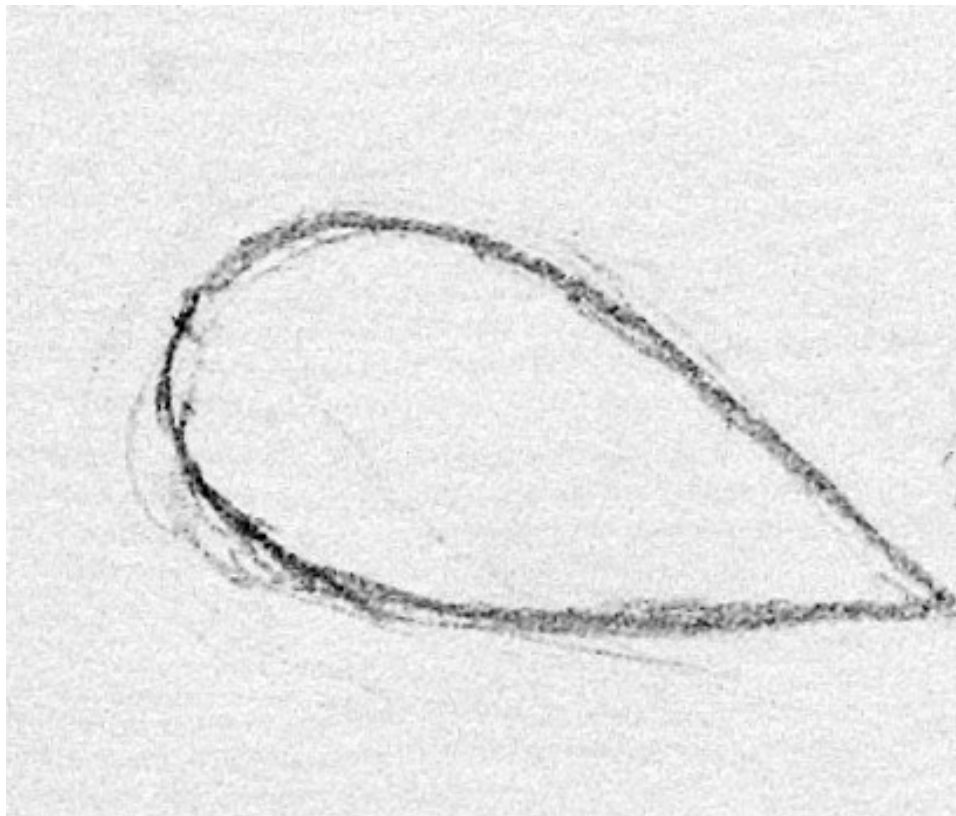
This is my final stage, I have lightly rubbed out the pencil lines so that I can put in the detail like the feathers on the wing. I have also added shading to give the bird form.



The second example is an egret to reinforce the principles.

