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HUDSON VALLEY REGION



BIRD GUIDE



Birdwatching in Columbia County

Columbia County, New York

is a welcoming haven for birds and the people who love to watch them. With its range of woodlands, fields, ponds, wetlands and hills, Columbia County offers a wide variety of habitats for birds and other wildlife.

Over the years, more than 260 species of birds have been reported in the County. Some, like the Blue Jay, live here year round; others are part-time residents, like the Scarlet Tanager, who come to nest and raise a family before moving on; and others just pass through, like the Fox Sparrow. Now and then an off-course visitor appears, like the rare oceanic species that was seen only once as they wandered down the Hudson River after a major storm.

Birdwatching is a popular outdoor activity the whole family can enjoy.

A way to start enjoying birdwatching is to become very familiar with the "common" species. Then comes the excitement of discovering a new or rare species to add to your own "Life List" or to the County list. Either way, there are plenty of opportunities to enhance your visit to Columbia County by taking a birdwatching adventure.

As experienced birdwatchers know, the secret to finding a variety of bird species is to visit different bird habitats. This brochure will help you do that. It is designed to be used as a self-guided tour of birdwatching "hotspots," for which Columbia County is world famous.

You will also find a listing of bird species that have been recorded over the years. Some of the birds listed are very common. Some are not. The surest way to find birds is to look where they are expected to be found. Keep in mind, however, that birds have wings and can show up anywhere they want.



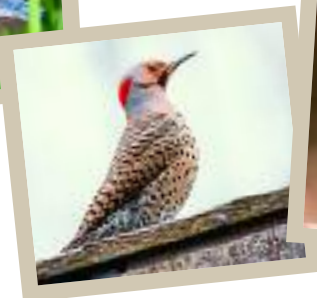
Canada Goose



Black Capped Chickadee



Blue Jay



Northern Flicker



Common Grackle



Hooded Merganser

It's a delightful experience and just about anyone, young or old, can join in, especially since birds are plentiful and everywhere, and there's always something new to discover about them.

Adventure

Birds Through the Seasons

Over 260 species of birds have been recorded in Columbia County. Most of these are summer residents, arriving here from points south to nest. At the season's end they retreat back south for the winter. A few species are year-round residents, which may be joined in winter by relatives from the north. Visitors from the north tend to be cyclical or irruptive, depending on the severity of the winter or availability of food. Another group is the transients or migrants. These birds nest up north and winter to the south of us. They simply pass through Columbia County en route to other destinations.

The last group is the vagrants or accidentals. These are birds that have wandered out of their normal range or have been blown in by storms. They have been recorded fewer than ten times in or near the County.

The Nesting Season

Because of the highly visible activity of singing males, courtship behavior, and parent birds feeding noisy young, the nesting season is the best time to observe birds. Most birds begin nesting in the spring (April, May and June), continue through the summer (July and August), and finish by autumn (September and October).

In the spring, males return to the nesting grounds first to claim their territories. Females arrive later, attracted by singing males. Apparently, the females select their mates based on the character of his song, the suitability of his territory, and the strength of his defense of his territory.

After a brief courtship, a pair will settle down to raise one or more broods of young. The male will bring food to the brooding female that sits quietly and inconspicuously on the nest. He will also maintain the territorial boundaries by fending off rival males and driving away intruding predators.



*White-breasted Nuthatch
feeding young*



*Great Horned Owl
with baby*

Transients and migrants

Where to Find Birds

Birds have basic requirements for food, water, shelter and nesting. Many species have a combination of specific needs found only in specific habitats. Knowing what each species requires helps when going out to look for a bird. Another technique for finding birds is to visit a variety of habitats to yield a greater variety of species; woodlands, fields, ponds, marshes, and open water abound in Columbia County. The following list indicates the best habitats in which to look for birds.

Birding “Hotspots”

Here are a few of the many ideal locations to search for birds in Columbia County. Look at the map and plan a trip that fits your time schedule and enhances your experience. The numbers listed below are indicated on the map to help you decide where to go. It is not necessary to follow the numbers sequentially to plan a route. Just try out a few or all of the stops and perhaps pick out a favorite spot to revisit. The main idea is to have fun and enjoy the beautiful birdlife and scenery of Columbia County.

