

# Common Birds of Meadow Farm

## A Field Guide

### Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias*

- ~4 ft tall
- A tall blue-grey bird with long legs, long neck, and knife like bill. Flies with its neck pulled in.
- *Habitat:* Marshes, swamps, shores; Often seen flying over roads/populated areas
- *Diet:* Use their spear-like bills to catch fish, frogs, salamanders, and aquatic invertebrates



### Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

- 2 ½ - 3 ½ ft tall
- Black head and neck with white patch that runs on side of head.
- *Habitat:* Lakes, ponds, marshes, fields. Many non-migratory groups are found in parks, golf courses, or open areas are causing problems. Flocks travel in V formation, often honking.
- *Diet:* On land: grasses, berries, seeds, grass & grain crops in fields; In water: aquatic plants, roots, algae

### Turkey Vulture *Carthartes aura*

- 26-32" Wingspan 6 ft.
- When overhead, two-toned wings can be seen: dark covert feathers and silver primary flight feathers. Red featherless head.
- *Habitat:* Usually seen soaring or perched on dead trees or post or feeding on the ground on carrion
- *Diet:* Dead animals (carrion)



### Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*

- 23-27" Wingspan under 5 ft.
- *Habitat:* Usually seen soaring or perched on dead trees or post or feeding on the ground on carrion.
- When soaring, look for short tail and silver patch restricted to tips of wings. Black featherless head.
- *Diet:* Dead animals (carrion)

### Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*

- 19"-2 ft
- *Habitat:* Commonly seen along roadsides, woodland and field edges, and open country.
- While soaring, red tail upperside of tail visible in adults; underside slightly red. Immatures have brownish tails with pale banding. Whitish breast with broad band of streaks across belly. Voice a drawn out scream, *keeeer-r-r-r*, slurring downward.
- *Diet:* small mammals, birds, reptiles





**Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus***

- o 2 ½ - 3 ½ ft Wingspan 7-8 ft
- o The national bird of the United States. Adult (5+ years) has an all-white head and white tail; Immature are all dark; 2-3 year old immatures are mottled. Wings held flat when soaring. Voice a sharp cackle, *kleek-kik-ik-ik-ik*, or a lower *kak-kak-kak*.
- o *Habitat*: Coasts, rivers, large lakes
- o *Diet*: Fish (salt and fresh water), carrion

**American Kestrel *Falco sparverius***

- o 10-13"
- o Small hawk-like bird with rufous back/tail. Males have blue-gray wings. Mustached black-and-white face pattern. Hovers for prey, sits erect often on wires, flicking the tail.
- o *Habitat*: Open country, farmland, cities, wood edges, wires
- o *Diet*: Large insects (grasshoppers, butterflies, etc), small mammals



**Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus***

- o 7-8"
- o Common plover of farm country with 2 black breast bands, and orange rump showing in flight, with white wing stripes. Noisy, a loud *kill-dea*, or *ki-dee-dee-dee*
- o *Habitat*: Fields, lawns, riverbanks, shores
- o *Diet*: Insects, caterpillars, snails, crayfish

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird *Archilochus colubris***

- o 3-3 ¾"
- o Male as a fiery red throat, iridescent green back and forked tail. Female lacks red throat. Hover when feeding on nectar and can fly backward.
- o *Habitat*: Flowers, gardens, wood edges, over streams
- o *Diet*: Primarily nectar, sometimes feeding on small insects



**Red-bellied Woodpecker *Malanerpes carolinus***

- o 9-10 ½"
- o A zebra-backed woodpecker with red cap. Red covers nape and head in male, only nape in female. Voice muffled *kwirr* or *churr*.
- o *Habitat*: Forests, woodlands, groves, orchards
- o *Diet*: Primarily insects, spiders, some seeds and fruits

**Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica***

- 6 – 7 ½"
- Blue-black above, cinnamon-buff above, with a dark orange throat. Forked tails with white tail spots. Voice a soft *vit-vit*; Song a long musical twitter.
- *Habitat*: Open/semi-open land, farms, fields, nesting often in barns
- *Diet*: Insects, feeding while flying



**Carolina Chickadee *Poecile carolinensis***

- 4 ½"
- Small bird patterned with a combination of a black cap and bib and white cheeks. Voice a clear *chick-a-dee-dee-dee* or two-noted whistle *fee-bee, fee-bay*.
- *Habitat*: Mixed & deciduous woods, groves; Visits feeders
- *Diet*: Insects, spiders, seeds, some berries

