

Common Birds of Camp Edwards



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Brown Thrasher *Toxostoma rufum*

- The Brown Thrasher is a large brown mimic, slightly larger than a Robin. It has a beautiful rufous brown back, head, and tail with a pale belly with brown spotty streaking around the breast and underneath their wings. Brown Thrasher's have a long, recurved black bill, as well as long straight legs and long tail. They prefer shrubby thickets and forest edges that provide cover and rarely stray into open areas.
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/236707141> (Song)
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/23539281> (Call)
- One of three mimics in New England, the Brown Thrasher repeats a series of different phrases often given in pairs (twice repeated)
- This is sometimes likened to "Pick it up, pick it up, cover it up, cover it up, bury it, bury it"
- They also have various call notes of soft chirrups, whistles, and a common distinct "Smooch" sound



Eastern Bluebird *Sialia Sialis*

- A plump sparrow sized thrush with a short-pointed beak. The males are deep blue on their back, head, and wings, with a rust orange patch on their upper breast. Females are a drab grey/blue with a lighter orange breast. They can often be found perched on nest boxes and telephone wires. Bluebirds prefer grasslands, meadows, and forest edges near open spaces.
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/27018561> (Song)
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/71848061> (Call)
- The Eastern Bluebird's call is almost like a whisper; it is very low pitch and soft sounding. The song consists of a warbler-esque smattering of multiple phrases.



Eastern Towhee

Pipilo erythrophthalmus

- The Eastern Towhee is a Robin sized, stout bird with a thick bill built for cracking seeds. Males are a beautiful mosaic of black (on their back), orange (on their sides), and white (on the belly). The white tips of their tail feathers are a good ID as they dart through the scrub oak. Females are a rich brown, with an orange and white breast. A poster-bird of Scrub Oak Pine Barrens, the Eastern Towhee prefers shrubby habitats with dense vegetation.
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/238431511> (Song)
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/639312721> (Call)
- The Eastern Towhee's song is often likened to the phrase "Drink-Your-Tea" and their call likened to "Driiip".



Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas*

- The Common Yellowthroat is a small warbler with a round head. Males have a black "mask" around their eyes with a white line where it meets their olive-colored head, nape, and back. The "mask" is highlighted by the bright yellow throat. Females lack the "mask" and are mostly a drab olive with a pale-yellow throat. They like to forage for invertebrates among thickets and shrubs. They can be found in meadows, wetlands, and forests.
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/245666251> (Song)
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/163337> (Song)
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/174961451> (Call)
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/219656> (Call)
- Their song is likened to the phrase "Witchety-witchety-witchety". There can be stark variations from region to region making the ID somewhat tricky.
- They will often make a "chuck" call when they perceive a threat to be nearby. They also have a raspy trill like a Chipping Sparrow's song.



Black-Capped Chickadee *Poecile atricapillus*

- Black-capped Chickadee's are a small round bird with a long tail. They have a round head with a black "cap" on their crown and a black throat patch, separated by white cheeks. They are grey on their back and a dull white on their breast. Females and Males look the same. Often seen in groups, they are quick and will dart among branches and thickets. They can be found in many habitats, including suburbs.
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/94959121> (Song)
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/199076> (Call)
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/87282551> (Call)
- The Black-capped Chickadee's song is likened to "Fee-bee", "Hey, Sweetie", and my favorite "Cheese-burger"
- They will make a variety of high pitch chirps and gurgles, as well as a distinctive "Chick-a-dee-dee-dee" call resembling their name.
- Like the Common Yellowthroat different regions may have slightly different tones and pitches.



