

# How to Draw Birds



A brief guide by  
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## 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 its 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 let's 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 that can be obliging.

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



## So let's 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, it's 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.

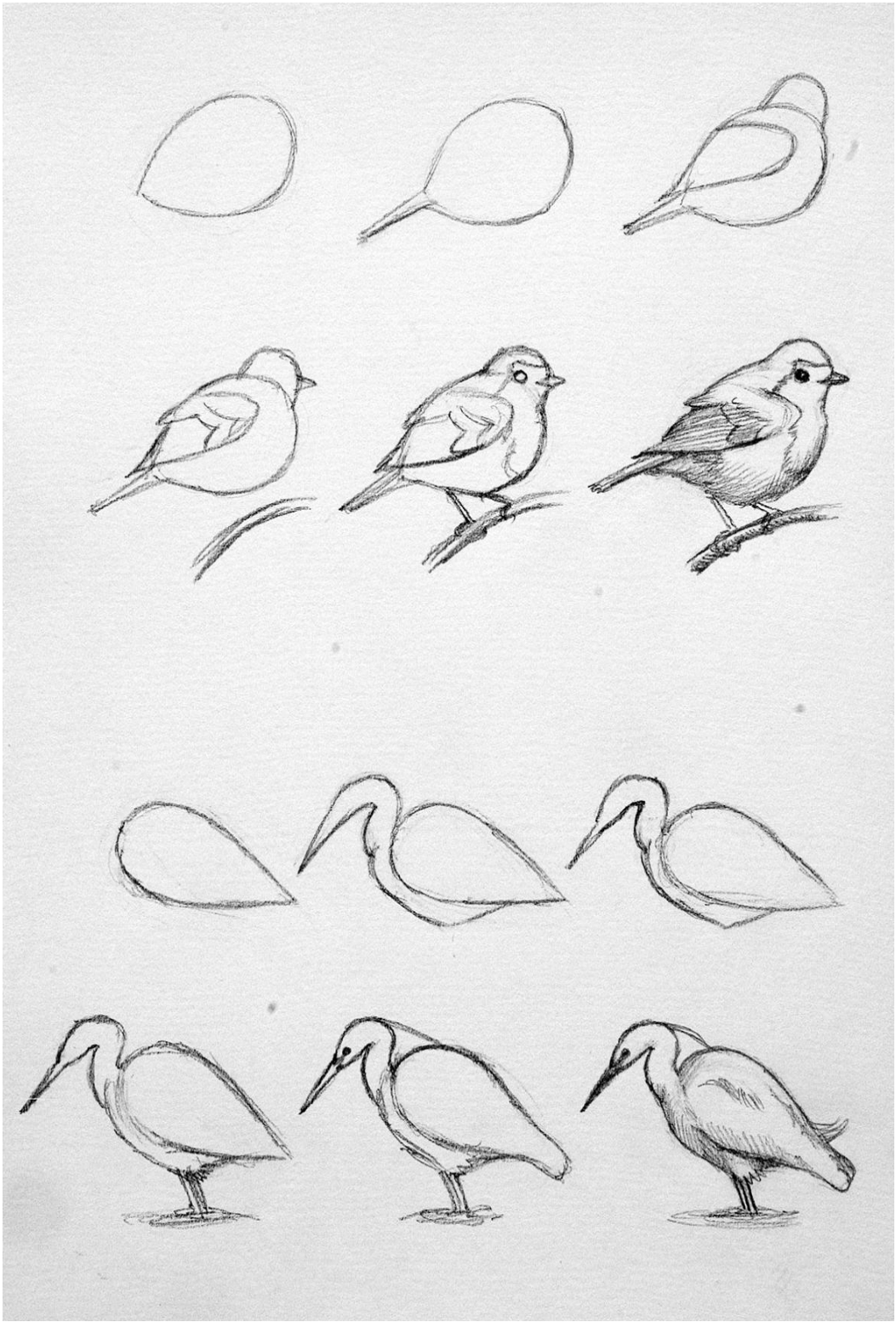
Next you can start on the detail but before you do so you can erase any unwanted lines, otherwise it will be difficult once all the details are in place. Now you can render in some shading, this will give it a more three dimensional appearance.



*Collard Dove*

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

First here is an overview of the process.

