

## A Divinatory Glossary of Bird Meanings

**Blackbird**-Considered a fortunate omen whenever it's seen, the good omen is strengthened if two blackbirds are seen sitting together.

**Bluebird**-A bird of good omen, the Bluebird indicates happiness.

**Buzzard**-An unlucky bird to see. Beware of danger from hidden enemies and those with predatory natures.

**Cock (Rooster)**-A bird of variable, but mostly-negative omen. For an unmarried person to hear a cock crow while they are thinking of their sweetheart is a harbinger of good luck. For either of the soon-to-be-married individuals to hear a cock crow on their wedding day foretells a marriage of strife, bickering and unhappiness. To meet a white cock is a warning of approaching bad luck, and if the white cock approaches a house, trouble and danger are in store for any inhabitants of the house.

**Crow**-Usually considered a bird of ill-omen, the number of its utterances are considered the most important factor. One call is considered favorable, two calls are *unfavorable*, three calls are favorable. One or more crows on the left-hand side of the divining field are a definite omen of misfortune, foretelling much contention and strife. The number of crows present may be significant. There is an old rhyme, called 'Counting Crows', and the significance of the various number of crows present can be broken down thus: One crow-sorrow, bad luck, possibly a death. Two Crows-good luck, a change for the better, a reason for happiness. Three Crows-a celebration, such as a wedding, or the birth of a girl. Four Crows-the birth of a boy, or some significant event concerning a son. Five Crows-a positive transaction, money changing hands. Six Crows-acquiring gold or wealth. Seven Crows-a secret which must remain so. Eight Crows-something profound, or a life-altering experience. Nine Crows-passion, something sensual, a wish fulfilled. Ten Crows-something overwhelming. Eleven Crows-health or, more conversely, uncertainty. Twelve Crows-fulfillment; possible wealth to come. Thirteen Crows-a bad omen; the Devil himself.

**Cuckoo**-To hear the call of a cuckoo on the right side of the divining field is a sign of coming prosperity. To hear the call of a cuckoo on the left side indicates a lesser-degree of success.

**Dove**-A very good omen. If strife is present, then peace is soon to come. Love, happiness or wedded bliss may be coming soon for somebody. If it's an all-white or mostly-white pigeon, then it can be taken as a good omen, but not as much as if it had been a dove.

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**Duck**-a favorable omen; indicates stability in a relationship. If a duck is quacking, it's a sign of coming prosperity. To see a duck flying over the divining field is a *very* good omen, especially for those who are in trouble or sorrow, for their trouble and sorrow will soon abate.

**Eagle**-Jupiter's own bird, this powerful bird varies as to whether it's a good omen or a bad one. Symbolic of power, strength and leadership, to have an eagle circling overhead in the divining field or alighting on a tree branch can be a harbinger of a promotion, a leadership position, or some great elevation to come. To see one may indicate you'll rise above any current problems and emerge successful. To see an eagle swoop down into the divining field, seize and carry-off some hapless prey can be read as an encouragement to fearlessly seize an opportunity, or it may be a warning that trouble-or a predator-is soon to swoop down on the unsuspecting, and it can happen in an instant, so be watchful at all times!

**Falcon**-an ill-omened bird, to see a falcon in the divining field indicates a sudden disaster can descend on the inquirer like a bolt out of the blue sky. If the falcon is seen or heard on the left side of the divining field, the ill-fortune to come is even more pronounced. As with the eagle, to see the falcon swoop into the divining field, seize and carry off some hapless prey, is a very bad sign.

**Goose**-these vigilant and often-unpleasant birds are a presage of danger and the approach of secret enemies. If they're honking or making any noise while in the divining field, the inquirer should take that as a warning to act cautiously in the coming days.

**Gull**-a mostly-fortunate bird to see. The inquirer may soon travel. If for business, it will be financially-successful. If for pleasure, you'll enjoy yourself. If, however, the seagull brushes against a person with their wings or flaps them in the person's face, then it's an omen of death, likely that of a friend of theirs.

**Hawk**-to see a hawk anywhere in the divining field is warning the observer to be on guard against those more powerful than themselves. If the bird is on the left side of the divining field or, even worse, directly overhead, the subject is in the gravest-possible-danger from cruel and grasping people.

**Hen**-to hear a hen actually *crowing* indicates serious personal illness to come.

**Heron**-a bird of ill-omen, the heron presages hard times ahead. Slim-pickings, if any.

**Hummingbird**-a very fortunate bird, it indicates love, marriage or a pregnancy to come.

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**Jackdaw**-a bird of ill-omen, foretelling serious ill-luck, especially if the bird croaks. See the Crow and the Raven for more details, as these birds are all of similar significance.

**Kestrel**-see the Falcon, for this bird is of like-significance.

**Kingfisher**-a bird of ill-omen, to see a kingfisher threatens scandal and calumny falling down on someone's head, and the public-washing of someone's dirty linen.

**Kite**-a bird of ill-omen, the kite indicates robbery, extortion and financial losses are to come, especially by the person who encounters it.