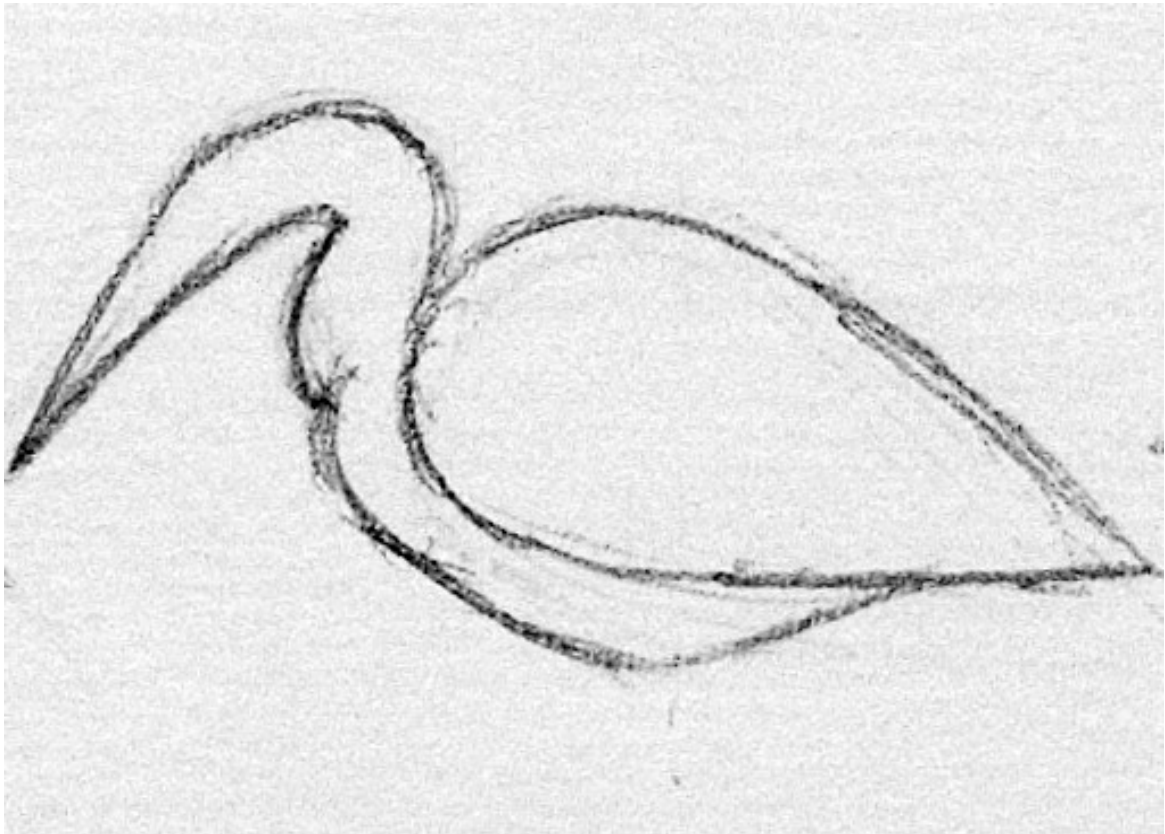
Stage One

Here like the first example I have drawn the basic body shape.



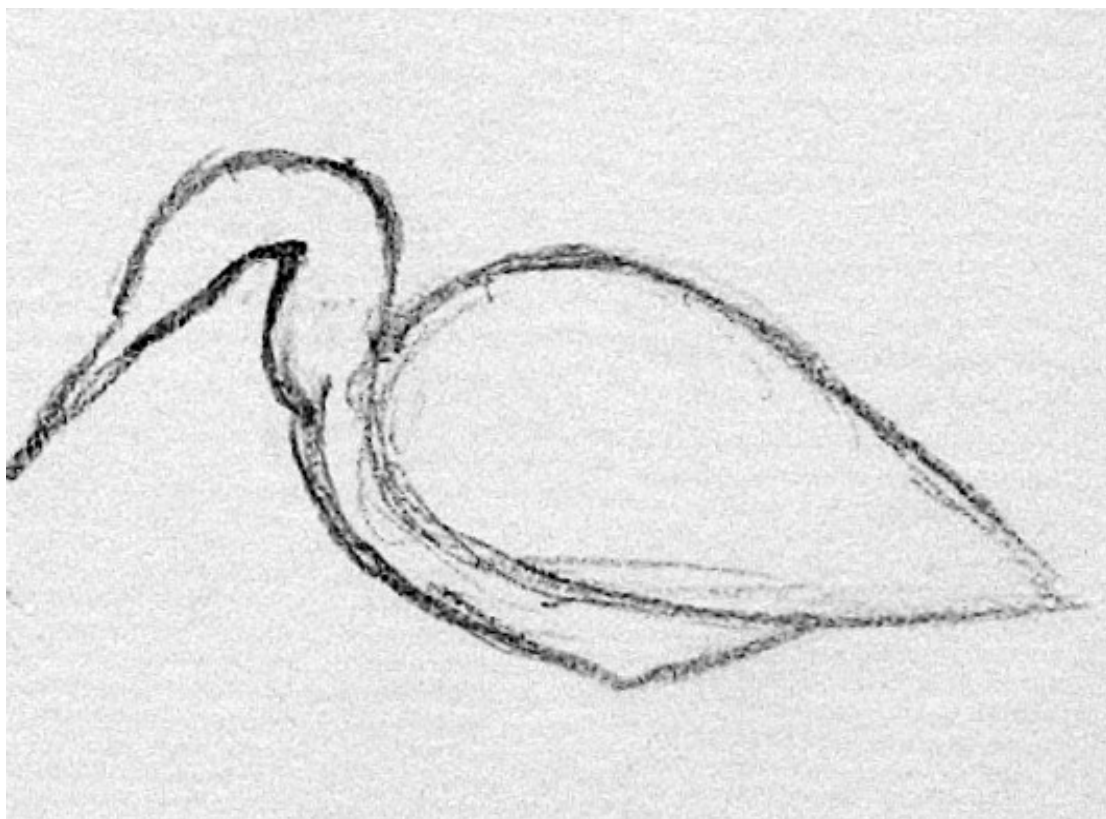
Stage Two

Now I have added the head, neck and lower body shapes. Here you can now use the head as a measure, in this instance the length of the head goes one and a half times into the length of the top body shape.



