

## THE SPARROWS

### Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*)

This small bird (~5-6" long, ½ oz with a 8" wingspan) has a bright brown crown, pale face with black eye bar, buff brown wings with dark streaks above, and is white below. It lives in open woods, eats seeds, nests in shrubs and migrates. Its song is a 3-4 second-long trill of dry chips.



### House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)



This small bird (~6-7" long, ½-2 oz with an 8-10" wingspan) has a gray crown, brown necks, black bibs, white cheeks, brown back, band pale undersides. Males are bolder. It lives in urban and suburban areas, eats a range of food and nests in cavities. Its song is a simple series of loud *chirrup*s.

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



### Dark-Eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*)

This small bird (~5-6" long, ½-1 oz with a 7-10" wingspan), is dark gray above and white below with black eyes and a light beak. It lives in mature forests, eats seeds, nests on the ground, and may or may not migrate in winter. Its song is a loud, even musical trill made up of around 10-20 or so notes.

**A BEAT ON SPARROWS:** There are around 140 New World sparrow species worldwide, about a dozen of which can be found at West Point alone. This, of course, excludes house sparrows which are an Old World sparrow species.

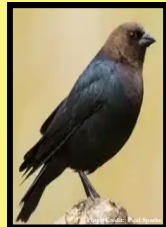
## BLACKBIRDS & ORIOLES

### Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quisqu-*

This mid-sized bird (10-13" long, 3-5 lbs., 14-18" wingspan) has a dark blue-purple heads with a dark brown iridescent body and bright yellow eyes. It lives in open woods, eats seeds and fruits and also insects, nests on the ground, and does not migrate. It makes many sounds include its *readle-eak* croak.



### Brown-Headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*)



This small bird (~7-9" long, ~1½-2 oz with a 12-15" wingspan) is glossy black with a brown head if male or all brown if female. wings. It lives in grasslands, eats seeds, and nests in trees, and does not migrate. Its song is a liquid series of low gurgles ending in a sliding whistle.

The brown-headed cowbird is a brood parasite. Female cowbirds lay eggs in the nests of other bird species. The baby cowbirds when physically crowd out or outcompete the true young of the parent birds for attention and food.

## Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*)

This is a small bird (6-8" long, 1 oz., with a 9-12" wingspan). Males are black with orange and white wingbars above and are red/orange below. Females are dull yellow with black wings. It lives in forests, eats insects, nests in trees, and migrates. Its fast song is a liquid series of paired notes.



\* For red-winged blackbird, see our "Near Water Birds" Brochure

## THE FINCHES

### House Finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*)



This is a small bird (~5" long, <1 oz. with an 8-10" wingspan). Males have a rosy red face and breast, streaky brown back, belly and tail. Females are gray-brown. It lives in urban/suburban areas, eats seeds, nests in trees, and does not migrate. Its song is a long, mixed series of short warbled notes.

### American Goldfinch (*Spinus tristis*)

This is a small bird (~4-5" long, <1 oz. with an 8-9" wingspan). Males are bright yellow with a black forehead wing with white wingbars. Females are duller. It lives in open woods, eats seeds, nests in shrubs, and may or may not migrate. Its song is a long, varied series of tweets and warbles.



**A BEAT ON FINCHES:** There are over 230 species of finches in the world, making it one of the larger families of birds. Only ten or so have been reported at West Point and the only confirmed nesters here are the two species above.

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

## 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)

## OTHER 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



# MORE COMMON WEST POINT BIRDS

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 second brochure, we look at twenty more species, seeking to inform readers a bit 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 twenty, so while we hope this brochure helps to inform readers, it is by no means a comprehensive guide.

For more see NYSDEC's website: [www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov)

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

**Harvesting:** As was the case with most birds in our first common birds brochure, most birds in this brochure are protected and may not be harvested. See reporting section for issues with nuisance house sparrows.

## THE THRUSHES

### Eastern Blue Bird (*Sialia sialis*)

The bluebird is a small thrush (~6-8" long, 1.0 oz with a 10-13" wingspan). Males are deep blue above and red-orange and white below. Females are gray-blue above and pale brown and white below. It lives in open grasslands, eats insects and berries, and nests in tree cavities. It has a 1-3 note, low warbling song and a soft, low *tu-a-wee* call.

This is the state bird of New York and while it may migrate, if food is plentiful it may also remain through winter.

### Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*)

This small thrush (~7-8" long, 1.5-2 oz with a 12-13" wingspan) is red-brown above with white eye rings and white with black spots below. It lives in forests, eats insects, nests in trees, and migrates in winter. Its famous song starts with 1-3 low soft notes, continues with a flute-like *ee-oh-lay*, and ends in a trill.

### American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*)

This large thrush (~8-11" long, 2-3 oz with a 12-16" wingspan) is gray-brown with a dark head and white eye rings and is mostly red below. It lives in open woods, eats worms and insects, and lays bright blue-green eggs in tree nests. It's cheery, musical 10-12 note song is a familiar sound in the early hours of warmer months. The robin is a winter migrant and its return north helps mark the arrival of spring.