**Tufted Titmouse *Baeolophus bicolor***

- 6"
- A small gray, mouse-colored bird with a tufted crest. Voice a clear whistled *peter, peter, peter*.
- *Habitat*: Mixed & deciduous woods, groves; Visits feeders
- *Diet*: Insects, spiders seeds, some berries



**White-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta carolinensis***

- 4 ½"
- Small gray bird with black cap (males) or gray cap (females) and rusty underparts. Song a rapid series of low nasal whistled notes on one pitch, or a nasal *yank, yank*.
- *Habitat*: Forests, woodlands, river woods, visits feeders
- *Diet*: Insects, spiders, seeds

**Carolina Wren *Thryothorus ludovicianus***

- 5 ½"
- A large reddish brown wren with buff underparts. Conspicuous white eyebrow stripe. Voice a clear chant that sounds like *tea-kettle, tea-kettle, tea-kettle* or *chirpity, chirpity, chirpity*.
- *Habitat*: Brushy undergrowth, suburban gardens
- *Diet*: Insects, spiders, seeds, berries





**Eastern Bluebird *Sialia sialis***

- o 7"
- o A blue bird with a rusty red breast. Voice a musical *chur-wi* or *tru-ly*
- o *Habitat*: Open country with scattered trees, farms, roadsides. Uses nesting boxes
- o *Diet*: Insects, worms/caterpillars, some berries



**American Robin *Turdus migratorius***

- o 9-11"
- o Brick red breast, dark gray back. Head and tail of male are blackish; female grayer. Song a clear caroling of short phrases, rising and falling, often prolonged.
- o *Habitat*: Cities, towns, farmland, lawns, forests
- o *Diet*: Earthworms, insects, spiders, some berries



**Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos***

- o 9-11"
- o Gray, with large white patch on wing and tail, conspicuous during flight. Mocks other birds in repeating syllables
- o *Habitat*: Towns, farms, roadsides
- o *Diet*: Insects & other small invertebrates, berries



**Blue Jay *Cyanocitta cristata***

- o 11-12 ½"
- o A showy, noisy, blue bird with a crest. White spots in wings and tail. Dull grey underparts and black necklace. Voice a harsh *jay jay* or a musical *queedle, queedle*. Also mimics Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks.
- o *Habitat*: Oak and pine woods, suburban, towns, feeders
- o *Diet*: Insects, spiders, seeds, fruits, nuts, mice, frogs



**American Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos***

- o 17-21"
- o Larger, completely black bird. Common and often social, Voice a loud *caw*.
- o *Habitat*: Farmland, woodlands, river groves
- o *Diet*: Small mammals, frogs, invertebrates, carrion, human food scraps

**Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas***

- o 4 ½ - 5 ½"
- o Male with yellow throat and black mask. Female olive-brown with yellow throat and breast, no black mask. Song a rapid chant *witchity-witchity-witchity*
- o *Habitat:* Common near water, marsh, wet thickets
- o *Diet:* Insects, spiders, some seeds



**Northern Cardinal *Cardinalis cardinalis***

- o 7 ½ - 9"
- o Male an all red bird with a pointed crest and black around its large triangular bill. Female buff-brown with some red on wings and tail. Song is clear slurred whistles: *birdy birdy birdy* or *cheer-cheer-cheer*. Call note is a metallic *chip*
- o *Habitat:* Woodland edges, suburban gardens, visits feeders
- o *Diet:* seeds, fruits, insects

**American Goldfinch *Carduelis tristis***

- o 5"
- o Male in summer is bright yellow with black wings, tail and forehead. Female is yellow-olive with blackish wings. Song is canary like, *ti-dee-di-di* or *per-chik-o-ree*
- o *Habitat:* Patches of thistles, lawns, roadsides, open woods and edges, visits feeders with thistle seeds
- o *Diet:* Primarily seeds, some insects



**Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia***

- o 5-6 ½"
- o Brown with heavy breast streaks and long tail. Song a variable series of notes, some musical, some buzzy, starting with 3 or 5 clear repetitious notes *sweet sweet sweet*
- o *Habitat:* Thickets, brush, marches, roadsides
- o *Diet:* Primarily seeds, some berries

**Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus***

- o 7-9 ½"
- o Black with bright red epaulets in mail. Female streaked brown. Travel and roost in large flocks. Song a distinctive *konk-a-ree!*
- o *Habitat:* Marshes, brushy swamps, wetlands, cultivated land
- o *Diet:* Seeds, aquatic insects (dragonflies, mayflies)