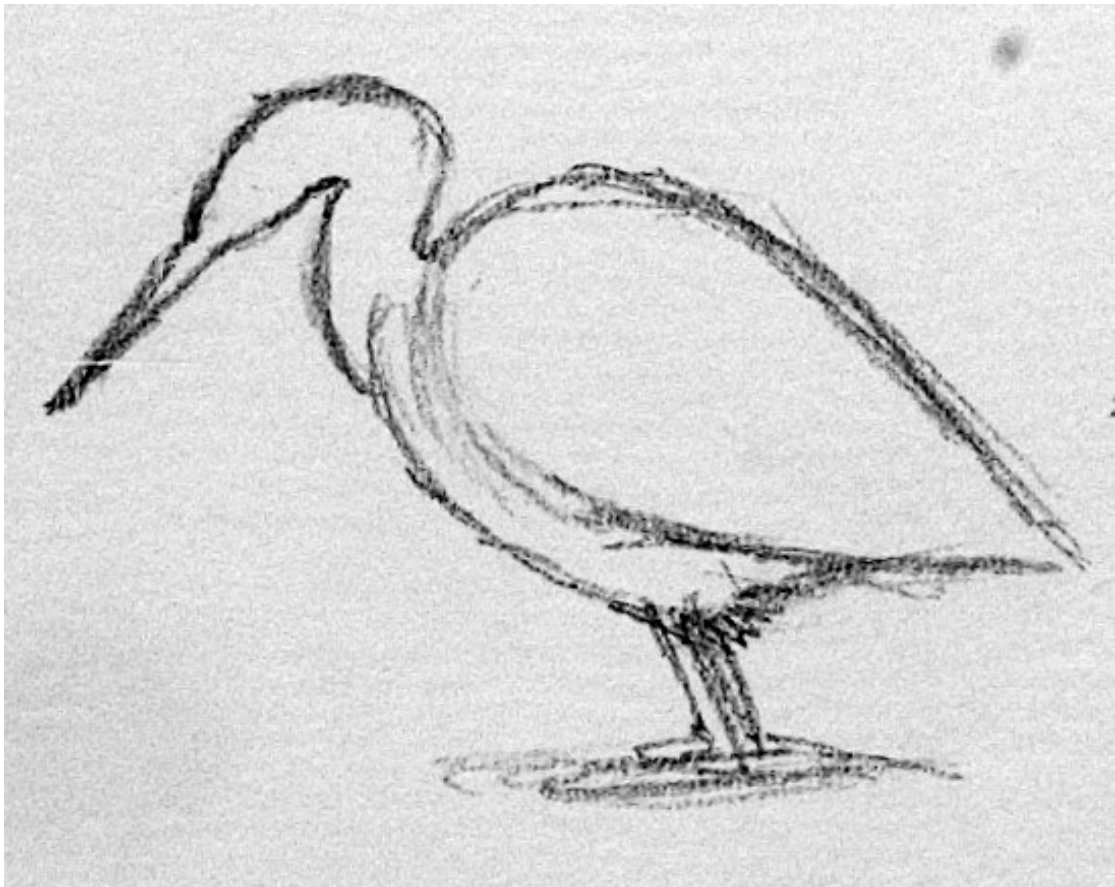
Stage Three

Next I have added shape to the head.



