







159 Sapsucker Woods Road • Ithaca NY • (607) 254-2455 • urbanbirds@cornell.edu

Bird Guide for “Celebrate Urban Birds!”




Learn about the 16 species of birds we focus on during the Celebration.

Click on the name of the bird to learn more and hear its song!

Bird Species	Food	Habitat	Did You Know?
 American Crow <small>photo by Kevin McGowan</small>	Insects and other invertebrates, small birds and mammals, eggs, nestlings, grain, seeds, fruit, dead animals (carrion), garbage	Farmland, towns, and suburbs.	Young crows may stay with their parents for years until they can find a home of their own. The young crows help their parents guard their territories and raise new young.
 American Robin <small>Photo by Errol Taskin</small>	Earthworms and fruit	Cities, towns, suburbs; gardens, parks, woodlands.	On average only 40 percent of American Robin nests successfully produce young. Only 25 percent of those young survive to November. Only about half of the robins alive in any year will make it to the next. A lucky robin can live to be 14 years old.
 Baltimore Oriole (Eastern United States) <small>Photo by Victor Loewen</small>	Caterpillars, fruits, insects, spiders, and nectar	Parks and wooded urban areas; also woodland edges and open areas with scattered trees.	Young male Baltimore Orioles look like females until the fall of their second year. Some first-year males succeed in attracting a mate and nest successfully. Baltimore Orioles weave a gourd-shaped nest from hair, plant fibers, and synthetic fibers. Nests hang by the rim from thin branches or a fork in a tall tree.
 Barn Swallow <small>Photo provided by iStockPhoto.com</small>	Flying insects	Open areas with man-made structures (like barns and porches) for nesting.	Females prefer to mate with males that have the longest and most symmetrical tails. When feeding their nestlings, swallows carry several insects at a time to the nest, packing them together into a ball that they carry in their throats. A pair of swallows may bring up to 400 separate meals per day to their nestlings.







159 Sapsucker Woods Road • Ithaca NY • (607) 254-2455 • urbanbirds@cornell.edu

Bird Species	Food	Habitat	Did You Know?
 <p>Black-crowned Night-Heron Photo provided by iStockPhoto.com</p>	<p>A wide variety of foods: earthworms, insects, fish, snakes, rodents, eggs, plants, garbage, and more</p>	<p>Marshes, swamps, streams, ponds, lakes, and fields.</p>	<p>When feeding, Black-crowned Night-Herons dive feet first, or plunge headfirst into the water. They generally sleep during day except when they have to find food for their young in daylight hours. It seems that adult Black-crowned Night-Herons don't distinguish between their own young and those from other nests, and will care for chicks that don't belong to them.</p>
 <p>Brown-headed Cowbird Photo by Judy Howle</p>	<p>Primarily insects and other invertebrates, seeds, and fruit</p>	<p>Grassy areas, yards, brushy areas.</p>	<p>Female cowbirds make no nest of their own. They lay their eggs in the nests of other bird species, who then raise the young. Cowbird eggs hatch faster than other species eggs, giving nestlings a head start in getting food from the parents. Cowbirds also develop at a faster pace than their nest mates. They may toss out eggs and nestlings or smother them in the nest.</p>
 <p>Bullock's Oriole Photo by Marty Jones (Western United States)</p>	<p>Caterpillars, fruits, insects, spiders, and nectar</p>	<p>Parklands, open woodlands, or woodlots with tall trees The Bullock's Oriole is especially fond of tall trees along rivers and streams.</p>	<p>Both sexes of Bullock's Oriole sing, but the males and females sing different songs. The song of the female is similar to that of the male, but it ends differently and with harsher notes. Early in the nesting period, and before and during nest building, the female may sing more than the male.</p>
 <p>Cedar Waxwing Photo by Mary Papke</p>	<p>Fruit and insects</p>	<p>Parks, gardens, forest edges, open woodlands, old fields with shrubs and small trees.</p>	<p>Cedar Waxwings with orange instead of yellow tail tips began appearing in the northeastern United States in the 1960s. The orange color is the result of a red pigment picked up from the berries of an introduced species of honeysuckle. If a waxwing eats the berries while it is growing a tail feather, the tip of the feather will be orange. Cedar Waxwings may become drunk (and may even die from alcohol intoxication) after eating fermented fruit in the spring.</p>