**A BEAT ON THRUSHES:** West Point hosts only a half dozen or so of the world's 170+ thrush species. Nearly all of these species build open cupped nests on branches. Only the three bluebirds, including our own, nest in cavities.

# THE MIMIDS - MOCKINGBIRDS, ETC.

## Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*)

This medium bird (~8-10" long, 1.5-2 oz with a 12-14" wingspan) is gray-brown above with two white wingbars and one white patch per wing. It lives in urban and suburban areas, eats insects and berries, nests in shrubs, and usually does not migrate. It has long, complex songs - mixtures of whistles, rasps, and sounds often copied from other birds.



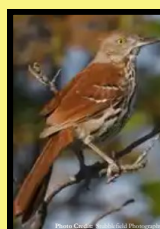
### Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*)

This medium bird (~8-9" long, 1-2 oz with a 9-12" wingspan) is slate-gray with a dark cap and tail and brown tail spot below. It lives in open woods, eats insects, nests in shrubs and may migrate. It sings long songs made of short whiny or squeaky phrases but its raspy *mew* call gives this bird its name.



### Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*)

This medium bird (~9-12" long, 2-3 oz with a 11-14" wingspan) is red-brown with dark streaks on white body below. It has a gray face with yellow eyes. It lives in scrub, eats insects and berries, nests in shrubs and migrates. It sings long songs of double phrases and has a smacking kiss-like call.

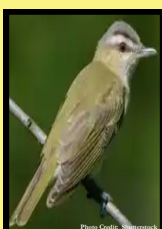


**A BEAT ON MIMIDS:** As a sort of avian analog to sampling in pop music, the three birds above and other mimids are so-named for their ability to copy the sounds of other birds and use those sounds in their own songs.

## THE VIREOS

### Red-Eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*)

This small bird (~5" long, ½ -1 oz with a 9 - 10" wingspan) is olive-brown above, white below, with a gray crown, black-lined white eyebrows, and red eyes. It lives in forests, eats insects, nests in trees and migrates. Its incessant, slurry rise-and-fall song sounds like it's saying, "*Here I am, where are you?*"



**A BEAT ON VIREOS:** As a rule, vireos have simple songs, but they sing them relentlessly. Vireos frequently sing more than 10,000 songs a day. Red-eyed vireos, our most common vireo, can be heard in most of our forests.

## THE WOOD WARBLERS

### Blue-Winged Warbler (*Vermivora cyanoptera*)

This small bird (~4½" long, <½ oz. with 6" wingspan) is yellow-green with two white wingbars on blue-gray wings and a black eyebrow. Males are brighter in color than females. It lives in open woods, eats insects, nests on the ground, and migrates in winter. Its song is a raspy *bee-buzz*.



**BLUE- (BWW) & GOLD-WINGED WARBLERS (GWW):** Since the 1800s, BWW have moved north and interbred with closely-related GWW. This hybrid mating and habitat destruction is leading to severe GWW population declines.

### Yellow Warbler (*Toxostoma rufum*)

This small bird (4½-5" long, <½ oz. with 6-8" wingspan) is yellow with a yellow-green back and brown chest marks. Males are brighter. It lives in open woods, eats insects, nests in shrubs, and migrates in winter. Its sweet 6-10 note whistly song resembles "*Sweet, sweet, sweet, I'm so sweet.*"



### Black & White Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*)

This small bird (4-5" long, ½ oz. with a 7-8" wingspan) is black and white streaked with two white wing bars. Males are bolder in color than females. It lives in forests, eats insects, nests on the ground, and migrates in winter. Its song is a thin, squeaky 3-second "*weesy, weesy, weesy*".



### American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*)

The males of this small bird species (4-5" long, <½ oz. with a ~7" wingspan) differ from females. Males are black above with orange underwing spot and wing/tail bars. Females are gray with black wings and a yellow underwing spot & bars. It lives in forests, eats insects, nests in trees, and migrates. Its thin, high song ends abruptly like a sneeze.



### Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis tri-*

Males of this small bird (4-5" long, ~½ oz. with a 6-8" wingspan) are olive above with a white cap, black face, and bright yellow chest, throat. Females are brownish above with yellow chest, throat. It lives in scrub, eats insects, nests in shrubs, and migrates. Its song goes "*witchety-witchety-witchety*".



**A BEAT ON WOOD WARBLERS:** AKA the New World Warblers, this family has about 120 bird species worldwide. Over 30 of them have been seen at West Point alone which makes this group one of most diverse bird groups we host.

## THE CARDINALS

### Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*)

This mid-sized songbird species (8-9" long, ~1½ oz. with a 10-12" wingspan) includes bright red males and pale brown females. Both sexes have black faces, red beaks, and tall crests. It lives in open woods, eats seeds, nests in shrubs, and does not migrate. Its song is a series of loud whistles that speed up and then end in a slow trill.



Its name comes from its red plumage and crest resembling the outfit of senior Roman Catholic clergy called cardinals.