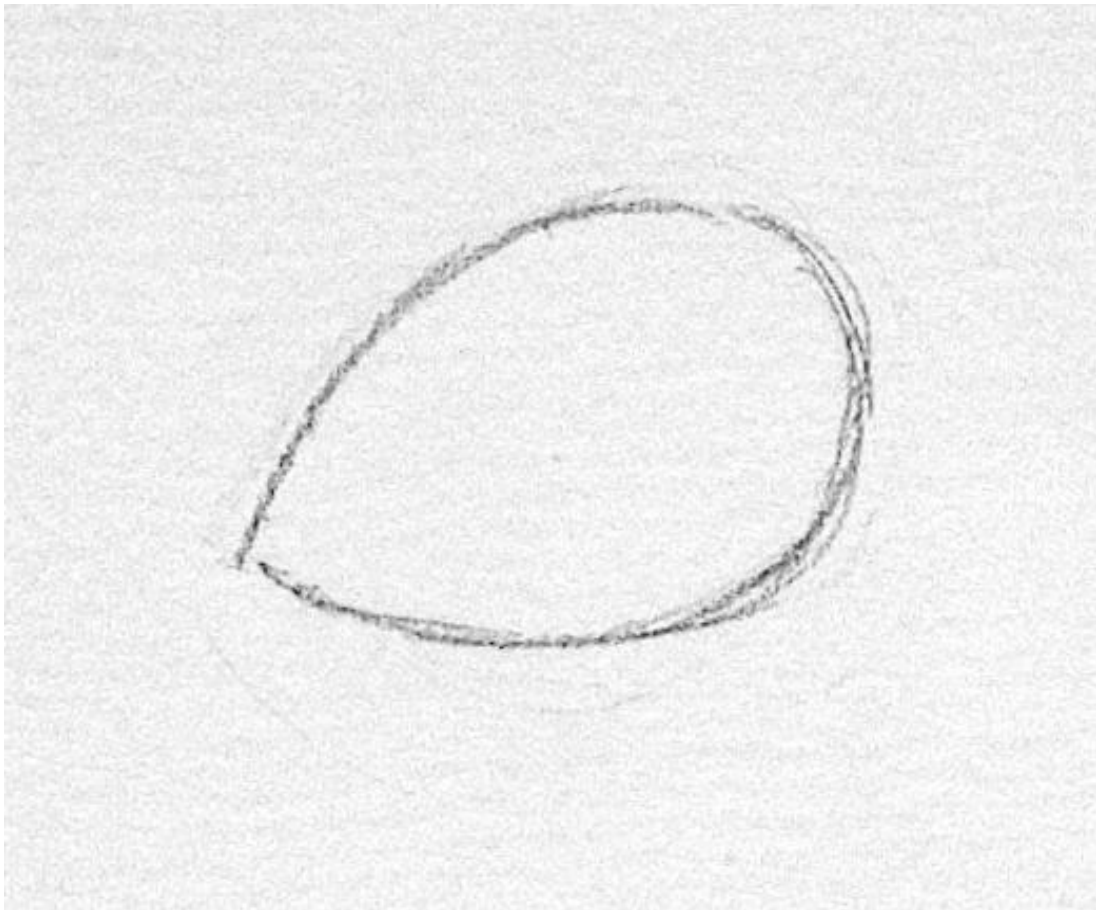




# **This first example is of a robin.**

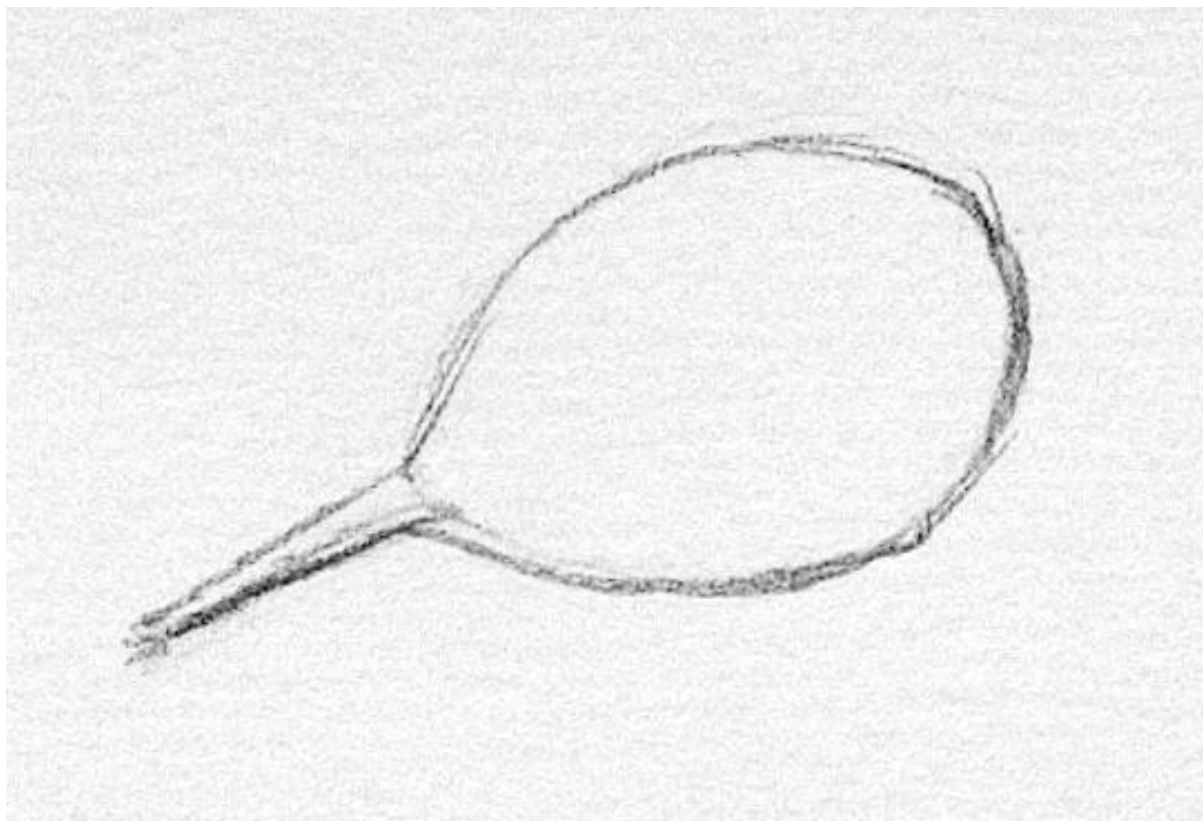
## **Stage One**

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

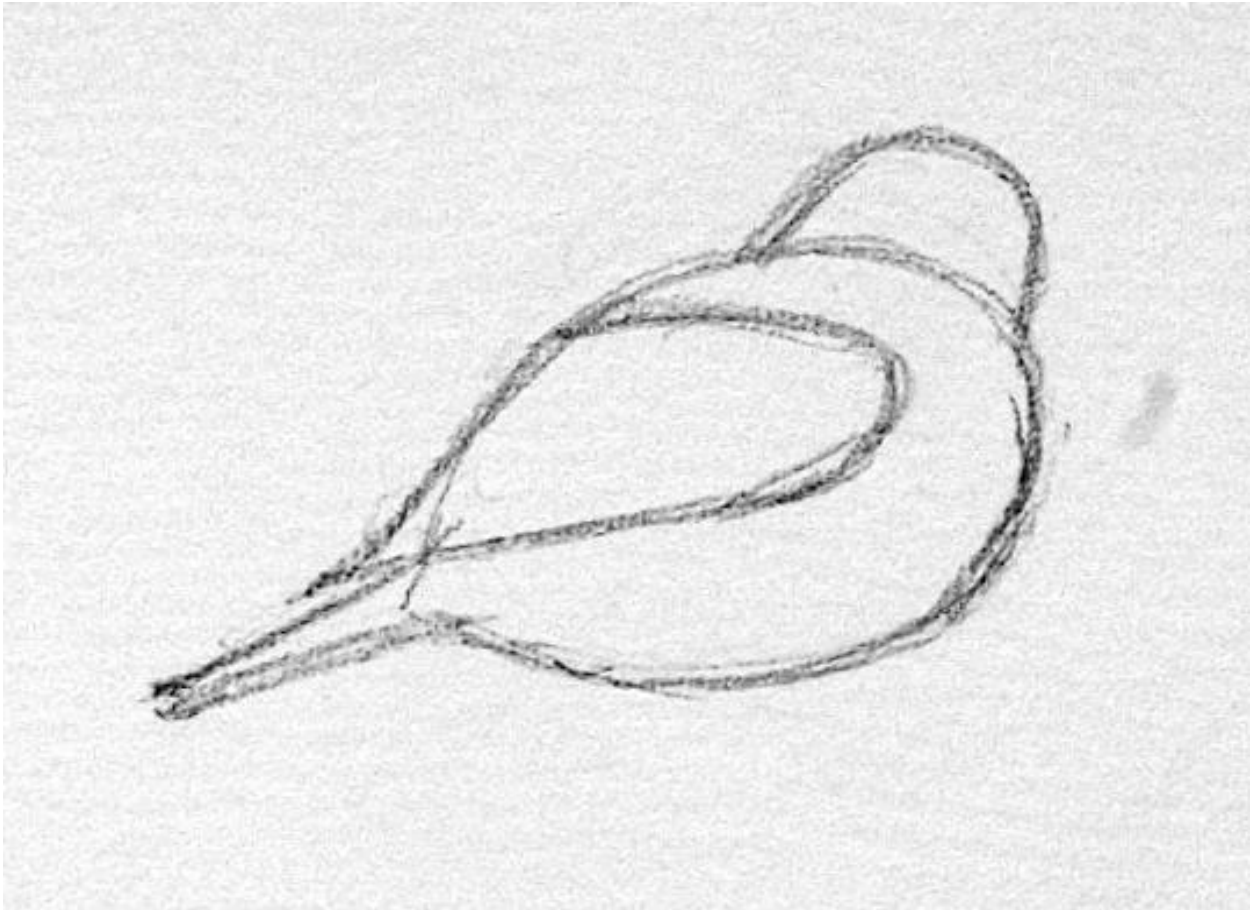
