

# Common Birds of Houston, Texas

Houston Audubon Society



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# Cattle Egret

Bitterns, Herons and Egrets (Ardeidae)

Species	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	Length	19 - 21 in	Weight	11.9 oz	Wingspan	36 - 38 in
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**General** Cattle Egret: Medium, stocky egret with white body and pale orange-brown patches on head, neck and back. Eyes, bill and legs are orange. This is the only white egret with both a yellow bill and yellow legs. Feeds primarily on insects disturbed by livestock. Direct flight on quick steady wing beats.

**Foraging and Feeding** Cattle Egret: Eats mostly grasshoppers, crickets, spiders, flies, frogs, and moths. Commonly associates with livestock or large wild game, feeding on insects disturbed by grazing; also follows tractors in fields. Forages in small groups or singly, walking in a steady strut, darting forward and stabbing quickly with bill to catch prey.

**Breeding and Nesting** Cattle Egret: One to nine pale blue or blue green eggs are laid in a nest made of sticks and vegetation; nests in colonies and sometimes reuses an old nest; often steals materials from neighbors. Eggs are incubated for approximately 24 days by both parents.

**Flight Pattern** Direct flight with rapid wing beats.

**Similar Species** Cattle Egret: Great Egret and white phase Great Blue Heron are much larger. Snowy Egret and immature Little Blue Heron have dark or bi-colored bills.



**Song** "rick-rack"

**Range and Habitat** Cattle Egret: Breeds throughout much of the U.S.; less dependent on aquatic habitats than other egrets, preferring grassy fields.



Length Range: 48 - 53 cm (19 - 21 in)  
 Weight: 337 g (11.9 oz)  
 Back Pattern: Solid  
 Belly Pattern: Solid  
 Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Colonial

North American population increasing

# Great Blue Heron

Bitterns, Herons and Egrets (Ardeidae)

Species	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	Length	46 - 52 in	Weight	91.2 oz	Wingspan	77 - 82 in
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**General** Great Blue Heron: Large, elegant heron with blue-gray back, black sides, and gray-and-white striped belly. Long neck is gray with black-bordered white throat stripe. Head has white face, cap, and black crest. Upper mandible is dark, while lower mandible is yellow. Direct flight on steady wing beats.

**Foraging and Feeding** Great Blue Heron: Diet consists of fish, frogs, salamanders, lizards, snakes, shrimps, crabs, crayfish, dragonflies, grasshoppers, and aquatic insects; forages while wading, often belly-deep, impaling prey with its sharp, spear-like bill; active night and day.

**Breeding and Nesting** Great Blue Heron: Two to seven pale blue or blue green eggs are laid on a shallow platform of sticks lined with finer material, usually built in a tree but sometimes on the ground, or concealed in a reed bed; often nests in colonies. Incubation ranges from 25 to 30 days and is carried out by both adults.

**Flight Pattern** Direct flight with slow steady wing beats.

**Similar Species** Great Blue Heron: Sandhill Crane is larger, has red cap, dark bill, and does not fold neck in flight. White phase is distinguished from other white egrets by its larger size and combination of yellow bill and yellow legs.



**Song** "kraak", "fraunk", "ar"

**Range and Habitat** Great Blue Heron: Breeds locally from coastal Alaska, south-central Canada, and Nova Scotia south to Mexico and West Indies. Spends winters as far north as southern Alaska, central U.S., and southern New England. Preferred habitats include lakes, ponds, rivers, and marshes.



Length Range: 117 - 132 cm (46 - 52 in)  
 Weight: 2586 g (91.2 oz)  
 Back Pattern: Solid  
 Belly Pattern: Solid  
 Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Colonial

Widespread, Stable and common



# Great Egret

Bitterns, Herons and Egrets (Ardeidae)

Species	<i>Ardea alba</i>	Length	37 - 41 in	Weight	32 oz	Wingspan	55 in
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**General** Great Egret: Large, white heron with yellow eyes. Bill is yellow, may appear orange when breeding. Black legs and feet. Long feather plumes extend from the back to beyond the tail during breeding season. Feeds on fish, frogs, insects, snakes and crayfish. Buoyant direct flight on steady wing beats.

**Foraging and Feeding** Great Egret: Feeds mainly on crayfish, shrimp, aquatic insects, frogs, fish, crabs, and snails. Occasionally eats lizards, snakes, salamanders, mice, and moles; forages while wading.

**Breeding and Nesting** Great Egret: One to six pale blue or blue green eggs are laid in a nest constructed of sticks, twigs, and stems of marsh plants, with little or no lining, and built in a medium-sized tree 20 to 40 feet above the ground; often nests in colonies. Incubation ranges from 23 to 26 days and is carried out by both parents.

**Flight Pattern** Buoyant direct flight with deep steady wing beats.

**Similar Species** Great Egret: Snowy Egret is smaller with black bill and legs, and yellow feet. In southern Florida, the white form of the Great Blue Heron is larger and has yellow legs.



**Song** "kroow"

**Range and Habitat** Great Egret: Breeds locally from Oregon south to western Mexico and from Minnesota to the Mississippi Valley and southeast U.S.; also occurs along the Atlantic coast north to southern New England. Spends winters regularly from Oregon south through the southwest, Texas, and Gulf coast states to Mexico, and on the Atlantic coast north to New Jersey. Preferred habitats include fresh and salt marshes, marshy ponds, and tidal flats.



Length Range: 94 - 104 cm (37 - 41 in)  
 Weight: 907 g (32 oz)  
 Back Pattern: Solid  
 Belly Pattern: Solid  
 Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Colonial

Expanding northward

# Snowy Egret

Bitterns, Herons and Egrets (Ardeidae)

Species	<i>Egretta thula</i>	Length	22 - 27 in	Weight	13.1 oz	Wingspan	38 - 45 in
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**General** Snowy Egret: Medium-sized, totally white egret with a long slender black bill with yellow lores. The eyes are yellow and legs are black while feet are bright yellow. The head, neck and back have long, lacy plumes during breeding season. Generally silent and feeds on crustaceans, insects, and fish.

**Foraging and Feeding** Snowy Egret: Eats small fish, crustaceans, and insects, but also takes small reptiles and amphibians; forages by walking slowly or standing motionless in water and striking at prey.

**Breeding and Nesting** Snowy Egret: Lays two to six pale blue-green eggs in a platform nest built primarily of twigs and built in a tree, usually about 7 feet above the ground; occasionally nests in marsh grass and rarely on the ground. Both parents incubate eggs for 18 days.

**Flight Pattern** Buoyant flight with steady fast wing beats.

**Similar Species** Snowy Egret: Great Egret and "Great White" Heron are larger with thicker, yellow bills. Cattle Egret is smaller with yellow or orange bill and pale legs. Reddish Egret and Juvenile Little Blue Heron have dark-tipped pale bills and gray legs.



SNOWY EGRET

**Song** "wulla-wulla-wulla"

**Range and Habitat** Snowy Egret: Breeds locally from Oregon and California east to New England, mainly along coasts. Spends winters regularly from California, Arizona, and Virginia south to the West Indies and South America. Preferred habitats include marshes, ponds, swamps, and mudflats.



Length Range: 56 - 69 cm (22 - 27 in)  
 Weight: 371 g (13.1 oz)  
 Back Pattern: Solid  
 Belly Pattern: Solid  
 Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Colonial

Expanding northward, Increasing

# Yellow-crowned Night-Heron

Bitterns, Herons and Egrets (Ardeidae)

Species	<i>Nyctanassa violacea</i>	Length	22 - 28 in	Weight	25.6 oz	Wingspan	42 - 44 in
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**General** Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: Medium-sized, stocky heron with gray body and brown-and-white mottled wings. Face is black and white; crown is pale yellow and sweeps back as a plume. Eyes are large and red. Bill is heavy and black. Legs and feet are yellow. Direct flight with steady, deep wing beats.

**Foraging and Feeding** Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: Food consists primarily of crustaceans, but also eats small fish, reptiles, amphibians, eels, insects, and mollusks; forages in open water, mud flats, and in partially submerged vegetation.

**Breeding and Nesting** Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: Two to eight pale blue green eggs are laid in a nest made of sticks built in a tree or occasionally on the ground; nests singly or in small colonies, sometimes with other heron species. Incubation ranges from 21 to 25 days and is carried out by both parents.

**Flight Pattern** Direct flight with deep steady wing beats.

**Similar Species** Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: Adults are distinct; juvenile is distinguished from American Bittern by pale spotting on upperwing, red eye, lack of black neck spot, and stouter bill. Juvenile Black-crowned Night-Heron has larger spots, more slender, longer bill, and shorter legs.



**Song** Generally silent

**Range and Habitat** Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: Breeds from southern New England to Florida and west to Texas, mainly near coasts but in the interior north to Minnesota and along Mississippi River and its larger tributaries. Spends winters along the Gulf Coast and on Atlantic coast north to South Carolina. Preferred habitats include wooded swamps and coastal thickets.



Length Range: 56 - 71 cm (22 - 28 in)  
Weight: 726 g (25.6 oz)  
Back Pattern: Striped or streaked  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Solitary nester

Stable



# Black Vulture

Vultures (Cathartidae)

Species	<i>Coragyps atratus</i>	Length	23 - 27 in	Weight	76.8 oz	Wingspan	54 - 60 in
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**General** Black Vulture: Large raptor, black overall, short, featherless neck, pale bill, short and squared tail, long, pale gray legs and feet. Gray-black skin on head and neck is wrinkled. White-tipped wings, held horizontal in flight. Soars on thermals, must flap its wings more often than a Turkey Vulture.

**Foraging and Feeding** Black Vulture: Diet consists primarily of carrion. Sometimes attacks and kills prey.

**Breeding and Nesting** Black Vulture: Two blue to gray-green eggs marked with brown and lavender are laid in a cave, hollow log, stump, tree trunk, or abandoned building, with no nest materials added. Incubation ranges from 37 to 48 days and is carried out by both parents.

**Flight Pattern** Soars on thermals. Several quick deep wing beats followed by a glide.

**Similar Species** Black Vulture: Turkey Vulture has bare red head, long rectangular tail, and 2-toned wings from below (black in front with silver-gray trailing edge), and hold wings in shallow "V" when soaring.



**Song** Generally silent

**Range and Habitat** Black Vulture: Resident in southeastern U.S. and Texas, south to the tropics; preferred habitats include open country, but breeds in woodlands and thickets.



Length Range: 58 - 69 cm (23 - 27 in)  
Weight: 2177 g (76.8 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Colonial

Fairly common to common

# Turkey Vulture

Vultures (Cathartidae)

Species	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	Length	26 - 32 in	Weight	51.2 oz	Wingspan	68 - 72 in
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**General** Turkey Vulture: Medium vulture, mostly black with red, featherless head and upper neck. Wings are held in a shallow V in flight. One of the few birds of prey that is able to use its sense of smell to find food. They are attracted to the smell of mercaptan, a gas produced by the beginnings of decay.

**Foraging and Feeding** Turkey Vulture: Feeds on carrion; forages by soaring, finding animal carcasses by sight or smell.

**Breeding and Nesting** Turkey Vulture: One to three creamy white eggs, often marked with brown, are laid in a rock crevice, hollow tree, or fallen hollow log, with no nest materials added. Incubation ranges from 38 to 41 days and is carried out by both parents.

**Flight Pattern** Circles with wings in shallow V.

**Similar Species** Turkey Vulture: Black Vulture is smaller with dark head, and glides with wings held horizontally. Bald and Golden eagles are both superficially similar, but fly on flat wings, have feathered heads, and do not have contrastingly gray flight feathers.



**Song** Generally silent

**Range and Habitat** Turkey Vulture: Breeds from southern British Columbia, central Saskatchewan, the Great Lakes, and New Hampshire southward. Spends winters in the Southwest and eastern U.S. northward to southern New England. Preferred habitats include deciduous forests, woodlands, and scrublands; often seen over adjacent farmlands.



