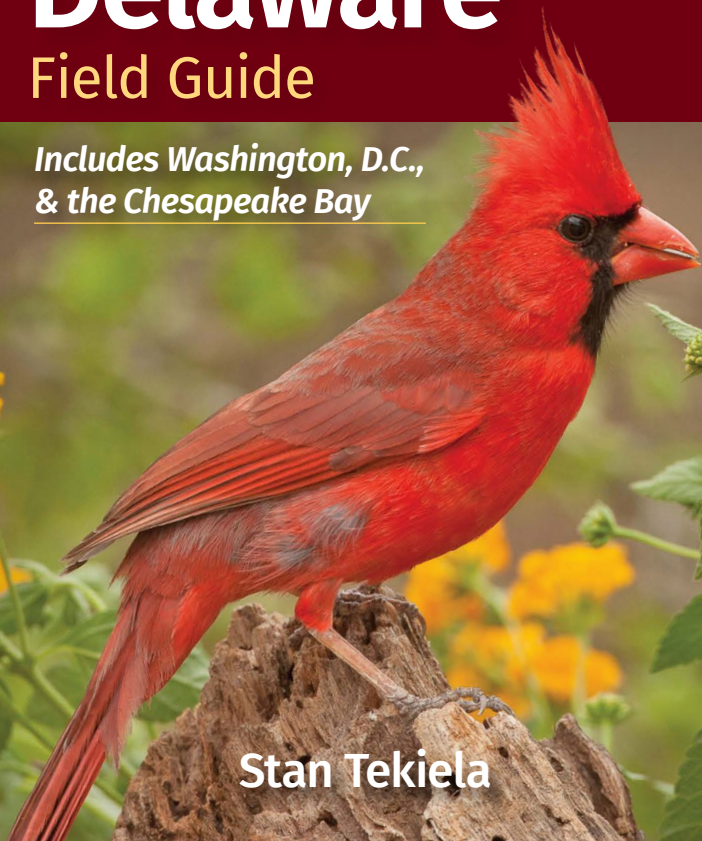


2ND EDITION

# Birds *of* Maryland & Delaware

## Field Guide

*Includes Washington, D.C.,  
& the Chesapeake Bay*



Stan Tekiela

**Birds that are mostly black**

p. 25



**Birds that are mostly black and white**

p. 51



**Birds that are mostly blue**

p. 95



**Birds that are mostly brown**

p. 117



**Birds that are mostly gray**

p. 243



**Birds that have prominent green**

p. 307



**Birds that have prominent orange**

p. 319



**Birds that have prominent red**

p. 323



**Birds that are mostly white**

p. 339



**Birds that have prominent yellow**

p. 365



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In Delaware and eastern Maryland, there are over 3,500 miles (5,635 km) of coast. Coastlines provide nesting habitats for a great number of birds, including many species of waterfowl. Coastal areas are home to many ocean-loving birds such as Sanderlings, Great Black-backed Gulls, Ruddy Turnstones and American Oystercatchers. Chesapeake Bay in Maryland and the Delaware Bay are also wonderful places to see birds such as Ospreys and Tundra Swans.

Varying habitats in Maryland and Delaware also mean variations in weather. Summers in the region can be rather warm, with the hottest temperatures in July and August. Temperatures are the coldest in January, and there is some snowfall in most winters. Typically, the weather is slightly less moderate along the coastlines.

No matter if you're in the mountains of Maryland or around the Chesapeake Bay, there are birds to watch every season. Whether witnessing hawks migrating along the coastline in autumn or welcoming back hummingbirds in spring, you will find variety and excitement in birding as each season turns to the next.