I have now added the basic shape of the tail.



### **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.

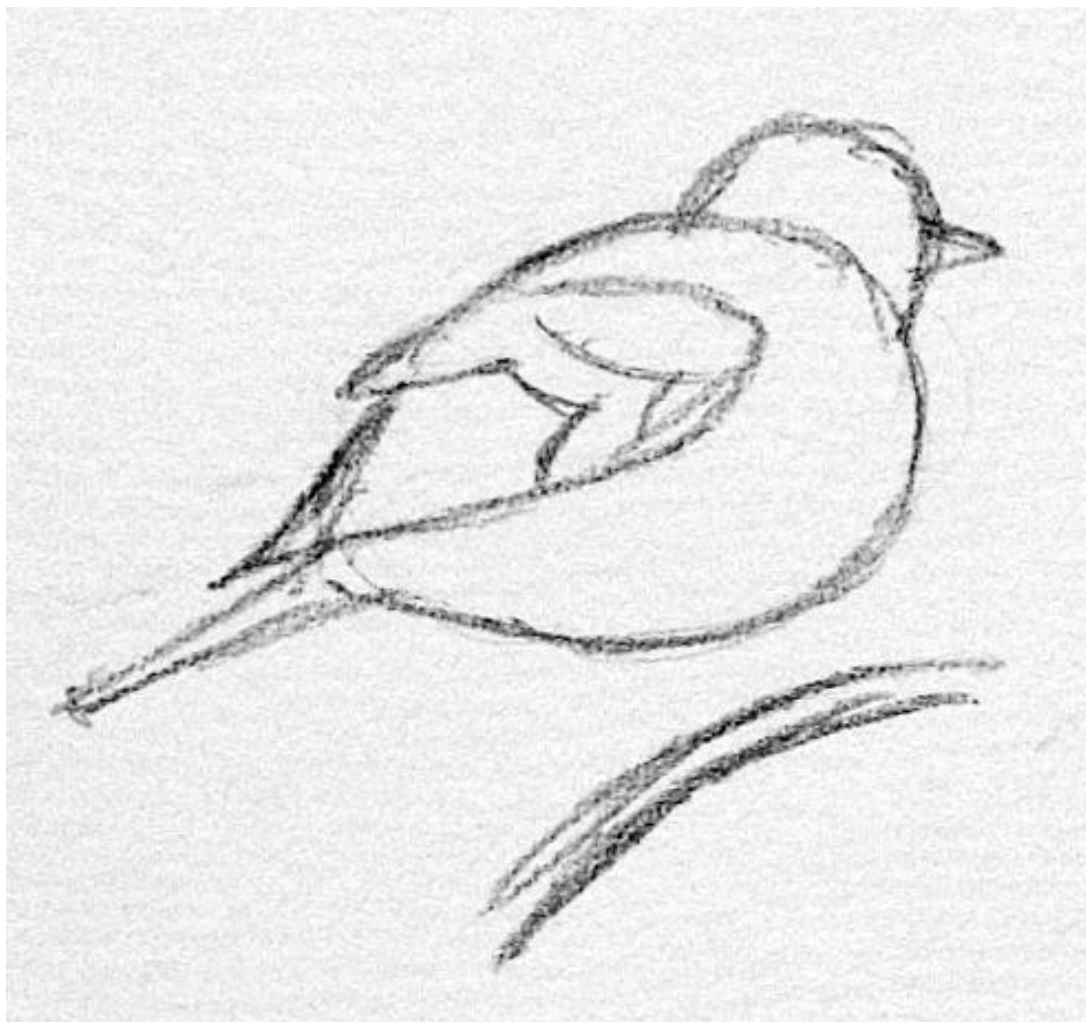
Measuring one shape against another will help you get shapes the right size.