Length Range: 66 - 81 cm (26 - 32 in)  
Weight: 1452 g (51.2 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous

# Osprey

Osprey (Pandionidae)

Species	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Length	21 - 24 in	Weight	49.6 oz	Wingspan	54 - 72 in
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**General** Osprey: Large raptor, dark brown upperparts contrast with white underparts, faint breast band. Small, white head has dark crown, eyestripe. Dark bill. Wings held at a distinct angle in flight, with underwing showing barred flight feathers and diagnostic dark patches on forewing. Gray legs and feet.

**Foraging and Feeding** Osprey: Feeds exclusively on fish, usually twice daily, in mid-morning and late afternoon. Forages by flying over water, hovering once prey is spotted, then diving into the water feet-first to grasp prey; sometimes lays on the water and rests, but eventually takes off to find a perch to eat its meal.

**Breeding and Nesting** Osprey: Three pink or white eggs, marked with olive and brown, are laid in a bulky nest made of sticks built in a large tree; sometimes nests in loose colonies. Incubation ranges from 35 to 40 days and is carried out by both parents.

**Flight Pattern** Sometimes soars on thermals. Deep, slow wing beats alternate with glides.

**Similar Species** Osprey: Bald Eagle is larger with an entirely white head and tail, and dark underparts and underwings.



**Song** "chewk-chewk-chewk"

**Range and Habitat** Osprey: Worldwide distribution except Antarctica; found near large bodies of water.



Length Range: 53 - 61 cm (21 - 24 in)  
Weight: 1406 g (49.6 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Striped or streaked

Monogamous

Common in coastal range, uncommon inland.



# Bald Eagle

Kites, Eagles and Hawks (Accipitridae)

Species	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Length	34 - 43 in	Weight	168 oz	Wingspan	72 - 96 in
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**General Bald Eagle:** Large, hawk-like bird, dark brown body and white head, tail. Heavy bill, legs, feet, eyes are yellow. Hunts for fish, which it sometimes steals from ospreys. Eats carrion and crippled or injured squirrels, rabbits, muskrats and waterfowl. Flap-and-glide flight, also soars on thermals.

**Foraging and Feeding Bald Eagle:** Feeds primarily on fish, which they catch themselves, find dead, or steal from other birds such as ospreys; also feeds on carrion or live prey including waterfowl, other birds, turtles, and rabbits. Road-killed deer are a favorite and leads to many eagles being hit by cars.

**Breeding and Nesting Bald Eagle:** Builds a huge stick nest (sometimes weighing over 1 ton), usually about 6 feet in diameter and more than 6 feet tall, near the top of large tree near a river or lake. Female lays two dull white to light blue eggs. Both parents incubate eggs for 35 days. Young grow quickly and leave the nest between 10 and 12 weeks of age.

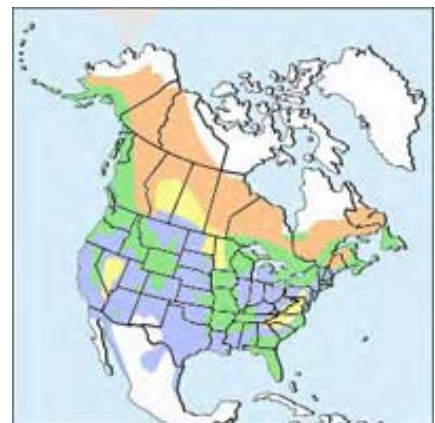
**Flight Pattern** Several deep wing beats alternate with long glides. Direct flight with deep steady wing beats. Soars on thermals.

**Similar Species Bald Eagle:** Golden Eagle has less massive bill, less blotchy white on underwings and underparts, and has golden feathers on head. Steller's Eagle has a long, wedge-shaped white tail and white thighs and shoulders.



**Song** "kleek-kik-ik-ik", "kak-kak-kak"

**Range and Habitat Bald Eagle:** Formerly distributed across most of North America; now limited to breeding in Alaska, Canada, northern Great Lakes states, Gulf coast states, and the Pacific northwest. Move south from northern breeding grounds during winters. Preferred habitats include open water areas that support large numbers of waterfowl or fish.



Length Range: 86 - 109 cm (34 - 43 in)  
 Weight: 4763 g (168 oz)  
 Back Pattern: Solid  
 Belly Pattern: Solid  
 Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Solitary nester

Fairly common to common, Local outside FL & AK



# Cooper's Hawk

Kites, Eagles and Hawks (Accipitridae)

Species	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	Length	14 - 21 in	Weight	12.3 oz	Wingspan	27 - 36 in
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**General** Cooper's Hawk: Medium, agile hawk with dark blue-gray back and white underparts with many fine rufous bars. Cap is darker than upperparts. Eyes are red. The tail is long with thick black-and-white bands. Legs and feet are yellow. Alternates rapid wing beats and short glides, often soars on thermals.

**Foraging and Feeding** Cooper's Hawk: Feeds mostly on birds, but also takes small mammals. Perches, waits, and quickly swoops down to seize prey; also pursues prey on the ground, half running, and half flying; known for raiding poultry yards.

**Breeding and Nesting** Cooper's Hawk: Lays four to five brown spotted, pale blue or green eggs in a stick nest high in a deciduous tree, usually 20 to 60 feet above the ground; returns to the same area to nest year after year. Female incubates eggs for approximately 28 days however, male has been known to assist.

**Flight Pattern** Soars on thermals. Rapid wing beats followed by short glide.

**Similar Species** Cooper's Hawk: Sharp-shinned Hawk has shorter, notched tail, smaller head, and less contrast between back and crown.



**Song** "kac-kac-kac", "kuck, kuck kuck, kuck"

**Range and Habitat** Cooper's Hawk:

Breeds from southern Canada to southern U.S. Prefers patchy deciduous and mixed forests.



Length Range: 36 - 53 cm (14 - 21 in)  
Weight: 349 g (12.3 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Barred or banded  
Breast Pattern: Barred or banded

Monogamous. Solitary nester

Uncommon to rare, Stable or increasing in most areas

# Red-shouldered Hawk

Kites, Eagles and Hawks (Accipitridae)

Species	<i>Buteo lineatus</i>	Length	17 - 24 in	Weight	17.6 oz	Wingspan	32 - 50 in
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**General** Red-shouldered Hawk: Large hawk with brown upperparts and head. Underparts are white with rust-red barring. The wings are finely barred above with red-brown shoulders and pale below with red-brown wash and dark tips. Tail is dark with thick white bands.

**Foraging and Feeding** Red-shouldered Hawk: Diet of consists of small mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and large insects. Hunts while perched or soaring.

**Breeding and Nesting** Red-shouldered Hawk: Two to six brown marked, white to blue eggs are laid in a large stick nest lined with finer materials and built in a tree. Eggs are incubated for 28 days by both sexes.

**Flight Pattern** Soars on thermals. Fairly rapid stiff wing beats. Soars on flat wings and glides on slightly drooped wings.

**Similar Species** Red-shouldered Hawk: Broad-winged Hawk lacks red shoulders, has black-and-white bands on tail of even width, and a crisp black border on underwings.



**Song** "Kee-yer"

**Range and Habitat** Red-shouldered Hawk: Resident in the eastern woodlands and west of the Rocky Mountains; also in New England and the Great Lakes region during the summer.



Length Range: 43 - 61 cm (17 - 24 in)  
Weight: 499 g (17.6 oz)  
Back Pattern: Spotted or speckled  
Belly Pattern: Barred or banded  
Breast Pattern: Barred or banded

Monogamous. Solitary nester

Fairly common

# Red-tailed Hawk

Kites, Eagles and Hawks (Accipitridae)

Species	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	Length	19 - 25 in	Weight	36.8 oz	Wingspan	46 - 58 in
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**General** Red-tailed Hawk: Large, highly variable hawk with brown upperparts, head and throat. The underparts are pale with brown streaks. Wings are pale below with dark bar at leading edge and dark tips. The tail is red-brown with dark terminal band. Legs and feet are yellow. Soars on thermals and updrafts.

**Foraging and Feeding** Red-tailed Hawk: Eats mostly small mammals, but also takes birds and reptiles; male Red-winged Blackbirds are often eaten because of their vulnerability when guarding nests.

**Breeding and Nesting** Red-tailed Hawk: Two to three white to pale blue eggs, sometimes spotted with brown, are laid in a nest constructed from twigs, lined with pine needles and bark, and built in a large tree. Eggs are incubated for about 30 days by both parents; male may bring female food while she is on the nest.

**Flight Pattern** Soars on thermals. Several rapid strong wing beats followed by glide. Sometimes hangs on updrafts.

**Similar Species** Red-tailed Hawk: Rough-legged Hawk has unmarked flight feathers, a white comma on the outermost underwing coverts, and lacks brown tail. Dark morph Swainson's Hawk has dark flight feathers and white undertail coverts.



**Song** "keeer-r-r"

**Range and Habitat** Red-tailed Hawk: Found in Alaska and Canada south to Panama. Found in open country, woodlands, prairie groves, mountains, plains, farmlands, and roadsides.



Length Range: 48 - 64 cm (19 - 25 in)  
Weight: 1043 g (36.8 oz)  
Back Pattern: Spotted or speckled  
Belly Pattern: Striped or streaked  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Solitary nester

Very common



# American Kestrel

Falcons (Falconidae)

Species	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	Length	9 - 12 in	Weight	3.9 oz	Wingspan	20 - 25 in
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**General** American Kestrel: Smallest North American hawk, has two distinct black facial stripes, rust-brown tail and back, slate-blue wings, black-spotted underparts. Eats bats, rodents, insects, frogs, small reptiles, and birds. Alternates several rapid wing beats with glides, also hovers. Soars on thermals.

**Foraging and Feeding** American Kestrel: Hunts in early morning and evening in summer, eating mostly large insects such as grasshoppers. During winter months, hunts throughout daylight hours and eats small mammals, birds, and amphibians.

**Breeding and Nesting** American Kestrel: Female is promiscuous, mating with two or three males prior to settling with a single mate. Three to seven white or pale pink eggs are laid, usually in a tree cavity. Incubation ranges from 29 to 30 days and is carried out by the female; however, the male occasionally takes over incubation duties.

**Flight Pattern** Soars on thermals. Several rapid wing beats followed by a glide. Often hovers on rapidly beating wings.

**Similar Species** American Kestrel: Sharp-shinned Hawk is larger with rounded wings and different overall pattern. Merlin is larger with broader-based wings, lacks rust-brown tones on back and wings, has single moustache stripe mark, and strongly checkered underwings.



**Song** "klee-klee-klee", "killy, killy, killy"

**Range and Habitat** American Kestrel: Breeds from Northwest Territories and Alaska east through Maritime Provinces and south throughout most of the continent. Usually winters north to British Columbia, Great Lakes, and New England. Preferred habitats include towns, cities, parks, farmlands, and open country.



Length Range: 23 - 30 cm (9 - 12 in)  
Weight: 111 g (3.9 oz)  
Back Pattern: Barred or banded  
Belly Pattern: Spotted or speckled  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Solitary nester



# Peregrine Falcon

Falcons (Falconidae)

Species	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Length	16 - 20 in	Weight	20.8 oz	Wingspan	43 - 46 in
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**General** Peregrine Falcon: Medium robust falcon with blue-gray upperparts, plain breast, heavily barred sides, belly, and leggings. Head has a black hood and sideburns. Yellow fleshy eye ring. Yellow legs and feet. Feeds primarily on birds which it takes in midair after a steep, swift dive from above them.

**Foraging and Feeding** Peregrine Falcon: Preys mostly on birds, including doves, pigeons, shorebirds, waterfowl, and passerines; also eats small reptiles and mammals. Often soars to hunt, diving to stun its prey in midair.

**Breeding and Nesting** Peregrine Falcon: Two to six buff or white eggs, heavily marked with brown and red, are laid in a nest, often built by other species, set high on a cliff or tall building. Incubation ranges from 28 to 32 days and is carried out by the female.

**Flight Pattern** Direct flight with rapid wing beats.

**Similar Species** Peregrine Falcon: Merlin is smaller, has a less-distinct moustache stripe and more strongly barred tail. Prairie Falcon has black underwing patch and lacks strong moustache stripe. Gyrfalcon is larger with broader wings and tail, and lacks the bold moustache stripe.



