



American Goldfinch

(Spinus tristis)



SEASONAL MOLT:
Bright yellow in summer, drab olive-brown in winter.



STRICT VEGETARIAN:
Diet is almost entirely seeds from thistles and other plants.



LATE NESTER:
Times nesting with mid-summer thistle seeding.



SOCIAL STANDING:
Low in hierarchy; often the first to yield at feeders.



American Robin

(Turdus migratorius) - Winter Nomad



WINTER DIET SHIFT:

Switches from worms and insects to a diet almost entirely of berries and fruits.



NOMADIC FLOCKS:

Forms large, roaming flocks in winter to search for food sources, abandoning territories.



COLD HARDY:

Can withstand extreme cold by puffing up downy feathers to retain body heat.



QUIET WINTER:

Typically silent during winter months, resuming song with the approach of spring.



Black-capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*) - Maine's State Bird



SUPER MEMORY:

Hippocampus grows 30% in winter to recall thousands of food caches.



CAVITY NESTER:

Excavates own holes in soft birch or alder wood.



SOCIAL CORE:

Forms the nucleus of winter mixed-species flocks.



ALARM CALL:

"Chick-a-dee-dee-dee"
– More "dees" mean higher threat.



Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*)



INTELLIGENT CORVID:

Known for "fun and interactive" personalities.



MIMICRY:

Imitates hawk calls to scare other birds or for social learning.



FOREST REGENERATOR:

Caches acorns that can sprout into new trees.



HIGHLY SOCIAL:

Travels in family groups, engages in playful "chasing games".

American Crow



Habitat and Range

- Widespread across most of North America.
- Highly adaptable to woodlands, farmlands, suburban, and urban areas.
- Partially migratory; northern populations move south for winter, others are resident.
- Thrives in open areas near trees for roosting and nesting.

Physical Description

- Large, entirely black bird with iridescent, glossy plumage.
- Has a strong, stout black bill and black legs.
- In flight, tail appears squared-off or fan-shaped, unlike the wedge-shaped tail of a raven.

Interesting Behavior

- Exceptionally intelligent; known for tool use, complex problem-solving, and recognizing human faces.
- Highly social birds that gather in massive communal roosts numbering in the thousands during winter.



Dark-eyed Junco

(*Junco hyemalis*)



'SNOWBIRD' NICKNAME:

Appears in Southern Maine primarily during winter.



POPULATION DRIVERS:

Numbers at feeders spike when snow cover is low.



GROUND FORAGER:

Scrounges for fallen seeds beneath feeders or in leaf litter.



HABITAT TRANSITION:

Winter refuge after breeding in the Canadian taiga.



Downy Woodpecker (*Dryobates pubescens*)
- North America's Smallest Woodpecker



INSECT SPECIALIST:

Over 75% of diet is insects, including beetles, ants, and caterpillars hidden in bark.



GALL FORAGER:

Uniquely taps goldenrod galls in winter to find overwintering grubs.



FEEDER VISITOR:

Common at backyard feeders, readily eats suet and black oil sunflower seeds.



ACROBATIC MOVEMENT:

Moves horizontally and downwards on trees more easily than larger woodpeckers.



Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) - America's National Symbol



MASSIVE NESTS:

Builds the largest tree nests of any North American bird, reused for years.



PRIMARY PISCIVORE:

Diet consists mainly of fish, often snatched from the water's surface.



CONSERVATION SUCCESS:

Recovered from endangered status; Maine population grew from near extinction to over 700 pairs.



LATE MATURITY:

Takes 4-5 years to attain full adult plumage with the iconic white head and tail.



Herring Gull (*Larus smithsonianus*) - The Classic "Seagull"



WIDESPREAD RESIDENT:

Common year-round in Southern Maine; populations have declined from historic highs.



OPPORTUNISTIC FEEDER:

Omnivorous diet includes fish, invertebrates, garbage, and food scraps.



COLONIAL NESTER:

Nests in colonies on islands, cliffs, and sometimes rooftops.



LOUD CALLS:

Known for its loud, raucous "long call" and other varied vocalizations.



Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*) – Gentle Ground Feeder



SEED SPECIALIST:

Diet is 99% seeds; feeds on the ground by quickly filling its crop.



CROP STORAGE:

Stores large quantities of seeds in a throat sac to digest later in a safe location.



FLIMSY NESTS:

Builds simple, loosely constructed platform nests in trees, shrubs, or on man-made structures.



MOURNFUL COO:

Named for its soft, drawn-out, owl-like cooing call.



Northern Cardinal

(*Cardinalis cardinalis*)



RANGE EXPANSION:
Moving north due to warming climate and bird feeders.



FEEDER HIERARCHY:
Females are highly dominant, often displacing smaller birds.



PARENTAL TEACHERS:
Adults bring fledglings to feeders to teach feeding skills.



PREFERRED DIET:
Favors sunflower seeds and cracked corn.



Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – The “Jack-of-all-Trades” Raptor



KEEN VISION:

Eyesight 8x sharper than a human's; can spot a mouse from 100 feet up.



VARIED DIET:

Feeds on small mammals (voles, rabbits), birds, and reptiles.



SOARING HUNTER:

Often seen soaring over open fields or perched on roadside poles scanning for prey.



HOLLYWOOD SCREAM:

Its raspy, descending cry is frequently used in movies for eagles and other raptors.



Ring-necked Pheasant

(Phasianus colchicus) - Introduced Game Bird



INTRODUCED SPECIES:

Native to Asia, introduced to North America as a game bird; populations are often supplemented.



GROUND FORAGER:

Scratches the ground to find seeds, grains, berries, insects, and small invertebrates.



HAREM MATING:

Males (roosters) establish harems of several females (hens) during the breeding season.



LOUD CROWING:

Males have a distinctive, loud, two-note crowing call, often followed by wing-flapping.



Sandhill Crane (*Antigone canadensis*) - Majestic Migrant



MIGRATORY VISITOR:

Seen in Southern Maine during migration, with some populations breeding in the state.



DISTINCTIVE CALL:

Known for its loud, rolling, trumpeting call that can be heard from long distances.



OMNIVOROUS DIET:

Feeds on a variety of items including seeds, grains, berries, insects, and small vertebrates.



ELABORATE DANCE:

Performs complex dancing displays with leaping, wing-flapping, and bowing, especially during breeding season.



Semipalmated Sandpiper

(Calidris pusilla) - Long-Distance Migrant



EPIC MIGRATION:

Flies nonstop up to 2,500 miles from New England to South America.



MUDFLAT SPECIALIST:

Feeds on tiny invertebrates in mudflats and beaches during migration.



LARGE FLOCKS:

Gathers in huge flocks at key stopover sites to rest and refuel.



SEMIPALMATED FEET:

Partially webbed toes help it walk on soft mud.



White-breasted Nuthatch

(*Sitta carolinensis*)



ACROBATIC FORAGER:

Descends tree trunks head-first to find hidden insects.



SEED ANALYST:

Weighs seeds to maximize caloric return, prefers heavy oil sunflower.



TERRITORIAL PAIRS:

Establishes long-term bonds and permanent backyard territories.



THREAT DISPLAY:

Fans wings and sways to appear larger when threatened.



Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – Forest Floor Forager



OMNIVOROUS DIET:

Feeds on acorns, nuts, seeds, fruits, insects, and small amphibians.



SOCIAL FLOCKS:

Forms large flocks, especially in winter, with a clear social hierarchy.



GROUND NESTER:

Hens build simple nests on the ground, often at the base of a tree or under brush.



POWERFUL FLYER:

Despite their size, they can fly at speeds up to 55 mph for short distances.