

Common Raven (*Corvus corax*)

The common raven is a large (22-27" long, 2-4 lb., with a 45" wingspan), wholly black bird. It lives in forests, fields and near rural housing and farms, eats small birds and mammals, eggs, insects, carrion and litter. It nests in trees and does not migrate. Ravens make a low, throaty croaking sound.



IS THAT BIRD A CROW OR RAVEN? Look at its beak, breast, and tail. Crows have straight beaks, smooth chest feathers, and a fan-shaped tail. Ravens have curved beaks, ruffled chest feathers and a wedge-shaped tail.



Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*)

This mid-sized to large (10-11", 3-4 oz. with a 13-17" wingspan) bird is blue with a white face and black neck band above and white-gray below. It lives in forests, eats seeds, fruits and insects, nests in trees, and does not migrate. Its song is a mix of clicks, whirrs, and liquid notes. Its call is loud jeer.

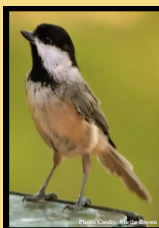
It is a common backyard bird feeder visitors and often mimic the calls of red-tail hawks to scare other birds away.

A BEAT ON CORVIDS: Corvids are well known for their intelligence. Birds in this family have been seen making and using tools and exhibiting clever behaviors like reeling in ice fishing lines for bait or dropping mussels into traffic.

THE CHICKADEES

Black-Capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*)

This small bird (5-6" long, ~0.5 oz. with a 6-8" wingspan) has a black cap and bib, white cheeks, and gray above with dark wing feathers. It is white below. It lives in forests, eats insects and seeds, nests in cavities, and does not migrate. Its song is a short *fee-bee* and its call is a long *chick-a-dee-dee*.



A BEAT ON CHICKADEES: Chickadees are common bird-feeder visitors, enjoying sunflower seeds and other seeds and berries. Like rodents, they often store seeds in many hiding areas to return to to feed on them later.

THE TITMOUSE

Tufted titmouse (*Baeolophus bicolor*)

This small bird (5-6" long, 0.5-1 oz. with an 8-10" wingspan) is gray above with a black face patch and is tan to white below. It lives in forests, eats insects, nests in cavities, and does not migrate. Its song is a swift, loud *peter-peter-peter* whistle and its call is a high, scratchy series of mechanical notes.



A BEAT ON TITMICE: Titmice are cavity nesters, like many of the species in the brochure. Forest cavity nesters often use the holes left by woodpeckers that the nesters then furnish with leaves, feathers, and even mammal hair.

THE WREN

House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*)

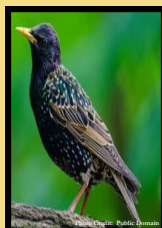
This small bird (4-5" long, 0.4 oz, with ~6" wingspan) is brown with dark barring above along its wings and tail. It is paler below. It lives in scrub habitats, feeds on insects, nests in cavities, and migrates in winter. Its songs are long, bubbly series of notes whereas their calls range from chatters to rattles and burrs.



A BEAT ON WRENS: Wrens are one of our smallest birds at West Point but in terms of physicality, they punch well above their weight. They very territorial and aggressive over resources, frequently attacking much larger birds.

THE STARLING

European starling (*Sturnis vulgaris*)



This mid-sized (8-9", 2-3 oz. with a 12-16" wingspan) is an iridescent purple-green (black at a distance) to brown with white spots. It lives in urban and suburban areas feed on insects, nest in cavities and do not migrate. They make many noises - clicks, rattles, warbles, whistles, etc.

Starlings often congregate in large, noisy flocks capable of high synchronizing, visually-dazzling in-flight maneuvers.

NUISANCE BIRDS: Starlings are non-native birds that may consume/infect agriculture, enter or damage property, harm native birds, and pose human health risks in large numbers. They are not protected under the MBTA.

NOT SEEING A PARTICULAR BIRD? Try our "OTHER COMMON BIRDS OF WEST POINT" brochure OR one of our four other bird brochures, OR our Bird Checklist.

BASIC WILDLIFE SAFETY REVIEW

Do these things to keep people and animals safe:

- **NEVER FEED WILDLIFE** - Nuisance animal issues often begin over food. Feeding wild animals is illegal.
- **KEEP YOUR DISTANCE** - Never approach, corner or handle wildlife. Risks incl. disease, bite, & scratch.
- **REPORT ANIMAL ISSUES** - Call a wildlife responder if human or animal well-being is a concern.