**Song** "kack-kack-kack-kack"

**Range and Habitat** Peregrine Falcon: Breeds from Alaska and the Canadian arctic south locally through the mountainous west, and sparingly in the east. Spends winters on coasts north to British Columbia and Massachusetts. Preferred habitats include tundra, savannas, coasts, mountains, and tall buildings.



Length Range: 41 - 51 cm (16 - 20 in)  
 Weight: 590 g (20.8 oz)  
 Back Pattern: Scaled or Scalloped  
 Belly Pattern: Barred or banded  
 Breast Pattern: Striped or streaked

Monogamous. Solitary nester

Common to fairly common on tundra

# Laughing Gull

Gulls, Terns, Skimmers (Laridae)

Species	<i>Larus atricilla</i>	Length	15 - 17 in	Weight	11.5 oz	Wingspan	40 - 42 in
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**General** Laughing Gull: Medium gull, gray back, white underparts. Head has black hood, neck is white, and bill is red. Wings are gray and white-edged and black at tips; tail is white. Legs and feet are black. Slow flight with deep wing beats. Soars on updrafts. Named for its laughterlike call.

**Foraging and Feeding** Laughing Gull: Feeds on fish, crabs, snails, insects, eggs, and chicks.

**Breeding and Nesting** Laughing Gull: Three olive to buff eggs marked with brown are laid in a ground nest lined with grass and weed stems, and built on sand or in a salt marsh. Eggs are incubated for 20 days by both parents.

**Flight Pattern** Slow flight with deep wing beats.

**Similar Species** Laughing Gull: Franklin's Gull is smaller, shorter-billed, rounder-headed, and has shorter wings; breeding adults have darker primary tips, paler primary undersides, and a white bar between gray upperwing and black primaries.



**Song** "ha, ha, ha, ha"

**Range and Habitat** Laughing Gull: Lives mainly on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of the U.S., ranging from Maine down through Florida and Texas. Spends winters regularly north to Virginia, in smaller numbers farther north. Found in salt marshes, lagoons, and coastal beaches.



Length Range: 38 - 43 cm (15 - 17 in)

Weight: 326 g (11.5 oz)

Back Pattern: Solid

Belly Pattern: Solid

Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Colonial

# Mourning Dove

Pigeons and Doves (Columbidae)

Species	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	Length	12 in	Weight	4.3 oz	Wingspan	17 - 19 in
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**General** Mourning Dove: Medium-sized dove with gray-brown upperparts and pink-brown underparts. Eyes are dark with a small, black spot beneath. Bill is dark. Wings are gray-brown with black spots and dark primaries. Tail is long and pointed with black-edged white tips on outer feathers. Swift direct flight.

**Foraging and Feeding** Mourning Dove: Eats seeds, waste grain, fruits, and insects. Usually forages on the ground, but occasionally in trees and shrubs.

**Breeding and Nesting** Mourning Dove: Two white eggs are laid in a loosely made nest made of sticks and twigs built in a low bush or tree, or sometimes on the ground. Eggs are incubated for 14 days by both parents.

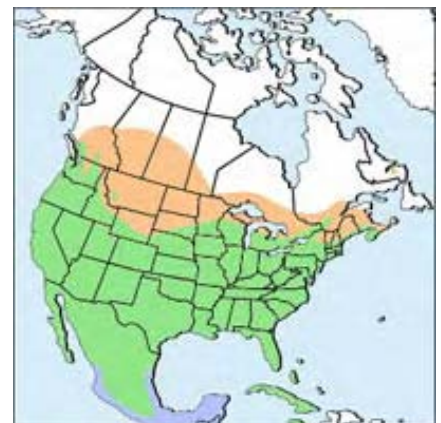
**Flight Pattern** Swift strong direct flight.

**Similar Species** Mourning Dove: Eurasian-collared Dove has a long, rounded neck and a black collar. White-winged Dove has large white wing patches and shorter, squared tail.



**Song** "coo-ah, coo-coo-coo"

**Range and Habitat** Mourning Dove: Breeds from southeastern Alaska, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick southward to Mexico and Panama. Spends winters north to the northern U.S. Favorite habitats include open fields, parks, and lawns with many trees and shrubs.



Length Range: 30 cm (12 in)  
 Weight: 122 g (4.3 oz)  
 Back Pattern: Solid  
 Belly Pattern: Solid  
 Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous

Increasing



# Rock Pigeon

Pigeons and Doves (Columbidae)

Species	<i>Columba livia</i>	Length	13 - 14 in	Weight	13 oz	Wingspan	24 - 25 in
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**General** Rock Pigeon: Large, highly variably colored dove; wild form has gray body, dark blue-gray head, neck, breast, and white rump. Wings are gray with two black bars. Tail is gray and rounded with dark terminal band. Forages on ground, eats grass, seeds, grains, clover and berries. Swift direct flight.

**Foraging and Feeding** Rock Pigeon: Eats mostly seeds, but also takes fruits and berries; subsists on scraps in urban and suburban areas; forages on the ground.

**Breeding and Nesting** Rock Pigeon: Two white eggs are laid in a crude nest lined with sticks and debris, built on a window ledge, building, bridge, or cliff. Incubation ranges from 16 to 19 days and is carried out by both parents.

**Flight Pattern** Swift direct flight with rapid wing beats.

**Similar Species** Rock Pigeon: Band-tailed Pigeon has a white bar on nape and broad gray tail band.



**Song** "cooing coo-a-roo", "coo-roo-cooo"

**Range and Habitat** Rock Pigeon: Native to Eurasia; introduced and established in most of North America from central Canada southward. Found in agricultural lands, open shrub, and urban areas.



Length Range: 33 - 36 cm (13 - 14 in)  
Weight: 369 g (13 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous



# White-winged Dove

Pigeons and Doves (Columbidae)

Species	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>	Length	11 - 12 in	Weight	5.4 oz	Wingspan	17 - 18 in
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**General** White-winged Dove: Medium-sized, stout dove with gray-brown upperparts, gray underparts, and small, back crescent below eye. The wings are dark gray with broad white stripes. Tail is short and brown with white corners. Bill is gray. Legs and feet are red. Fast direct flight with rapid wing beats.

**Foraging and Feeding** White-winged Dove: Feeds on seeds, grains, and fruits; forages on the ground.

**Breeding and Nesting** White-winged Dove: Two creamy buff eggs are laid on a frail platform made of loose twigs set in a low bush. Incubation ranges from 13 to 14 days and is carried out by both parents.

**Flight Pattern** Rapid direct flight.

**Similar Species** White-winged Dove: Mourning Dove is smaller, has long, pointed tail, and lacks distinct wing patches and white tail tip.



**Song** "who-cooks-for you", "hooo-hooo-hooo"

**Range and Habitat** White-winged Dove: Breeds in the southwestern U.S. and southern Texas. Spends winters south of the U.S. or in small numbers on the Gulf Coast east to Florida. Preferred habitats include open country with dense thickets of shrubs and low trees as well as in suburban and agricultural areas.



Length Range: 28 - 30 cm (11 - 12 in)  
Weight: 153 g (5.4 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Small colonies

# Barred Owl

True Owls (Strigidae)

Species	<i>Strix varia</i>	Length	17 - 24 in	Weight	22.4 oz	Wingspan	50 - 60 in
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**General** Barred Owl: Medium, large-headed owl with large, brown eyes, concentric rings around pale face, no ear tufts. Upperparts are brown with white markings. Underparts are white with dark bars on breast and dark streaks on belly. Heavily streaked, spotted, and variegated brown, white, and buff overall.

**Foraging and Feeding** Barred Owl: Mostly nocturnal and crepuscular; feeds on a wide variety of prey, including voles, shrews, mice, rats, squirrels, young rabbits, bats, moles, opossums, mink, weasels, and some birds; also eats small fish, turtles, frogs, snakes, lizards, crayfish, scorpions, beetles, crickets, and grasshoppers.

**Breeding and Nesting** Barred Owl: Nests in cavities or use abandoned Red-shouldered Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, squirrel, or crow nests. Lays two to three white eggs. Incubation ranges from 28 to 33 days and is carried out by the female; male brings her food on the nest.

**Flight Pattern** Slow steady shallow wing beats. Short flights.

**Similar Species** Barred Owl: Great Gray Owl is larger, grayer, and has yellow eyes and longer tail. Spotted Owl has white spots underparts.



**Song** " hoo hoo ho-ho, hoo hoo ho-hooooaw"

**Range and Habitat** Barred Owl: Widespread in the eastern half of North America; spreading westward in the northern portion of range, already occurring in Washington State, is causing concern that competition and hybridization may impact populations of endangered Spotted Owls. Preferred habitats include deep, moist forests, wooded swamps, and woodlands near waterways.



Length Range: 43 - 61 cm (17 - 24 in)  
 Weight: 635 g (22.4 oz)  
 Back Pattern: Mottled  
 Belly Pattern: Striped or streaked  
 Breast Pattern: Barred or banded

Monogamous. Thought to pair for life

Widespread, Very common to common

# Eastern Screech-Owl

True Owls (Strigidae)

Species	<i>Megascops asio</i>	Length	7 - 10 in	Weight	5.9 oz	Wingspan	18 - 24 in
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**General** Eastern Screech-Owl Gray Morph: Small with gray-mottled upperparts, rows of white spots at shoulders, heavily streaked and barred underparts. Facial disk is lightly mottled with prominent dark rim. Small ear tufts. Yellow eyes, bill is yellow or olive-green. Short, rounded wings and tail are barred.

**Foraging and Feeding** Eastern Screech-Owl Gray Morph: Feeds on mice, rats, chipmunks, squirrels, shrews, bats, and moles. Searches for prey while in flight, rather than from a perch.

**Breeding and Nesting** Eastern Screech-Owl Gray Morph: Two to eight white eggs are laid on natural sawdust on the floor of a natural tree cavity or abandoned woodpecker hole, usually 6 to 20 feet above the ground; readily nests in suitable boxes. Incubation takes about 26 days and is done mostly by the female.

**Flight Pattern** Silent wing beats. Bouyant flight.

**Similar Species** Eastern Screech-Owl Gray Morph: Western Screech-Owl has gray to black bill and different call. Whiskered Screech-Owl is smaller and does not occur in range.



**Song** "Whecoo", "whecoo, woo, woo, woee"

**Range and Habitat** Eastern Screech-Owl Gray Morph: Common in east North America from east Montana and the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, south to Tamaulipas in northeast Mexico; also found from south Ontario to Florida. Preferred habitats include mixed woodlands, deciduous forests, parklands, wooded suburban areas, riparian woods along streams and wetlands, mature orchards, meadows, and fields.



Length Range: 18 - 25 cm (7 - 10 in)  
 Weight: 167 g (5.9 oz)  
 Back Pattern: Solid  
 Belly Pattern: Mottled  
 Breast Pattern: Mottled

Monogamous

Widespread but with gradual decline



# Great Horned Owl

True Owls (Strigidae)

Species	<i>Bubo virginianus</i>	Length	18 - 25 in	Weight	48 oz	Wingspan	36 - 60 in
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**General** Great Horned Owl: Large owl with dark brown, gray-brown mottled upperparts and dark barred underparts. Head has distinct ear tufts and rufous facial disk. Throat and upper breast are white and may have dark spots. Northern birds are paler and grayer. Strong, silent, direct, flap and glide flight.

**Foraging and Feeding** Great Horned Owl: Hunts primarily at night, preying on rabbits, woodchucks, mice, rats, squirrels, skunks, ducks, quail, and occasionally geese or turkeys. Like many owls, it eats small prey whole and regurgitates indigestible parts such as hair, feathers, and bones in the form of pellets.

**Breeding and Nesting** Great Horned Owl: One to five dull white eggs are laid in an abandoned nest made by hawks or crows. Eggs are incubated for 28 to 35 days, mostly by the female.

**Flight Pattern** Direct flap and glide flight. Strong silent wing beats.

**Similar Species** Great Horned Owl: Long-Eared Owl is smaller, slimmer, has a darker throat, and has tufts set closer to the middle of head.