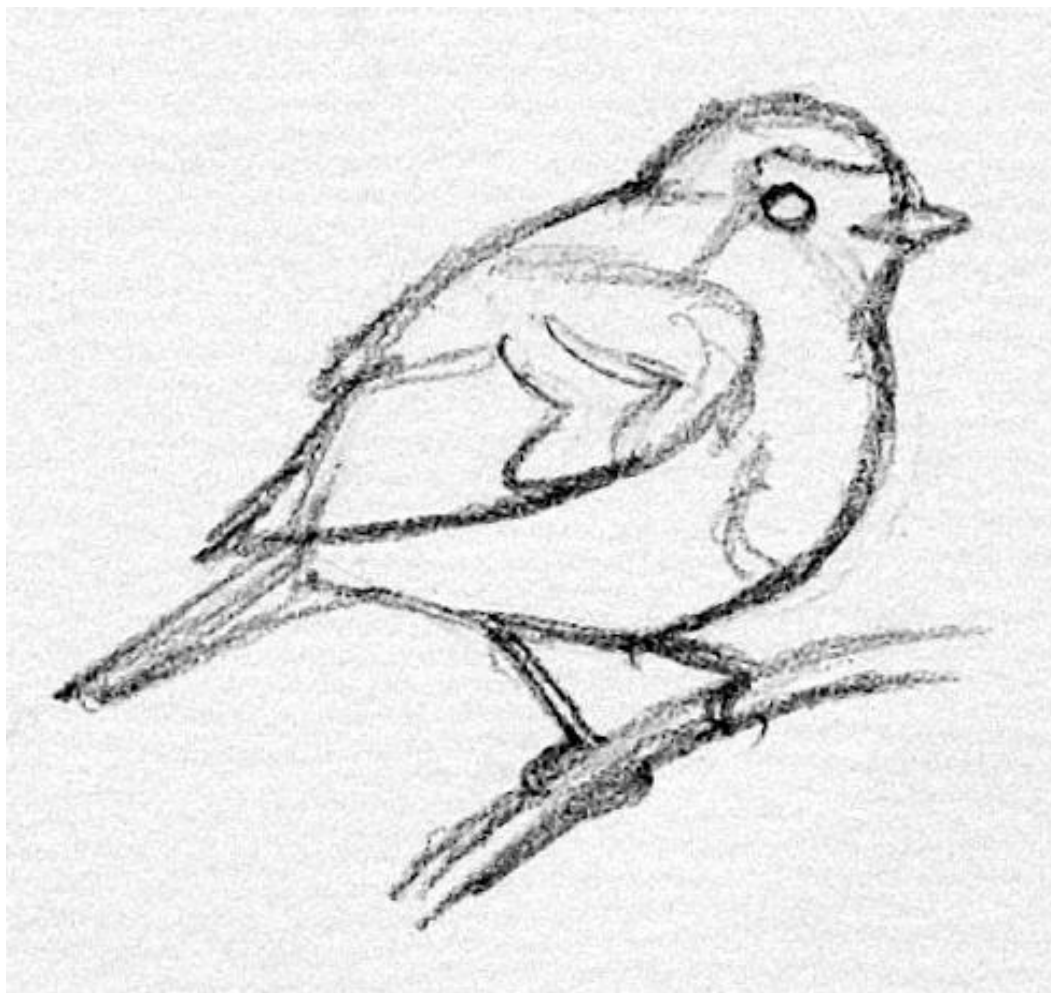
## Stage Four

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



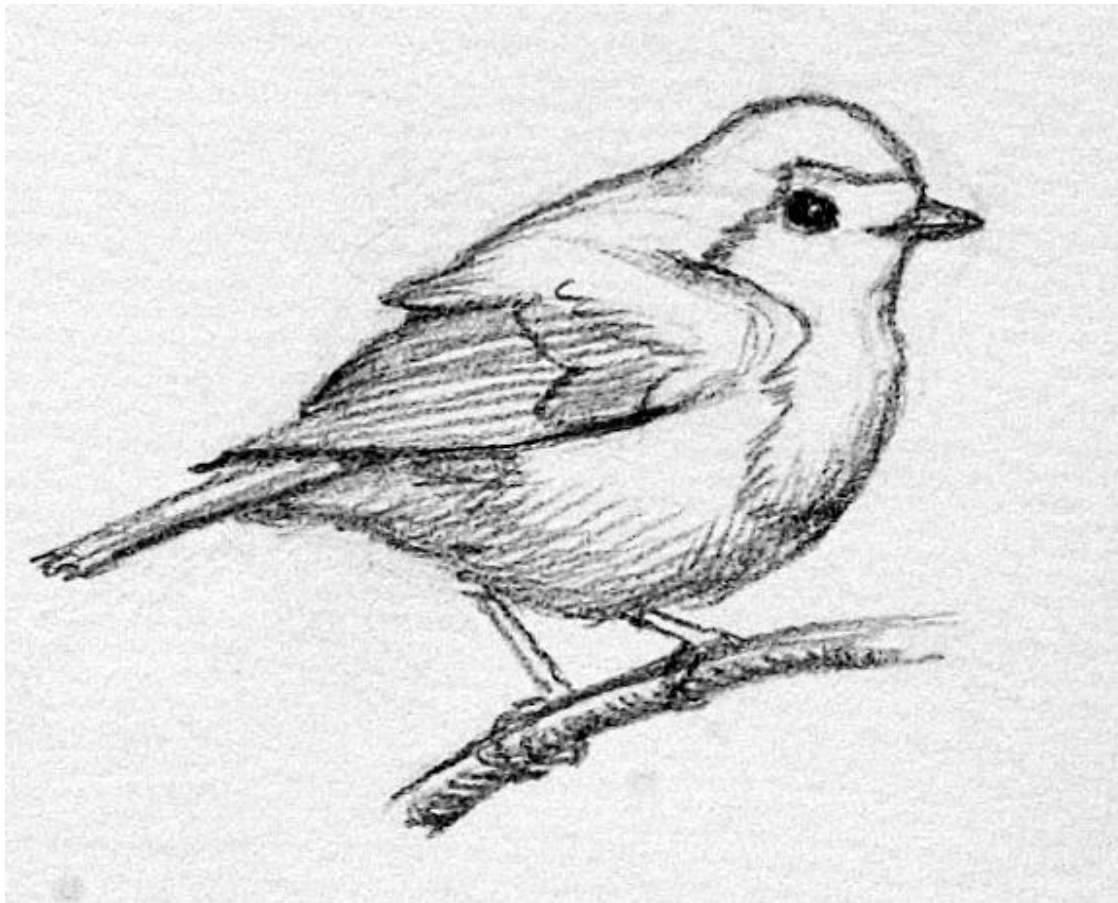
### **Stage Five**

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