- 1 Right in front of your door** – That’s right! The best way to see birds is to get outside, and the easiest place to go is right where you are. From the village apartment or a remote country cottage, take a short walk. Birds are where you find them. Of course, the more varied the habitats in your vicinity, the better. A walk around your neighborhood should produce about 30 species in the summer to more than a dozen species in the winter. To add some challenge, try keeping a cumulative list of the results of several days’ walks covering the same ground. After a few days, you’ll see that list grow as you become more familiar with the regular species and new ones “appear.” As you go along, you can keep track of each of the different bird species and create your own “Life List” of birds seen.



Downy Woodpecker

- 2 Parks** – Visit a park, conservation area or natural area nearby. Many colorful bird species will frequent the trees, flowers, shrubs or ponds. Whether it’s a ballpark, golf course, or swimming hole, there will be more than a few birds around worth noting. A good time to visit might be during off hours, when there are few other park users, who might disturb the birds. (Please Obey Posted Park Hours.) Killdeer may nest in the periphery, hawks may be seen soaring overhead, and be

sure to watch for flycatchers in the outfield or an eagle at the thirteenth hole.

- 3 Clermont State Historic Site** –

Originally the home of one of New York’s earliest and most prominent families, visitors enjoy this Hudson River Estate’s grand architecture, landscapes, gardens and collections. In addition to good views of the river, this site offers several trails that attract many migrating songbirds. Scan the river in fall and winter for large flocks of migrant geese and ducks. In the spring, listen and watch for Magnolia Warblers, Black-throated Green Warblers, and Black-throated Blue Warblers as they search for insects to fuel them forward on their journey to nesting sites in the Adirondacks and nearby. In summer, listen for the scratching sounds of Eastern Towhees and Ovenbirds searching for food among the oak and maple leaves of the shaded woodland floor. You can hear the song of the Ovenbird well into late summer, after many of our other songbirds have left and flown south. Listen for its sound, loudest just before the kids head back to school. Call the Clermont office for a current schedule of monthly guided bird walks, 518-537-4240.



Baltimore Oriole

- 4 Ernest R. Lasher Memorial Park at the Germantown Boat Launch** –

This spot is excellent for watching resident and migrating waterfowl. Duck counts have recorded dozens of Gadwall, Greater and Lesser Scaup, Canvasback, Northern Pintail, Common Mergansers and hundreds of Mallards, American Black Ducks, and Canada Geese. Rare winter visitors include Tundra Swan, Long-tailed Duck, and Barrow’s Goldeneye.

