



# Birds of the Northeast

## American Goldfinch



Listen for the "po-ta-to-chip" call and watch for the bouncy flight pattern of the American Goldfinch. In the spring, males are a brilliant yellow and jet black. Females and birds entering winter are a duller yellow. Look for their conical bill shape, white wingbars, and pointed tail to help identify these cheerful little finches. To attract American Goldfinches to your yard, consider planting milkweed and thistle, which they use in nesting and feeding young. They also eat sunflower and nyjer seed.

## Black-capped Chickadee

Naturally curious and quick to investigate anything new in their territory, Black-capped Chickadees are frequent visitors at feeders and comfortable near humans. Their "chickadee-dee-dee" call can be heard in almost any area with trees. Their black cap and bib, buffy sides, and gray wings make them nearly identical to their neighbors to the south, the Carolina Chickadee, but their range has very little overlap. To attract Black-capped Chickadees to your yard, hang feeders with suet, sunflower, and peanuts.



## Downy Woodpecker



Downy Woodpeckers are widespread across the United States and are found at feeders, in parks, and in woodlots. Tiny and active, they move quickly along tree trunks and slender branches. Males and females have a checkered pattern on their wings, and males have a patch of red at the back of the head. Their size and smaller bills distinguish them from larger Hairy Woodpeckers. The most common woodpecker at feeders, they are attracted to suet and black oil sunflower seeds, millet, and peanuts.

## Eastern Bluebird

Look for the charming Eastern Bluebird on telephone wires or perched on nest boxes in the open country, on golf courses, and in meadows. Males are brilliantly blue with rusty coloring on the chest; females are grayer but have beautiful blue coloring on the wings and tail. They might be spotted dropping to the ground abruptly in order to snatch up insects. While not common at feeders, they may visit if mealworms are offered. If space allows, a nest box might encourage visits to your backyard.



## Song Sparrow



This small, streaky sparrow's tendency to sing frequently from branches at eye-level makes it easy to spot. Males sing most often, and their song is a clattering, rapid string of notes. Both sexes have long, rounded tails, chestnut brown streaks across the chest with a "stickpin" in the center, and stripes across their heads and through the eyeline. Song Sparrows will readily visit feeders stocked with black oil sunflower seeds, safflower, white millet, and cracked corn.