

**1. American Crow** ID tips...look in trees, on the ground, and listen for the voice of the crow, who has a lot to say! The American Crow is a big black bird with...

- \* dark brown eyes
- \* black legs
- \* All feathers black glossed with violet.

Cool Fact: To eat road kill, crows have to wait for something else to tear open the body or for the body to decompose and soften, since a crow's beak isn't usually strong enough to tear open the dead animal's skin.

**2. American Robin** ID tips: larger than a sparrow, smaller than a crow, with dark back & reddish breast

- \* Back and wings gray.
- \* Underparts red.
- \* Dark head with white eye crescents.
- \* sexes similar, female paler, esp on head

Cool facts: Hundreds of thousands of American Robins can gather in a single winter roost. In summer, females sleep on the nests and males congregate in roosts. As young robins become independent, they join the males in the roost. Female adults go to the roosts only after they have finished nesting.

**Juvenile American Robin** looks somewhat similar to adult, but has black spotting on underparts, pale spotting on upperparts, white throat, and paler head. Younger babies look 'funny' with tufts of baby feathers on their head, yellow beak that looks too big for their head, and awkward attempts to fly.

**A robin nest** is an open cup of grass and twigs held together with a thick layer of mud, lined with fine dry grass. Nest is usually relatively low in a tree on a firm branch with dense foliage, but can be placed from ground to treetop, on lights next to doorways, on top of tires on parked cars, and on flat surfaces.

**3. Great Horned Owl** ID tips: upright "ear-like" feathers on the head

- \*Size: Larger than a crow
- \*Shape: rotund, barrel shaped bird with large eyes and two feather tufts on top of the head, looks tailless
- \*Color pattern: Variable-grays and browns, white throated
- \*Behavior: solitary perch hunter most active at dusk and dawn
- \*Habitat: Everywhere there are woodlands, especially fond of using edges

**4. Barn Swallow**

ID tips: small, graceful, very talented flying bird...often swooping over water or grassy areas to catch flying bugs, or perching on wires nearby nests

- \* small slender songbird
- \* long and forked tail
- \* upperparts steely iridescent blue
- \* reddish belly on males; females have whitish belly

Cool Facts: Barn Swallows originally nested in caves, but now the swallow nests almost exclusively on man-made structures like barns and underneath bridges. The Barn Swallow is the most abundant and widely distributed swallow species in the world. Barn Swallows nest and breed in North America but spend winter in Central and South America. They might travel as far as 120 miles in a day during migration. Migration might take a couple of months, either going south in the fall or north in the spring.

## 5. Black-crowned Night Heron

ID tip: look near water! This is a pretty big bird...bigger than an American Crow!

- \* medium-sized, stocky heron.
- \* short neck and thick black bill.
- \* black cap and back.
- \* gray wings
- \* white belly

Cool Facts: Young Black-crowned Night Herons may aggressively defend their nests, regurgitating and defecating (pooping) on human intruders, squawking with wings outstretched and beak wide open!

## 6. Brown-headed Cowbird

ID Tips: bigger than a sparrow, often seen with groups of blackbirds

- \* Male shiny black with brown head and neck.
- \* Medium-long tail.
- \* Bill stout and pointed.
- \* Female dull gray-brown.

Cowbirds can be considered a pest bird, but are our only native North American parasitic nester. Used to be in the Great Plains where they ate the insects in the grass near the wandering bison, but now moving into east because of larger areas of open cleared land. So they are moving from farmland into the suburbs! This is a common bird across most of North America, but numbers are declining in most areas. Its habit of nest parasitism can cause the decline of species with small populations, such as Kirtland's Warbler and Black-capped Vireo. American Robins and Gray Catbirds will throw the cowbird egg out of the nest. Cowbirds like the 'edge' of forest area to nest in...somewhere right next to open space where they can find food. If you see birds pecking and investigating right near where horses or cows are eating grass, that's probably a cowbird.

## 7. Bullock's Oriole

ID tips: about the size of an American Robin

- \* medium-sized songbird with long tails and long pointed bills
- \* male has orange on his head with a black eye stripe and the lower part of his beak is pale. In his first year he will develop a black line down his throat as he gets older.
- \* female has a yellow head
- \* often found singing from the top of a tall tree...(see silhouette poster)

Cool Fact: With its bright orange and black plumage, the Oriole's arrival is eagerly awaited by birders each spring migration. It prefers open areas with tall trees and is common in parks and suburban areas. Also look for it along woodland edges and open areas with scattered trees. look for female might be near the distinctive hanging, woven nest.

## 8. Cedar Waxwing

ID tips: about the size of an American Robin and looks like it's wearing a mask!

- \* Medium-sized songbird.
- \* Gray-brown overall.
- \* Crest on top of head.
- \* Black mask edged in white.
- \* Yellow or orange tips on tail feathers
- \* Waxy tips on the end of some of the wing feathers

Cool Fact: The Cedar Waxwing depends on fruit for food and can survive on fruit alone for several months. Because of its dependence on fruit it breeds late in the season and leads a nomadic life, looking for more fruit!