**Song** "whooh! Whooh-whooh-Whooh! Whooh! Whooh!", "hoot-hoot-hoot-hoot"

**Range and Habitat** Great Horned Owl: Found throughout the forests of North, Central, and South America, from the Arctic to the Straits of Magellan. Preferred habitats include coniferous, mixed, and deciduous woodlands, areas along cliffs and rocky canyons, and forest openings.



Length Range: 46 - 64 cm (18 - 25 in)  
 Weight: 1361 g (48 oz)  
 Back Pattern: Mottled  
 Belly Pattern: Barred or banded  
 Breast Pattern: Striped or streaked

Monogamous

Fairly common to common, Widespread

# Chimney Swift

Swifts (Apodidae)

Species	<i>Chaetura pelagica</i>	Length	5.5 in	Weight	0.8 oz	Wingspan	12 - 12.75 in
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**General** Chimney Swift: Medium-sized swift, uniformly dark brown with slightly paler throat and upper breast. Inconspicuous spines extend past web at tips of tail feathers. Bill, legs and feet are black. Flight is rapid and batlike on swept-back wings, alternates with gliding. Soars on thermals and updrafts.

**Foraging and Feeding** Chimney Swift: Feeds on insects; forages in flight, sometimes quite high. Drinks by skimming the water surface in flight.

**Breeding and Nesting** Chimney Swift: Two to seven white eggs are laid in a nest made of twigs cemented together with saliva and fastened to inner wall of a chimney or, rarely, in a cave or hollow tree. Incubation ranges from 19 to 21 days and is carried out by both parents.

**Flight Pattern** Rapid batlike flight.

**Similar Species** Chimney Swift: Vaux's Swift is somewhat smaller, with shorter wings, paler rump and throat, and different call.



**Song** "chatter-chatter-chatter"

**Range and Habitat** Chimney Swift: Breeds from southeastern Saskatchewan, southern Manitoba, central Ontario, southern Quebec, and Nova Scotia south to Gulf coast states. Spends winters in the tropics. Nests and roosts in chimneys and feeds entirely on the wing over forests, open country, and towns.



Length Range: 14 cm (5.5 in)  
Weight: 23 g (0.8 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Colonial or solitary nester

Fairly common to common

# Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Hummingbirds (Trochilidae)

Species	<i>Archilochus colubris</i>	Length	3 - 3.75 in	Weight	0.1 oz	Wingspan	4.25 - 4.5 in
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**General** Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Medium hummingbird, iridescent green upperparts, head, flanks. Underparts are pale gray, paler breast, green wash on sides, belly; throat is bright red with black chin. Tail is dark, forked. Feeds primarily on nectar. Direct and hovering flight with very rapid wing beats.

**Foraging and Feeding** Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Feeds mostly on nectar, but also eats insects and spiders; preferred flowers include honeysuckle, petunias, nasturtiums, and lilacs, but is often attracted to red-flowered species. Consumes twice its body weight each day.

**Breeding and Nesting** Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Two white eggs are laid in a nest woven from plant down, held together with spider silk, covered with lichens, and saddled to a tree branch, usually in a forest clearing. Eggs are incubated for 11 to 16 days by the female.

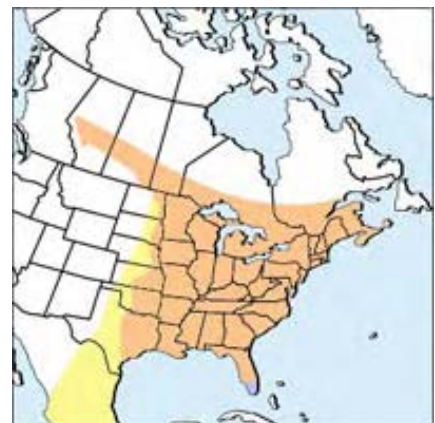
**Flight Pattern** Up to 75 rapid wing beats per second.

**Similar Species** Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Broad-tailed Hummingbird has a duller red throat and lacks black chin. Female is distinguished from the following: Calliope Hummingbird has rufous on flanks and tail; Anna's Hummingbird is larger and has grayer breast; Costa's Hummingbird is smaller, stouter, and has pale eyebrows; Black-chinned Hummingbird has grayer crown and underparts.



**Song** "chip-chip-chip-chip-chip"

**Range and Habitat** Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Breeds from southern Canada to the Gulf Coast; only hummingbird that breeds east of the Mississippi River. Spends winters mainly in the tropics and rarely on the Gulf Coast. Found in woodlands, orchards, and gardens.



Length Range: 8 - 10 cm (3 - 3.75 in)  
 Weight: 3 g (0.1 oz)  
 Back Pattern: Solid  
 Belly Pattern: Solid  
 Breast Pattern: Solid

Solitary nester

Common to fairly common



# Belted Kingfisher

Kingfishers (Alcedinidae)

Species	<i>Ceryle alcyon</i>	Length	11 - 14.5 in	Weight	5.2 oz	Wingspan	22 - 26 in
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**General** Belted Kingfisher: Medium kingfisher, distinct, bushy crest, white collar, and large, black dagger-like bill. Upperparts are blue-gray and underparts are white. The male has blue-gray breast band. Legs and feet are gray. Slow direct flight with erratic pattern. Hovers above water to search for prey.

**Foraging and Feeding** Belted Kingfisher: Eats fish, occasionally too long to swallow completely, accounting for sightings of fish tails sticking out from the bill; when fish are scarce, feeds on mollusks, crustaceans, insects, amphibians, reptiles, young birds, small mammals, and berries. Plunge dives for prey.

**Breeding and Nesting** Belted Kingfisher: Five to eight white eggs are laid in a nesting cavity at the end of a long tunnel excavated by the parents, usually in a riverbank of sand or clay. Incubation ranges from 22 to 24 days and is carried out by both parents, with the female sitting through the night, and the male taking her place in the early morning hours.

**Flight Pattern** Slow direct flight with somewhat erratic pattern. Hovers above water.

**Similar Species** Belted Kingfisher: Ringed Kingfisher is larger and has an entirely red belly band.



**Song** "rattle"

**Range and Habitat** Belted Kingfisher: Breeds from Alaska eastward across southern Canada and south throughout most of U.S. Spends winters on the Pacific coast north to southeastern Alaska, and throughout the south, north to the Great Lakes and along the Atlantic coast to New England. Preferred habitats include rivers, lakes, and saltwater estuaries.



Length Range: 28 - 37 cm (11 - 14.5 in)  
 Weight: 147 g (5.2 oz)  
 Back Pattern: Solid  
 Belly Pattern: Solid  
 Breast Pattern: Barred or banded

Monogamous

Slight decline

# Downy Woodpecker

Woodpeckers (Picidae)

Species	<i>Picoides pubescens</i>	Length	6.75 - 7 in	Weight	1 oz	Wingspan	11 - 12 in
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**General** Downy Woodpecker: The smallest woodpecker in North America. Has a white back, black nape and black wings with white spotting. Underparts are white. Face is white with black stripes. Hindcrown patch is red. Tail is black with black-spotted or barred white outer tail feathers. Bill is black and short.



**Foraging and Feeding** Downy Woodpecker: Diet consists of insects and seeds; male forages higher in tree than female; feeds on suet at feeders.

**Breeding and Nesting** Downy Woodpecker: Three to seven white eggs are laid in a bare hole in a tree. Eggs are incubated for approximately 12 days by both parents.

**Flight Pattern** Rapidly beating wings. Undulating flight.

**Similar Species** Downy Woodpecker: Hairy Woodpecker is larger, has a longer bill, and lacks spots or bars.

**Song** "pik"

**Range and Habitat** Downy Woodpecker: Resident from Alaska across Canada and south throughout the U.S. except in the southwest. Preferred habitats include woodlands, parks, and gardens.



Length Range: 17 - 18 cm (6.75 - 7 in)  
Weight: 28 g (1 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous

Widespread

# Pileated Woodpecker

Woodpeckers (Picidae)

Species	<i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>	Length	16.5 - 19.5 in	Weight	10.9 oz	Wingspan	27 - 30 in
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**General** Pileated Woodpecker: Large woodpecker with mostly black body and white wing linings which are visible in flight. The head has a prominent red crest and cap, white face and neck stripes and a red moustache stripe, and large gray stripes and a red moustache stripe, and large gray bill. Legs and feet are gray. The largest woodpecker in North America.

**Foraging and Feeding** Pileated Woodpecker: Feeds on insects such as ants and wood boring beetle larvae; also eats fruits and nuts. Pries off long slivers of wood to expose ant galleries, or uses its long, pointed tongue with barbs and sticky saliva to catch and extract ants from tunnels.

**Breeding and Nesting** Pileated Woodpecker: Three to eight white eggs are laid in a bare tree cavity. Incubation ranges from 15 to 18 days and is carried out by both parents.

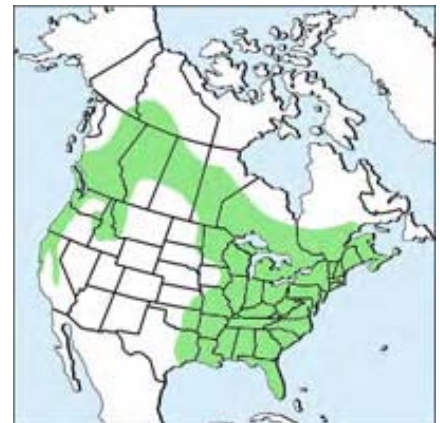
**Flight Pattern** Strong powerful wing beats when traveling distances.

**Similar Species** Pileated Woodpecker: Ivory-billed Woodpecker lacks white chin and small white eyestripe extending to crest.



**Song** "cuk-cuk-cuk-cuk-cuk"

**Range and Habitat** Pileated Woodpecker: Resident from British Columbia east across southern Canada to Nova Scotia, and south to northern California, southern Idaho, eastern North Dakota, central Texas, and Florida. Found in mature forests and borders.



Length Range: 42 - 50 cm (16.5 - 19.5 in)  
Weight: 309 g (10.9 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous

Common to fairly common



# Red-bellied Woodpecker

Woodpeckers (Picidae)

Species	<i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>	Length	9 - 10.5 in	Weight	2.4 oz	Wingspan	15 - 18 in
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**General** Red-bellied Woodpecker: Medium woodpecker, black-and-white barred upperparts, pale gray-brown underparts with indistinct red wash on belly. Head has bright red crown and nape, pale brown face. White rump, white wing patches, and white-barred central tail feathers are visible in flight.

**Foraging and Feeding** Red-bellied Woodpecker: Eats insects, fruits, vegetables, seeds, and sap from sapsucker drill wells.

**Breeding and Nesting** Red-bellied Woodpecker: Three to eight white eggs are laid in tree cavity built by both parents, or in an abandoned hole of other woodpeckers. Incubation ranges from 11 to 14 days and is carried out by both parents (male at night, female during the day).

**Flight Pattern** Undulating flight with fairly rapid wing beats interspersed with periods of roller-coaster flight with wings folded.

**Similar Species** Red-bellied Woodpecker: Golden-fronted Woodpecker has black tail without white bars, yellow-orange nape, yellow patch at base of upper mandible, and indistinct yellow wash on belly.



**Song** "churr-churr", "querr-querr", "chuck-chuck-chuck"

**Range and Habitat** Red-bellied Woodpecker: Breeds from South Dakota, Great Lakes, and southern New England south to the Gulf Coast and Florida. Northernmost birds sometimes migrate south for winter. Inhabits open and swampy woodlands; comes into parks during migration and to feeders in winter.



