



BIRDS COMMON TO WINDY ACRES

There are close to 500 different species of bird found in New Jersey, and many of them call Windy Acres their home. As you walk around the trails, you should be able to hear, and hopefully see, many species of bird. Some of the more common birds to look out for are listed below.

Additionally, there are free apps available that provide resources for identifying birds, including tools to identify birds from photos you take, or by a recording of their bird song. Download one of these apps and see if you can identify local birds. You can even report your sightings to their databases.

‘eBird’ – managed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology

‘Audubon’ – managed by the National Audubon Society

AMERICAN CROW

Crows are thought to be among our most intelligent birds, and the success of the American Crow in adapting to civilization would seem to confirm this. Despite past attempts to exterminate them, crows are more common than ever in farmlands, towns, and even cities, and their distinctive caw! is a familiar sound over much of the continent. Sociable, especially when not nesting, crows may gather in communal roosts on winter nights, sometimes with thousands or even tens of thousands roosting in one grove.



AMERICAN GOLDFINCH

A typical summer sight is a male American Goldfinch flying over a meadow, flashing golden in the sun, calling perchickory as it bounds up and down in flight. In winter, when males and females alike are colored in subtler brown, flocks of goldfinches congregate in weedy fields and at feeders, making musical and plaintive calls.



AMERICAN ROBIN

A very familiar bird over most of North America, running and hopping on lawns with upright stance, often nesting on porches and windowsills. The Robin's rich caroling is among the earliest bird songs heard at dawn in spring and summer, often beginning just before first light. In fall and winter, robins may gather by the hundreds in roaming flocks, concentrating at sources of food.



BARN SWALLOW

One of our most familiar birds in rural areas and semi-open country, this swallow is often seen skimming low over fields with a flowing, graceful flight. It seems to have adopted humans as neighbors, typically placing its nest in barns or garages, or under bridges or wharves; indeed, it is now rare to find a Barn Swallow nest in a site that is not manmade.



BLUE JAY

One of the loudest and most colorful birds of eastern back yards and woodlots, the Blue Jay is unmistakable. Intelligent and adaptable, it may feed on almost anything, and it is quick to take advantage of bird feeders. Besides their raucous jay! jay! calls, Blue Jays make a variety of musical sounds, and they can do a remarkable imitation of the scream of a Red-shouldered Hawk.



CAROLINA WREN

More brightly colored than most wrens, and with a rich musical song, Carolina Wrens are common in open woods and backyards in the southeast. The adults live in pairs all year, and they may "duet" at any season, with the female giving a chattering note while the male sings. Seen in warmer weather before migrating South for the Winter.



COMMON YELLOWTHROAT

Abundant and well-known, the Common Yellowthroat has succeeded by being a nonconformist. As the only one of our warblers that will nest in open marshes, it is found in practically every reed-bed and patch of cattails from coast to coast. The male often perches atop a tall stalk to rap out his distinctive song, wichity-wichity-wichity.



DOWNY WOODPECKER

The smallest woodpecker in North America, common and widespread. In the East, this is the most familiar member of the family, readily entering towns and city parks, coming to backyard bird feeders. Its small size makes it versatile, and it may forage on weed stalks as well as in large trees.



EASTERN BLUEBIRD

This is the most widespread of the three bluebirds. A high percentage of Eastern Bluebirds in North America today nest in birdhouses put up especially for them along "bluebird trails." When they are not nesting, these birds roam the countryside in small flocks.



FIELD SPARROW

The plaintive whistled song of the Field Sparrow often can be heard in brushy pastures, even on hot summer days when most birds are silent. Despite the name, this is not one of the sparrows inhabiting open fields of grass; it prefers brushy places, overgrown meadows with many bushes. It looks distinctively small and long-tailed, and its plain face gives it an innocent expression to match the sweetness of its song.



GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER

In dense leafy forests of the east, the Great Crested Flycatcher lives within the canopy of tall trees in summer. It is more easily heard than seen, its rolling calls echoing through the woods. It nests in holes in trees, and it has the odd habit of adding pieces of shed snakeskin to its nest.



HOUSE FINCH

Adaptable, colorful, and cheery-voiced, House Finches are common from coast to coast today, familiar visitors to backyard feeders. Native to the Southwest, they are recent arrivals in the East. New York pet shop owners, who had been selling the finches illegally, released their birds in 1940 to escape prosecution; the finches survived, and began to colonize the New York suburbs.



HOUSE WREN

A familiar backyard bird, the House Wren was named long ago for its tendency to nest around human homes or in birdhouses. Very active and inquisitive, bouncing about with its short tail held up in the air, pausing to sing a rich bubbling song, it adds a lively spark to gardens and city parks despite its lack of bright colors.



INDIGO BUNTING

In parts of the East, Indigo Bunting may be the most abundant songbird, with the deep-blue males singing along every roadside. The plain brown females are seen far less often, and they have good reason to be inconspicuous: they do almost all the work of caring for the eggs and young, hidden away in dense thickets.



MOURNING DOVE

The mournful cooing of the Mourning Dove is one of our most familiar bird sounds. From southern Canada to central Mexico, this is one of our most common birds, often abundant in open country and along roadsides. Mourning Doves may raise up to six broods per year, more than any other native bird.



NORTHERN CARDINAL

One of our most popular birds, the Cardinal is the official state bird of no fewer than seven eastern states. Abundant in the Southeast, it has been extending its range northward for decades, and it now brightens winter days with its color and its whistled song as far north as southeastern Canada. Feeders stocked with sunflower seeds may have aided its northward spread.



NORTHERN FLICKER

This brown woodpecker flashes bright colors under the wings and tail when it flies. Its ringing calls and short bursts of drumming can be heard in spring almost throughout North America.



NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD

This bird's famous song, with its varied repetitions and artful imitations, is heard all day during nesting season (and often all night as well). Very common in towns and cities, the Mockingbird often seeks insects on open lawns. When running in the open it may stop every few feet and partly spread its wings, flashing the white wing patches.



RED-TAILED HAWK

This is the most widespread and familiar large hawk in North America, bulky and broad-winged, designed for effortless soaring. An inhabitant of open country, it is commonly seen perched on roadside poles or sailing over fields and woods. Although adults usually can be recognized by the trademark reddish-brown tail, the rest of their plumage can be quite variable.



RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD

Among our most familiar birds, Red-wings seem to sing their nasal songs in every marsh and wet field from coast to coast. They are notably bold, and several will often attack a larger bird, such as a hawk or crow, that flies over their nesting area. The red shoulder patches of the male, hidden under body feathers much of the time, are brilliantly displayed when he is singing.



SONG SPARROW

Very widespread in North America, this melodious sparrow is among the most familiar birds in some areas, such as the Northeast and Midwest. At times it is rather skulking in behavior, hiding in the thickets, seen only when it flies from bush to bush with a typical pumping motion of its tail. Usually, however, sheer numbers make it conspicuous.



TREE SWALLOW

The popularity of the bluebird has been a boon to the Tree Swallow, which nests in holes of exactly the same size, and has taken advantage of bluebird houses over much of North America. Unlike other swallows, Tree Swallows eat many berries (especially bayberries), allowing them to survive through wintry spells when other insect-eaters might starve.



TURKEY VULTURE

A familiar sight in the sky over much of North America is the dark, long-winged form of the Turkey Vulture, soaring high over the landscape. Most birds are believed to have a very poor sense of smell, but the Turkey Vulture is an exception, apparently able to find carrion by odor.

