

Beginner Bird Guide

NEBRASKA



BIRDING BOWL



Tips & Tricks of Birdwatching



- **Start Close to Home:** Begin birdwatching in your backyard, local park, or school grounds. You'll be surprised by the variety of birds you can find right in your own neighborhood.
- **Use Binoculars:** Invest in a pair of binoculars to get a closer look at birds in the distance. Start with a lower magnification (8x or 10x) for easier viewing, especially for beginners.
- **Learn Bird Calls:** Pay attention to the sounds birds make. Learning bird calls can help you identify species even if you can't see them. There are many apps and online resources available to help you learn bird songs.
- **Observe Behavior:** Take note of how birds behave. Do they forage on the ground, perch in trees, or soar in the sky? Understanding bird behavior can provide clues to their identity.
- **Keep a Field Journal:** Bring along a notebook or journal to record your bird sightings. Note the date, location, weather conditions, and any interesting behaviors you observe. Drawing or sketching the birds can also be helpful.
- **Join a Birdwatching Group:** Consider joining a local birdwatching club or group. Birding with experienced enthusiasts can be both educational and enjoyable. Plus, it's a great way to make new friends who share your interests.
- **Respect Wildlife:** Remember to observe birds from a distance and avoid disturbing them or their habitats. Be mindful of nesting areas and sensitive habitats, and always follow Leave No Trace principles.
- **Be Patient and Persistent:** Birdwatching requires patience and practice. Don't get discouraged if you don't see many birds at first. Keep exploring, and you'll gradually become more skilled at spotting and identifying them.
- **Use Field Guides:** Invest in a good field guide or download a bird identification app to help you identify birds in the field. Look for guides with color illustrations, range maps, and concise descriptions to assist you in your birdwatching adventures.
- **Have Fun:** Most importantly, have fun and enjoy the experience of connecting with nature. Birdwatching is a rewarding hobby that can bring you closer to the natural world and provide a lifetime of enjoyment and discovery.

American Robin



Meet the American Robin, the harbinger of spring!

- **Description:** With its red breast and cheerful song, the American Robin is one of the most recognizable birds in North America.
- **Habitat:** You can find robins hopping around in parks, gardens, and forests across the continent.
- **Fun Fact:** Did you know that robins can eat up to 14 feet of earthworms in a single day?

Eastern Bluebird



Behold the stunning Eastern Bluebird, a symbol of happiness!

- **Description:** Sporting vibrant blue feathers, the Eastern Bluebird is a sight to behold against a clear sky.
- **Habitat:** Look for bluebirds in open fields, meadows, and along country roads.
- **Fun Fact:** Bluebirds are cavity nesters, meaning they often make their homes in abandoned woodpecker holes or nest boxes provided by humans.

Western Meadowlark



Listen to the melodious song of the Western Meadowlark!

- **Description:** The Western Meadowlark boasts a yellow breast with a distinctive black "V" on its chest.
- **Habitat:** These birds prefer grasslands, prairies, and agricultural fields in the western United States.
- **Fun Fact:** Meadowlarks are talented singers, with each male having its own unique song to attract mates and establish territory. They are also Nebraska's state bird!

Red-tailed Hawk



Marvel at the majesty of the Red-tailed Hawk soaring high in the sky!

- **Description:** With its keen eyesight and broad wingspan, the Red-tailed Hawk is a formidable predator.
- **Habitat:** Look for these raptors perched on trees, utility poles, or soaring above open fields and forests.
- **Fun Fact:** Red-tailed Hawks are excellent hunters, feeding on small mammals like mice, rabbits, and even snakes.

American Crow



Meet the intelligent and resourceful American Crow!

- **Description:** Crows are all-black birds with a distinctive cawing call and a knack for problem-solving.
- **Habitat:** You can find crows in a variety of habitats, from urban areas to forests and farmlands.
- **Fun Fact:** Crows are known for their intelligence, using tools and even remembering human faces.

House Finch



Admire the vibrant colors of the House Finch!

- **Description:** Male House Finches sport bright red plumage on their heads and chests, while females have a more subdued brown coloration.
- **Habitat:** Look for House Finches in urban and suburban areas, particularly around bird feeders.
- **Fun Fact:** House Finches were originally found only in the western United States but have since expanded their range across North America.

Northern Cardinal



Delight in the brilliant red plumage of the Northern Cardinal!

- **Description:** Male Northern Cardinals are striking with their bright red bodies and distinctive crest, while females are a more subdued brown color.
- **Habitat:** Cardinals inhabit woodlands, gardens, and shrubby areas across the eastern United States.
- **Fun Fact:** Cardinals are known for their loud, clear whistle-like songs, which they use to communicate with each other.

Blue Jay



Meet the noisy and colorful Blue Jay!

- **Description:** Blue Jays are known for their vibrant blue plumage, white face, and black markings on their wings and tail.
- **Habitat:** Look for Blue Jays in woodlands, parks, and suburban areas throughout much of North America.
- **Fun Fact:** Blue Jays are excellent mimics and can imitate the calls of other birds, as well as human-made sounds.

Mourning Dove



Listen to the gentle cooing of the Mourning Dove!

- **Description:** Mourning Doves are soft gray birds with a long, tapered tail and a distinctive mournful cooing call.
- **Habitat:** These birds are commonly found in urban and suburban areas, as well as open fields and agricultural land.
- **Fun Fact:** Mourning Doves are one of the most widespread and abundant birds in North America.

Downy Woodpecker



Marvel at the tiny yet mighty Downy Woodpecker!

- **Description:** Downy Woodpeckers are small black-and-white birds with a distinctive red patch on the back of their heads (males) or lack thereof (females).
- **Habitat:** Look for Downy Woodpeckers in woodlands, parks, and suburban areas across North America.
- **Fun Fact:** Despite their small size, Downy Woodpeckers are skilled at excavating insects from tree bark using their sharp beaks.

Red-winged Blackbird



Observe the sleek and glossy plumage of the Red-winged Blackbird!

- **Description:** Male Red-winged Blackbirds are glossy black with bright red and yellow shoulder patches, while females are a more subdued brown color.
- **Habitat:** Look for Red-winged Blackbirds in wetlands, marshes, and along the edges of lakes and rivers.
- **Fun Fact:** Red-winged Blackbirds are highly territorial during the breeding season, with males fiercely defending their territories from intruders.

Song Sparrow



Listen to the sweet melodies of the Song Sparrow!

- **Description:** Song Sparrows are small, streaky brown birds with a distinct dark spot in the center of their chest. They have a long, rounded tail and a slightly rounded head.
- **Habitat:** Look for Song Sparrows in a variety of habitats, including grasslands, marshes, gardens, and urban parks, across North America.
- **Fun Fact:** As their name suggests, Song Sparrows are accomplished singers, with each male having its own unique song. They often sing from exposed perches to establish territory and attract mates.

NOTES