## **OBSERVE WITH A STRATEGY: TIPS FOR IDENTIFYING BIRDS**

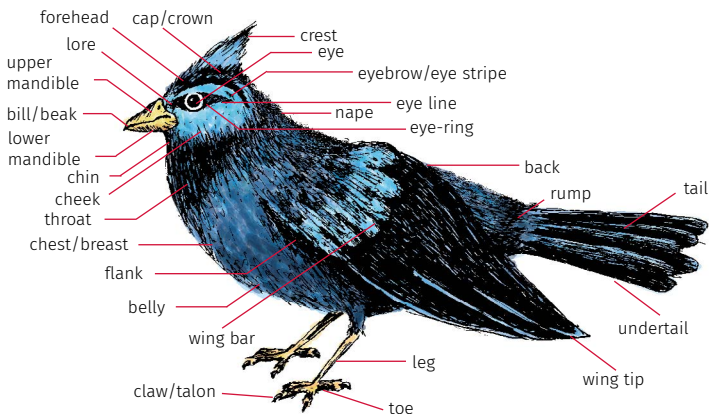
Identifying birds isn't as difficult as you might think. By simply following a few basic strategies, you can increase your chances of successfully identifying most birds that you see. One of the first and easiest things to do when you see a new bird is to note its **color**. This field guide is organized by color, so simply turn to the right color section to find it.

Next, note the **size of the bird**. A strategy to quickly estimate size is to compare different birds. Pick a small, a medium and a large bird. Select an American Robin as the medium bird.

## BIRD BASICS

It's easier to identify birds and communicate about them if you know the names of the different parts of a bird. For instance, it's more effective to use the word "crest" to indicate the set of extra-long feathers on top of a Northern Cardinal's head than to try to describe it.

The following illustration points out the basic parts of a bird. Because it is a composite of many birds, it shouldn't be confused with any actual bird.



## Bird Color Variables

No other animal has a color palette like a bird's. Brilliant blues, lemon yellows, showy reds and iridescent greens are common in the bird world. In general, male birds are more colorful than their female counterparts. This helps males attract a mate, essentially saying, "Hey, look at me!" Color calls attention to a male's health as well. The better the condition of his feathers, the better his food source, territory and potential for mating.





YEAR-ROUND

## Common Grackle

*Quiscalus quiscula*

**Size:** 11–13" (28–33 cm)

**Male:** Large, iridescent blackbird with bluish-black head and purplish-brown body. Long black tail. Long, thin bill and bright-golden eyes.

**Female:** similar to male but smaller and duller

**Juvenile:** similar to female

**Nest:** cup; female builds; 2 broods per year

**Eggs:** 4–5; greenish white with brown markings

**Incubation:** 13–14 days; female incubates

**Fledging:** 16–20 days; female and male feed the young

**Migration:** non-migrator to partial; will move around to find food in winter

**Food:** fruit, seeds, insects; will come to seed and suet feeders

**Compare:** Male Boat-tailed Grackle (p. 39) is larger and has a much longer tail. The European Starling (p. 29) is much smaller with a speckled appearance, and a yellow bill during breeding season. The male Red-winged Blackbird (p. 31) has red-and-yellow wing markings (epaulets).

**Stan's Notes:** Usually nests in small colonies of up to 75 pairs but travels with other blackbird species in large flocks. Known to feed in farm fields. The common name is derived from the Latin word *gracula*, meaning "jackdaw," another species of bird and a term that can refer to any bird in the *Quiscalus* genus. The male holds his tail in a deep V shape during flight. The flight pattern is usually level, as opposed to an undulating movement. Unlike most birds, it has larger muscles for opening its mouth than for closing it, enabling it to pry crevices apart to find hidden insects.

in flight







YEAR-ROUND

## American Crow

*Corvus brachyrhynchos*

**Size:** 18" (45 cm)

**Male:** All-black bird with black bill, legs and feet. Can have a purple sheen in direct sunlight.

**Female:** same as male

**Juvenile:** same as adult

**Nest:** platform; female builds; 1 brood per year

**Eggs:** 4–6; bluish to olive-green with brown marks

**Incubation:** 18 days; female incubates

**Fledging:** 28–35 days; female and male feed the young

**Migration:** non-migrator to partial

**Food:** fruit, insects, mammals, fish, carrion; will come to seed and suet feeders

**Compare:** Fish Crow (p. 41) is nearly identical, but it is smaller, has a longer tail and a smaller head and bill. American Crow is most easily differentiated from the Fish Crow by its lower-pitched call.

