Birds of Northeast Iowa

If you want to bring birds to your own backyard, provide their favorite foods. They also need water, as well as shelter, like bushes or trees. Keep a notebook handy so you can keep track of who visits you!

American Goldfinch

- Look for: short tail; yellow or brown; white bars on black wings; short, cone-shaped bill
- Feeder Foods: sunflower seeds, nyger
- Visits Iowa: year-round
- Habitat: weedy fields and

Spring male

American Robin

- Look for: round body with long legs and tail; red-orange stomach & chest; white streaks on dark throat
- Foods: earthworms, fruits, berries
- Visits Iowa: spring
- Habitat: gardens, parks, fields, forests, pastures, and backyards

Baltimore Oriole

- Look for: orange or yellow belly; black head, wings, and tail; silver bill
- Feeder Foods: grape jelly, oranges, nectar
- Visits Iowa: summer
- Habitat: open areas with tall trees

Male

Black-capped Chickadee

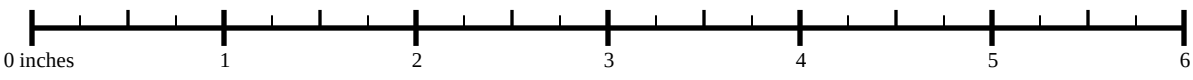
- Look for: big head with black cap and throat; white cheeks; gray back, wings, and tail
- Feeder Foods: sunflower seeds
- Visits Iowa: year-round
- Habitat: anywhere with trees or woody shrubs

- Look for: crest on head; blue, white, and black on back; white belly
- Feeder Foods: sunflower seeds, peanuts
- Visits Iowa: year-round
- Habitat: forest edges, especially where there are oaks

Cardinal

- Look for: crest of feathers on head; short, thick bill; males bright red with black around bill; females pale brown with red markings on wings, tail, and crest;
- Feeder Foods: sunflower seeds
- Visits Iowa: year-round
- Habitat: shrubby areas with people, like parks and backyards

Male



Downy Woodpecker

- Look for: straight bill; small body; checkered black and white; white stripe down back; males have small red patch on back of head
- Feeder Foods: suet, peanut butter
- Visits Iowa: year-round
- Habitat: woodlands, parks and backyards

Male

Grackle

- Look for: large, black, glossy body; purple-blue head; gold eye
- Feeder Foods: white millet, cracked corn
- Visits Iowa: year-round
- Habitat: open areas like fields, feedlots, and pastures

Male

Mourning Dove

- Look for: small head; slender, long tail; plump, light brown body with black spots on wings
- Feeder Foods: white millet, cracked corn
- Visits Iowa: year-round
- Habitat: anywhere but deep woods

Red-winged Blackbird

- Look for: Males glossy black with red-and-yellow shoulder patches; females streaky brown
- Foods: grains, seeds, insects
- Visits Iowa: year-round
- Habitat: fresh and saltwater marshes, old fields, or pastures

Male

Rose-breasted Grosbeak

- Look for: Large, pale, cone-shaped beak, males have rosy-red patch on breast, black head and shoulders, and white belly; females light brown with black streaks on sides, breast, and crown; pale stripe through eye
- Feeder Foods: sunflower seeds, safflower
- Visits Iowa: summer
- Habitat: forests

Male

Ruby-throated Hummingbird

- Look for: slender, long bill; short wings; bright green on back and crown, with gray-white underparts; males have bright red throat
- Feeder Foods: sugar water, nectar
- Visits Iowa: summer
- Habitat: open woodlands, forest edges, and gardens

Male

White-breasted Nuthatch

- Look for: large head with almost no neck; long, narrow bill; gray-blue back with white face and underparts; black or gray cap and neck feathers that look like a little hood
- Feeder Foods: sunflower seeds, peanuts
- Visits Iowa: year-round
- Habitat: mature woods, particularly with deciduous trees