- 5 Olana State Historic Site** –

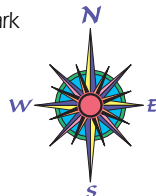
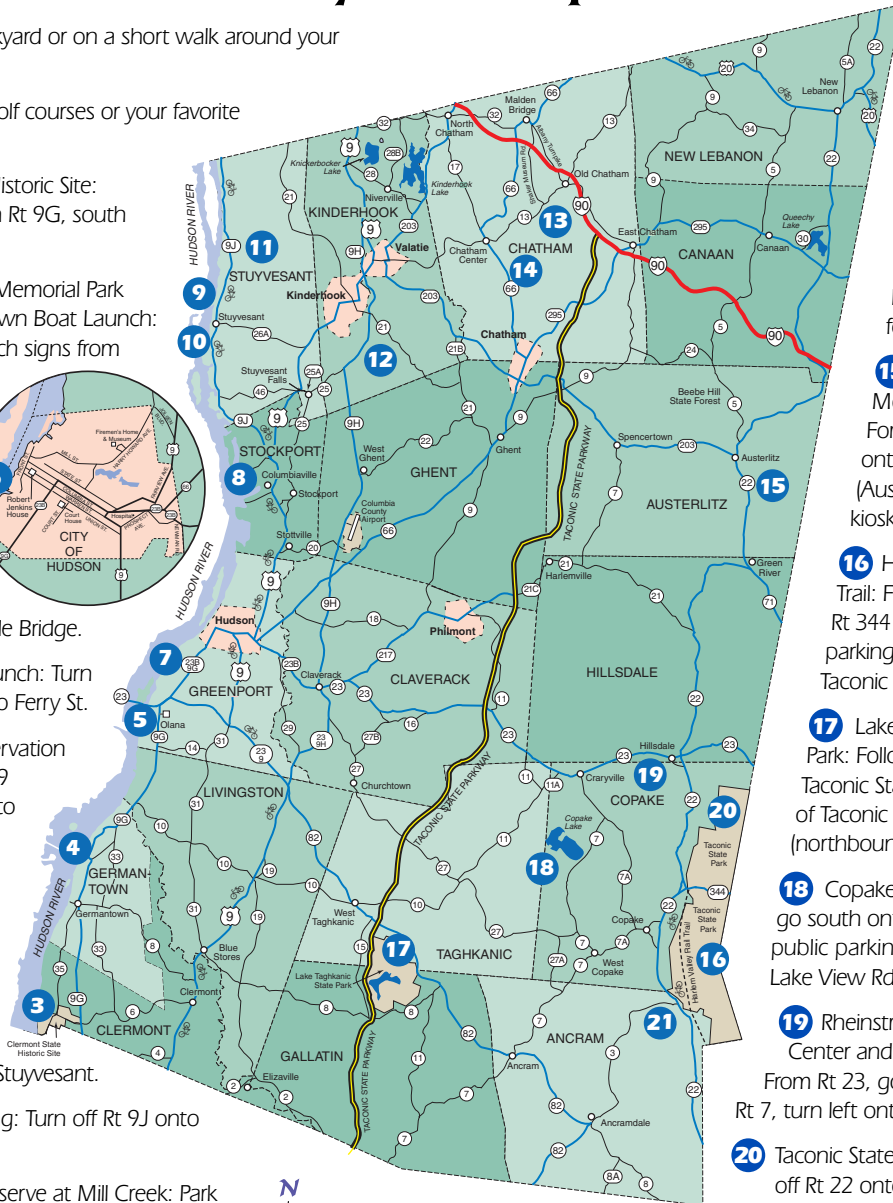
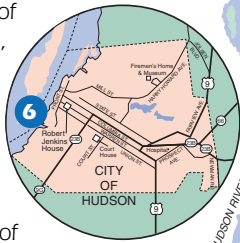
This site is the former estate of Hudson River School painter Frederic Church, one of New York State’s most famous 19th-century painters. It has many popular wooded trails that attract several species of woodpeckers, vireos, warblers, and sparrows. Watch out for Scarlet Tanagers in the canopy overhead and listen for the relentless spring song of the Red-eyed Vireo, aptly nicknamed the “Preacher Bird.” The crow-sized Pileated Woodpecker has been known to breed here, nesting in tree cavities that it excavates with its dagger-shaped bill. After a morning walk, bring a picnic lunch to eat on the large hilltop overlooking the magnificent view of the Hudson River and Catskills – a scene immortalized in watercolors and oils by Church. Keep your binoculars close by in case a hawk or falcon flies over.

- 6 Hudson Boat Launch** –

Visit any time of year and scan the water and island for Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets, Wood Ducks, Osprey, Belted Kingfishers, Fish Crows and Bank

Columbia County Hotspots!