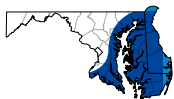
**Stan's Notes:** One of the most recognizable birds in Maryland and Delaware, found in all habitats. Imitates other birds and human voices. One of the smartest of all birds and very social, often entertaining itself by provoking chases with other birds. Eats road-kill but is rarely hit by vehicles. Can live as long as 20 years. Often reuses its nest every year if it's not taken over by a Great Horned Owl. Unmated birds, known as helpers, help to raise the young. Extended families roost together at night, dispersing daily to hunt. Cannot soar on thermals; flaps constantly and glides downward. Gathers in huge communal flocks of up to 10,000 birds in winter.

winter



breeding





WINTER

# Ruddy Turnstone

*Arenaria interpres*

**Size:** 9½" (24 cm)

**Male:** Breeding male has a white breast and belly with a black bib. Wings and back are black and chestnut. Head has a black-and-white marking. Orange legs. Slightly upturned black bill. Winter male has a brown-and-white head and breast pattern.

**Female:** similar to male but duller

**Juvenile:** similar to adults, but black-and-white head has a scaly appearance

**Nest:** ground; female builds; 1 brood per year

**Eggs:** 3–4; olive-green with dark markings

**Incubation:** 22–24 days; male and female incubate

**Fledging:** 19–21 days; male feeds the young

**Migration:** complete, to Maryland and Delaware and southern states

**Food:** aquatic insects, fish, mollusks, crustaceans, worms, eggs

**Compare:** Unusually ornamented shorebird. Look for the striking black-and-white pattern on the head and neck, and orange legs to identify.

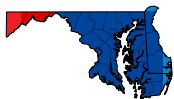
**Stan's Notes:** Winters along the coast. Also known as Rock Plover. Named "Turnstone" because it turns stones over on rocky beaches to find food. Hangs around crabbing operations to eat scraps from nets. Can be very tolerant of humans when feeding. Females often leave before their young leave the nest (fledge), resulting in males raising the young. Males have a bare spot on the belly (brood patch) to warm the young, something only females normally have.

female  
p. 207



male





YEAR-ROUND  
WINTER

# Hooded Merganser

*Lophodytes cucullatus*

**Size:** 16–19" (40–48 cm)

**Male:** Black and white with rust-brown sides. Crest “hood” raises to show a large white patch on each side of the head. Long, thin, black bill.

**Female:** brown and rust with ragged, rust-red “hair” and a long, thin, brown bill

**Juvenile:** similar to female

**Nest:** cavity; female lines an old woodpecker cavity or a nest box near water; 1 brood per year

**Eggs:** 10–12; white without markings

**Incubation:** 32–33 days; female incubates

**Fledging:** 71 days; female feeds the young

**Migration:** complete to non-migrator, to Maryland, Delaware, southern states and the Gulf Coast

**Food:** small fish, aquatic insects, crustaceans (especially crayfish)

**Compare:** Male Bufflehead (p. 71) is smaller than Hooded Merganser and has white sides. The male Wood Duck (p. 319) has a green head. The white patch on the head and rust-brown sides distinguish the male Hoodie.

**Stan's Notes:** A small diving bird of shallow ponds, sloughs, lakes and rivers, usually in small groups. Quick, low flight across the water, with fast wingbeats. Male has a deep, rolling call. Female gives a hoarse quack. Nests in wooded areas. Female will lay some eggs in the nests of other Hooded Mergansers or Wood Ducks, resulting in 20–25 eggs in some nests. Rarely, she shares a nest, sitting with a Wood Duck.



