

Maryland Envirothon: Class Aves

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WILDLIFE AND HERITAGE
SERVICE



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Aves Overview

- > 450 species in Maryland
- Extirpated species include:
 - Bewick's Wren
 - Greater Prairie Chicken
 - Red-cockaded Woodpecker



American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*) chick by Kerry Wixted

Note: This guide is an overview of select species found in Maryland. The taxonomy and descriptions are based off Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Eastern and Central North America, 6th Ed.

Order: Anseriformes

- Web-footed waterfowl
- Family Anatidae
 - Ducks, geese & swans



Male Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*)

Cygnus- Swans



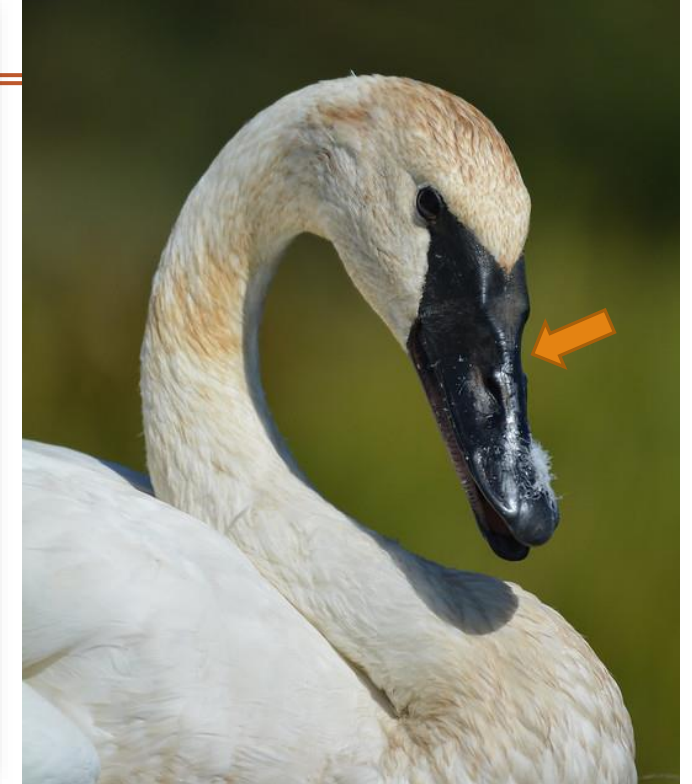
Mute Swan
(*Cygnus olor*)

Invasive. Adult black-knobbed orange bill tilts down; immature is dingy with pinkish bill; makes hissing sounds



Tundra Swan
(*Cygnus columbianus*)

Winter resident. Adult bill black, usually with small yellow basal spot; immature is dingy in color with pinkish bill; makes mellow-high pitched *woo-ho*, *woo-woo* noise



Trumpeter Swan
(*Cygnus buccinator*)

Winter resident. Adult all black bill with straight ridge; more nasal calls than tundra swan

Dabbling Ducks- feed by dabbling & upending

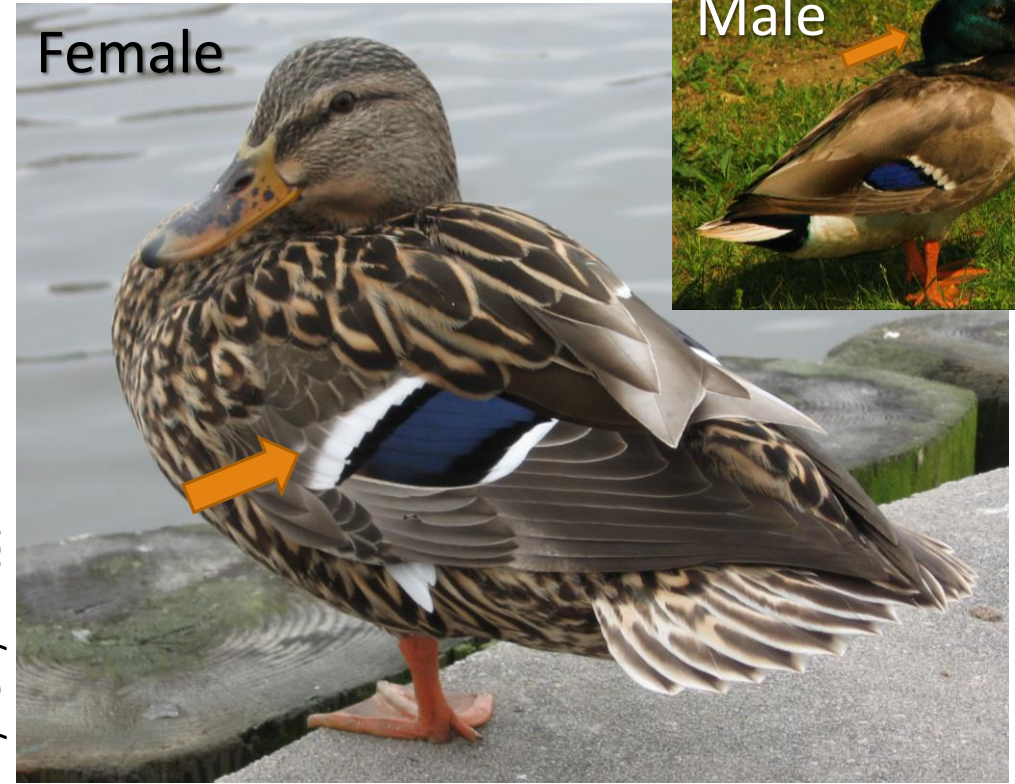
By Bill Hubick, Maryland Biodiversity Project