Length Range: 23 - 27 cm (9 - 10.5 in)  
Weight: 68 g (2.4 oz)  
Back Pattern: Barred or banded  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Solitary nester

Common to fairly common

# Red-headed Woodpecker

Woodpeckers (Picidae)

Species	<i>Melanerpes erythrocephalus</i>	Length	8.5 - 9.25 in	Weight	2.5 oz	Wingspan	16 - 18 in
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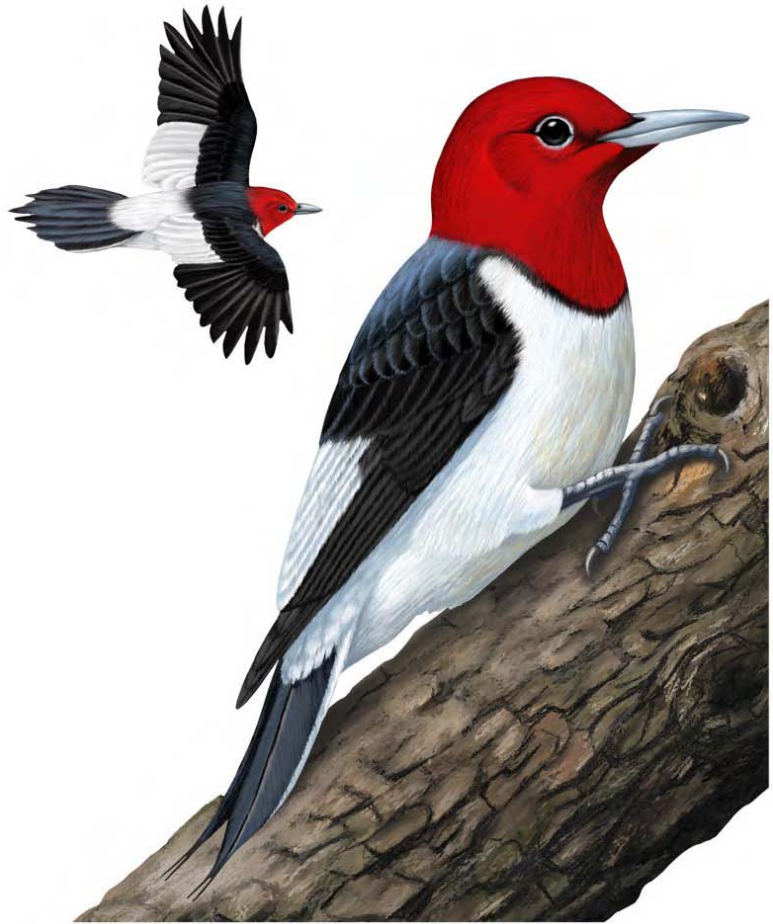
**General** Red-headed Woodpecker: Medium-sized woodpecker with black upperparts and tail, and white underparts and rump. The head, throat, and upper breast are dark red. Wings are black with large white patches. Bill, legs and feet are black. This is the only woodpecker in the east with a completely red head.

**Foraging and Feeding** Red-headed Woodpecker: Eats insects, spiders, millipedes, and centipedes, seeds, various nuts, and berries; forages by hunting from low perches, flying down to ground to pick up prey or nuts.

**Breeding and Nesting** Red-headed Woodpecker: Four to seven white eggs are laid in a cavity drilled in a limb of a living or dead tree, mostly by the male. Incubation ranges from 12 to 14 days and is carried out by both parents.

**Flight Pattern** Strong flight with slow steady shallow wing beats. Sallies for flying insects, then returns to same or nearby perch.

**Similar Species** Red-headed Woodpecker: Red-bellied Woodpecker has barred black-and-white upperparts and much less red on head and neck.



**Song** "queark", "queer,queer,queer", "kerr-uck,kerr-uck"

**Range and Habitat** Red-headed Woodpecker: Breeds from Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Quebec south to Florida and the Gulf Coast; scarce in northeastern states. Spends winters in southern part of breeding range.



Length Range: 22 - 23 cm (8.5 - 9.25 in)  
Weight: 71 g (2.5 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Solitary nester

Yes but uncommon



# Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

Woodpeckers (Picidae)

Species	<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>	Length	8 - 9 in	Weight	1.8 oz	Wingspan	16 - 18 in
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**General** Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Medium woodpecker, black-and-white mottled upperparts, white rump, yellow-washed white underparts. Red throat, black border. Red crown, black-and-white striped face, neck. Dark wings have white shoulder patch. Black tail has black-barred, white center stripe.

**Foraging and Feeding** Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Feeds on sap, insects, fruits, and berries. Hammers trees for insects; also creates sap wells in bark to collect sap and trap insects; sometimes catches insects in mid-air.

**Breeding and Nesting** Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Four to seven white eggs are laid in a tree cavity lined with wood chips. Incubation ranges from 12 to 13 days and is carried out by both parents (male at night, female during the day).

**Flight Pattern** Alternates several rapid shallow wing beats with short glides.

**Similar Species** Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Red-naped Sapsucker has red nape.



**Song** "meow", "cheee-er, cheee-er", "hoih-hoih"

**Range and Habitat** Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Breeds across Canada east of the Rockies to southern Labrador and Newfoundland south to the northern U.S. from North Dakota to New York and Connecticut and south through the Appalachians to northwest Georgia. Spends winters in the southeastern U.S., the West Indies, and in middle and high altitudes of Central America as far south as Panama. Preferred habitats include deciduous and mixed woods in foothills and lower montane regions.



Length Range: 20 - 23 cm (8 - 9 in)  
 Weight: 51 g (1.8 oz)  
 Back Pattern: Barred or banded  
 Belly Pattern: Solid  
 Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Loose colonies. Small colonies

Common to fairly common



# Loggerhead Shrike

Shrikes (Laniidae)

Species	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	Length	9 in	Weight	1.7 oz	Wingspan	12.5 - 13 in
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**General** Loggerhead Shrike: Medium shrike with gray upperparts and paler gray underparts. Mask is black and throat is white. Bill is heavy and slightly hooked. Wings are black with white patches. Tail is long, black, and white-edged. Low, swift flight, alternates rapid wing beats with wings pulled to sides.

**Foraging and Feeding** Loggerhead Shrike: Feeds on small vertebrates and invertebrates; hunts from a low perch in a tree, shrub, or power line, often catching prey on the ground. Maintains a food larder; impales prey on thorns or barbed wire.

**Breeding and Nesting** Loggerhead Shrike: Four to seven white to gray eggs, marked with gray, brown or black, are laid in a bulky nest made of twigs and grass, lined with plant down and feathers, and set in a thorny shrub or tree. Incubation ranges from 16 to 17 days and is carried out by the female.

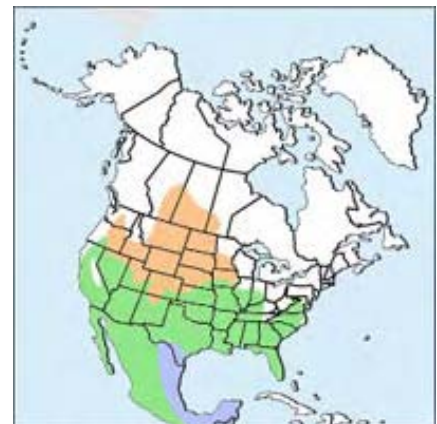
**Flight Pattern** Rapid flight with quick wing strokes.

**Similar Species** Loggerhead Shrike: Northern Shrike is larger, paler, has faintly barred underparts, and black mask that does not extend across the top of bill.



**Song** "queedle- queedle"

**Range and Habitat** Loggerhead Shrike: Breeds from southern British Columbia, central Alberta, central Saskatchewan, southern Manitoba, southern Ontario, and southern Quebec, south throughout the U.S. Spends winters in the southern half of its breeding range. Preferred habitats include grasslands, orchards, and open areas with scattered trees.



Length Range: 23 cm (9 in)  
Weight: 48 g (1.7 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Solitary nester

Fairly common

# White-eyed Vireo

Vireos (Vireonidae)

Species	<i>Vireo griseus</i>	Length	5 in	Weight	0.4 oz	Wingspan	8 in
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**General** White-eyed Vireo: Medium-sized, secretive vireo with olive-green upperparts, and white underparts with yellow sides and flanks. Spectacles are pale yellow and iris is white. Wings are dark with two white bars. Legs and feet are gray. Flight is fast and direct on short, rounded wings.

**Foraging and Feeding** White-eyed Vireo: Eats insects, spiders, and small lizards; also eats seeds and berries in fall and winter. Forages in shrubs or dense undergrowth

**Breeding and Nesting** White-eyed Vireo: Three to five brown-and-black spotted, white eggs are laid in a deep cup of twigs, rootlets, bark strips, coarse grass, and leaves, and built in a dense thicket 1 to 8 feet above the ground. Incubation ranges from 12 to 16 days and is carried out by both parents.

**Flight Pattern** Rapid direct flight.

**Similar Species** White-eyed Vireo: Bell's Vireo has broken eye-ring, lacks yellow spectacles, usually shows fainter wing-bars, and has dark eye as an adult. Yellow-throated Vireo resembles White-eyed Vireo juvenile, but has white throat.



**Song** "quick-with the beer check", "tick"

**Range and Habitat** White-eyed Vireo: Breeds from Nebraska to Massachusetts, south to eastern Mexico and throughout Florida. Winters from the southern Gulf Coast to Central America and from coastal North Carolina, the Bahamas, and Bermuda to the Caribbean. Found in dense thickets, pine flatwoods, cypress swamps, and scrubby edges of roads, canals, and ponds. Avoids urban areas, but may be found in wooded parks and undeveloped areas near and within large cities.



Length Range: 13 cm (5 in)  
 Weight: 11 g (0.4 oz)  
 Back Pattern: Solid  
 Belly Pattern: Solid  
 Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Solitary nester

Fairly common to common

# American Crow

Crows and Jays (Corvidae)

Species	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	Length	17.5 in	Weight	16 oz	Wingspan	33 - 40 in
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**General** American Crow: Large, black bird with dark, stout bill, iridescent violet gloss on body, and blue-black wings. Tail is fan-shaped in flight. Eats insects, small invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles and mammals, eggs and young of other birds, grains, fruits, refuse, and carrion. Steady direct flight.

**Foraging and Feeding** American Crow: Diet includes fruits, snails, salamanders, grain, small birds, mice, eggs, toads, corn, insects, and carrion. Around coastal areas, crows display behavior similar to that of gulls, taking clams and mussels and dropping them from heights to crack open shells.

**Breeding and Nesting** American Crow: Three to seven blue green to olive green eggs with dark markings are laid in a large nest made of twigs and sticks lined with feathers, grass, plant material, and rootlets. Nest is built in a tree or shrub, up to 100 feet above the ground. May use cross posts of utility poles as a nest site; in prairies, nests may be built on the ground. Nest is built by both parents, sometimes with the help of extra birds. Both parents incubate eggs for about 18 days. Young stay in nest 4 to 5 weeks before fledging.

**Flight Pattern** Slow steady deliberate direct flight with deep wing beats. Glides with slight dihedral from altitude to perch or ground, between perches, and from perch to ground.

**Similar Species** American Crow: Fish Crow is smaller, has more pointed wings, a more slender bill, longer tail, and different call. Northwestern Crow has a separate range. Common Raven is much larger with heavy, stout bill, shaggy throat feathers, wedge-shaped tail, and different call.

Length Range: 44 cm (17.5 in)  
Weight: 454 g (16 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid



**Song** "caw, caw, caw", "caa-caa"

**Range and Habitat** American Crow: Breeds from British Columbia, central interior Canada, and Newfoundland south to southern California, the Gulf Coast, and Florida. Usually winters north to southern Canada. Preferred habitats include woodlands, farms, fields, river groves, shorelines, and towns.



Monogamous. Solitary nester

Abundant



# Blue Jay

Crows and Jays (Corvidae)

Species	<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>	Length	11 in	Weight	3 oz	Wingspan	16 in
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**General** Blue Jay: Medium, noisy jay with bright blue upperparts, pale gray underparts, distinct head crest, and neck surrounded with a curious black necklace. Black-barred wings and tail have prominent white patches. Direct flight with steady and buoyant wing beats. Glides between perches or to the ground.

**Foraging and Feeding** Blue Jay: Feeds on fruits, nuts, seeds, insects, mice, and frogs; sometimes robs other nests for young birds and eggs. Opens nuts by holding them in place with feet and hammering the shell with bill.

**Breeding and Nesting** Blue Jay: Three to seven brown marked, light blue green or green blue eggs are laid in a coarsely built nest made of sticks, lined with grass, and well concealed in a tree, often a conifer. Incubation ranges from 16 to 18 days and is carried out by both parents.