Stage Four

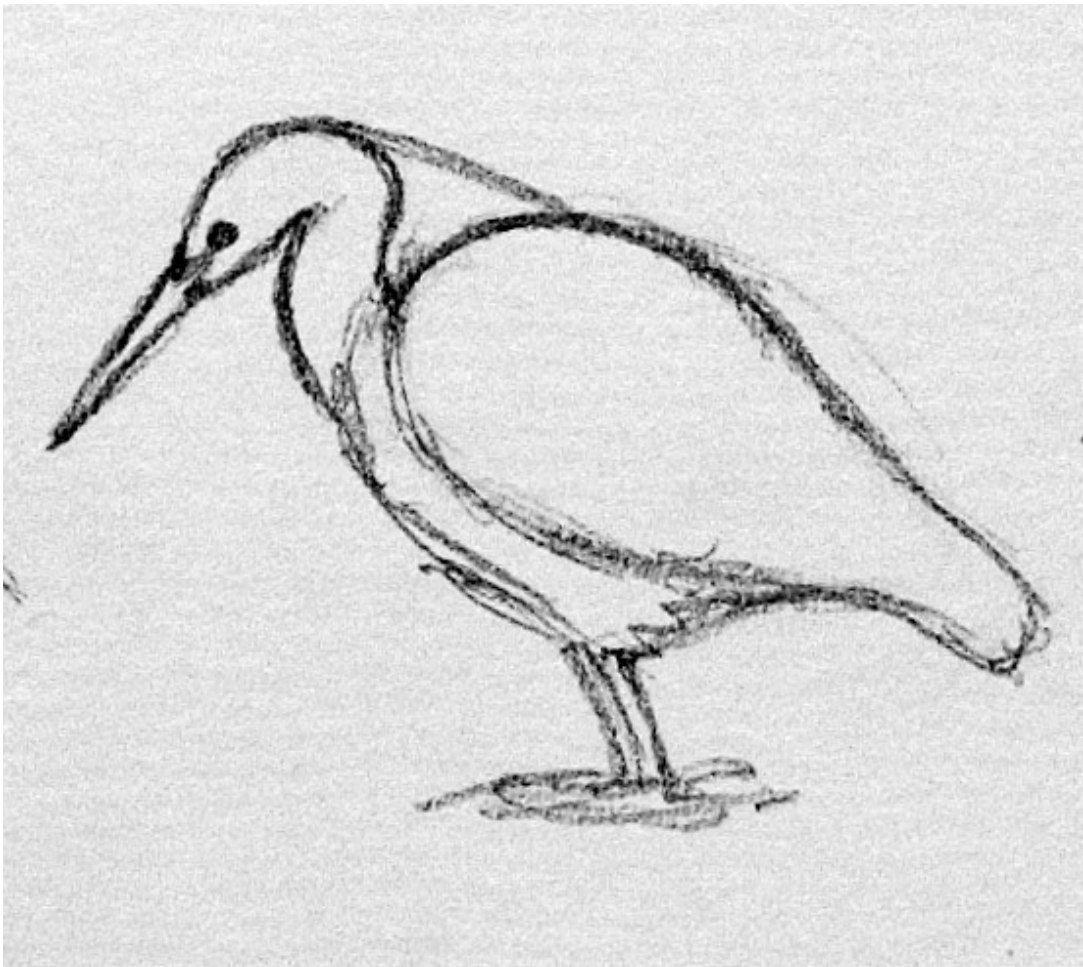
Legs have now been added and some ripples to indicate the water it's standing in.