**male**



**female**



YEAR-ROUND

# Eastern Bluebird

*Sialia sialis*

**Size:** 7" (18 cm)

**Male:** Sky-blue head, back and tail. Rust-red breast and white belly.

**Female:** grayer than male, with a faint rusty breast and faint blue wings and tail

**Juvenile:** similar to female but with spots on the breast and blue wing markings

**Nest:** cavity, vacant woodpecker cavity or nest box; female adds a soft lining; 2 broods per year

**Eggs:** 4–5; pale blue without markings

**Incubation:** 12–14 days; female incubates

**Fledging:** 15–18 days; male and female feed the young

**Migration:** non-migrator in Maryland and Delaware

**Food:** insects, fruit; comes to shallow dishes with live or dead mealworms, and to suet feeders

**Compare:** The male Indigo Bunting (p. 97) is nearly all blue. The Blue Jay (p. 109) is much larger and has a crest. Look for the rusty breast to help identify the Eastern Bluebird.

**Stan's Notes:** Once nearly eliminated from Maryland and Delaware due to a lack of nest cavities. Thanks to people who installed thousands of nest boxes, bluebirds now thrive. Prefers open habitats, such as farm fields, pastures and roadsides, but also likes forest edges, parks and yards. Often perches on trees or fence posts and drops to the ground to grab bugs, especially grasshoppers. Makes short flights from tree to tree. Song is a distinctive “churlee chur chur-lee.” A year-round resident that is joined by many northern migrants, swelling populations during winter. The rust-red breast is like that of the American Robin, its cousin.









YEAR-ROUND

## Blue Jay

*Cyanocitta cristata*

**Size:** 12" (30 cm)

**Male:** Bright light-blue-and-white bird with a black necklace and gray belly. Large crest moves up and down at will. White face, wing bars and tip of tail. Black tail bands.

**Female:** same as male

**Juvenile:** same as adult but duller

**Nest:** cup; female and male construct; 1–2 broods per year

**Eggs:** 4–5; green to blue with brown markings

**Incubation:** 16–18 days; female incubates

**Fledging:** 17–21 days; female and male feed the young

**Migration:** non-migrator to partial migrator; will move around to find an abundant food source

**Food:** insects, fruit, carrion, seeds, nuts; visits seed feeders, ground feeders with corn or peanuts

**Compare:** The Belted Kingfisher (p. 111) has a larger, more ragged crest. The Eastern Bluebird (p. 105) is much smaller and has a rust-red breast. Look for the large crest to help identify the Blue Jay.

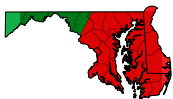
**Stan's Notes:** Highly intelligent, solving problems, gathering food and communicating more than other birds. Loud and noisy; mimics other birds. Known as the alarm of the forest, screaming at intruders. Imitates hawk calls around feeders to scare off other birds. One of the few birds to cache food; can remember where it hid thousands of nuts. Carries food in a pouch under its tongue (sublingually). Eats eggs and young birds from other nests. Feathers lack blue pigment; refracted sunlight causes the blue appearance.

male  
p. 311



female





# Wood Duck

*Aix sponsa*

YEAR-ROUND  
SUMMER

**Size:** 17–20" (43–51 cm)

**Female:** Small brown dabbling duck. Bright-white eye-ring and a not-so-obvious crest. Blue patch on wings (speculum), often hidden.

**Male:** highly ornamented, with a mostly green head and crest patterned with black and white; rusty chest, white belly and red eyes

**Juvenile:** similar to female

**Nest:** cavity; female lines an old woodpecker cavity or a nest box in a tree; 1 brood per year

**Eggs:** 10–15; creamy white without markings

**Incubation:** 28–36 days; female incubates

**Fledging:** 56–68 days; female teaches the young to feed

**Migration:** non-migrator to partial

**Food:** aquatic insects, plants, seeds

**Compare:** The female Mallard (p. 219) and female Blue-winged Teal (p. 199) lack the eye-ring and crest. The female Northern Shoveler (p. 221) has a large, spoon-shaped bill.