159 Sapsucker Woods Road • Ithaca NY • (607) 254-2455 • urbanbirds@cornell.edu

Bird Species	Food	Habitat	Did You Know?
 <p>European Starling Photo by Len Endy</p>	<p>Berries, insects and other invertebrates, fruits, grains, seeds, and garbage</p>	<p>Cities, towns, suburbs, and farmland.</p>	<p>The European Starling is not native to North America. From 1890-1892, a group that wanted to introduce all birds mentioned in Shakespeare's writings to North America released about 100 starlings in New York City's Central Park. There are now more than 200 million starlings across most of the continent.</p>
 <p>House Finch Photo by Don Rash</p>	<p>Buds, seeds, and fruits</p>	<p>Cities, towns, suburbs; especially in areas with buildings, lawns, and small conifers; also in deserts and open forests.</p>	<p>The red or yellow color of a male House Finch comes from pigments that it gets in its food. The more pigment in the food, the redder the male. Females prefer to mate with the reddest male they can find.</p>
 <p>House Sparrow Photo by Raymond Belhumeur</p>	<p>Seeds, grain, and insects</p>	<p>Cities, towns, suburbs, farmland; near humans.</p>	<p>The House Sparrow was introduced into Brooklyn, New York, in the mid 1800s. It spread quickly across the continent. The House Sparrow takes frequent dust baths. It throws soil and dust over its body feathers, just as if it were bathing with water. In doing so, a sparrow may make a small depression in the ground, and sometimes defends this spot against other sparrows. House Sparrows aggressively defend their nest holes and will displace native birds from nest boxes.</p>
 <p>Killdeer Photo by Paul Rentz</p>	<p>Mostly insects, also earthworms and snails</p>	<p>Open grassy areas and sandbars, gravel parking lots, and rooftops.</p>	<p>Killdeer are willing to live and nest close to people. Because they live so close to people, they are vulnerable to pesticide poisoning and collisions with cars and buildings. Killdeer are often seen pretending to have a broken wing to lead predators away from their nests.</p>



159 Sapsucker Woods Road • Ithaca NY • (607) 254-2455 • urbanbirds@cornell.edu

Bird Species	Food	Habitat	Did You Know?
 <p>Mallard Photo by Deanna Taylor</p>	<p>Insects and larvae, aquatic invertebrates, seeds, acorns, aquatic vegetation, grain</p>	<p>All wetland habitats, cities, farms.</p>	<p>Mallards freeze or pretend to be dead when captured by a fox. Sometimes the confused fox loosens its grip and allows the Mallard to escape.</p>
 <p>Mourning Dove Photo by Susan May</p>	<p>Grains and seeds. Occasionally eats snails, slugs, insects. Grit is an important part of their diet.</p>	<p>Found almost everywhere. Prefers open areas, farmland, open woods, deserts, forest edges, cities and suburbs.</p>	<p>Mourning Doves are hunted heavily throughout most North America, yet they remain among the 10 most abundant birds in the United States.</p>
 <p>Peregrine Falcon Photo by iStockPhoto.com</p>	<p>Mostly live birds</p>	<p>Mountains, river valleys, coastlines, and cities.</p>	<p>The Peregrine Falcon can reach up to 200 miles per hour when it dives for prey. It is the fastest bird in the world.</p>
 <p>Rock Pigeon Photo by Tim Gallagher</p>	<p>Seeds, fruits, grain, and human leftovers</p>	<p>Found in cities, suburbs, and farmlands.</p>	<p>Homing pigeons are the same species as ordinary city pigeons. They can find their way home from hundreds of miles away, and have been used in war to deliver messages across enemy lines.</p>