## **Stage Six**

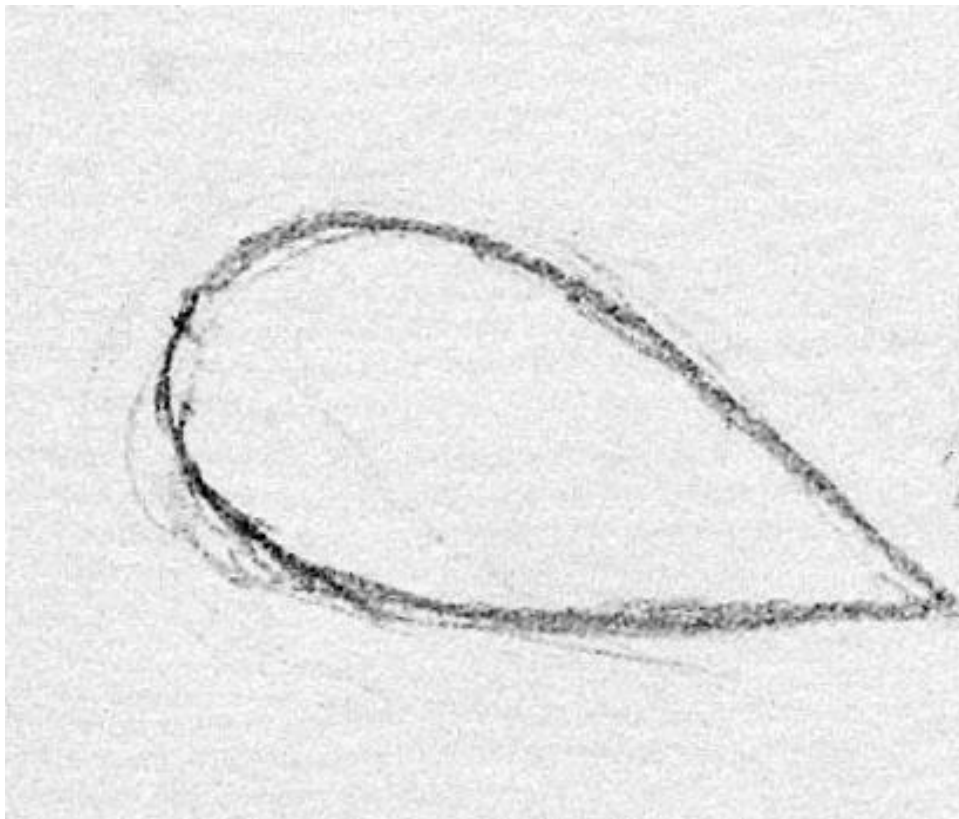
This is my final stage, I have lightly rubbed out the pencil lines so that I can put in the detail like the feathers on the wing. I have also added shading to give the bird form.