**Stan's Notes:** A common duck of quiet, shallow backwater ponds. Nearly went extinct around 1900 due to overhunting, but it's doing well now. Nests in a tree cavity or a nest box in a tree. Seen flying in forests or perching on high branches. Female takes off with a loud, squealing call and enters the nest cavity from full flight. Lays some eggs in a neighboring nest (egg dumping), resulting in more than 20 eggs in some clutches. Hatchlings stay in the nest for 24 hours, then jump from as high as 60 feet (18 m) to the ground or water to follow their mother. They never return to the nest.

**soaring**



**juvenile  
soaring**



**juvenile**





YEAR-ROUND

## Red-tailed Hawk

*Buteo jamaicensis*

**Size:** 19–23" (48–63 cm); up to 4½' wingspan

**Male:** Variety of colorations, from chocolate brown to nearly all white. Often brown with a white breast and brown belly band. Rust-red tail. Underside of wing is white with a small dark patch on the leading edge near the shoulder.

**Female:** same as male but slightly larger

**Juvenile:** similar to adults, with a speckled breast and light eyes; lacks a red tail

**Nest:** platform; male and female build; 1 brood per year

**Eggs:** 2–3; white without markings or sometimes marked with brown

**Incubation:** 30–35 days; female and male incubate

**Fledging:** 45–46 days; male and female feed the young

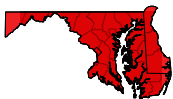
**Migration:** non-migrator

**Food:** small and medium-size animals, large birds, snakes, fish, insects, bats, carrion

**Compare:** Red-shouldered Hawk (p. 201) and Sharp-shinned Hawk (p. 293) are much smaller.

**Stan's Notes:** Common in open country and cities. Seen perching on fences, freeway lampposts and trees. Look for it circling above open fields and roadsides, searching for prey. Gives a high-pitched scream that trails off. Often builds a large stick nest in large trees along roads. Lines nest with finer material, like evergreen needles. Returns to the same nest site each year. The red tail develops in the second year and is best seen from above.





YEAR-ROUND

## Rock Pigeon

*Columba livia*

**Size:** 13" (33 cm)

**Male:** No set color pattern. Shades of gray to white with patches of gleaming, iridescent green and blue. Often has a light rump patch.

**Female:** same as male

**Juvenile:** same as adults

**Nest:** platform; female builds; 3–4 broods per year

**Eggs:** 1–2; white without markings

**Incubation:** 18–20 days; female and male incubate

**Fledging:** 25–26 days; female and male feed the young

**Migration:** non-migrator

**Food:** seeds

**Compare:** The Eurasian Collared-Dove (p. 287) has a black collar on the nape. The Mourning Dove (p. 183) is smaller and light brown and lacks the variety of color combinations of the Rock Pigeon.

**Stan's Notes:** Also known as the Domestic Pigeon. Formerly known as the Rock Dove. Introduced to North America from Europe by the early settlers. Most common around cities and barnyards, where it scratches for seeds. One of the few birds with a wide variety of colors, produced by years of selective breeding while in captivity. Parents feed the young a regurgitated liquid known as crop-milk for the first few days of life. One of the few birds that can drink without tilting its head back. Nests under bridges or on buildings, balconies, barns and sheds. Was once thought to be a nuisance in cities and was poisoned. Now, many cities have Peregrine Falcons (p. 297) feeding on Rock Pigeons, which keeps their numbers in check.





**in flight**







YEAR-ROUND

# Great Blue Heron

*Ardea herodias*

**Size:** 42–48" (107–122 cm); up to 6' wingspan

**Male:** Tall and gray. Black eyebrows end in long plumes at the back of the head. Long yellow bill. Long feathers at the base of the neck drop down in a kind of necklace. Long legs.

