



Presented by UPMC HEALTH PLAN

Birds of the Southeast

Brown Pelican



There's no mistaking a pelican. With their enormous bills, called "gulars," that help them to scoop up fish, these huge birds can be spotted on coastlines throughout the south. They fly above the surf and plunge into the water quickly to catch fish, often making enormous splashes in the process. Pelicans are frequently found in groups called squadrons. If they aren't spotted out on the water, pelicans might be found resting on mudflats.

Great Egret

Great Egrets are elegant birds that frequent ponds and marshes, where they hunt by staying very still and stalking prey in shallow water. They can be found in both freshwater and saltwater habitats. Males and females are long and slender with white plumage, bright yellow bills, and dark legs. They fly with their neck tucked in, but when standing their neck has a distinctive S-shape. During the breeding season, Great Egrets nest in large colonies in trees.



Red-bellied Woodpecker



Red-bellied Woodpeckers are common throughout the eastern half of the United States. Look for these medium-sized woodpeckers in wooded areas, and listen for their chattering calls. Males and females have black and white backs and wings and red markings on the neck, but only males have a red crown. Red-bellied Woodpeckers will visit feeders if they are located near a wooded area, preferring suet and peanuts. Keeping dead trees in your yard might encourage nesting.

Red-shouldered Hawk

You might hear a Red-shouldered Hawk before you see it. Visit a swamp forest or woodland near a river and listen for their whistling call. Males and females have peach-colored stripes along the chest, broad wings with markings that resemble crescents when outstretched, and dramatic white bars along the tail. They hunt from perches along ponds and streams and can be spotted circling and soaring in the skies, especially during nesting season.



Brown-headed Nuthatch



Brown-headed Nuthatches are known for their squeaky sound, which is thought to resemble a rubber ducky. Look for groups of these tiny birds in the canopy of mature pine forests, or clinging to a tree trunk woodpecker-style. Males and females of this species look alike, with ruddy-brown heads and gray wings, and an overall buffy body. Occasional visitors to backyard feeders, Brown-headed Nuthatches enjoy suet.