



Presented by UPMC HEALTH PLAN

Birds of the Midwest

Eastern Meadowlark



Look and listen for the sweet singing Eastern Meadowlark in grasslands and near farms. These medium-sized songbirds tend to perch on fenceposts and telephone wires, and during the breeding season they sing very often. They have a distinctive black "V" across their chest, which is a brilliant yellow color. Their wings are rounded and their tails are short. The dappled brown coloring on their back provides camouflage as they forage in flocks in agricultural fields.

Mourning Dove

Mourning Doves are widespread across the United States and are a common sight at backyard birdfeeders. These graceful birds have long, slender tails that come to a point. Look for Mourning Doves along telephone wires and high perches in residential neighborhoods, and listen for the fluttering sound of their wings as they take flight. Mourning Doves will readily come to backyard feeders, and will eat seeds, especially millet, from platform feeders or on the ground.



Northern Flicker



Northern Flickers are woodpeckers, but they are often spotted on the ground where they forage for ants and beetles. Take a walk through woods or along forest edges and look for these large-bodied birds with downcurved bills. A brown color overall, they also have black feathers that create a scalloped look, a black bib, a white patch on the rump visible in flight, and males possess red napes and black whiskers that look like a moustache.

Red-winged Blackbird

Male Red-winged Blackbirds are hard to miss: they have glossy jet-black feathers with red and yellow shoulder patches. Females are streaky brown and resemble a large sparrow. In the spring and summer, look for Red-winged Blackbirds in marshy areas, on telephone poles, and just about any spot with vegetation and water. Males have a loud "conk-la-reel!" song that is considered by some to be the first sign of spring. In the winter, they tend to flock with other blackbirds.



Red-headed Woodpecker



Red-headed Woodpeckers are stunning birds, sometimes called "flying checkerboards" because of the bold, blocky patterns shared by both males and females. Listen for their drumming sounds and loud, sharp calls in open woodlots near agricultural areas, in swamps, or in pine stands. Red-headed Woodpeckers cache, or store, food, including acorns and beech nuts, and make occasional feeder visits for suet.