**9. European Starling** ID tips: a small but good-sized black bird...larger than a sparrow but smaller than a crow

- \* Short, square-tipped tail.
- \* Pointed, triangular wings.
- \* Long pointed bill, yellow in breeding season.
- \* Shimmering green and purple feathers in spring.
- \* Starlike pattern on back

Cool fact: Migrating flocks of European Starlings consisting of 100,000 birds are not uncommon. They nest in cavities (holes in trees, buildings, and nest boxes) and might destroy eggs and kill nestlings of native birds (like bluebirds and woodpeckers) to use their nesting sites.

**10. House Finch** ID tip: small bird with a bit of pink color on head & chest...smaller than a robin

- \* Male bright red on head, chest, and rump
- \* Bill short and thick, with rounded top edge.
- \* Two thin white wingbars.

ID Tip: find **female House Finches** alongside male House Finches!

- \* Female is brown and softly striped.
- \* Note the shape of her beak, which is good for cracking open seeds.
- \* Challenge yourself to learn the difference between female House Finch & female House Sparrow!

Cool fact: The poop of nestling House Finches is enclosed in a thin sac called a fecal sac (this is true for most birds). The parents eat the fecal sacs of the nestlings for about the first five days. When most parent songbirds stop eating the sacs, they carry the sacs away from the nest. House Finch parents don't do this and the sacs build up around the rim of the nest.

**11. House Sparrow** ID tips: small bird, about the same size as the House Finch

- \* Small, stocky songbird.
- \* Bill thick.
- \* Legs short.
- \* Chest unstreaked.
- \* Wingbars.
- \* Male with black throat and white cheeks, black is darker in breeding plumage

Female ID tips: you see her all the time and never notice her!

- \* frequently seen with male House Sparrow!
- \* gray-brown crown and pale streak behind eye.
- \* unmarked throat and breast, plain gray-brown
- \* short wings and tail, light-colored but stout bill

Cool Facts: Can bathe in water or dust. House Sparrows have been observed attacking as many as 70 other species of birds, especially to steal or defend a nest cavity, including other House Sparrows, Eastern Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, and Purple Martins. Female House Sparrows prefer male House Sparrows with darker, larger black bibs. 100 House Sparrows were bought by Mr. Nicolas Pike for \$200 from England and released in Brooklyn, NY, in the fall the 1851 and the spring 1852. By 1900 House Sparrows had spread throughout most of the U.S. and into Canada.

## 12. Killdeer

ID tips: look for them on the ground, in gravel by the side of the road, parking lots, driveways, flat roofs

- medium-sized shorebird
- legs moderately long
- short neck
- brown back
- white underparts with two black bands on chest.

Cool Fact: Killdeer are skilled actors and will try to lure potential predators away from their nests by pretending to have a broken-wing. They will also practice "false-brooding" if a predator is nearby, where the adult will settle down as if to brood at a site where there are no eggs or chicks. Nests are built right on stones and are very hard to see.

**13. Mallard** ID tips: This is the duck you are most likely to see in urban and suburban settings. Male and female look very different though!

- \* Male has shiny, or iridescent green head, rusty chest, and gray body.
- \* Female is plain mottled brown, and blends in with grasses and nest.

Cool Fact: Mallards find their mates long before the spring breeding season. They pair up in the fall, but they court each other throughout the winter. Only the female incubates the eggs and takes care of the ducklings.

**14. Mourning Dove** ID Tip: often looking for food on the ground, under feeders, or sitting on telephone wires

- \* Small head.
- \* Long, pointed tail.
- \* Light brown body.
- \* Tail with white outer edges.

Cool fact: On hot rainy days, Mourning Doves may lean forward, hold up their wings, and fluff themselves up allowing water to get into their feathers. In a cold rain or if they don't want to get wet, they hold their heads high and flatten their feathers and the water flows off.

**15. Peregrine Falcon** ID tips...look up! You'll probably see this bird in the air or possibly high up on the ledge of a tall building in a big city.

- \* Large falcon, medium-sized hawk.
- \* Black mustache mark on face.
- \* Long pointed wings.

Cool Fact: The name "peregrine" means wanderer or traveler. The Peregrine Falcon has one of the longest migrations of any North American bird. Some falcons may travel 15,500 miles in a year.

**16. Rock Pigeon** ID Tip: larger and comes in more colors than a Mourning Dove

- \* Color variable, but Blue-bar color morph is most common...look for the bluish bar across the wings.
- \* White rump.
- \* Rounded tail, usually with dark tip.
- \* Wings broad with moderately pointed wingtips.
- \* Males often have iridescent neck and throat

Cool Fact: Both male and female Rock Pigeons produce "pigeon milk" in their crops which they feed to their hatchlings.

**17. Calliope Hummingbird** ID tips: Smallest hummer in NC WA

Size: tiny

Shape: tear dropped, large head, short bill, pot-bellied, short-tailed

Color pattern: Male has reddish-purple gorget, green and rufous

Behavior: slouches when perched

Habitat: 3500 ft and up in open woodlands and edges during breeding season

**18. Hairy Woodpecker** ID tips: Longer bill than look-alike downy woodpecker

Size: Larger than a robin

Shape: Large wedge shaped head with a long chisel like bill

Color pattern: high contrast of black and white

Behavior: uses large limbed trees

Habitat: mature forest

**19. Steller's Jay** ID tips: Loud and in-your-face. Head crest

Size: larger than a robin

Shape: robust dark bird with a crest

Color pattern: dark blue with a blackish cowl

Behavior: boisterous, ascends tree by spiraling up through branches closest to the trunk

Habitat: conifers and mixed forest