- 1** In your own backyard or on a short walk around your neighborhood.
- 2** Local ballparks, golf courses or your favorite swimming hole.
- 3** Clermont State Historic Site: Follow signs from Rt 9G, south of Germantown.
- 4** Ernest R. Lasher Memorial Park at the Germantown Boat Launch: Follow boat launch signs from Rt 9G, north of Germantown, onto Anchorage Rd.
- 5** Olana State Historic Site: Rt 9G, south of the Rip Van Winkle Bridge.
- 6** Hudson Boat Launch: Turn off S Front St onto Ferry St.
- 7** Greenport Conservation Area: Turn off Rt 9 (Fairview Ave) onto Joslen Blvd.
- 8** Stockport Flats: Turn off Rt 9 in Stockport onto Cty Rt 22.
- 9** Nutton Hook: Turn off Rt 9J onto Ferry Rd in Stuyvesant.
- 10** Stuyvesant Landing: Turn off Rt 9J onto Riverview St.
- 11** Lewis A Swyer Preserve at Mill Creek: Park on western shoulder of Rt 9J north of Stuyvesant and follow signs.
- 12** Martin Van Buren Nature Trail: Parking off Rt 9H directly across from Martin Van Buren National Historic Site.
- 13** Wilson M Powell Sanctuary: Turn off Rt 66 onto Cty Rt 13 (Chatham Center), follow signs off Cty Rt 13.



- 14** Ooms Conservation Area at Sutherland Pond: Turn off Rt 66 onto Cty Rt 13 (Chatham Center), turn off Cty Rt 13 onto Rock City Rd, follow signs.
- 15** Harvey Mountain State Forest: Turn off Rt 22 onto East Hill Rd (Austerlitz), park at kiosk.
- 16** Harlem Valley Rail Trail: Follow Rt 22 to Rt 344 (Copake Falls), parking at entrance to Taconic State Park.
- 17** Lake Taghkanic State Park: Follow Rt 82 south of Taconic State Parkway or exit of Taconic State Parkway (northbound side).
- 18** Copake Lake: From Rt 23, go south onto Cty Rt 7, to public parking at corner of Lake View Rd and Cty Rt 7.
- 19** Rheinstrom Hill Audubon Center and Sanctuary: From Rt 23, go south onto Cty Rt 7, turn left onto Cambridge Rd.
- 20** Taconic State Park: Turn off Rt 22 onto Rt 344, follow signs to park entrance.

- 21** Drowned Lands Swamp Conservation Area: From Rt 22, go west onto Cty Rt 3, parking lot on left.

**COLUMBIA
COUNTY
LODGING
ASSOCIATION**

**For lodging Information
and Availability
800-558-8218
(9am-9pm daily)**

www.ColumbiaCountyLodging.com

Swallows. If you're lucky, you might spot a Bald Eagle flying by or perched on a snag across the river. South

Bay, the adjacent cattail marsh, is one of the few places in the mid-Hudson Valley where Virginia Rail, Sora, and Least Bittern have been known to nest. Listen for the sweet rattling of the Marsh Wren among the nearby reeds.

7 Greenport Conservation Area

– Take a leisurely walk through the fields managed by the Columbia Land Conservancy as habitat for birds such as Bobolinks, Field Sparrows and Meadowlarks.

Eastern Bluebirds nest in the boxes along the trails, as do Tree Swallows and House Wrens. Visit in late April or May for the spectacular aerial stunts performed by male American Woodcocks as they compete with one another trying to attract the attention of the females.

8 Stockport Flats – This area of freshwater tidal wetlands and freshwater marshes is among the rarest ecosystems in the world. Belted Kingfishers and Bank Swallows burrow nesting holes into the soft, sandy cliffs of Stockport Middle Ground Island. In spring and fall,

look for Least, Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers, and Wilson's Snipe. Scan the inlet coves and islands for waterfowl and always keep an eye to the sky for Osprey and Bald Eagles.

9 Nutton Hook – Scan the river opposite the town of Coxsackie for ducks, geese, and herons. In winter, rare gulls such as Glaucous, Lesser Black-backed and Iceland Gulls appear frequently. Take a short walk along the small reed marsh and watch carefully for Marsh Wrens, Willow Flycatchers, Yellow Warblers,

and Swamp Sparrows. The southern cove is a nice place to put canoes in the water for a paddle through the marsh to the south or work the trail to the historic icehouse location to the north.

10 Stuyvesant Landing – This site offers good views of the river and should deliver ducks, geese, and cormorants nearly any time of year. Common Loons have been spotted here, along with Common Goldeneyes, Buffleheads, Red-breasted Mergansers, American Coot, and the rare Great Cormorant.