**Flight Pattern** Direct flight with buoyant steady wing beats.

**Similar Species** Blue Jay: Steller's Jay has dark underparts. Western and Florida Scrub-Jays lack crests.



**Song** "jay, jay, jay", "thief, thief, thief!"

**Range and Habitat** Blue Jay: Resident east of the Rockies, from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, but slowly encroaching westward. Preferred habitats include evergreen forests, farmlands, groves, and suburbs.



Length Range: 28 cm (11 in)  
Weight: 85 g (3 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Solitary nester

Widespread

# Purple Martin

Swallows (Hirundinidae)

Species	<i>Progne subis</i>	Length	7.25 - 8.5 in	Weight	1.7 - 2 oz	Wingspan	15.5 - 16.75 in
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**General** Purple Martin: Large, vocal swallow with glossy dark purple-blue body and forked tail. It is the largest North American swallow. Black bill, legs and feet. Stong, graceful flight, alternates a few rapid wing beats with long glides. Catches and eats insects in flight and also forages on the ground.

**Foraging and Feeding** Purple Martin: Feeds on flying insects; catches prey in mid-air, flying at up to 45 mph or more when foraging. Weather unfavorable for insect activity lasting three or more days puts it at risk of starvation.

**Breeding and Nesting** Purple Martin: Three to eight white eggs are laid in a cavity lined with mud, grass, and other plant material. Most nest in colonies in man-made birdhouses in developed areas and parklands. Incubation ranges from 15 to 18 days and is carried out by the female.

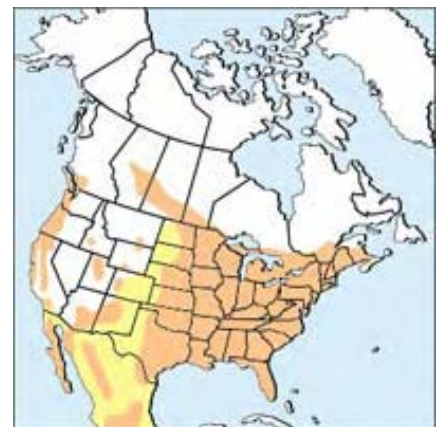
**Flight Pattern** Strong with graceful flight.

**Similar Species** Purple Martin: Male is distinct; female is larger and flaps more slowly than Bank and Northern Rough-winged swallows.



**Song** "tee-tee-tee"

**Range and Habitat** Purple Martin: Breeds from British Columbia, central interior Canada, and Nova Scotia southward, but is absent from the interior western mountains and Great Basin. Spends winters in the tropics. Preferred habitats include open woodlands, residential areas, and agricultural lands.



Length Range: 18 - 22 cm (7.25 - 8.5 in)  
Weight: 48 - 57 g (1.7 - 2 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Colonial

Declining

# Carolina Chickadee

Titmice and Chickadees (Paridae)

Species	<i>Poecile carolinensis</i>	Length	4 - 5 in	Weight	0.4 oz	Wingspan	6 - 8 in
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**General** Carolina Chickadee: Small chickadee with gray upperparts, distinct black cap and bib, dull white cheeks, and white underparts with rust-brown flanks. Short, black bill. When disturbed in its nest during incubation, it will hiss and strike intruders, similar to how a snake would act.

**Foraging and Feeding** Carolina Chickadee: Eats primarily insects, spiders, fruits, and seeds; forages by searching among tree branches, trunks, pinecones, and dead leaf clusters.

**Breeding and Nesting** Carolina Chickadee: Five to eight white eggs with red brown markings are laid in a cavity lined with down and fine plant materials. Both sexes incubate eggs for 11 to 12 days.

**Flight Pattern** Short weak fluttering flight with rapid beats, sometimes in longer flights folds wings to sides after several quick strokes.

**Similar Species** Carolina Chickadee: Black-capped Chickadee is larger, has more white on wings, slightly larger black bib, and bright white cheeks.



**Song** "fee-bee-fee-bay", "chick-a-dee-dee"

**Range and Habitat** Carolina Chickadee: Occurs as far north as Delaware, central Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois and as far west as Oklahoma and central Texas. Common throughout the southeast U.S. except for extreme southern Florida. Frequents deciduous and mixed woodlands, swamps, riparian areas, open woods, and parks; also found in suburban and urban areas.



Length Range: 10 - 13 cm (4 - 5 in)  
Weight: 11 g (0.4 oz)

Monogamous



# Tufted Titmouse

Titmice and Chickadees (Paridae)

Species	<i>Baeolophus bicolor</i>	Length	6.5 in	Weight	0.8 oz	Wingspan	10.75 in
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**General** Tufted Titmouse: The largest titmouse, it has gray upperparts, pale gray underparts, rust-brown flanks. Head has dark gray cap and crest, pale gray face, and white eye-ring. Bill is black. Wings and tail are gray. Legs and feet are gray. Most spend their entire lives not far from their birthplace.

**Foraging and Feeding** Tufted Titmouse: Eats insects, spiders, snails, various berries, acorns, and seeds. Forages in trees, sometimes upside down; often in mixed species flocks

**Breeding and Nesting** Tufted Titmouse: Four to eight brown-speckled, creamy white eggs are laid in a natural cavity, bird box, or woodpecker hole lined with bark, leaves, soft grass, moss, snakeskin, and bits of animal fur. Incubation ranges from 13 to 14 days and is carried out by the female.

**Flight Pattern** Weak fluttering short flights with shallow rapid wing beats. Flittering flight with several quick wing beats alternating with wings drawn to sides, then repeated.

**Similar Species** Tufted Titmouse: Phainopepla is larger and dull gray overall.



**Song** "peter-peter-peter", "peto-peto-peto"

**Range and Habitat** Tufted Titmouse: Breeds from eastern Nebraska, southern Michigan, and Maine south to Texas, the Gulf Coast, and central Florida. Preferred habitats include swampy or moist woodlands, and urban shade trees.



Length Range: 17 cm (6.5 in)  
Weight: 23 g (0.8 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Solitary nester

# Carolina Wren

Wrens (Troglodytidae)

Species	<i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>	Length	5.75 in	Weight	0.7 oz	Wingspan	7.5 in
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**General** Carolina Wren: Medium-sized wren with rufous upperparts and buff underparts. Eyebrows are white, wings and tail are dark barred with white flecks. Throat and chin are white. Bill is decurved. Legs and feet are pink-gray. Range expands north when winters are mild and retracts south when harsh.

**Foraging and Feeding** Carolina Wren: Eats mainly spiders and insects; forages on or near the ground.

**Breeding and Nesting** Carolina Wren: Four to eight white or light pink eggs, marked with brown, are laid in a shallow cup of sticks, leaves, mosses, and finer materials built in a crevice among rocks or, occasionally, on a building. Incubation ranges from 12 to 14 days and is carried out by the female.

**Flight Pattern** Weak and fluttering direct flight, often of short duration, on shallowly beating wings.

**Similar Species** Carolina Wren: Bewick's Wren has white underparts, long rounded tail tipped with white, and different song.



**Song** "peup- peup-peup-tew-tew-tew-tew-tew-mew", "jeet"

**Range and Habitat** Carolina Wren: Breeds from British Columbia, Montana, and western South Dakota southward.



Length Range: 15 cm (5.75 in)  
Weight: 20 g (0.7 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Solitary nester

# Ruby-crowned Kinglet

Kinglets (Regulidae)

Species	<i>Regulus calendula</i>	Length	4.25 in	Weight	0.2 oz	Wingspan	6.75 - 7.5 in
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**General** Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Medium kinglet, olive-green upperparts and gray-washed, pale yellow underparts. Head has inconspicuous tuft of red crown feathers, white spectacles. Wings are dark with two white bars. Tail is slightly notched and has white edges. Weak fluttering flight on shallow wing beats.

**Foraging and Feeding** Ruby-Crowned Kinglet: Diet consists of insects, insect eggs, fruits, and seeds; forages by gleaning tree trunks, branches, and dense foliage.

**Breeding and Nesting** Ruby-Crowned Kinglet: Five to eleven creamy white eggs splotched with brown or gray are laid in a nest suspended from twigs below a sheltering and concealing horizontal branch. Incubation ranges from 12 to 14 days and is carried out by the female.

**Flight Pattern** Weak fluttering flight with shallow wing beats.

**Similar Species** Ruby-Crowned Kinglet: Golden-crowned Kinglet has a white stripe above the eye, orange crown patch (male), and paler underparts. Hutton's Vireo is larger, stockier, and has a stouter bill.



**Song** "tsee-tsee", "liberty-liberty-liberty", "je-dtit", "cack-cack"

**Range and Habitat** Ruby-Crowned Kinglet: Breeds from Alaska east across Canada to Newfoundland, south to southern California and New Mexico in the west, and to the Great Lakes region and northern New England in the east. Spends winters south from southern British Columbia and California across the southern tier of states to southern New England. Preferred habitats include coniferous and deciduous forests.



Length Range: 11 cm (4.25 in)  
 Weight: 6 g (0.2 oz)  
 Back Pattern: Solid  
 Belly Pattern: Solid  
 Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Solitary nester

Widespread



# Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

Old World Warblers and Gnatcatchers (Sylviidae)

Species	<i>Poliioptila caerulea</i>	Length	4.25 in	Weight	0.2 oz	Wingspan	5.75 - 6.5 in
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**General** Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: Small, flycatcher-like perching bird, blue-gray upperparts, white underparts, prominent white eye-ring. Wings are dark. Black tail is long and white-edged. Forages in thickets, trees and shrubs for insects, their eggs and larvae. Weak fluttering flight on shallow wing beats.

**Foraging and Feeding** Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: Eats aphids, hemipterans, beetles, moths, butterflies, flies, ants, bees, wasps, and spiders; forages by moving up and down outer branches of trees or shrubs.

**Breeding and Nesting** Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: Four or five pale blue eggs, usually with brown flecks, are laid in a small cup nest of plant down and spider webs decorated with lichens and fastened to a horizontal branch at almost any height above the ground. Both parents incubate eggs for 13 days.

**Flight Pattern** Weak fluttering flight with shallow wing beats.

**Similar Species** Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: Other male gnatcatchers have variable amounts of black (depending on species, season, and age) on crown. Other female gnatcatchers have brown-tinged tails.



**Song** "zee-you- zee-you"

**Range and Habitat** Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: Breeds from northern California, Colorado, southern Great Lakes region, southern Ontario, and New Hampshire southward. Spends winters from southern California to the Gulf coast and the Carolinas. Preferred habitats include deciduous woodlands, streamside thickets, live oaks, pinyon-juniper, and chaparral.



Length Range: 11 cm (4.25 in)  
Weight: 6 g (0.2 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Solitary nester

# American Robin

Thrushes (Turdidae)

Species	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	Length	10 in	Weight	2.7 oz	Wingspan	14 - 16 in
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**General** American Robin: Large, familiar North American thrush, gray-brown upperparts, rich red-brown breast, and white lower belly and undertail coverts. Head appears black with white splotches surrounding the eyes, and throat is white with black streaks. Swift, direct flight on rapidly beating wings.

**Foraging and Feeding** American Robin: Feeds on wild and cultivated fruits, berries, earthworms, and insects such as beetle grubs, caterpillars, and grasshoppers; appears to "listen" to the ground by cocking its head when stalking earthworms.

**Breeding and Nesting** American Robin: Three to seven pale blue eggs, sometimes flecked with brown, are laid in a well-made cup of mud reinforced with grass and twigs, lined with softer grass, and built in a tree or on a ledge. Incubation ranges from 12 to 14 days and is carried out by the female. Robins usually have two broods per season.

**Flight Pattern** Swift strong direct flight.

**Similar Species** American Robin: Rufous-backed Robin has rufous back and black-tipped yellow bill. Varied Thrush has dark band across breast and orange wing bars.



**Song** "cheerily cheer-up cheerio"

**Range and Habitat** American Robin: Breeds from Alaska east to Newfoundland and south to California, Texas, Arkansas, and South Carolina. Usually spends winters north to British Columbia and Newfoundland. Preferred habitats include towns, gardens, open woodlands, and agricultural lands.