American Black Duck (*Anas rubripes*)

Year-round resident. Dusky black duck with white wing linings evident in flight; resembles a female mallard but has black borders on secondary wing feathers; can hybridize with mallards

By Kerry Wixted



Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

Year-round resident. Adult males have green head w/ white neck ring & females are mottled in color ; resembles an American Black Duck mallard but has white borders on secondary wing feathers

Diving Ducks- feed by diving; legs close to tail

By Judy Gallagher CC by 2.0



Canvasback (*Aythya valisneria*)

Winter resident. Male is whitish with black chest & reddish brown head with sloping bill; male voice a cooing & female a raspy *krrrr*

By Matthew Beziat CC by NC 2.0

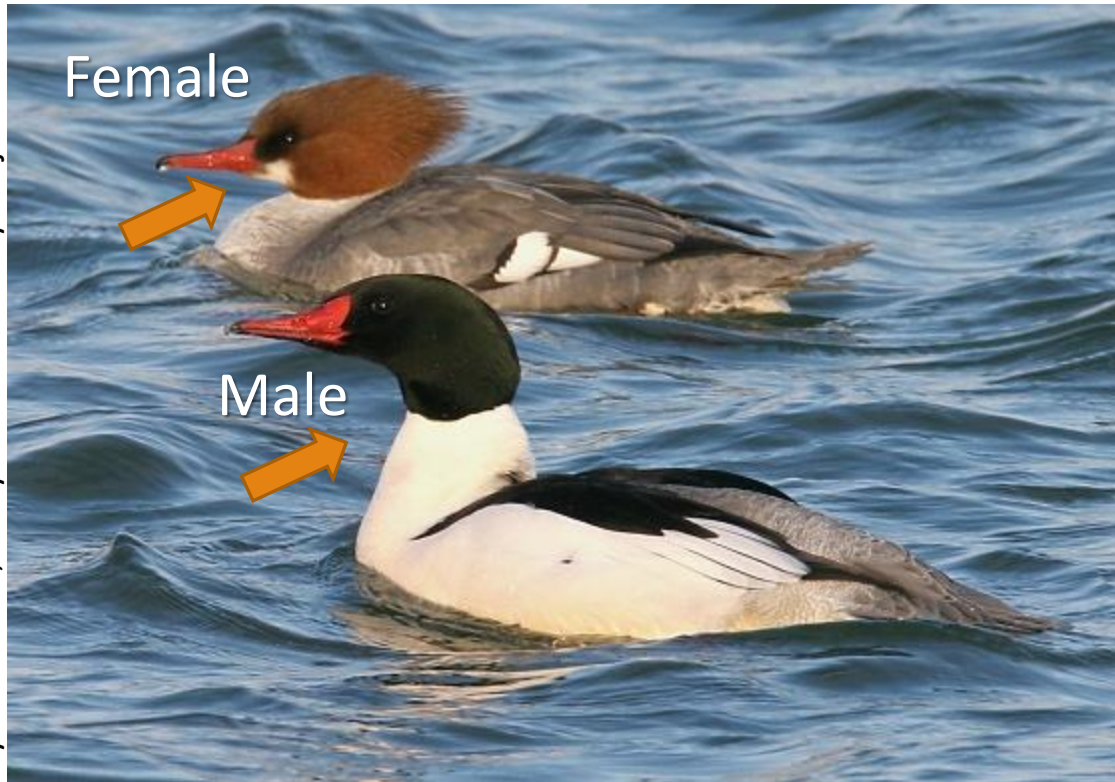


Redhead (*Aythya americana*)

Winter resident. Male is gray with black chest & reddish head; has grayish bill with black tip; male voice *meow* & female a soft *krrrr*

