

BIRD IDENTIFICATION

When bird watching, there are several things to look for that will help ensure you correctly identify what you see and enjoy your bird watching experience.

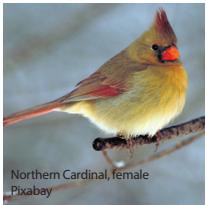


SIZE

Bird watchers often compare the size of the bird to other well-known bird species. Is the bird you are looking at smaller than a robin? Between the size of a robin and a crow? Or, larger than a crow? Starting with size will help narrow your search.

SHAPE

Take a look at a heron and you will see it is shaped different than an owl. Songbirds are often small and compact, but cranes are long and slender. A bird's shape can help you determine what group of birds it belongs to.



COLOR

Many birds are some shade of brown to help camouflage them from predators and prey. But, some birds use bright colors to attract a mate. Determining the predominate color(s) of a bird will go a long way in determining what bird you see.

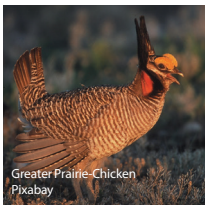
MARKINGS

In addition to color, a bird's markings will help narrow your search. Markings are anything unique about the bird – an eye-ring, a crest on its head, the color of its beak, a mask around its eyes, or a distinctive color marking.



HABITAT and RANGE

Habitat is the type of environment (plants, climate, food) that a bird prefers. Range is the geographic area a bird can be found. Determining what habitat and geographic location you are in when bird watching will help determine if it is possible to see a specific bird in that location.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Nebraska Bird Library
NebraskaBirdLibrary.org



BIRDING LOCATIONS

STATE PARKS & STATE RECREATION AREAS
Nebraska has 8 state park, 10 state historical parks and 24 state recreation areas. Each site has unique features and bird species depending on the site's location and habitats.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS
Nebraska's 292 wildlife management areas are managed for the benefit of wildlife species. Located throughout the state, visitors can see a wide diversity of bird species.

LOCAL PARKS
Even the smallest of urban parks can provide amazing bird watching opportunities. Head to a local park to see many of Nebraska's most common bird species.

NATURE CENTERS
Nebraska is rich with nature centers located from Gering to Bellevue. Visit a nature center to not only go bird watching, but also learn about Nebraska's wildlife.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Nebraska Birding Trails
www.NEBirdingGuide.org



The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission does not discriminate based upon any protected status. Please see outdoornebraska.gov/nondiscrimination



Western Meadowlark
Shutterstock

A guide to 20 Common Birds of Nebraska



NEBRASKA
- GAME WILDLIFE PARKS -

Red-headed Woodpecker
AdobeStock



American Goldfinch

Carduelis tristis

Size: 5"

Range: statewide; year-round
Males are bright yellow and black in summer, but dull brown like females in winter.

NEBRASKAland Magazine

American Robin

Turdus migratorius

Size: 10"

Range: statewide, year-round
Ground feeder. Common in suburban areas. Song is a happy "cherri-up, cherri-oh."



Pixabay

Black-capped Chickadee

Poecile atricapilla

Size: 5"

Range: statewide, year-round
Common at feeders; eats seeds and insects. Two distinct calls: "chick-a-dee-dee" and "fee-bee."



Jack Bulmer, Pixabay

Blue Jay

Cyanocitta cristata

Size: 11"

Range: statewide, year-round
An aggressive bird with many different loud calls. Eats seeds, insects and small animals.



Pixabay

American Kestrel

Falco sparverius

Size: 10 1/2"

Range: statewide, year-round
Seen on roadsides hovering over prey before diving. Feeds on insects, rodents and small birds.



Bill Gracey, Flicker



White-breasted Nuthatch

Sitta carolinensis

Size: 5 3/4"

Range: statewide; year-round
Often seen searching tree bark for insects. Call is a repeated "yank, yank."

Ryan Hodnett

Great Horned Owl

Bubo virginianus

Size: 22"

Range: statewide, year-round
Call is 3-8 loud "hoots." Eats small animals, skunks, cats and birds.



National Park Service

Eastern Kingbird

Tyrannus tyrannus

Length: 7.5-9"

Range: statewide, summer
Black or grey back with white belly, dark grey or black head. Voracious insect eater.



USFWS

Yellow Warbler

Setophaga petechia

Wingspan: 4.6-5"

Range: statewide, summer
Often found near wetlands or streams in wooded areas. Eats insects.



Keith Williams

House Wren

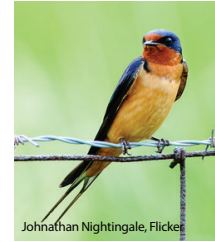
Troglodytes aedon

Size: 4 3/4"

Range: statewide, summer
Found in farms, gardens and parks. Song is a bubbly whistling; loud for its small size.



dfaulder, wikimedia



Barn Swallow

Hirundo rustica

Size: 6 3/4"

Range: statewide, summer
Nests under bridges and eaves, often in large colonies. Swoops through the air to catch insects.

Johnathan Nightingale, Flicker

Mourning Dove

Zenaida macroura

Size: 12"

Range: statewide, year-round
Call is a mournful "oowwoo-woo-woo." Commonly seen perching on power lines.



Pixabay

Canada Goose

Branta canadensis

Size: 25" - 45"

Range: statewide, year-round
Migrates in "V" formations, but if open water is available, they remain in Nebraska year-round.



Joe Ravi

Eastern Bluebird

Sialis sialis

Size: 7"

Range: statewide, summer
Found in open woodland, farms and orchards. Nests in cavities.



Pixabay

House Finch

Haemorhous mexicanus

Size: 5"

Range: statewide; year-round
Common in urban areas, eats exclusively seeds. Females are brown and lack red coloring.



Pixabay



Red-tailed Hawk

Buteo jamaicensis

Size: 22" (wingspan 50")

Range: statewide, year-round
Common hawk in Nebraska, often seen along roadsides. Call is a sharp, shrill "keeeeeeer."

Downy Woodpecker

Picoides pubescens

Size: 6 3/4"

Range: statewide, year-round
Smallest woodpecker species in Nebraska. Common visitor to feeders.



Mallard

Anas platyrhynchos

Length: 20-26"

Range: statewide, year-round
Males have a bright green head, grey and brown body. Females are mottled brown.



Turkey Vulture

Cathartes aura

Size: 27" (wingspan 69")

Range: statewide, summer
Feeds on carrion or dead animals. Soars with wings in a "V" with unstable rocking.



Killdeer

Charadrius vociferus

Length: 8-11"

Range: statewide, summer
Although a shorebird, they are found in parking lots, golf courses and open fields.