REPORTING WILDLIFE ISSUES

Know when and what to report and who to contact

- **WHEN:** Call right away If you see wildlife 1) near where people are 2) is being fed or baited. 3) hurt, sick or acting odd. 4) has been harvested illegally.
- **WHAT:** Be sure to say : 1) when and 2) where wildlife issue happened, 3) what the animal did 4) where animal (if known), 5) your name, phone number.
- **CALL:** For a bat indoors: Service Desk (315) 774-9240 or Balfort Beatty/ODIA. Otherwise: MP Sgt Desk:(845) 938-3333 (anytime) NRS: (646) 208-9431(M-F 0745-1630)

COMMON BIRDS

OF THE WEST POINT

MILITARY RESERVATION



West Point Natural Resources Section (NRS)
Bldg 667A Ruger Road
USAG—West Point, NY 10996
www.westpoint.isportsman.net

COMMON BIRDS OF WEST POINT

Historically, over 160 bird species have been observed on the West Point Military Reservation. In our two-part common bird brochure series, we discuss over forty of our more abundant or frequently seen birds, focusing mostly on the perching birds. In this first brochure, we look at nineteen such birds, seeking to inform readers a bit about about how to identify them, their preferred habitats and diets, their calls and more. In the limited space available here there was hardly time to thoroughly examine one species, much less nearly twenty, so while we hope this brochure helps informs readers, it is by no means a comprehensive guide.

For more see NYSDEC's website: www.dec.ny.gov

Migratory Bird Treaty Act - MBTA: Passed in 1918 to protect migratory birds, this landmark federal law today prohibits the hunting, harming, catching and selling of almost 1100 bird species and their parts.

Harvesting: Most birds in this brochure are protected and may not be harvested. Crows are a protected game species and may be hunted in season per NYS law. See reporting section for nuisance pigeons, starling issues.

THE DOVES

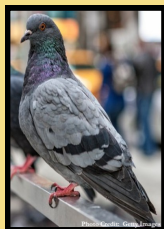


Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*)

This mid-sized bird (~10-13" long, 3-6 oz. 16-19" wingspan), is brown to tan with black-spotted grayish wings. It lives in open woodlands and suburban areas, eats seeds, nests in trees, and is a year-round resident. Its call and song are series of coos and it often whistles when taking off or landing.

Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia domestica*)

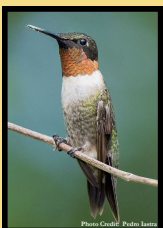
This mid-sized bird (11-14" long, ~12-14 oz., 20-26" wingspan) varies in color but is often blue-gray, with two black wingbars. It lives in urban and suburban areas, feeds on seeds or litter, nests in buildings, does not migrate. It's song is a series of coos and its call is a long coo. Pigeons have been domesticated



and one breed, the racing homer, has been bred for long distance racing. Lost birds turn up every year at West Point.

NUISANCE BIRDS: Rock pigeons are non-native birds that may consume/infect agriculture, enter or damage property, harm native birds, and pose human health risks in large numbers. They are not protected under the MBTA.

THE HUMMINGBIRD



Ruby Throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*)

This tiny bird (3-4" long, 0.2 oz, with a 3-4" wingspan) is golden-green in body and head above and gray-white below, with males having a namesake bright red throat. It lives in open woodland habitats, feeds mostly on nectar, nests in trees, hovers in flight, and migrates in winter. Its call is a soft chee-dit.

A BEAT ON HUMMINGBIRDS: Hummingbirds are most well known for their small size and fast wingbeats. The ruby-throated hummingbird is our smallest nesting bird and is capable of beating its wings over fifty times a second.

THE WOODPECKERS

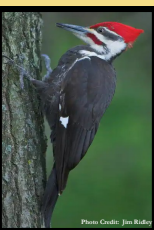


Downy Woodpecker (*Dryobates pu*-

This small woodpecker (5.5-7" long, 1 oz, with a 10-12" wingspan) is black above with white wing spots, head stripes and back stripe and is white below. Males have a small red head patch. It lives in forests, eats insects, nests in cavities, and does not migrate. Its call is a hoarse pik squeak.