Length Range: 25 cm (10 in)  
 Weight: 77 g (2.7 oz)  
 Back Pattern: Solid  
 Belly Pattern: Solid  
 Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Solitary nester

Widespread, Abundant

# Northern Mockingbird

Mockingbirds and Thrashers (Mimidae)

Species	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	Length	10 in	Weight	1.7 oz	Wingspan	13 - 15 in
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**General** Northern Mockingbird: Medium-sized mockingbird with gray upperparts, paler gray underparts, and thin black mask. Wings are gray-black with two white bars and large white patches visible when spread. The tail is long, gray, and edged with white. Legs and feet are black. Feeds on fruit and insects.

**Foraging and Feeding** Northern Mockingbird: Diet consists of insects, fruits, crustaceans, and small vertebrates; forages in foliage and on the ground.

**Breeding and Nesting** Northern Mockingbird: Two to six blue green eggs with brown splotches are laid in a bulky cup nest made of sticks and weed stems, and built in a bush or low tree. Incubation ranges from 12 to 13 days and is carried out by the female.

**Flight Pattern** Several quick wing strokes alternated with wings pulled to the sides.

**Similar Species** Northern Mockingbird: Shrikes have black masks and thicker bills. Sage Thrasher lacks white wing patches and has darker, more extensive spotting below. Bahama Mockingbird has streaked flanks and lacks wing patches.



**Song** "chack"

**Range and Habitat** Northern Mockingbird: Breeds from northern California, eastern Nebraska, southern Ontario, and Maritime Canada southward. Spends winters in the southern part of range. Found in residential areas, city parks, farmlands, open country with thickets, and desert brush.



Length Range: 25 cm (10 in)  
Weight: 48 g (1.7 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Solitary nester



# European Starling

Starlings (Sturnidae)

Species	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Length	8.5 in	Weight	3 oz	Wingspan	15.5 in
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**General** European Starling: Small, chunky, iridescent purple and green blackbird with long, pointed yellow bill, pink legs, and short tail. The feathers on back and undertail show buff edges. Feeds in open areas, normally on the ground. Strong, direct and swift flight on rapidly beating wings.

**Foraging and Feeding** European Starling: Eats seeds, insects, small vertebrates, centipedes, spiders, earthworms, plants, and fruits; commonly takes food discarded by humans.

**Breeding and Nesting** European Starling: Four to eight pale blue or green eggs, sometimes marked with brown, are laid in a nest made of twigs, grass, forbs, straw, and trash. Nest is lined built in a natural hollow of a tree, bird box, building crevice, or abandoned woodpecker hole. Incubation ranges from 12 to 14 days.

**Flight Pattern** Swift direct flight with rapid wing beats.

**Similar Species** European Starling: Blackbirds, cowbirds and grackles have longer tails, slimmer bodies, dark bills, and lack white spots on head and body.



**Song** "pheeEW"

**Range and Habitat** European Starling: Native to Eurasia, but widely introduced worldwide. Occurs from Alaska and Quebec south throughout the continent to the Gulf coast and northern Mexico. Preferred habitats include cities, suburban areas, farmlands, and ranches.



Length Range: 22 cm (8.5 in)  
Weight: 85 g (3 oz)  
Back Pattern: Spotted or speckled  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Loose colonies

Abundant

# Cedar Waxwing

Waxwings (Bombycillidae)

Species	<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>	Length	7 in	Weight	1.1 oz	Wingspan	11 - 12.25 in
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**General** Cedar Waxwing: Small waxwing, red-brown upperparts, pale slate-gray rump, buff underparts. Head is crested, has black mask with narrow white band below. Yellow-tipped tail, white undertail coverts. Wings have red wax-like tips on secondaries from which it gets its name. Black bill, legs and feet.

**Foraging and Feeding** Cedar Waxwing: Diet consists mostly of insects such as carpenter ants, cicadas, caterpillars, scale insects, and cankerworms; also feeds on berries, fruits, maple sap, and flowers. Sometimes becomes intoxicated from eating fermented berries in winter.

**Breeding and Nesting** Cedar Waxwing: Two to six pale blue gray eggs spotted with brown and black are laid in a bulky cup nest of twigs and grass built in a tree. Incubation ranges from 12 to 16 days and is carried out by both parents.

**Flight Pattern** Strong rapid flight with several quick wing strokes.

**Similar Species** Cedar Waxwing: Bohemian Waxwing is larger with dark undertail coverts, gray belly, and red, white, and yellow wing markings.



**Song** "zeee", "zeet"

**Range and Habitat** Cedar Waxwing: Breeds from southeastern Alaska east to Newfoundland and south to California, Illinois, and Virginia. Spends winters from British Columbia, the Great Lakes region, and New England southward. Preferred habitats include open woodlands, orchards, and residential areas.



Length Range: 18 cm (7 in)  
 Weight: 31 g (1.1 oz)  
 Back Pattern: Solid  
 Belly Pattern: Solid  
 Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Colonial or solitary nester

Fairly common to uncommon

# Pine Warbler

Wood Warblers (Parulidae)

Species	<i>Dendroica pinus</i>	Length	5.25 in	Weight	0.4 oz	Wingspan	8.5 in
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**General** Pine Warbler: Medium warbler with plain olive-gray upperparts, yellow throat and breast, blurry-streaked sides, and white belly and undertail coverts. Wings are gray with two white bars. It is the only warbler that eats large quantities of seeds, usually pine. One of the earliest breeding warblers.

**Foraging and Feeding** Pine Warbler: Diet consists of insects, fruits, and seeds; forages in trees and shrubs.

**Breeding and Nesting** Pine Warbler: Three to five white eggs with brown flecks at large end are laid in a compact, well-concealed nest built among pine needles near the tip of a horizontal branch, usually higher than 20 feet. Eggs are incubated for about 10 days by both parents.

**Flight Pattern** Weak flight on rapidly beating wings.

**Similar Species** Pine Warbler: Yellow-throated Vireo has spectacles and a thicker bill. Blackburnian Warbler has white streaks on back and a broader stripe behind eye. Blackpoll Warbler has streaks on back and has pale yellow underparts and yellow legs and feet. Bay-breasted Warbler has brown crown and streaked back. Cape May Warbler has more heavily streaked breast and pale mark on side of neck.



**Song** "tsup"

**Range and Habitat** Pine Warbler: Breeds from southeastern Manitoba, southern Ontario, and Maine south to eastern Texas, the Gulf Coast, and Florida. Spends winters in the southern states, occasionally north to New England. Prefers pine forests.



Length Range: 13 cm (5.25 in)  
Weight: 11 g (0.4 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Solitary nester

Fairly common to common



# Yellow-throated Warbler

Wood Warblers (Parulidae)

Species	<i>Dendroica dominica</i>	Length	5.25 in	Weight	0.3 oz	Wingspan	8.5 in
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**General** Yellow-throated Warbler: Medium warbler with gray upperparts, yellow throat, chin, and upper breast, white underparts with black spots on sides. Head has black face patch, white eyebrows. Wings are dark with two white bars. Tail is gray with white spots near corners. Bill, legs, and feet are black.

**Foraging and Feeding** Yellow-throated Warbler: Diet includes beetles, moths, flies, grasshoppers, crickets, and spiders; gleans food from leaves and branches.

**Breeding and Nesting** Yellow-throated Warbler: Four purple-spotted, pale green eggs are laid in a nest made of grass and bark strips, lined with hair and feathers, and often set in a clump of Spanish moss or in a pine needle bunch. Incubation ranges from 12 to 13 days and is carried out by the female.

**Flight Pattern** Fairly swift direct flight for short distances.

**Similar Species** Yellow-throated Warbler: Wilson's Warbler has longer, darker tail and lacks yellow tail spots. Orange-crowned Warbler is olive-green overall and has paler underparts.



**Song** "tweede-tweede-tweede-tweede-dee-da-ma-deet"

**Range and Habitat** Yellow-throated Warbler: Breeds from Illinois, Ohio, and New Jersey south to Missouri, Texas, the Gulf Coast, and northern Florida. Spends winters from the Gulf Coast states southward. Preferred habitats include forests of pine, cypress, sycamore, and oak, in both swampy places and dry uplands.



Length Range: 13 cm (5.25 in)  
Weight: 9 g (0.3 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Solitary nester

Fairly common

# Northern Cardinal

Cardinals and Grosbeaks (Cardinalidae)

Species	<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>	Length	7.5 - 9.25 in	Weight	1.6 oz	Wingspan	10 - 12 in
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**General** Northern Cardinal: Large, crested finch with vivid red body. Black mask and chin contrast with heavy, red bill. Forages on ground and in trees and bushes. Feeds on seeds, grains, fruits, insects and snails. Hops instead of walks on ground. Alternates rapid wing beats with wings pulled to sides.

**Foraging and Feeding** Northern Cardinal: Eats seeds, insects, fruits, and snails; forages in trees, bushes, and on the ground.

**Breeding and Nesting** Northern Cardinal: Three to four pale green, blue, or gray eggs with gray, purple, and brown marks are laid in a nest made of twigs, weeds, grass, bark strips, and leaves. Nest is lined with hair and grass, and built in a low tree or bush, or set in tangled twigs or vines, usually less than 5 feet above the ground. Incubation ranges from 12 to 13 days and is carried out mostly by the female.

**Flight Pattern** Alternates several rapid wing beats with wings pulled to sides. Short flight just above vegetation or below canopy.

**Similar Species** Northern Cardinal: Pyrrhuloxia has a stubby, sharply curved yellow bill, red eye-ring, gray upperparts, and red wash on throat and underparts.



**Song** "whoit cheer, whoit cheer, cheer-cheer-cheer; cheer, whoit-whoit-whoit-whoit; wheat-wheat-wheat-wheat", "bir-dy,bir-dy,bir-dy,bir-dy"

**Range and Habitat** Northern Cardinal: Resident in eastern U.S. and much of Mexico. Preferred habitats include forest edges, lowlands, and suburban areas.



Length Range: 19 - 23 cm (7.5 - 9.25 in)  
Weight: 45 g (1.6 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous. Solitary nester

Abundant

# Brown-headed Cowbird

Blackbirds and Orioles (Icteridae)

Species	<i>Molothrus ater</i>	Length	7 - 8.25 in	Weight	1.7 oz	Wingspan	11.75 - 13.75 in
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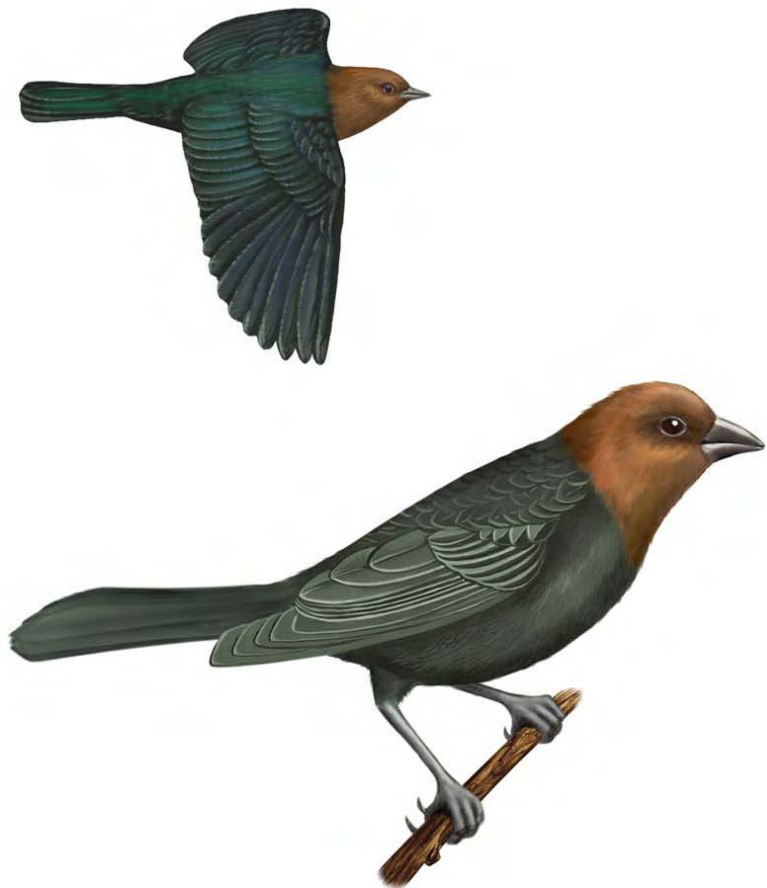
**General** Brown-headed Cowbird: Small blackbird with glossy brown head, heavy bill, and dark eyes. The black body has a faint green sheen. Walks on ground to forage and holds tail cocked over back. Feeds on caterpillars, insects, spiders, fruits, grains and seeds. Swift direct flight with rapid wing beats.