**The second example is an egret to reinforce the principles.**

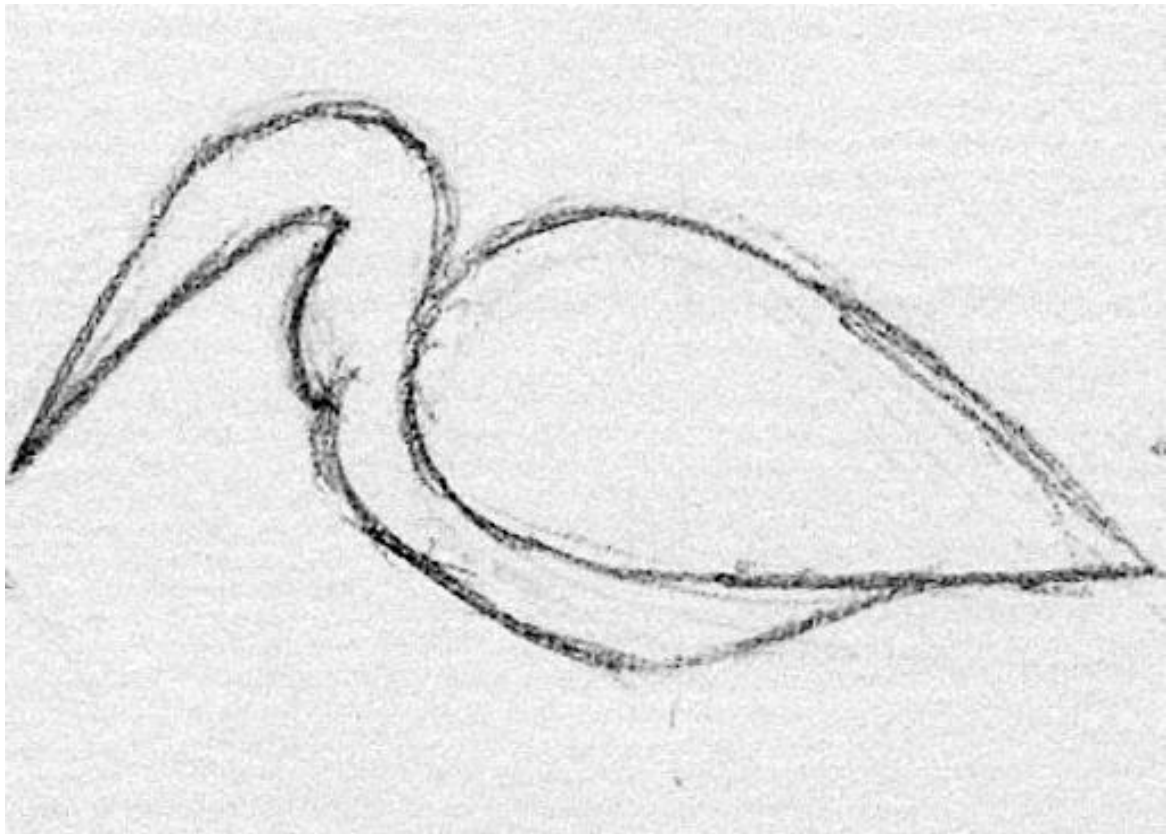
**Stage One**

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