Mergansers- slender-bodied diving ducks w/ spikelike bill

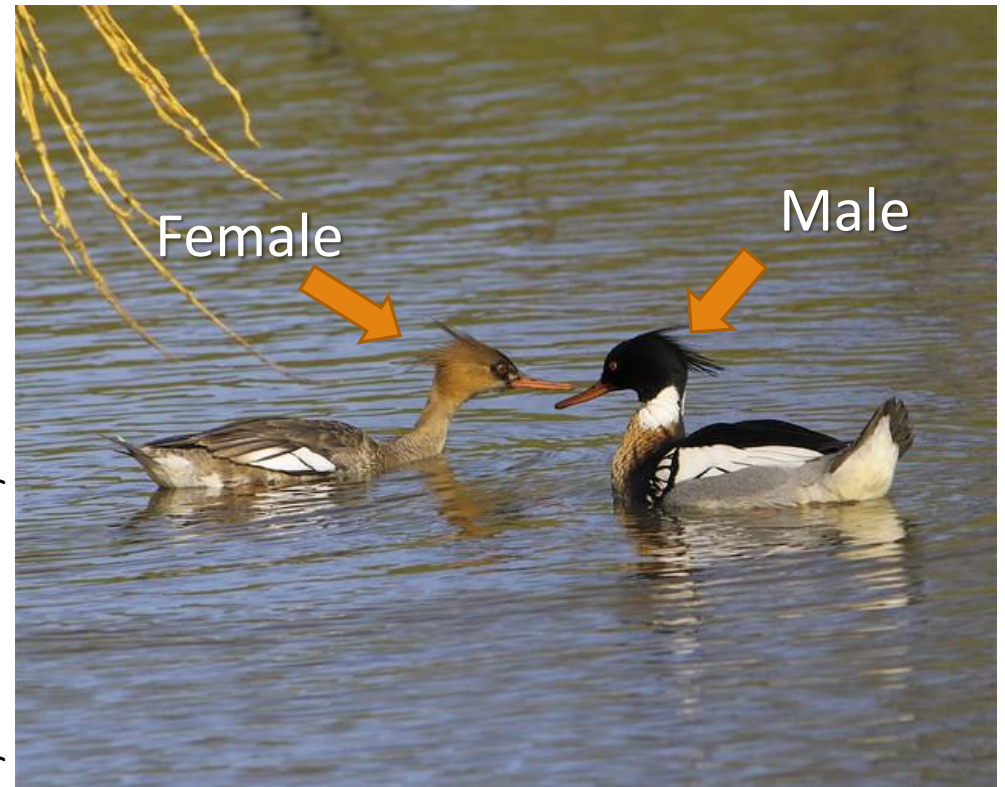
By Bill Hubick, Maryland Biodiversity Project



Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*)

Winter resident. Male has whitish body w/ green/black head & white chest; female & immature have reddish head, white chin & white chest

By Dan Mullen CC by NC ND 2.0



Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*)

Winter resident. Male has greenish head w/ crest, white band on neck & mottled chest; female & immature are gray w/ crest and have rusty head that blends into chest

Order: Galliformes

- “Chicken-like” birds
- Includes many upland game birds
- Family Odontophoridae
 - Northern Bobwhite
- Family Phasianidae
 - Grouse, turkeys & the like



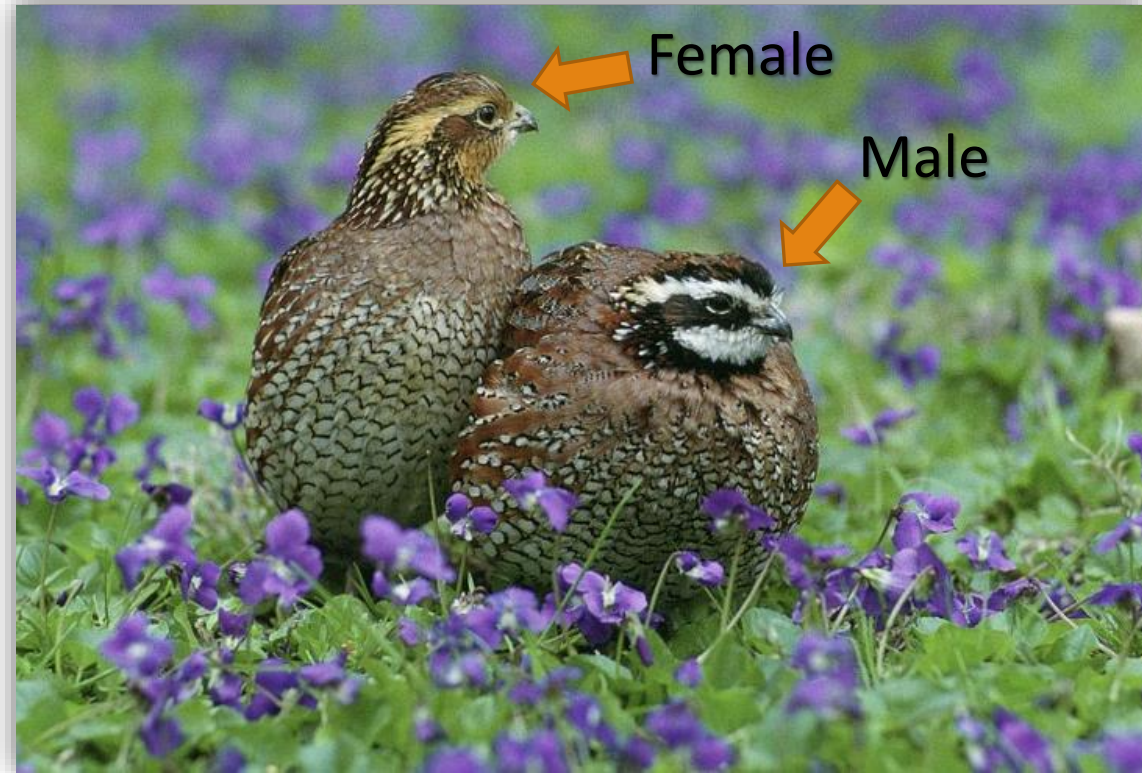
Wild Turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*) by Kerry Wixted

Gallinaceous Birds



Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*)

Year-round resident in western MD. Rusty or gray in color with broad, black band near tip of tail; male display includes drumming that sounds like a distant motor; omnivore



Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*)

Year-round resident. Small and small; males have white eyebrow stripe and chin while females have buff marks; whistles *bob-white*; omnivore

Order: Ciconiiformes

- Large, long-legged wading birds with large bills
- Family Ardeidae
 - Bitterns, herons & allies
- Family Cathartidae
 - New world vultures



Cattle Egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*) are **adventive** (naturally expanded their range). They are medium-sized wading birds with buff orange crowns & beards during breeding season.