**Eastern Meadowlark *Sturnella magna***

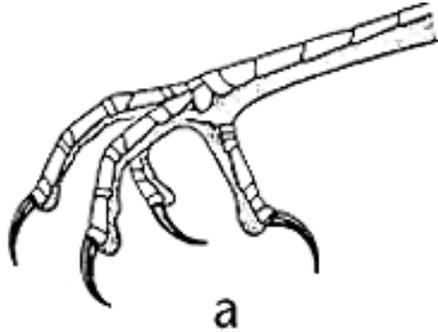
- o A chunky brown bird with bright yellow chest with a black V. Patch of white on either side of its short tail. Song is composed of 2 clear slurred whistles, then a musical *tee-ya, tee-tair*
- o *Habitat:* Pastures, meadows, prairies, marsh edges
- o *Diet:* Insects, seeds

# Bird Feet Adaptations

a = anisodactyl

Three toes point forward, one points backwards.

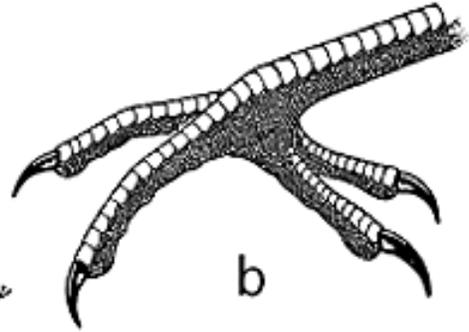
Example: Songbirds such as warblers, finches, thrushes



b = zygodactyl

The toes are arranged in pairs, toes 1 and 2 in front and 3 and 4 in back

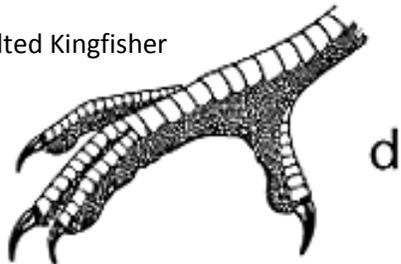
Example: woodpeckers



d = syndactyl

Outer and middle toes are united for most of their length.

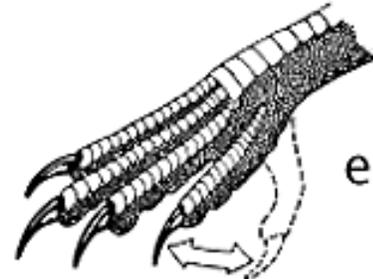
Example: Belted Kingfisher



c = heterodactyl

Like zygodactyl except toes 3 and 4 face forward and 1 and 2 are in back.

Only found in trogons



e = pamprodactyl

All 4 toes are in front.

**Raptorial**

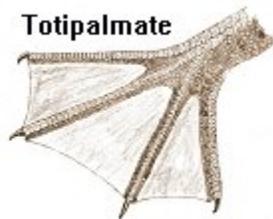


Raptorial

Toes are deeply cleft with large, long, sharp curved talons.

Example: hawks, eagles, owls

**Totipalmate**

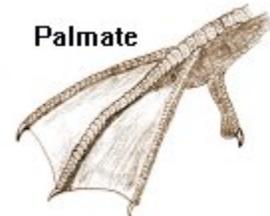


Totipalmate

Fully webbed

Example: Cormorant

**Palmate**



Palmate

3 front toes webbed

Example: ducks, gulls

## Bird Beak Adaptations

	<p>A cone shaped bill is found in many birds such as finches and grosbeaks. It is a strong beak used for cracking seeds.</p>
	<p>Thin, slender, pointed beaks are found mainly in insect eaters. They are used to pick insects off leaves, twigs, and bark. This warbler is a good example.</p>
	<p>Woodpeckers have strong beaks which taper to the tip, forming a <b>chisel</b> for pecking holes in trees for food or nests. Most feed on insects which live under the bark.</p>
	<p>Hummingbirds have long, tubular bills that resemble straws, which they use to sip nectar from flowers.</p>
	<p>Hawks, owls, and other birds of prey which catch and kill live prey have sharp, "hooked" beaks. These are used to bite the skull or neck and also to tear the body into pieces small enough to swallow.</p>
	<p>The edges of a duck's bill are fringed to strain plants, seeds, and small animals from mud and water.</p>
	<p>Beaks which are flat and wide at the base are found in birds which catch insects in flight, such as flycatchers. These birds also often have whiskers at the corners of the mouth, which effectively widens the mouth opening, allowing more effective capture of prey.</p>