**Female:** same as male

**Juvenile:** same as adults, but more brown than gray, with a black crown; lacks plumes

**Nest:** platform in a colony; male and female build; 1 brood per year

**Eggs:** 3–5; blue-green without markings

**Incubation:** 27–28 days; female and male incubate

**Fledging:** 56–60 days; male and female feed the young

**Migration:** non-migrator to partial migrator in Maryland and Delaware

**Food:** small fish, frogs, insects, snakes, baby birds

**Compare:** Tricolored Heron (p. 115) is half the size of the Great Blue Heron and has a white belly. Green Heron (p. 309) is much smaller and has a short neck. Look for the long, yellow bill to help identify the Great Blue Heron.

**Stan's Notes:** One of the most common herons. Found in open water, from small ponds to large lakes. Stalks small fish in shallow water. Will strike at mice, squirrels and nearly anything it comes across. Red-winged Blackbirds will attack it to stop it from taking their babies out of the nest. In flight, it holds its neck in an S shape and slightly cups its wings, while the legs trail straight out behind. Nests in a colony of up to 100 birds. Nests in trees near or hanging over water. Barks like a dog when startled.

female  
p. 219



male



# Mallard

*Anas platyrhynchos*



YEAR-ROUND

**Size:** 19–21" (48–53 cm)

**Male:** Large, bulbous green head, white necklace and rust-brown or chestnut chest. Gray-and-white sides. Yellow bill. Orange legs and feet.

**Female:** brown with an orange-and-black bill and blue-and-white wing mark (speculum)

**Juvenile:** same as female but with a yellow bill

**Nest:** ground; female builds; 1 brood per year

**Eggs:** 7–10; greenish to whitish, unmarked

**Incubation:** 26–30 days; female incubates

**Fledging:** 42–52 days; female leads the young to food

**Migration:** non-migrator in Maryland and Delaware

**Food:** seeds, plants, aquatic insects; will come to ground feeders offering corn

**Compare:** Most people recognize this common duck. The male Northern Shoveler (p. 315) has a white chest with rusty sides and a very large spoon-shaped bill. Look for the green head and yellow bill to identify the male Mallard.

**Stan's Notes:** A familiar dabbling duck of lakes and ponds. Also found in rivers, streams and some backyards. Tips forward to feed on vegetation on the bottom of shallow water. The name "Mallard" comes from the Latin word *masculus*, meaning "male," referring to the male's habit of taking no part in raising the young. Male and female have white underwings and white tails, but only the male has black central tail feathers that curl upward. Unlike the female, the male doesn't quack. Returns to its birthplace each year.

female  
p. 375



male





SUMMER

# Baltimore Oriole

*Icterus galbula*

**Size:** 7–8" (18–20 cm)

**Male:** Flaming orange with a black head and back. White-and-orange wing bars. Orange-and-black tail. Gray bill and dark eyes.

**Female:** pale yellow with orange tones, gray-brown wings, white wing bars, gray bill, dark eyes

**Juvenile:** same as female

**Nest:** pendulous; female builds; 1 brood per year

**Eggs:** 4–5; bluish with brown markings

**Incubation:** 12–14 days; female incubates

**Fledging:** 12–14 days; female and male feed the young

**Migration:** complete, to Mexico, Central America and South America

**Food:** insects, fruit, nectar; comes to nectar, orange-half and grape-jelly feeders

**Compare:** The male Orchard Oriole (p. 321) is much darker orange. Look for the flaming orange to identify the male Baltimore Oriole.

**Stan's Notes:** A fantastic songster, often heard before seen. Easily attracted to a feeder that offers sugar water (nectar), orange halves or grape jelly. Parents bring their young to feeders. Hunts at the top of trees, feeding on caterpillars. Female builds a sock-like nest at the outermost branches of tall trees. Prefers parks, yards and forests and often returns to the same area year after year. Young males turn orange-and-black at 1½ years of age. Some of the last birds to arrive in spring (early April) and first to leave in fall (September). The state bird of Maryland.