Hérons- long-legged & long-necked wading birds



Great Blue Heron



Little Blue Heron

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*)

Year-round resident. Large, blue-gray bird w/ yellow dagger-like bill. Very common. Voice: deep croaks.

Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*)

Summer resident on eastern shore. Small, slender heron with maroon-brown neck and blueish-gray back; grayish bill. Voice: loud, nasal *scaaaahh*

Egrets- typically whitish herons



Great Egret (*Ardea alba*)

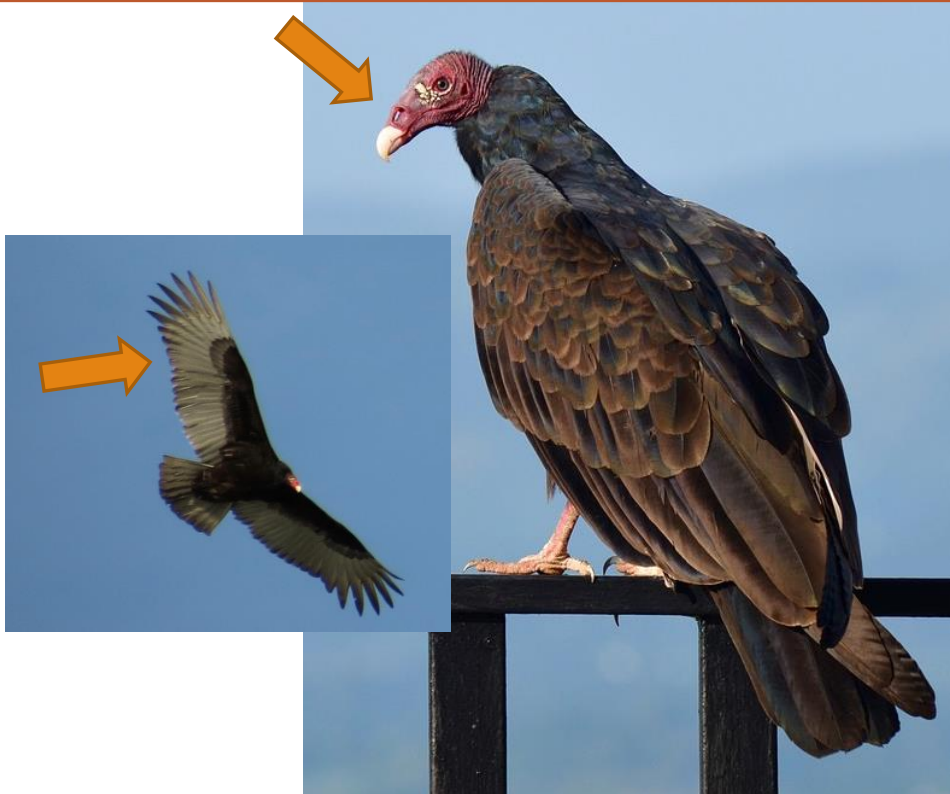
Summer resident w/ lower shore having year-round residents. Large, white heron w/ yellow bill & black legs and feet; found in marshes, ponds & shores



Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*)