Wood Ducklings



Cardinal

11 Lewis A. Swyer Preserve at Mill Creek – A well-managed boardwalk winds through a tidal floodplain swamp along Mill Creek to its confluence with the Hudson River. Listen in the early hours for the tremulous whistle of the Eastern Screech-Owl, which nests here regularly. Search the canopy for Blue-Gray Gnatcatchers, Great Crested Flycatchers, and Yellow-throated Vireos. Some years, hundreds of Rusty Blackbirds rest here during their migration flight. At the end of the trail a viewing platform overlooks the river, perfect for eagle and heron watching.

12 Martin Van Buren Nature Trail – Take a short walk through the hardwood trails to see Hairy Woodpeckers, Wild Turkeys, American Redstarts, Baltimore Orioles and other songbirds. Afterwards, stop over at the historic site to learn more about Martin Van Buren, our 8th U.S. President and Columbia County resident.

13 Wilson M. Powell Sanctuary – This preserve is managed by the Alan Devoe Bird Club and provides habitat for Barred Owls, Common Ravens, Veery, Louisiana Waterthrushes and many other songbirds. Start your walk near the feeders before visiting the small pond and wooded trails. Take a short hike up to Dorson's Rock for panoramic views across the Hudson Valley to the distant Catskill Mountains, scanning the sky for Red-shouldered, Red-tailed and Broad-winged Hawks.

14 Ooms Conservation Area at Sutherland Pond – Recently acquired from private owners, this public use pond hosts many migrating ducks, herons and swallows. Eastern Meadowlarks, Bobolinks and Savannah Sparrows are usually present in the surrounding fields. If lucky, you might hear the metallic buzz of a Grasshopper Sparrow skulking in the nearby grasses. With patience and good fortune, you might even catch a glimpse of one. Ospreys are another occasional treat!



Wood Ducks

15 Harvey Mountain State Forest – This northern hardwood forest is a continuation of the habitat found in western Massachusetts and Vermont. Nearly 1600 acres of hemlock and birch host Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Hermit Thrushes, Red-breasted Nuthatches and Blue-headed Vireos. This is a good place to search for irruptive northern species such as Pine Siskin, Common Redpoll, and Crossbills, which may be found feeding on hemlock and spruce cones.

16 Harlem Valley Rail Trail – This former railroad bed was converted into a paved public trail running from Copake Falls south through Taconic State Park. The trail passes through several fields and woods, along ponds and wetlands on its way

through the Taconic highlands, affording a perfect opportunity to look for birds in many different habitats. Rare birds such as Prothonotary Warblers and Yellow-throated Warblers have been spotted here in the past.

17 Lake Taghkanic State Park – Brown Thrashers and Prairie Warblers nest in the low shrubs each year. Red oak-white pine forests shelter numerous Wild Turkeys, Barred Owls, Ruffed Grouse and many warblers, thrushes and vireos. The Fitness Trail is a good way to travel through several different habitats, from low scrub, to hardwood forest, to wet fields, to the open water of Lake Taghkanic in search of many different species. In winter, strap on a pair of cross-country skis to see winter sparrows and finches during those slow, dusk-heavy days.

18 Copake Lake – Visit any time of year, but especially in fall and winter when other summer recreational activities on this small lake are less intruding. Many northern diving ducks stop here in early spring to rest before flying the rest of the way to Canada. Some unusual winter visitors include Red-throated Loons, Tundra Swans and Red-breasted Mergansers.

19 Rheinstrom Hill Audubon Center and Sanctuary – This 1,037-acre preserve is managed by the Audubon New York and provides a variety of habitats for nesting and migrating birds. For information on scheduling individual or group visits, or summer education workshops, contact the sanctuary warden at 518-325-5203.

20 Taconic State Park – This large park contains some of the highest elevations in Columbia County, including Washburn Mountain and the small peaks leading to Bash Bish Falls. Uncommon warblers, such as Worm-eating Warbler and Hooded Warbler, appear occasionally on some of the wooded slopes. Listen for Dark-eyed Juncos, White-throated Sparrows and the Black-throated Green Warbler, which sings its name: “Green, Green, Black-throated Green!” For a refreshing summer hike, visit Bash Bish Falls just east of NYS Rt 344.

