

I NY BEGINNER'S BIRDING CHALLENGE

Find these 10 common New York birds



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Birding is an activity enjoyed by many New Yorkers of all ages and abilities and is a great way to connect with the outdoor world. Like people, different birds like to live in different places or habitats. The following common birds are typical of habitats in New York State. Use your observation skills and see if you can find these birds in their preferred habitats near your own home. Successfully complete your challenge and you will be entered into a drawing for fun birding accessories. Open to NYS residents 16 years old and younger.



Name of Bird Detective: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

House Sparrow



The house sparrow is one of the more common birds in the world. Not native to this country, it was first introduced to the United States in Brooklyn in 1851. Male house sparrows have a gray cap on their heads framed by brown with white cheeks and a black neck.

Length: 5 to 7 inches.

Date Sighted: ____/____/____ Time: _____

Where Sighted: Town/City _____

Habitat: ☐ Wooded Area ☐ Field ☐ Roadside

☐ Wetland ☐ Pond, Lake, or Stream ☐ Ocean

☐ Birdfeeder ☐ Park ☐ Playground

☐ Other: _____

American Robin



One of the first birds seen as spring arrives in New York, robins can often be seen hopping around the ground pulling earthworms. The robin's cheery call can be heard at first light. Robins can be identified by their rusty orange chest.

Length: 9 to 11 inches.

Date Sighted: ____/____/____ Time: _____

Where Sighted: Town/City _____

Habitat: ☐ Wooded Area ☐ Field ☐ Roadside

☐ Wetland ☐ Pond, Lake, or Stream ☐ Ocean

☐ Birdfeeder ☐ Park ☐ Playground

☐ Other: _____

European Starling



Like the house sparrow, the starling is not native to this country. They were first introduced to North America in 1890 from Europe. Starlings can form large flocks in fall and winter. Starlings change color by season, from purplish green in the summer to brownish black with white spots in the winter.

Length: approx. 8 inches.

Date Sighted: ____/____/____ Time: _____

Where Sighted: Town/City _____

Habitat: ☐ Wooded Area ☐ Field ☐ Roadside

☐ Wetland ☐ Pond, Lake, or Stream ☐ Ocean

☐ Birdfeeder ☐ Park ☐ Playground

☐ Other: _____

Northern Cardinal



The northern cardinal is one of the country's most distinguishable birds given the male's bright red color. The cardinal has slowly expanded its range northward and is now found in most states east of the Mississippi River. Male cardinals are bright red in color. Female cardinals are brownish-gray with red tinges on their crest (top of head), wings and tail.

Length: 8 to 9 inches.

Date Sighted: ____/____/____ Time: _____

Where Sighted: Town/City _____

Habitat: ☐ Wooded Area ☐ Field ☐ Roadside

☐ Wetland ☐ Pond, Lake, or Stream ☐ Ocean

☐ Birdfeeder ☐ Park ☐ Playground

☐ Other: _____

Blue Jay



Noisy, raucous, and aggressive at feeders, the blue jay is a bright blue bird with a noticeable crest atop its head. It has a grayish face and underside, and a black necklace. Common in woods and near homes, jays will mob hawks and owls to drive them away. Listen for its loud "Jay" call; you might hear it before you see it!

Length: 11 to 12 inches.

Date Sighted: ____/____/____ Time: _____

Where Sighted: Town/City _____

Habitat: ☐ Wooded Area ☐ Field ☐ Roadside

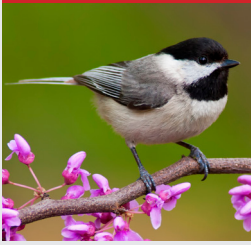
☐ Wetland ☐ Pond, Lake, or Stream ☐ Ocean

☐ Birdfeeder ☐ Park ☐ Playground

☐ Other: _____

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Black-capped Chickadee



Named after its distinctive *chick-a-dee-dee-dee* call, the chickadee is one of the friendliest birds around. They are very curious and will often fly right up to a person to investigate them and can sometimes be fed by hand. The chickadee has a black cap and throat with white cheeks.

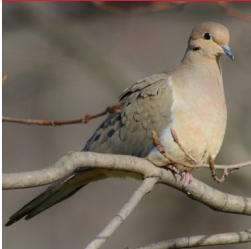
Length: 4 to 6 inches.

Date Sighted: ____/____/____ Time: _____

Where Sighted: Town/City _____

Habitat: ☐Wooded Area ☐Field ☐Roadside
☐Wetland ☐Pond, Lake, or Stream ☐Ocean
☐Birdfeeder ☐Park ☐Playground
☐Other: _____

Mourning Dove



Similar to the chickadee, the mourning dove is named after its primary call - a gloomy cooing sound. Mourning doves are commonly seen picking up seeds and grit on the ground. When disturbed they take off like a rocket. Mourning doves are brown to pinkish tan in color with black spots on the wings and black tips on their pointed tail feathers.

Length: 11 to 12 inches.

Date Sighted: ____/____/____ Time: _____

Where Sighted: Town/City _____

Habitat: ☐Wooded Area ☐Field ☐Roadside
☐Wetland ☐Pond, Lake, or Stream ☐Ocean
☐Birdfeeder ☐Park ☐Playground
☐Other: _____

Red-tailed Hawk



The most popular hawk in North America, the red-tailed hawk can often be seen perched on a telephone pole or tree limb or slowly circling high in the air. Red-tailed hawks can be identified by their rusty red upper tail feathers.

Length: 18 to 26 inches.

Date Sighted: ____/____/____ Time: _____

Where Sighted: Town/City _____

Habitat: ☐Wooded Area ☐Field ☐Roadside
☐Wetland ☐Pond, Lake, or Stream ☐Ocean
☐Birdfeeder ☐Park ☐Playground
☐Other: _____

Red-winged Blackbird



Named after the distinctive red shoulder patches of the male, the red-winged blackbird is one of the most abundant birds in North America. Males like to be noticed and are very vocal, belting out a distinctive *konk-la-ree* call.

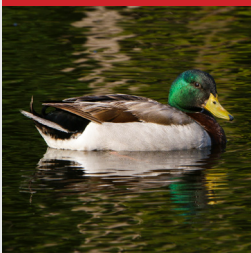
Length: 7 to 9.5 inches.

Date Sighted: ____/____/____ Time: _____

Where Sighted: Town/City _____

Habitat: ☐Wooded Area ☐Field ☐Roadside
☐Wetland ☐Pond, Lake, or Stream ☐Ocean
☐Birdfeeder ☐Park ☐Playground
☐Other: _____

Mallard Duck



Mallards are one of the most abundant ducks in the world and very popular with New York duck hunters. The male mallard can be identified by its gleaming green head and curled black tail feathers. The female is brown in color. Both sexes have a white-bordered blue patch on the wing.

Length: 20 to 26 inches.

Date Sighted: ____/____/____ Time: _____

Where Sighted: Town/City _____

Habitat: ☐Wooded Area ☐Field ☐Roadside
☐Wetland ☐Pond, Lake, or Stream ☐Ocean
☐Birdfeeder ☐Park ☐Playground
☐Other: _____

Return completed challenge forms to:

I BIRD NY Beginners Birding Challenge
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-1010

Or complete online and email to: birdingchallenge@dec.ny.gov



Rules:

- 1) Challenge open to contestants 16 years of age and younger.
- 2) One entry per individual.
- 3) Challenge open now through September 30th.
- 4) All entries must be received by October 14th.