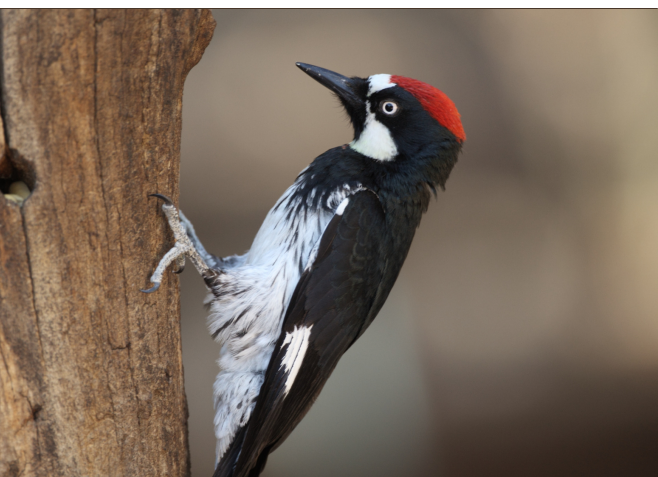




Presented by UPMC HEALTH PLAN

Birds of the Northwest

Acorn Woodpecker



Walk through an oak or pine forest, and you might come across a group of Acorn Woodpeckers, or find a tree full of holes. Described as having a "clown" face, their bright white eyes stand out against black facial markings. Males have a red cap that covers the whole top of the head. Groups of Acorn Woodpeckers stash acorns in tree trunks and guard their stashes, and give loud "waka-waka" calls reminiscent of a parrot's call. They may visit feeders for seed and suet.

Black-billed Magpie

Black-billed Magpies are both noisy and eye-catching birds and are easy to spot perched high in trees, on fence posts, and on road signs in grassland and sagebrush habitats. Males and females are large, with very long, diamond-shaped tails that trail behind them in flight, and white and blue markings. Black-billed Magpies are social, and often gather in large flocks, using frequent whistling calls as they fly together. These birds make occasional visits to backyard feeders.



Steller's Jay



Steller's Jays are common birds in western forests, and can often be spotted at birdfeeders and around campgrounds. Male and female Steller's Jays look alike, with bright blue tails and wings, black feathers on their upper half, and prominent crests. While Steller's Jays are usually found high in the canopy, listening for their scratchy calls can help you locate a flock of these intelligent birds. Peanuts and suet will attract Steller's Jays to your feeder, and they may take some away to store for later!

Varied Thrush

Varied Thrushes are shy birds that prefer dense forests, and you are likely to hear this bird's sweet song before you will see it. Males and females have similar patterns of rusty orange and gray, but the coloring on the female is duller. In the summer, look for these stocky thrushes foraging for insects on the ground in small forest clearings. In the winter, they may visit feeders to eat seed from the ground, or to eat berries from native shrubs.



Mountain Bluebird



The bright cerulean blue of a male Mountain Bluebird stands out in the meadows and prairies it prefers. Look for these charming birds on perches like fenceposts, telephone wires, and high up in trees. Females are grayer overall with hints of blue at their wingtips. Mountain Bluebirds are cavity nesters, and might be found in areas with aspen trees. A well-placed nest box set away from buildings in an open rural setting might draw a nesting pair to your yard.