**Lark**-a good-omen bird, the lark represents love, but is also a predictor of future health or illness. If it alights on a tree branch in the divining area and turns its head from the diviner, then the illness of the sick person being inquired-about will continue for some time, ditto if it's someone recovering from an injury-recovery will be slow. If, however, the lark lands on a tree branch and stares directly at the diviner, recovery will occur soon and quickly.

**Magpie**-a bird of variable omen. A few cultures consider them a good omen, others bad. To see a single magpie especially on the left, is a very unlucky sign, indicating a death to come. Two of these birds in the divining field is *very* lucky, and the luck should come within three days. A flock of magpies flying through the divining field can be interpreted as death coming for somebody, especially for someone in any house they pass-by. To draw an omen from the number of magpies present, the augur can consider the old rhyme concerning these birds:

*One's sorrow, two's mirth, three's a wedding, four's a birth, five's a christening,  
six a dearth, seven's heaven, eight's hell, and nine's the Devil his ane sel'.*

**Owl**-usually an ill-omened bird, but it varies. The owl is traditionally considered a presage of death and disaster, or a harbinger of ominous or portentous news to come. To hear an owl hoot three times in succession is a fearsome sign of very bad luck to come. But the owl *also* symbolizes wisdom, being the Greek Goddess Athena's own bird. So if Athena is one of your patron deities, or you simply feel an affinity for Her, the appearance of an owl can be a sign of Athena's favor and blessing. Or, the owl may simply be indicating that if some matter has you baffled, confused, or left in the dark, like you didn't get the memo when everyone else did, wisdom and enlightenment will soon dawn over the situation, and the missing pieces of the puzzle will fall into place.

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**Oriole**-a bird of good omen. The future will bring happiness and peace.

**Peacock**-to meet a peacock is a happy omen. If he spreads his lavish tail for you, happiness and prosperity are to come. The peacock is the Goddess Juno's own bird, so if you feel an affinity for Her, or are in a committed relationship such as marriage, the appearance of a peacock may be taken as a positive sign of Her favor and blessings. A hero of some kind may come to the rescue.

**Pigeon**-if a white pigeon is seen flying around a house, the engagement or marriage of one of the inhabitants in the near future may be indicated, otherwise, there's no particular significance.

**Quail**-a good-omen bird. If arguments are raging, they'll soon end. A peace will reign in the household. The quail is *so* fortunate an omen, that to see one in the divining area, whether on the left side or the right side, or to hear one calling, can be taken as a positive omen.

**Raven**-a bird of variable omen. See both the Crow and the Magpie, because the same meanings apply. Some cultures consider the raven to be the most-prophetic of all birds. The raven is the God Odin's own bird. If Odin is a patron deity for you, or if you feel an affinity for Him, the Raven could be a sign of His favor and blessing. Ravens also report back to Odin what they see and hear; they serve as His spies. Therefore, to see a Raven in the divining field could indicate someone is being watched, and their words and activities are being reported back to the authorities. Be cautious and observant; a negative report could have serious repercussions later on.

**Robin**-a good omen of a happy home life. To see a robin near a house or in a garden is an omen of good fortune to those who dwell within, or nearby.

**Rook**-see Crow, Magpie, Raven, etc.

**Sparrow**-when seen in the divining area, it is a good omen for lovers and assures domestic tranquility, but as a *general* omen, the sparrow is considered *unfortunate*.

**Stork**-a fairly-positive bird, Roman augurs considered it not just a lucky bird, but the most-auspicious bird of all. It hints that the future will largely be positive, and children may be involved. In some parts of Europe, storks are encouraged to build their nests on houses, as they are considered a bird of good-omen for the household.

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**Swallow**-a bird of good-omen, and considered a highly-fortunate bird to see in the divining area, whether it's perched on a tree branch or flying to the right. It presages joy in the future. This bird represents spring, regeneration, birth, re-birth or awakening.

**Vulture**-a bird of very ill-omen, but not seen in many places. To encounter a vulture, especially in the divining field, foretells the death of a friend or acquaintance, but it may also be taken to indicate the death of an idea, relationship, agreement, ambition, or project. The number of vultures present indicate how many days will elapse before the death occurs.

**Wagtail**-a bird of good-omen, to have a wagtail land in the divining field is a lucky sign, especially if this bird is walking toward you from the left (even though the left side is traditionally considered the 'bad' side).

**Woodpecker**-this often-unwelcome and destructive bird is actually considered a fortunate bird. To have one enter the divining field is considered to be an omen of success, possibly as the reward for patient effort.

**Wren**-this charming little brown bird is considered by some to be the luckiest of birds, and to have one enter the divining field is considered a sign of good luck to come.

### A Final Word:

This is not intended to be a comprehensive list. The birds you may see when you practice ornithomancy will depend on the sort of birds which inhabit your part of the world. When divining-by-bird, draw on your knowledge of what the species of bird is known-for. What are it's habits? What folklore surrounds this bird? What are your personal experiences with this bird? Such details will help you discern what the bird's appearance means for you.