SUMMER

## Scarlet Tanager

*Piranga olivacea*

**Size:** 7" (18 cm)

**Male:** Bright scarlet with coal-black wings and tail. Ivory bill and dark eyes.

**Female:** drab greenish yellow with olive wings and tail, whitish wing linings and dark eyes

**Juvenile:** same as female

**Nest:** cup; female builds; 1 brood per year

**Eggs:** 4–5; blue-green with brown markings

**Incubation:** 13–14 days; female incubates

**Fledging:** 9–11 days; female and male feed the young

**Migration:** complete, to Central and South America

**Food:** insects, fruit

**Compare:** The male Northern Cardinal (p. 331) is larger, with a black mask and red bill. Look for the black wings and tail to help identify the male Scarlet Tanager.

**Stan's Notes:** A tropical-looking bird. Found in mature deciduous woodlands, where it hunts for insects high up in trees. Requires a territory covering at least 4 acres (1.5 ha) for nesting but prefers 8 acres (3 ha). Arrives late in spring and leaves early in fall. Male and female both sing like American Robins, but the tanagers intersperse an unusual “chick-burr” call in their songs. The song of the female is like that of the male, only softer. This bird is one of hundreds of tanager species in the world. Nearly all are brightly colored and live in the tropics. The name “Tanager” comes from a South American Tupi Indian word meaning “any small, brightly colored bird.” The male sheds (molts) his bright-scarlet plumage in the fall, appearing more like the female during winter.

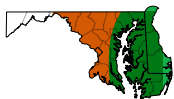




in flight







SUMMER  
MIGRATION

## Snowy Egret

*Egretta thula*

**Size:** 22–26" (56–66 cm); up to 3½' wingspan

**Male:** All-white bird with black bill. Black legs. Bright-yellow feet. Long feather plumes on head, neck and back during breeding season.

**Female:** same as male

**Juvenile:** similar to adult, but backs of legs are yellow

**Nest:** platform; female and male build; 1 brood per year

**Eggs:** 3–5; light blue-green without markings

**Incubation:** 20–24 days; female and male incubate

**Fledging:** 28–30 days; female and male feed the young

**Migration:** complete, to southern states and Gulf Coast

**Food:** aquatic insects, small fish

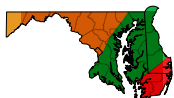
**Compare:** Great Egret (p. 359) is much larger and has a yellow bill and black feet. Little Blue Heron (p. 113) is the same size and has a black-tipped gray bill. Look for the black bill and yellow feet of Snowy Egret to help identify.

**Stan's Notes:** Common in wetlands and often seen with other egrets. Colonies may include up to several hundred nests. Nests are low in shrubs 5–10 feet (1.5–3 m) tall or constructs a nest on the ground, usually mixed among other egret and heron nests. Chicks hatch days apart (asynchronous), leading to starvation of last to hatch. Will actively “hunt” prey by moving around quickly, stirring up small fish and aquatic insects with its feet. In the breeding state, a yellow patch at the base of bill and the yellow feet turn orange-red. Was hunted to near extinction in the late 1800s for its feathers.



**in flight**





YEAR-ROUND  
SUMMER  
MIGRATION

## Great Egret

*Ardea alba*

**Size:** 36–40" (91–102 cm); up to 4½' wingspan

**Male:** Tall, thin, all-white bird with a long neck and a long, pointed yellow bill. Black, stilt-like legs and black feet.

**Female:** same as male

**Juvenile:** same as adults

**Nest:** platform; male and female construct; 1 brood per year

**Eggs:** 2–3; light blue without markings

**Incubation:** 23–26 days; female and male incubate

**Fledging:** 43–49 days; female and male feed the young

**Migration:** complete to partial migrator, to southern states; non migrator in parts of both states

**Food:** small fish, aquatic insects, frogs, crayfish

**Compare:** Cattle Egret (p. 359) is about half the size of Great Egret and has a much shorter neck and much smaller bill. The Snowy Egret (p. 351) is much smaller with yellow feet and a black bill. Juvenile Little Blue Heron (p. 113) is smaller and has a black-tipped gray bill.