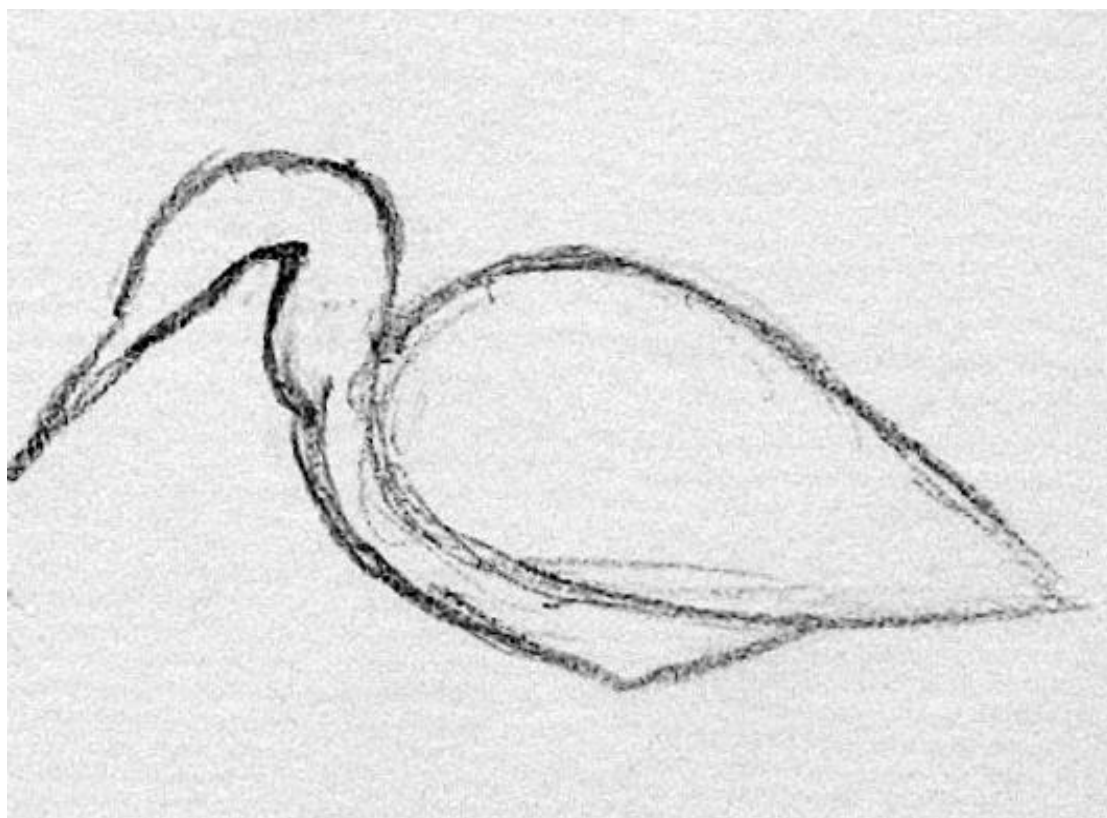
## Stage Two

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**

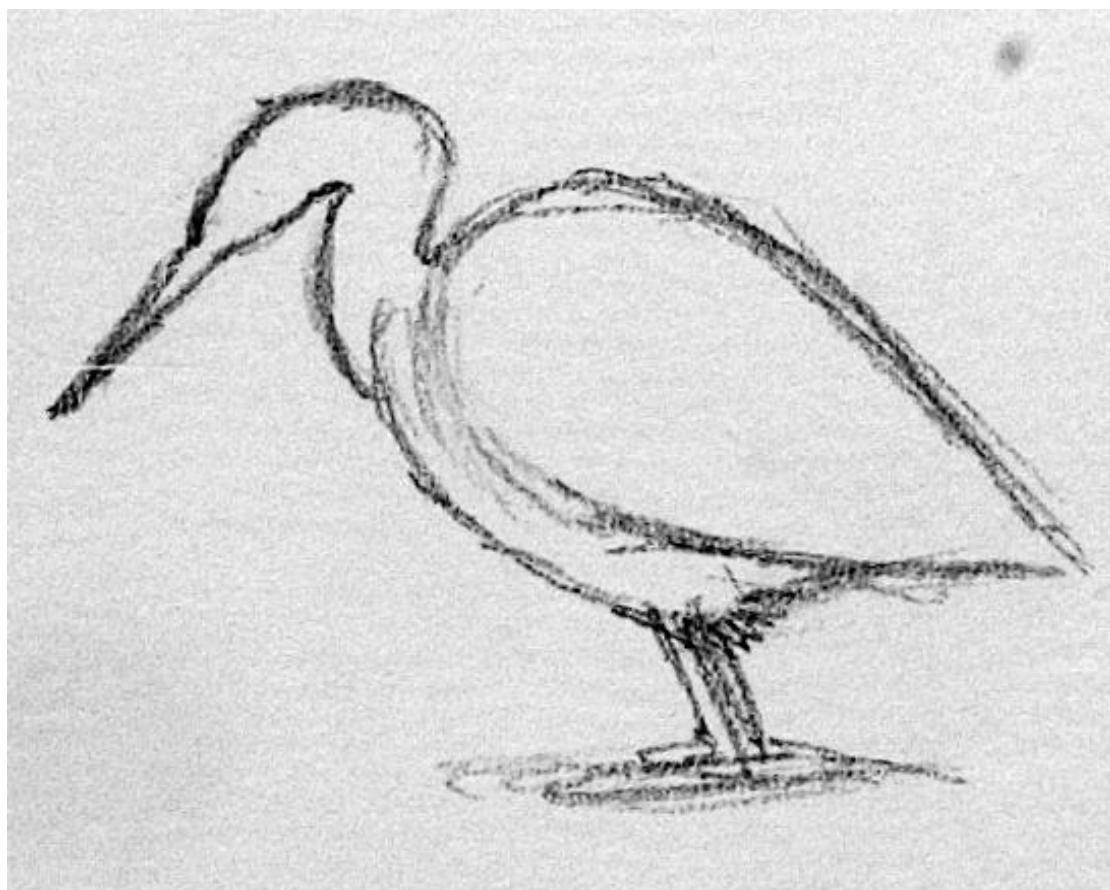
Next I have added shape to the head.