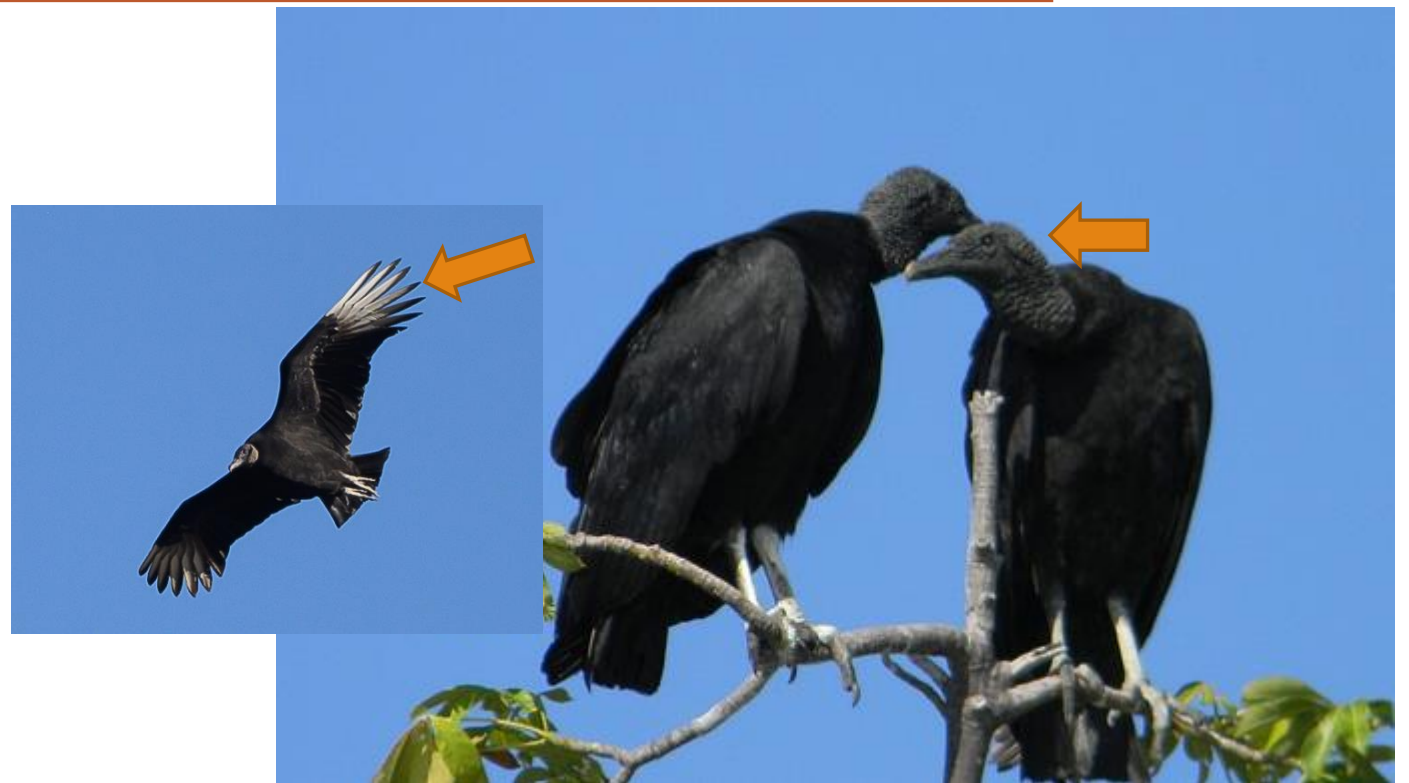
Summer resident w/ lower shore having year-round residents. Medium-sized w/ black bill & legs and yellow feet; lores yellow; found in marshes, swamps & tidal flats

New World Vultures



Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*)

Year-round resident. Nearly 6 ft wingspan; adult has naked red head and two toned wings; primarily a scavenger