**Stan's Notes:** Slowly stalks shallow ponds, lakes and wetlands in search of small fish to spear with its long, sharp bill. Gives a loud, dry croak if disturbed or when squabbling for a nest site at the colony. The name "Egret" comes from the French word *aigrette*, meaning "ornamental tufts of plumes." The plumes grow near the tail during the breeding season. Hunted to near extinction in the 1800s and early 1900s for its long plumes, which were used to decorate women's hats. Today, the egret is a protected species.

**male**

**winter  
male**

**female**



YEAR-ROUND

## American Goldfinch

*Spinus tristis*

**Size:** 5" (13 cm)

**Male:** Canary-yellow finch with a black forehead and tail. Black wings with white wing bars. White rump. No markings on the chest. Winter male is similar to the female.

**Female:** dull olive-yellow plumage with brown wings; lacks a black forehead

**Juvenile:** same as female

**Nest:** cup; female builds; 1 brood per year

**Eggs:** 4–6; pale blue without markings

**Incubation:** 10–12 days; female incubates

**Fledging:** 11–17 days; female and male feed the young

**Migration:** partial migrator to non-migrator; small flocks of up to 20 birds move around to find food

**Food:** seeds, insects; will come to seed feeders

**Compare:** Male Yellow Warbler (p. 3369) is all yellow with orange streaking on chest. The Pine Siskin (p. 121) has a streaked chest and belly and yellow wing bars. The female House Finch (p. 123) and female Purple Finch (p. 137) have heavily streaked chests.

**Stan's Notes:** A common year-round backyard resident. Most often found in open fields, scrubby areas and woodlands. Enjoys Nyjer seed in feeders. Breeds in late summer. Lines its nest with the silky down from wild thistle. Almost always in small flocks. Twitters while it flies. Flight is roller coaster-like. Moves around to find adequate food during winter. Often called Wild Canary due to the male's canary-colored plumage. Male sings a pleasant, high-pitched song.



male  
p. 321

female



first-year  
male



SUMMER

## Orchard Oriole

*Icterus spurius*

**Size:** 7–8" (18–20 cm)

**Female:** Olive-green with a dull-yellow belly. Gray wings with 2 indistinct white wing bars. Long, thin bill with a gray mark on the lower bill.

**Male:** dark orange with black head, throat, upper back, wings and tail; 1 white wing bar

**Juvenile:** same as female; first-year male looks like the female, with a black bib

**Nest:** pendulous; female builds; 1 brood per year

**Eggs:** 3–5; pale blue to white, brown markings

**Incubation:** 11–12 days; female and male incubate

**Fledging:** 11–14 days; female and male feed the young

**Migration:** complete, to Mexico, Central America and northern South America

**Food:** insects, fruit, nectar; comes to nectar, orange-half and grape-jelly feeders

**Compare:** Female Baltimore Oriole (p. 375) is similar, but it has orange tones and more distinct wing bars. The female Summer Tanager (p. 381) is mustard-yellow with a larger bill.

**Stan's Notes:** Named "Orchard" for its preference for orchards. Also likes open woods. Eats insects until wild fruit starts to ripen. Often nests alone; sometimes nests in small colonies. Parents bring their young to bird feeding stations after they fledge. Many people don't see these birds at feeders much during the summer and think they have left, but the birds are still there, hunting for insects to feed to their young. Summer resident, arriving in early April and departing in September. Often migrates in flocks with Baltimore Orioles.



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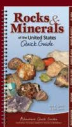
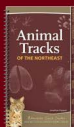
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### About the Author

Naturalist Stan Tekiela is an award-winning wildlife photographer and the author of many popular state-specific field guides. He has written educational books about wildlife, including children's books, quick guides, and more, presenting birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, trees, wildflowers, and cacti.

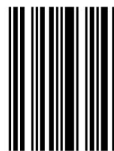
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