Hairy Woodpecker (*Leuconotopicus vil*-

This mid-sized woodpecker (7-10", 1-4 oz. with 13-15" wingspan) is very similar to the downy woodpecker but a little bigger with a longer beak and wider white head stripes. It lives in forests, feeds on insects, nests in cavities, and does not migrate. Its call is a sharp pik squeak, lower than a downy's call.



Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*)

This large woodpecker (16-20", 9-12 oz., with a 26-30" wingspan) is black with a white face, neck stripes and underwings and a bright red head crest. Males have red cheek stripes. It lives in forests, feeds on insects, nests in cavities, and does not migrate. Its call is a series of high piping notes. This bird

is the largest woodpecker here and in all of North America if the long missing ivory-billed woodpecker is truly extinct.

A BEAT ON WOODPECKERS: Woodpeckers are so named for drilling into tree bark to forage for insects. In our woods, one can often hear their drumming or see the holes woodpeckers carve in trees as they search for food.

THE FLYCATCHERS

Eastern Wood Peewee (*Contopus vi*-

This small songbird (~6" long, 0.5 oz, with a 9-10" wingspan) is olive-gray with dark wings, two white wingbars and a white throat and belly. Its lower beak is yellow-orange. It lives in forests, eats insects, nests in trees and migrates in winter. Its loud pee-a-wee is common to our forests.



Least Flycatcher (*Empidonax minimus*)

This small songbird (~5" long, 0.4 oz, with a 8" wingspan) is gray-olive to brown with a white eyering, black wings with two white wingbars, and is white below. It lives in forests, eats insects, nests in trees, and migrates in winter. Its song is a fast, two-note semi-mechanical chick-et.



Eastern Phoebe (*Sayornis phoebe*)

This small songbird (5-7" long, 0.6 oz, with 10-11" wingspan) is gray-brown with a dark brown head above, and white below. It lives in open woodlands, eats insects, often builds nests in buildings and migrates in winter. Its call is song is a fast, raspy fee-bee and its call is a chip.

Great-Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerifus*)

This songbird (7-8" long, 1-1.5 oz. with a 12-14" wingspan) is brown above, gray in face and breast with dark wings with white wing-bars. Below it is otherwise yellow. It lives in forests, eats insects, nests in cavities and migrates in winter. Its song is a whee-eeep of two short whistles followed by a vibrato.

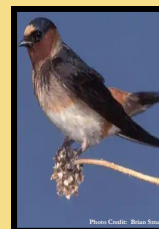
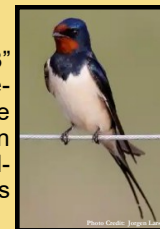


A BEAT ON FLYCATCHERS: We mention just four in this brochure and only ten or so are known to West Point, but at over 400 known species, the New World flycatchers (Family Tyrannidae) are the world's biggest bird family.

THE SWALLOWS

Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

This small bird (6-7" long, 0.6 oz. with 11-13" wingspan) is dark blue above with a red forehead and throat, light red flashes on a white underside and a long, forked tail. It lives in grasslands, feeds on insects, nests in buildings, and migrates. Its song is a long series of warbles and mechanical whirs.



Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*)

This small bird (~5", 1.0 oz. with 11-12" wingspan) is a dark blue above with a white forehead, dark orange-red face, gray-black wings and is white below. It lives near lakes and ponds, eats insects, nests in cliffs or on building exteriors, and migrates in winter. Its song is a series of clicks and squeaks.

A BEAT ON SWALLOWS: Swallows feed on insects in flight and have evolved to be incredibly aerodynamic, capable of incredible acrobatic aerial maneuvers. Some species are cavity nesters, but these two build mud nests.

THE CORVIDS - CROWS, RAVENS & JAYS

American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*)



The American crow is a large (16-21" long, 1-2 lb., with 34-40" wingspan), wholly black bird. It lives in grasslands, open woodlands, and in urban/suburban areas and eats a varied diet incl. worms and insects, small birds and mammals, carrion, and litter. Crows usually nest in trees and do not migrate. Crows famously caw but also click and rattle.

Crows may gather in very large groups. In Middletown and Poughkeepsie nearby, thousands of birds have congregated.