**Foraging and Feeding** Brown-headed Cowbird: Eats mostly seeds and arthropods. Forages on the ground, but sometimes hawks slow-flying insects.

**Breeding and Nesting** Brown-headed Cowbird: Nest parasite; usually one brown flecked light blue egg is laid in the nest of another species of bird. As many as thirty-six eggs are laid per nesting season. Incubation ranges from 10 to 13 days and is carried out by the host. Altricial young usually hatch first and outcompete hosts' young.

**Flight Pattern** Swooping direct flight with rapid wing beats.

**Similar Species** Brown-headed Cowbird: Bronzed Cowbird is slightly larger and has larger bill and red eyes. Male Shiny Cowbird is glossy black overall and has a purple sheen on head, back, and breast. Female has gray-brown upperparts.



**Song** "glug-glug-gee"

**Range and Habitat** Brown-headed Cowbird: Breeds throughout much of southern Canada and the U.S. Spends winters in central and southern parts of breeding range as well as in Florida. Habitat consists of agricultural lands, fields, woodland edges, and suburban areas.



Length Range: 18 - 21 cm (7 - 8.25 in)  
Weight: 48 g (1.7 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Promiscuous



# Great-tailed Grackle

Blackbirds and Orioles (Icteridae)

Species	<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>	Length	10.5 - 18.5 in	Weight	6.7 oz	Wingspan	19.25 in
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**General** Great-tailed Grackle: Large blackbird, iridescent black body and purple sheen. Yellow eyes. Long, keeled tail. Walks on ground, wades in water to forage. Eats snails, insects, frogs, shrimp, small fish and birds, eggs and young of other birds, fruits, berries, seeds and grains. Strong direct flight.

**Foraging and Feeding** Great-tailed Grackle: Feeds on insects, worms, small vertebrates (including tadpoles, small fish, and lizards), plant matter, and garbage. Forages while walking on the ground and wading in water; also steals food from other birds.

**Breeding and Nesting** Great-tailed Grackle: Three to four light blue to gray eggs with red purple markings are laid in a nest made of grass, bark, and weeds, and built in a palm or shade tree near water. Incubation ranges from 13 to 14 days and is carried out by the female.

**Flight Pattern** Strong swift direct flight on rapidly beating wings.

**Similar Species** Great-tailed Grackle: Boat-tailed Grackle is usually dark-eyed.



**Song** "may-ree, may-ree"

**Range and Habitat** Great-tailed Grackle: Resident from California, Colorado, Kansas, and western Louisiana southward. Preferred habitats include open areas with scattered trees, cultivated areas, marshes, parks, and areas around human habitation.



Length Range: 27 - 47 cm (10.5 - 18.5 in)  
Weight: 190 g (6.7 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Polygamous. Colonial

# Red-winged Blackbird

Blackbirds and Orioles (Icteridae)

Species	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>	Length	7.5 - 9.5 in	Weight	2.3 oz	Wingspan	12 - 14.5 in
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**General** Red-winged Blackbird: Small blackbird with jet-black body and bright red shoulder patches edged with yellow on bottom. Runs or hops while foraging on the ground. Eats seeds, grains, berries, fruits, insects, caterpillars, spiders, snails, grubs and mollusks. Strong direct flight on rapid wing beats.

**Foraging and Feeding** Red-winged Blackbird: Feeds on insects, small fruits, seeds, waste grain, and small aquatic invertebrates. Runs or hops while foraging on the ground. Although regarded as a pest because it eats grain in cultivated fields, the farmer also benefits from consumption of harmful insects.

**Breeding and Nesting** Red-winged Blackbird: Three to five pale blue green eggs marked with dark brown and purple are laid in a well-made cup of marsh grass or reeds and attached to emergent vegetation or built in a marsh shrub. Incubation ranges from 11 to 12 days and is carried out by the female.

**Flight Pattern** Strong direct flight with deep rapid wing beats. Displaying males fly with slow stiff shallow wing beats with epaulettes raised.

**Similar Species** Red-winged Blackbird: Tricolored Blackbird, which occurs only in Oregon and California, has white bordered red shoulder patch. Female has darker belly.



**Song** "o-ka-leeeee", "konk-a-ree"

**Range and Habitat** Red-winged Blackbird: Breeds from Alaska east across Canada to Newfoundland and south to northern Baja California, central Mexico, the Gulf Coast, and Florida. Spends winters regularly across the U.S. north to British Columbia, Great Lakes, and Pennsylvania. Preferred habitats include fresh and saltwater marshes, rice paddies, sedge meadows, alfalfa fields, and other croplands.



Length Range: 19 - 24 cm (7.5 - 9.5 in)  
Weight: 65 g (2.3 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Colonial. Some polygamous

Abundant

# American Goldfinch

Finches (Fringillidae)

Species	<i>Carduelis tristis</i>	Length	5 in	Weight	0.5 oz	Wingspan	8.75 - 9 in
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**General** American Goldfinch: Small, noisy finch. Male has a bright yellow body, black cap, wings, and tail, and white rump and undertail coverts. Wings have flashy white patches and bright yellow shoulder bar. Bill is conical. Undulating flight, alternates several rapid wing beats with wings pulled to sides.

**Foraging and Feeding** American Goldfinch: Feeds primarily on seeds; prefers hanging onto seed heads rather than feeding on the ground.

**Breeding and Nesting** American Goldfinch: Four to six pale blue to white blue eggs are laid in a well-made cup of grass, bark strips, and plant down, and built in a small sapling or shrub. Incubation typically ranges from 10 to 12 days and is carried out by the female; male feeds her on the nest.

**Flight Pattern** Undulating flight. Several rapid wing beats and then a pause.

**Similar Species** American Goldfinch: Yellow Warbler lacks black wings and tail. Lesser Goldfinch has yellow undertail coverts.



**Song** "per-chick-oree"

**Range and Habitat** American Goldfinch: Breeds from southern British Columbia east to Newfoundland and south to California, Utah, southern Colorado, central Oklahoma, Arkansas, and the Carolinas. Spends winters throughout much of U.S.; prefers brushy thickets, weedy grasslands, and nearby trees.

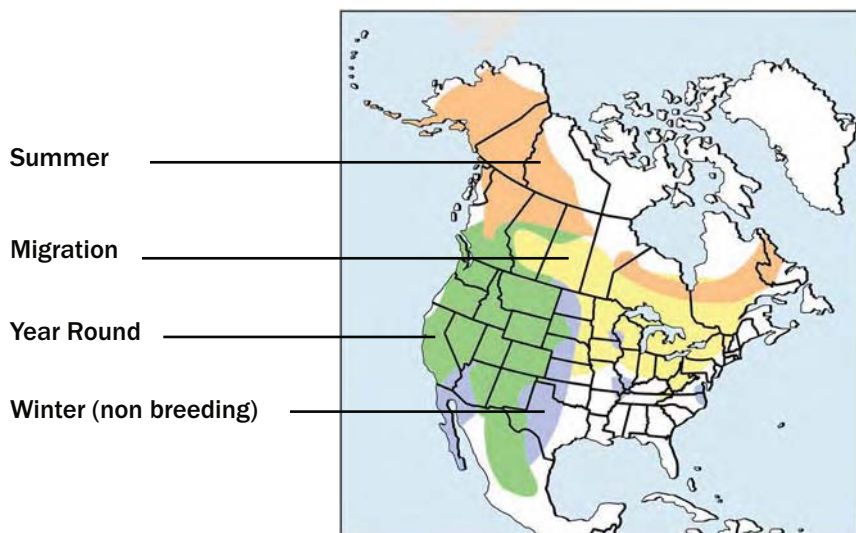


Length Range: 13 cm (5 in)  
Weight: 14 g (0.5 oz)  
Back Pattern: Solid  
Belly Pattern: Solid  
Breast Pattern: Solid

Monogamous

Declining slightly





## How to Use This Book

**Range Maps:** The Range maps are color coded to show where and when to expect each bird to occur. The maps cover ranges of birds living in North America, including the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Each map shows four ranges: orange for summer, blue for winter, yellow for migration, and green for year round. Because birds do not stay strictly inside these boundaries, you may find them wandering far from ranges assigned in this guide, particularly during migration. In some cases, a bird may be so rare that its sightings appear as small dots on the map; a bird may be seen in a certain area, and then disappear shortly after it has been spotted. When a bird is so rare that its range cannot be drawn, the map area will read “No Map Available”.

## Definitions and Conventions

**Common Name:** Birds are organized by common name, sex or seasonal or age variation, such as Abert’s Towhee Breeding Male, American Robin Female California Gull 1st Winter. The Latin species name, Order, and Family name are located under the common name, for example: Abert’s Towhee Breeding Male *Pipilo aberti* Order: PASSERIFORMES Family: Sparrows (Emberizidae)

**Family Name and Color:** The top of every page has a unique color bar associated with each family name.)

**General:** The general heading gives an overview of basic identification details. It describes the coloring of the body, any distinctive marks found in the head, tail, and underparts and the coloring differences between sexes and juveniles. Example: American Kestrel is the smallest North American hawk. Dainty falcon with two distinct black facial stripes and rust-brown tail and back. Male has slate-blue wings and black-spotted underparts. Female has rust-brown wings, narrow tail bands, and rust-streaked underparts.

**Foraging and Feeding:** Describes what the bird eats during different seasons. Example: In the summer, American Kestrels hunt in the early morning and evening, eating large insects like grasshoppers. During winter months, they hunt throughout daylight hours and eat small mammals such as mice, sandpiper chicks, lizards, scorpions, and amphibians.

**Breeding and Nesting:** Describes breeding, nesting, egg-laying, and incubation. Example: American Kestrel: For up to six weeks before egg laying, females are promiscuous, mating with two or three males. Once a female settles with one mate, the pair mates frequently until eggs are laid. Typically, three to seven white or light pink eggs are laid. Incubation is carried out primarily by the female, and lasts approximately 29-30 days; however, the male will occasionally take over the duties.

**Similar Species:** Distinguishes birds that closely resemble the bird in question. Example: American Kestrel: The Sharp-shinned Hawk is similar in size, but has rounded wings and is patterned differently. The Merlin is larger with broader-based wings, lacks rust tones on back and wing coverts, has a single mustache mark, and is strongly checkered under wings.

**Flight Pattern:** How the bird flies. For example: “American Kestrel: Soars on thermals. Several rapid wing beats followed by a glide. Often hovers on rapidly beating wings”

**Song:** Describes the bird's vocalization in a mnemonic form. Example: American Kestrel alarm call is a loud, quick klee-klee-klee or killy, killy, killy.

**Range and Habitat:** Describes where the bird breeds, residence and migration patterns, and preferred habitats such as chaparral, brushy oak, woodlands, and so on. Example: American Kestrel breeds from Alaska and the Northwest Territories east through the Maritime Provinces and south throughout the continent. It winters north to British Columbia, Great Lakes, and New England. Preferred habitat includes towns and cities, parks, farmlands, and open country.

**Info Box:** Contains basic physical parameters including body length, wingspan, weight, coloring, and patterns. Units are given in metric and English..

All information contained in this field guide is derived from the WhatBird database found at <http://www.whatbird.com>. This database includes a state of the art parametric search engine that allows identification of any one of over 800 bird species or variations found in North America with just a few clicks. There is also a bird forum where our ornithologists will help you identify birds that you cannot find with the search engine.

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