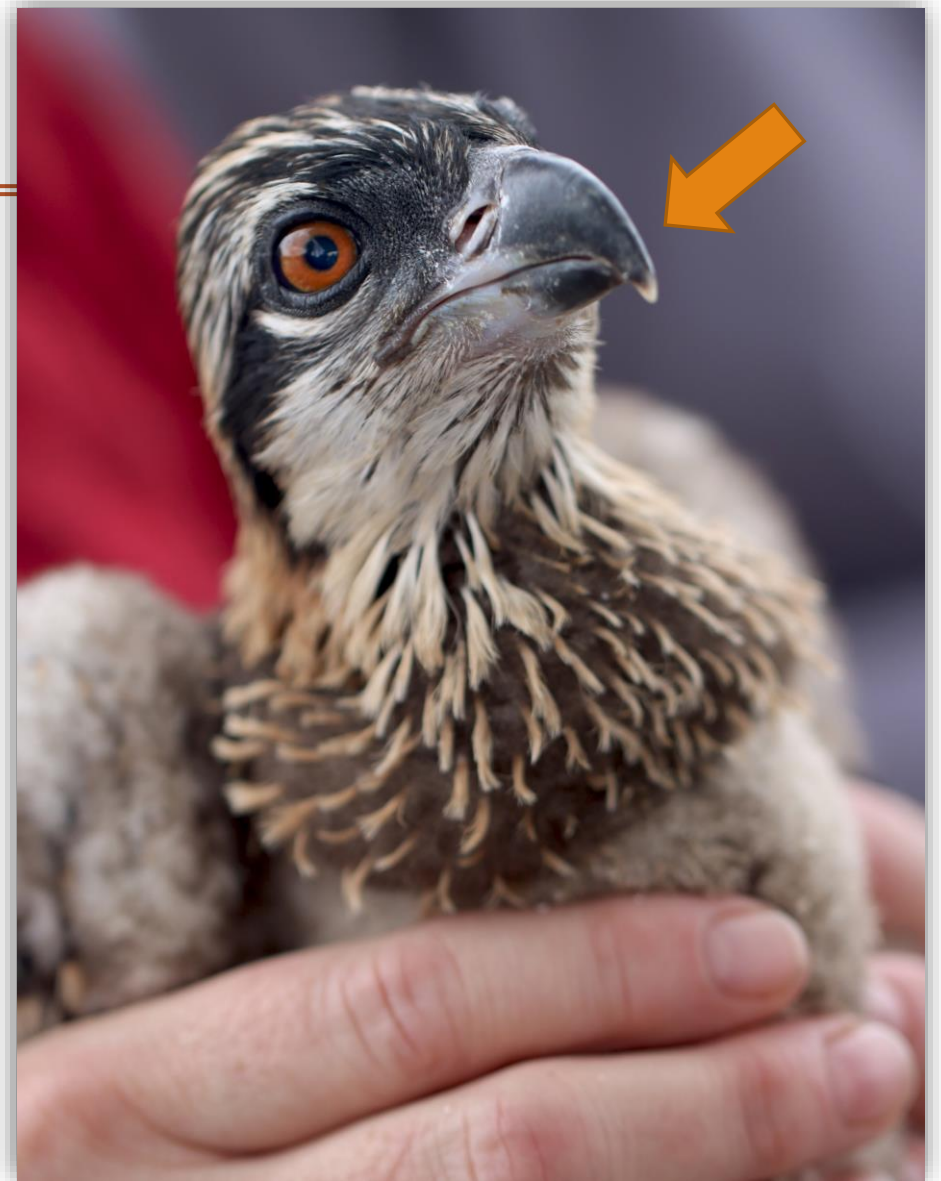


Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*)

Year-round resident. Less than 5 ft wingspan w/ whitish patch toward wingtips; grayish/ lightly feathered head

Order: Falconiformes

- Day-flying (diurnal) raptors with hooked bill and pointed claws
- Family Accipitridae
 - Hawks, kites, eagles & allies
- Family Falconidae
 - Caracaras & falcons



Juvenile Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) by Kerry Wixted

Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

- National bird of US
- Adult: white head & white tail w/ yellow bill
- 1st yr: mostly dark w/ whitish wing linings
- 2nd & 3rd yr: mottled w/ white on belly & back



Immature Bald Eagle by Tyler Ingram CC by NC ND 2.0



Adult Bald Eagle

Accipiters- hawks w/ short, rounded wings

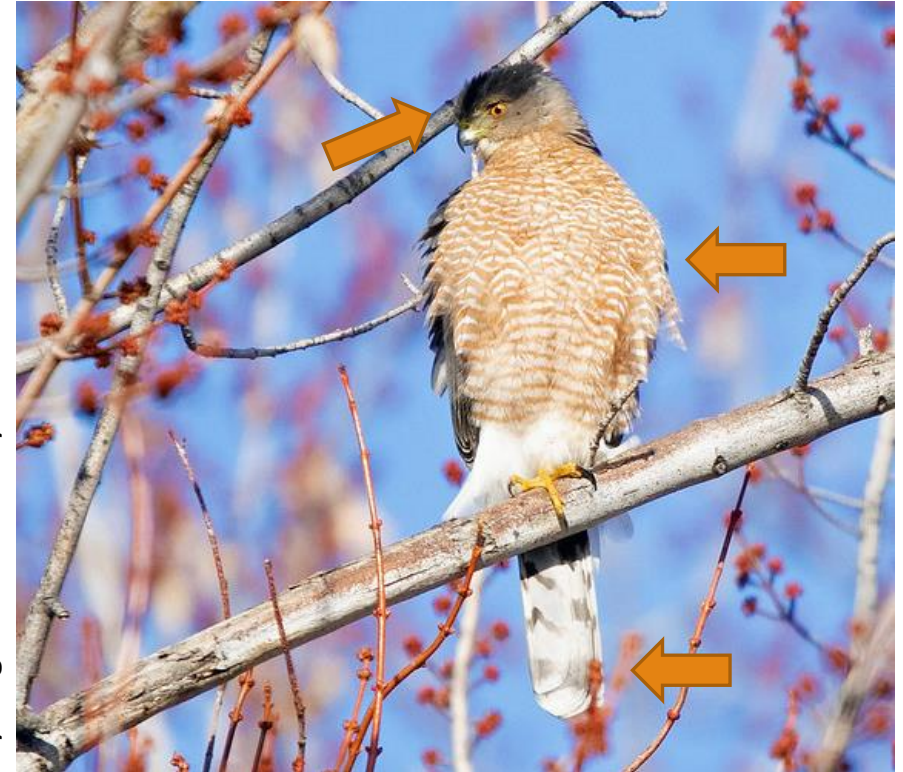
By Chuck Roberts CC by NC ND 2.0



Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*)

Year-round resident. Slim hawk w/ square-tipped tail; adult w/ dark back & rusty-banded breast while immature has dark brown above; voice: *kik, kik, kik*

By Virginia River CC by NC 2.0



Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*)

Year-round resident. Like Sharp-shinned hawk but larger; has rounded tail; voice: *kek, kek, kek*

Buteos- stocky hawks w/ broad wings

By Rhys A CC BY 2.0



Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)

Year-round resident. Common along roadsides. Notable red tail from top-side; light breast w/ dark belly-band; voice a *key-yah*

By Dave Gigliotti, MD DNR Photo Contest



Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*)

Year-round resident. Adult has black and white bands on wings and tail w/ reddish shoulders, chest, & underparts; voice *key-yer*

Order: Charadriiformes

- Large group! Select families include:
 - Family Charadriidae
 - Plovers
 - Family Scolopacidae
 - Sandpipers, phalaropes & allies
 - Family Laridae
 - Gulls, terns & skimmers



The Black Skimmer (*Rhynchops niger*) is a state endangered breeding bird that has an uneven bill that allows it to skim water for fish and other food.