Stage Five

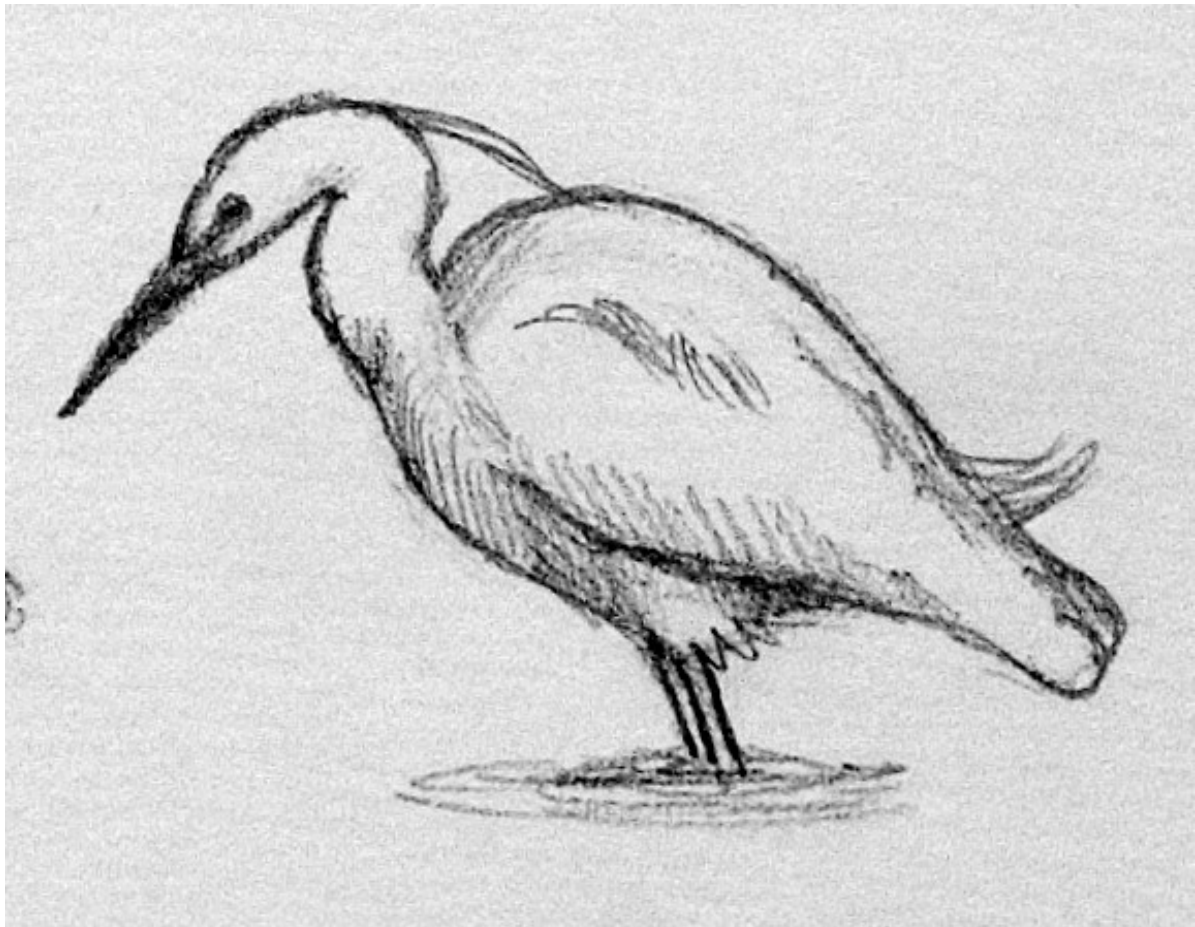
Here I have now began to add shape to the basic shapes, the eye and head feathers have also been added.

Very close to finishing the drawing.



Stage Six

Here is the final drawing, I have added more detail like the feathers near the tail and detail on the body also shading to help show form.



One thing to remember, this is just a sketch not a finished piece that is going into the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition! Just relax it doesn't matter if you make mistakes, just learn from them and enjoy your self!

Don't forget just relax and enjoy drawing, its a big adventure with a great ending.

Further Help.

I hope you have enjoyed this eBook sample and have found it helpful in developing your drawing skills, if so then why not get hold of the complete book which is full of helpful advise on drawing. What I have given you in this sample is only a basic guide, there is a lot more in the full eBook which will help you to produce a drawing you will be happy with. Below are the subjects covered within the book.

As I said at the beginning I have also included an invaluable tool that will go a long way in helping you to achieve the results you are looking for in your drawings. I have called this tool the '**Proportion Measure**' and I think you will find this indispensable.

The eBook '**How to Draw Birds**' has a great deal more within it to help you to develop your drawing skills.

The subjects covered are:

Familiarizing yourself with the subject.

How much to draw.

How to hold and use a pencil or pastel.

Measuring proportions.

Drawing through the subject.

Negative space.

Shading to show form and depth.

Perspective.

Step by step guide on how to draw a Buzzards head

Here I will go through the stages of a drawing which will further help you to understand the process.

Lastly I cover the subject of how to render feathers.

And also the invaluable '**Proportion Measure**' tool.

Go to www.performingpencil.com to obtain this or one of the other eBooks available.

Below are some more photos for you to draw from.



Black tailed Godwit



Blue Tit



Coot

Wildmonths

If you want to go even further in your development there are courses available at **Wildmonths.com** These provide projects for you to work on and also if you wish personal feedback and help with your work.

There is also a forum and gallery to show your work on.

So go and have a look at **Wildmonths.com**, apart from the courses available there is a wealth of information on wildlife together with my wildlife diary which include many of my photos taken in the field. A deeper understanding of wildlife can only help in your drawing.

www.wildmonths.com

Helping your understanding of the natural world



Linnet