21 Drowned Lands Swamp Conservation Area – Check the open red maple swamp for Barred Owl, Green Herons, American Bitterns, Alder Flycatchers, Wood Ducks and Swamp Sparrows. The township of Ancram is sparsely populated and has many surrounding open fields, perfect habitat for American Kestrels, Rough-legged Hawks, Eastern Meadowlark and Horned Larks. Study the winter flocks of Horned Larks carefully; you might just find a hitchhiking Lapland Longspur or a flock of Snow Buntings.

Report Your Sightings

One of the time-honored traditions of birdwatching is to share your sightings with others. This is particularly true if you have any unusual species recorded. Birdwatching is one activity where everyday amateurs can make significant contributions to the science. In Columbia County, you can report your observations to the Alan Devoe Bird Club Records Committee, P.O. Box 20, Chatham, NY 12037. If you have sighted a very rare species, then you should contact the “Birdline of Eastern New York” at 518-439-8080. Leave a message with the details of the sighting and of course, your name and contact phone number. Remember, birds have wings and can go anywhere they want to. Expect the unexpected, and enjoy!



Blue Bird

Columbia County, Not Just for the Birds

There's so much to see and do in Columbia County, one visit is never enough. All roads lead to vistas of natural beauty, historically important sites and culturally vibrant events. The County is also a major center for antiquing and a great place for outdoor activities. Plus, a range of cozy country inns and many fine dining spots make for a memorable stay.

The Columbia County Visitor's Guide and seasonal Calendar of Events brochures have all the what, where and when details. For free copies call 800-724-1846.

Checklist of 263 Species

LEDGEND

- ✕ = Known to nest in Columbia County
- ◆ = Suspected to nest in Columbia County
- ★ = Recorded on Christmas Bird Count(s)

GREBES

- ✕ ★ Pied-billed Grebe
- Red-necked Grebe
- Horned Grebe

CORMORANTS

- ✕ ✕ ★ Double-crested Cormorant
- ★ Great Cormorant

DUCKS, SWANS & GEESE

- Ruddy Duck
- ✕ ✕ ★ Mute Swan
- Tundra Swan
- ★ Snow Goose
- ✕ ✕ ★ Canada Goose
- Brant
- ✕ ✕ ★ Wood Duck
- American Wigeon
- Gadwall
- Green-winged Teal
- ✕ ✕ ★ Mallard
- ✕ ✕ ★ American Black Duck
- ★ Northern Pintail

- ★ Blue-winged Teal
 - ★ Northern Shoveler
 - ★ Canvasback
 - ★ Redhead
 - ★ Ring-necked Duck
 - ★ Greater Scaup
 - ★ Lesser Scaup
 - ★ Oldsquaw
 - ★ Black Scoter
 - ★ Surf Scoter
 - ★ White-winged Scoter
 - ★ Common Goldeneye
 - ★ Bufflehead
 - ✕ ✕ ★ Hooded Merganser
 - ✕ ✕ ★ Red-breasted Merganser
 - ✕ ✕ ★ Common Merganser
- ### HERONS, EGRETS & BITTERNS
- Snowy Egret
 - ✕ ✕ ★ Great Blue Heron
 - Great Egret
 - ✕ ✕ Green Heron
 - ◆ Black-crowned Night Heron
 - ✕ ✕ Least Bittern
 - ✕ ✕ ★ American Bittern

NEW WORLD VULTURES

- Black Vulture
- Turkey Vulture

OSPREY

- Osprey

HAWKS, EAGLES AND KITES

- Bald Eagle
- Northern Harrier
- Sharp-shinned Hawk
- Cooper's Hawk
- Northern Goshawk
- Red-shouldered Hawk
- Broad-winged Hawk
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Rough-legged Hawk