American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*)

- Year-round/ summer resident
- Woodland shorebird
- Long bill w/ large eyes
- Leaflike coloration
- Voice: nasally *peent*



American Woodcock chick by Kerry Wixted



American Woodcock adult by Foxman CC by ND 2.0

Order: Cuculiformes

- Cuckoos, roadrunners & anis
- Family Cuculidae
 - Slender, long-tailed birds w/ curved bills



Black-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*) has a black lower mandible & red orbital ring. This one is eating eastern tent caterpillars. By Bill Hubick, Maryland Biodiversity Project.



Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*) has a yellow lower mandible. By Nancy Magnussen CC by NC 2.0.

Order: Strigiformes

- Mostly nocturnal birds of prey
- Large heads w/ flat faces & hooked bills
- Family Tytonidae
 - Barn Owl
- Family Strigidae
 - “Typical” owls



Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)

Medium-Large Owls

By Shannon Bernier, MD DNR Photo Contest



Great Horned Owl
(*Bubo virginianus*)

Year-round resident. Common.
Large owl w/ ear tufts; white
throat bib; voice: *hoo hoo hoo*

By Scott Suriano, MD DNR Photo Contest



Barred Owl
(*Strix varia*)

Year-round resident. Common.
Large owl w/o ear tufts; barred
chest; voice: *who cooked for you*

By Kerry Wixted



Snowy Owl
(*Bubo scandiacus*)

Irruptive. (Occasional winter
visitor). Large, white owl with black
flecks; yellow eyes

Eastern Screech Owl (*Megascops asio*)

- Year-round resident; small owl
- Common/ generalist w/ varied diet
- Red or gray morph
- Voice= Whinny or trill
- Nesting= April



By Zaphir Shamma, MD DNR Photo Contest



Order: Caprimulgiformes

- Family Caprimulgidae
 - Nightjars
 - Nocturnal birds w/ large tails
 - Rest on limbs or ground
 - Camouflaged by pattern



Common Nighthawks (*Chordeiles minor*) are best identified in flight by their white wing bars or by call which is a nasally *peer* or *pee-ik*. Photo by Bill Hubick, Maryland Biodiversity Project.

Order: Piciformes

- Birds w/ chisel-like bills
- Have long tongues
- **Zygodactyl** feet (two toes in front & rear)
- Family Picidae
 - Woodpeckers & allies



By: Pat McGuire, MD DNR Photo Contest

The Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) is a year-round resident in Maryland.

Downy vs Hairy Woodpecker



Downy Woodpecker

Wolfgang Wander

<http://www.pbase.com/wwcsig/image/77075634>, CC BY-SA 3.0



Hairy Woodpecker

Mdf CC BY-SA 3.0

Downy Woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*)

Year-round resident. Common. White back w/ small bill; outer tail feathers spotted; males have red patch on heads; voice: flat *pick!*

Hairy Woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*)

Year-round resident. Common. White back w/ large bill and white outer tail feathers; male has red patch on head; voice: sharp *peek!*

Other Woodpeckers

By Judy Maglady, MD DNR Photo Contest



Red-bellied Woodpecker
(*Melanerpes carolinus*)

Year-round resident. Adult stripe-backed w/ red crown & neck on male and red neck on female

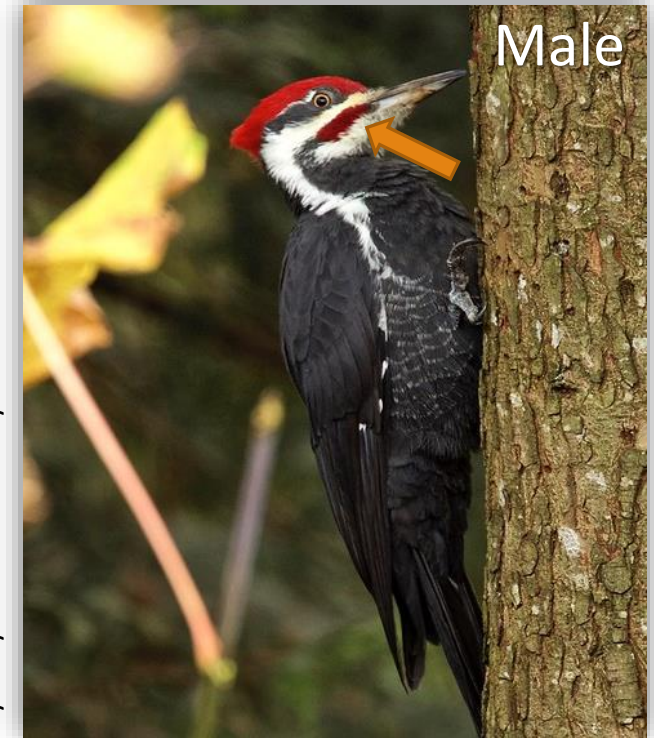
By Michael Osborne, MD DNR Photo Contest



Northern Flicker
(*Colaptes auratus*)

Year-round resident. Barred brown back w/ gray cap & black ring on chest; males have a black "mustache"