### **Stage Four**

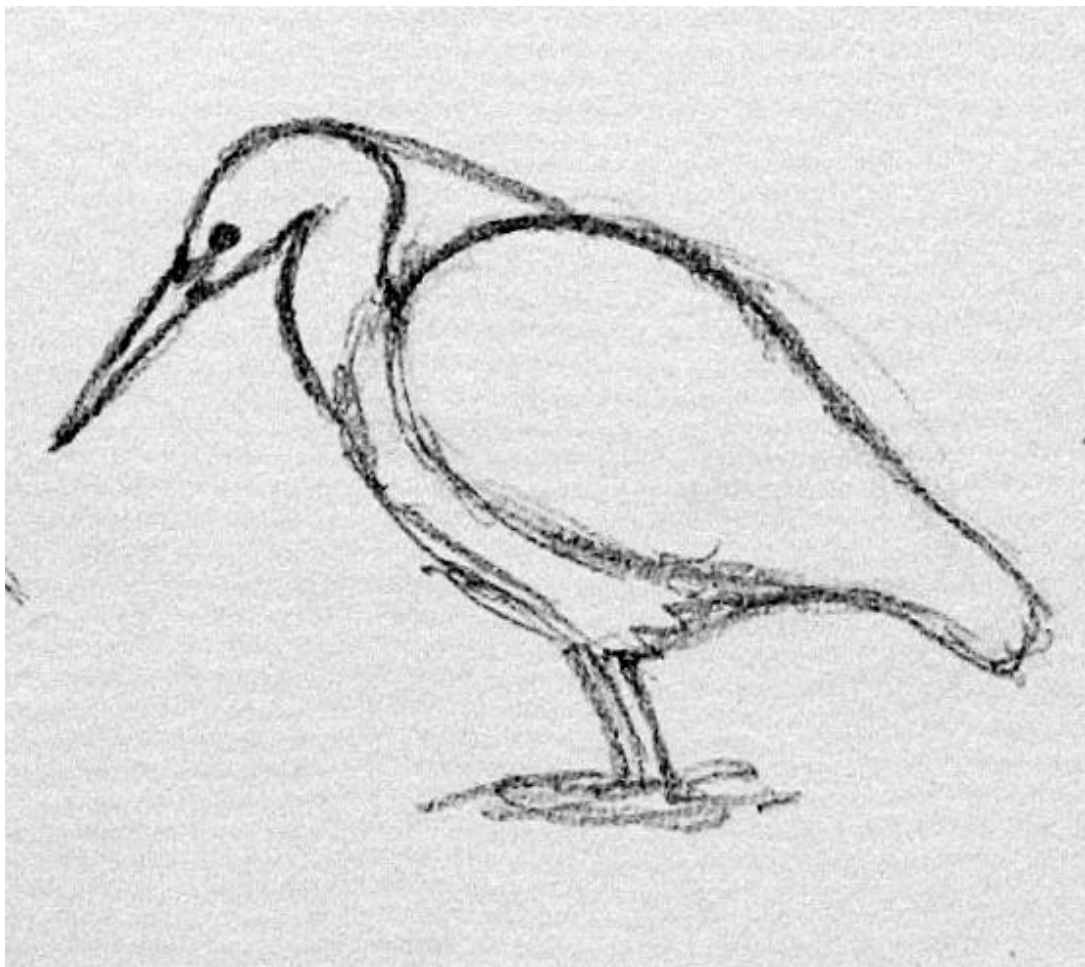
Legs have now been added and some ripples to indicate the water it's standing in.



### **Stage Five**

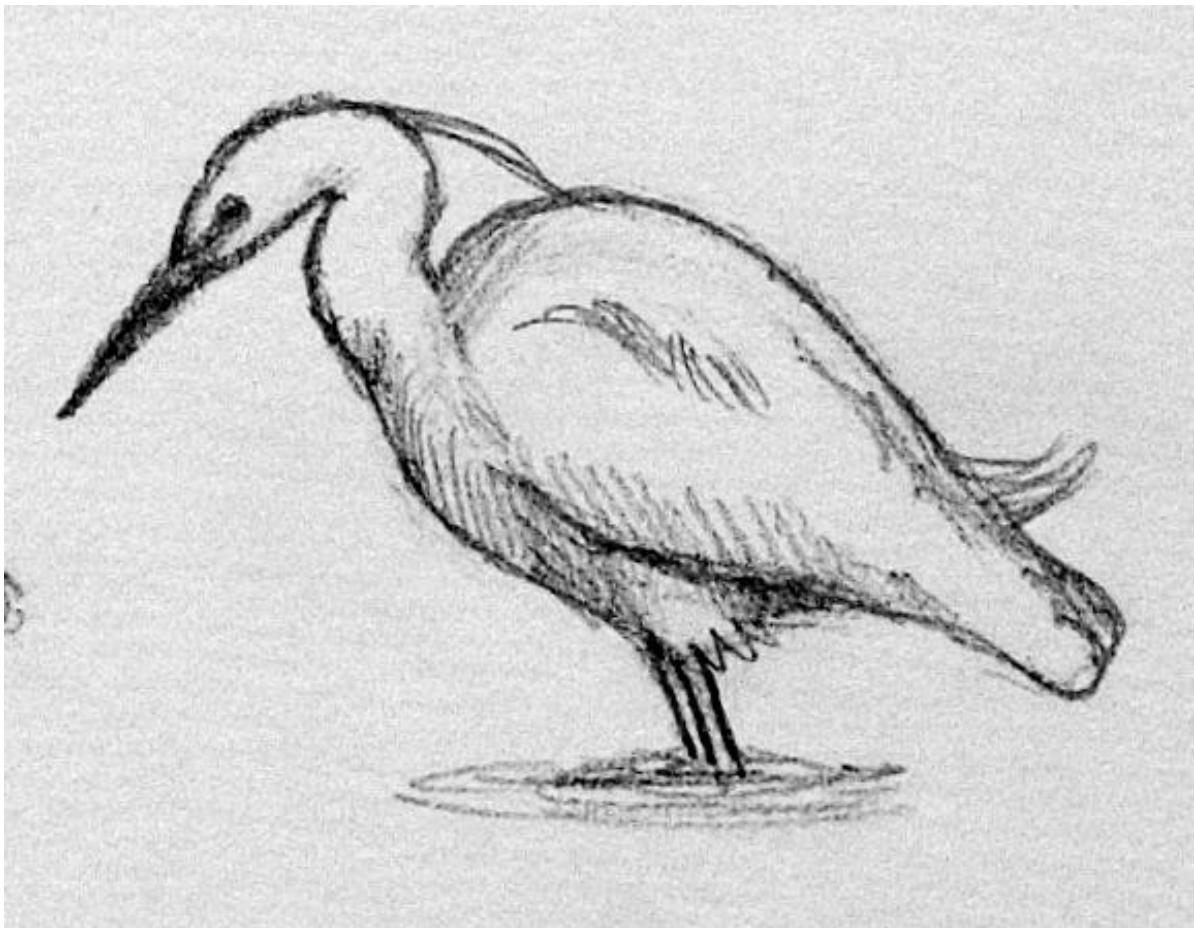
Here I have now begun to add shape to the basic shapes, the eye and head feathers have also been added.

Now we are 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 yourself!

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

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