FALCONS

- American Kestrel
- Merlin
- Peregrine Falcon

PHASANTS, GROUSE & TURKEYS

- Ring-necked Pheasant
- Ruffed Grouse
- Wild Turkey

RAILS AND COOTS

- Virginia Rail
- Sora
- Common Moorhen
- American Coot

SANDPIPERS

- American Woodcock
- Wilson's Snipe
- Upland Sandpiper
- Greater Yellowlegs
- Lesser Yellowlegs
- Solitary Sandpiper
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Semipalmated Sandpiper
- Least Sandpiper
- Pectoral Sandpiper
- Dunlin

POLOVERS AND LAPWINGS

- American Golden Plover
- Semipalmated Plover
- Killdeer

GULLS & TERNS

- Ring-billed Gull
- Great Black-backed Gull
- Glaucous Gull
- Iceland Gull
- Herring Gull
- Bonaparte's Gull
- Black Tern
- Caspian Tern
- Common Tern
- Forster's Tern

LOONS

- Red-throated Loon
- Common Loon

PIGEONS & DOVES

- Common Pigeon
- Mourning Dove

NEW WORLD CUCKOOS

- Black-billed Cuckoo
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo

OWLS

- Barn Owl
- Eastern Screech-Owl
- Great Horned Owl
- Snowy Owl
- Barred Owl
- Northern Saw-whet Owl
- Long-eared Owl
- Short-eared Owl

NIGHTJARS

- Common Nighthawk
- Whip-poor-will

SWIFTS

- Chimney Swift

HUMMINGBIRDS

- Ruby-throated Hummingbird

KINGFISHERS

- Belted Kingfisher

WOODPECKERS

- Red-headed Woodpecker
- Red-bellied Woodpecker
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- Downy Woodpecker
- Hairy Woodpecker
- Northern Flicker
- Pileated Woodpecker

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS

- Olive-sided Flycatcher
- Eastern Wood-Pewee
- Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
- Alder Flycatcher
- Willow Flycatcher
- Least Flycatcher
- Eastern Phoebe
- Great Crested Flycatcher
- Eastern Kingbird

CROWS & JAYS

- Blue Jay
- American Crow
- Fish Crow
- Common Raven

VIREOS

- Blue-headed Vireo
- Yellow-throated Vireo
- Philadelphia Vireo
- Red-eyed Vireo
- Warbling Vireo

SHRIKES

- Northern Shrike

WAXWINGS

- Cedar Waxwing

THRUSHES

- Eastern Bluebird
- Veery
- Gray-cheeked Thrush
- Bicknell's Thrush
- Swainson's Thrush
- Hermit Thrush

- Wood Thrush

- American Robin

MOCKINGBIRDS & THRASHERS

- Gray Catbird
- Northern Mockingbird
- Northern Thrasher

STARLINGS

- European Starling

NUTHATCHES

- Red-breasted Nuthatch
- White-breasted Nuthatch

CREEPERS

- Brown Creeper

WRENS

- Sedge Wren
- Marsh Wren
- Carolina Wren
- Winter Wren
- House Wren

GNATCATCHERS

- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

SWALLOWS

- Tree Swallow
- Purple Martin
- Northern Rough-winged Swallow
- Bank Swallow
- Barn Swallow
- Cliff Swallow

KINGLETS

- Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- Golden-crowned Kinglet

CHICKADEES & TITS

- Black-capped Chickadee
- Tufted Titmouse

LARKS

- Horned Lark

OLD WORLD SPARROWS

- House Sparrow

PIPITS

- American Pipit

SISKINS, CROSSBILLS & ALLIES

- Pine Siskin
- American Goldfinch
- Hoary Redpoll
- Common Redpoll
- Purple Finch
- House Finch
- Pine Grosbeak
- Red Crossbill
- White-winged Crossbill
- Evening Grosbeak