American Goldfinch

Spinus tristus

- American Goldfinches are sparrow sized and have a somewhat thick, conical bill. In the spring and summer, males have a bright yellow body with a black forehead and wings. Their wings and tail feathers have white streaks. Females and males in winter are a drab olive-brown with the black and white wings/tail feathers. Like woodpeckers, the Goldfinch has an undulating flight. They prefer weedy plains/open areas that support thistles, asters, and other plants that produce seeds for them to feed on.
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/221451711> (Song)
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/251971631> (Call)
- Goldfinches' songs are a series of high pitch twitters and warbles.
- Tristus translates to "sad" or "somber", so named because of the rising/falling tones during their songs and chatter.
- Goldfinch's calls are likened to the phrase "Po-Tay-To-Chip"



Eastern Kingbird *Tyrannus tyrannus*

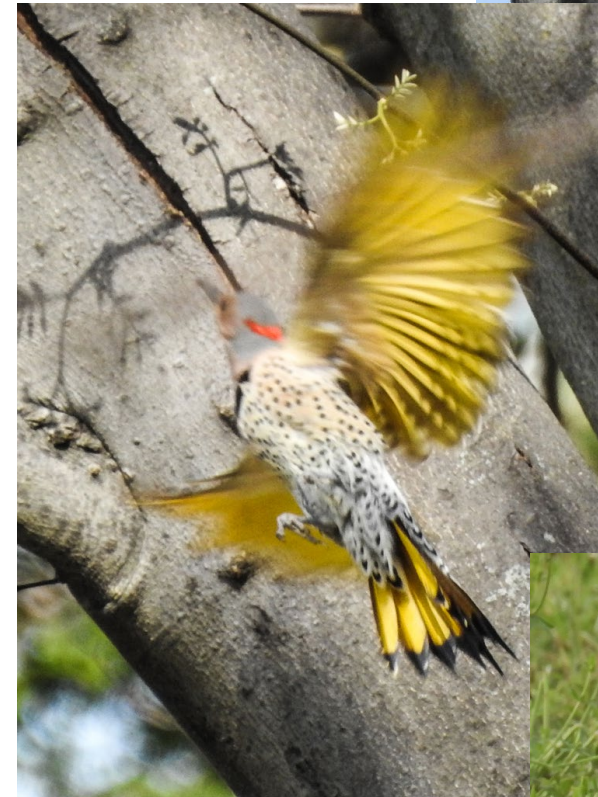
- Eastern Kingbirds are a common sight in Scrub Oak Pine Barrens. They're about the size of a Robin, with a black head, back, wings and tail. Their throat and belly are white. The edges of their wing feathers are white, and the tips of their tail are white, as if they dipped it in paint. This can be a good marker in the field. Like other members of the family *Tyrannidae*, Kingbirds are often seen flying out in a figure eight pattern and landing back at their perch. In their regular flight they have a fast, fluttering way of flying. Commonly seen on high perches, powerlines, and dead trees.
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/534398> (Song)
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/79452> (Call)
- I often think of Eastern Kingbirds as being a flying squeaky toy. Their song is a jumble of high pitch, electric notes. Their calls are a single high pitch shocking note.



Northern Flicker

Colaptes auratus

- Northern Flickers are a large woodpecker, in between a Robin and a Crow. They have many field markings that make them stand out. Northern Flickers have a speckled belly and wings, a black "bib" and cheek spot. Their throats and auricles are a bronze, accentuated by a grey crown and nape with a red crescent shaped patch on their nape. Our eastern variety has yellow undersides on their wings and tail feathers (western is red). A great field mark is their white rump which can be seen in their undulating flight. Another characteristic that can help identify Northern Flickers is their habit of foraging on the ground.
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/30597061> (Song)
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/77261> (Call)
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/263782231> (Call)
- Northern Flickers have a "laugh" like song similar to a Pileated Woodpecker but faster and higher pitched.
- Their calls are a sharp "Kyeer" and when close to each other and displaying they will make a sound like a squeaky toy likened to "Wick-a, wick-a, wick-a"



Red-Tailed Hawk

Buteo jamaicensis

- Red-Tailed Hawks are one of the most common hawks encountered. They are large, measuring about 2' in length with a wingspan around 4.5'. Like other Buteos, Red-Tailed Hawks have wide stocky tails and wings differentiating them from Accipiters like the Sharp-Shin and Coopers Hawks. Two good markings for field identification are their streaked belly band and rust orange tail. Juveniles lack the orange tail and instead have a black banded tail. All birds are brown on their back with a pale belly. There are many color morphs, including a dark morph and a rufous morph. They hunt over open plains and rights of way, often seen perched on powerline poles. They soar in the air in wide circles and have heavy wing beats. I find that their soaring habit, stout wings and tail, and belly band are the best features to look for in the field.
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/241076151> (Call)
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/150733861> (Call)
- Red-Tailed Hawks have a drawn out, shrill, "Kreeeeaaa" call. During courtship they will also make a shrill metallic "chwirk" call.