By Jerry McFarland CC by NC 2.0



Pileated Woodpecker
(*Dryocopus pileatus*)

Year-round resident. Largest local woodpecker w/ flaming red crest; males have red "mustache"

Order: Passeriformes

- Very large group! Select families include:
 - Family Mimidae
 - Mimic thrushes
 - Family Parulidae
 - Wood warblers
 - Family Emberizidae
 - Sparrows, Old World Buntings & allies
 - Family Cardinalidae
 - Cardinals & allies
 - Family Icteridae
 - Blackbirds



Male Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) by Kerry Wixted

Mimidae



Brown Thrasher
(*Toxostoma rufum*)

Mostly year-round resident. Chestnut brown above w/ heavily streaked breast; has curved bill & long tail. Voice: similar to Gray Catbird but in pairs.



Gray Catbird
(*Dumetella carolinensis*)

Mostly year-round resident. Gray bird w/ black cap & rusty patch undertail. Voice: catlike mewing.



Northern Mockingbird
(*Mimus polyglottos*)

Year-round resident. Gray robin-sized bird w/ large white patches on wings and tail. Voice: Varied mimics often repeated a half a dozen times.

Warblers

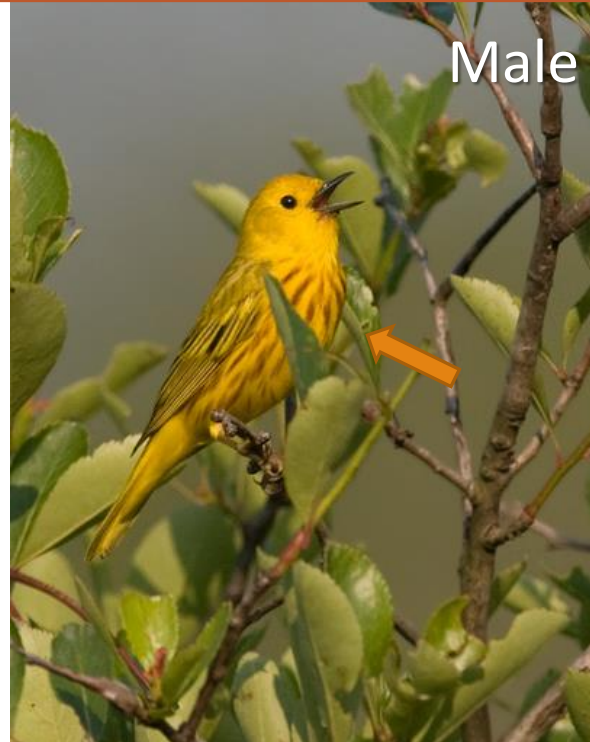


Male

Northern Parula

(Parula americana)

Summer resident. Pale bluish above w/ yellow throat & breast; adult male has dark breast-band; voice: zeeeeeee-up!



Male

Yellow Warbler

(Dendroica petechia)

Summer resident. Mostly yellow; male has rusty breast streaks; voice: tsee-tsee-tsee-titi-wee



Male

Prothonotary Warbler

(Protonotaria citrea)

Summer resident. Golden color; male breast & head= yellow w/ blue-gray wings; voice: zweet zweet zweet zweet

Winter Sparrows



White-throated Sparrow

(Zonotrichia albicollis)

Winter resident. Adult has gray breast w/ white throat & yellow above lores. Bill gray.



White-Crowned Sparrow

(Zonotrichia leucophrys)

Winter resident. Adult has clear, grayish breast w/ black & white striped crown.



Dark-eyed Junco

(Junco hyemalis)

Winter resident. Dark gray bird w/ white belly & light bill. Common feeder bird.

Cardinals & Allies

By: Kerry Wixted



Male

Northern Cardinal

(Cardinalis cardinalis)

Year-round resident. Male all red w/ crest & black patch around conical bill; voice: *cheer-cheer-cheer*



Male

Female

Blue Grosbeak

(Passerina caerulea)

Summer resident. Adult male blue w/ rusty wing bars; female brown w/ rusty wing bars; voice: warbling song w/ phrases rising & falling



Male

Indigo Bunting

(Passerina cyanea)

Summer resident. Breeding male blue & small; female & immature medium brown; voice: song lively, usually paired *sweet-sweet*

Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918

- International treaty w/ Canada, Japan, Mexico & Russia
- Protects all native species of birds, their nests, eggs, parts, etc
- Prohibits the take (including killing, capturing, selling, trading, and transport) of protected migratory bird species
- Excludes non-native & invasive species
 - Example: European Starlings, House Sparrows, etc



Birds like herons were once exploited due to their feathers. The Act prohibits taking feathers from protected bird species.

For Additional Information

For more information on Maryland's birds, please visit our webpage at: dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife Additional information can be found in the following resources.

Book Resources:

- Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Eastern and Central North America, 6th Ed

Online Resources:

- [Maryland Envirothon \(Wildlife and Heritage Service\)](#)
- Birds of Maryland (MD DNR)
- [Maryland Biodiversity Project \(Birds\)](#)
- [The Cornell Lab of Ornithology: All About Birds](#)



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