NEW WORLD WARBLERS

- Blue-winged Warbler
- Golden-winged Warbler
- Tennessee Warbler
- Orange-crowned Warbler
- Nashville Warbler
- Northern Parula
- Yellow Warbler
- Chestnut-sided Warbler
- Magnolia Warbler
- Cape May Warbler
- Black-throated Blue Warbler
- Yellow-rumped Warbler
- Black-throated Green Warbler
- Blackburnian Warbler
- Pine Warbler
- Prairie Warbler
- Palm Warbler
- Bay-breasted Warbler
- Blackpoll Warbler
- Cerulean Warbler
- Black-and-white Warbler
- American Redstart
- Worm-eating Warbler

- Ovenbird
- Northern Waterthrush
- Louisiana Waterthrush
- Mourning Warbler
- Common Yellowthroat
- Hooded Warbler
- Wilson's Warbler
- Canada Warbler
- Yellow-breasted Chat

BUNTINGS, SPARROWS, TANAGERS & ALLIES

- Lapland Longspur
- Snow Bunting
- Fox Sparrow
- Song Sparrow
- Lincoln's Sparrow
- Swamp Sparrow
- White-crowned Sparrow
- White-throated Sparrow
- Dark-eyed Junco
- Savannah Sparrow
- Grasshopper Sparrow
- American Tree Sparrow
- Chipping Sparrow
- Field Sparrow
- Vesper Sparrow
- Eastern Towhee
- Scarlet Tanager
- Dickcissel
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- Northern Cardinal
- Indigo Bunting

BLACKBIRDS, GRACKLES & ORIOLES

- Baltimore Oriole
- Orchard Oriole
- Red-winged Blackbird
- Eastern Meadowlark
- Common Grackle
- Rusty Blackbird
- Brown-headed Cowbird
- Bobolink

The following species have been rarely reported in recent years:

- Eurasian Wigeon
- King Eider
- Glossy Ibis
- Barrow's Goldeneye
- Gyrfalcon
- Sandhill Crane
- Golden Eagle
- Marbled Godwit
- Royal Tern
- Sooty Tern
- Least Tern
- Thayer's Gull
- Lesser Black-backed Gull
- Bohemian Waxwing
- Boreal Chickadee
- Yellow-throated Warbler
- Summer Tanager
- Yellow-headed Blackbird
- Red Phalarope
- Rufous Hummingbird
- Acadian Flycatcher
- Western Kingbird
- Blue Grosbeak

BIRD WATCHING TIPS

Keep it simple – Don't overload your ability to learn and enjoy. Study the common species until you are familiar with them well enough to sort out the more unusual species you may find. Learn bird songs and become familiar with size, shape, and flight patterns of the more frequently encountered types. This way, you can sort through a large flock and pick out different species.

Get out early and often – Most bird species are more active in the early morning. The best time to find birds is when they are feeding after a long night's fast. Songbirds tend to be more active and will sing more often in the early morning, thus making them easier to locate and identify. Many birds will take a midday "siesta," especially during the warmer months. The next best times are evening hours when birds are "fueling-up" for the night. But any time is a good time if you are out there looking and listening.

Listen carefully! – Many birds will be heard before they can be seen. Each species has its own distinctive song. Knowing the songs will help you to locate and identify them. Listening will also help you to find more species. There's also an added pleasure in recognizing a familiar spring song after a long winter. Try to learn some new bird songs each spring!

Binoculars are almost essential to birdwatching – Many a young country boy or girl got to know many birds by approaching them carefully and observing them without the aid of fancy binoculars, but most birds are wary and will allow only so much intrusion into their space. If they become alarmed, they will simply fly away or duck down into the shrubbery. Binoculars help you get a good look at birds without closing in on them, saving you a lot of time and effort.

A good bird identification field guide is worth its weight in gold feathers – The beginner will do well to obtain a local field guide, rather than a national or continent-wide tome. The larger guides will have many species that look a lot like the local birds but may be found only in the remote corners of the country. No sense cluttering your mind with unlikely look-alikes. Save them for future quests.

Research and text for this brochure compiled by
Richard Guthrie and Will Yandik.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF:
Fred Engel
Wildlife Photographer
www.fredengelfphoto.com



Columbia County Tourism
401 State Street, Hudson, NY 12534
800-724-1846 • 518-828-3375

www.bestcountryroads.com