Eastern Wood-Pewee *Contopus virens*

- The Eastern Wood-Pewee is a small, sparrow sized flycatcher that graces deciduous forests and woodlands from the Northeast of N.A. to the Northern portion of S.A. They have olive-brown backs with a pale white belly. They have two white wing bars, additionally their long wings differentiates them from the *Empidonax* flycatchers. Another good feature to look for in the field is their orange lower bill. However, differentiating an Eastern Wood-Pewee from other flycatchers can still be a challenge in the field. The best way to ID a Wood-Pewee is through its telltale song!
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/166766961> (Song)
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/250216391> (Call)
- The song of the Wood-Pewee is a lovely sung version of its name. A rising "Peee-a-weee" is most common, but they also have a descended "Peewuuu"
- Their call is a shorter, higher pitched "Peeee"



Gray Catbird

Dumetella carolinensis

- Gray Catbirds are a Robin sized mimic with a sleek dark gray body. They have a black stripe on their head and a secretive reddish-brown patch underneath their tail. They prefer dense shrubs and thickets, moving from patch to patch with fast flights staying close to the tops of vegetation. They do not like to fly across open spaces.
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/62798391> (Song)
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/250375621> (Call)
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/57730041> (Call)
- The Gray Catbird will mimic anthropogenic sounds, other birds, even frogs. They do not repeat their phrases unlike the Northern Mockingbird/Brown Thrasher. They will also mix in their characteristic cat "Mew" sound, which can also be sung on its own.
- They also have a machine-like "Chek-chek-chek" call.



American Kestrel

Falco sparverius

- American Kestrels are hunters of the open plains. About the size of a large Mourning Dove, they can be seen perching on telephone poles/wire and dead trees. They are pale below and a lovely rufous color on their back and wings. Males have an additional dark blue-gray that makes up the bottom portion of their wings, while the top is the same rufous color of their back. Both males and females have a gray cap that stops at the nape, as well as three black vertical stripes on either side of their head. Their entire body is covered in black spots, and the tip of the tail has a black stripe. They can be seen hovering over grasslands in search of small prey.
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/133146> (Call)
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/151151131> (Call)
- The most common call that American Kestrels will make is a repeated and sharp, "Key, key, key, key, key".
- During courtship and while feeding fledglings they may also make a drawn-out whiny call.



Compare tough species

Chipping Sparrow – *Spizella passerina*

- Average sized sparrow with a rufous crown and horizontal black eye stripe
- Light gray underside and light brown wings with dark brown streaks
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/195793> (Song)
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/94464> (Song)

Pine Warbler – *Setophaga pinus*

- Small warbler with a yellow breast that fades into pale white, and an olive-colored back
- Two white wing bars
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/216852> (Song)
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/230902351> (Song)



Compare tough species

Savannah Sparrow – *Passerculus sandwichensis*

- Thin, more sparrow like bill
- Yellow spot on the lore
- Crisp brown streaks on the belly
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/95736141> (Song)

Grasshopper Sparrow – *Ammodramus savvanarum*

- Thick, pale, finch-like bill
- White eye ring
- Yellow spot on the lore (between the eye and the bill) and the upper edge of the wing – sometimes more yellow or more brown
- <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/249307811> (Song)



DoD PIF Mission Sensitive and Tier 2 Species at Camp Edwards

- Lone Northern Bobwhite spotted in Grassland habitats this year
- Black-Billed Cuckoo heard in some of our managed training areas
- Grasshopper Sparrows are prevalent in the grasslands
- Prairie Warblers can be heard across the whole base
- Eastern Whip-poor-wills are a common sound at night during the spring and early summer



Citations

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