

# Backyard Birding

## An Introduction to Utah's Backyard of Birds



### House Finch

*Haemorhous mexicanus*

These are small-bodied birds with large beaks relative to their body size. They are striped gray and white and the males have a red head and neck.



### White-crowned Sparrow

*Zonotrichia leucophry*

These are small birds with gray bodies and black-and-brown striped wings. Their heads are distinctly striped white and black. These birds also have orange beaks and a long tail.



### Western Scrub-Jay

*Aphelocoma californica*

These birds have bright blue feathers on their head, neck, wings, and tail and grayish-white under-parts. They have large black beaks and are lanky birds that often stand hunched over.



### House Sparrow

*Passer domesticus*

The males have a red-brown neck and wings interspersed with black and white. They have a black throat and white-gray cheeks. The females have brown bodies and black-and-brown wings.



### Northern Flicker

*Colaptes auratus*

These birds are large-bodied birds with long beaks, gray heads, brown and-black striped wings and a black-spotted belly. In flight you may see the orange underwing. Males have a red patch on their cheek.



### American Goldfinch

*Spinus tristis*

The males are bright yellow birds with black foreheads and black-and-white wings. Their beaks are orange. Females are a much paler brown color with black-and-yellow wings and gray beaks.



### Downy Woodpecker

*Picoides pubescens*

These birds are the smallest woodpeckers. They have a short beak, black-and-white striped face and wings, and a white back and belly. The males have a red patch on the back of their head.



### Hairy Woodpecker

*Picoides villosus*

These birds are extremely similar to Downy Woodpeckers. They have all of the same coloration except they are slightly larger and have distinctively larger beaks.



### Lesser Goldfinch

*Spinus psaltria*

These birds are very similar to the American Goldfinch. The males are bright yellow, have a black cap (top of the head), and black-and-white wings. Females are less colorful and do not have a black cap.



### Dark-eyed Junco

*Junco hyemalis*

These birds are dark gray or brown with bright pink beaks. They have white or light gray under-parts with a particularly light under-tail that they flash in flight.

## Would you like to learn more?

These are only some of the many birds that will use your feeder. There are many great books and online sources that can help you identify more birds. Here are some suggestions:

- ▶ *The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Western North America*
- ▶ *Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Western North America*
- ▶ [Allaboutbirds.org](http://Allaboutbirds.org) – Cornell Lab of Ornithology

## Meet some of the birds you can attract with black-oil sunflower seeds!

Birds come in all shapes and sizes and so do their beaks. Birds use their beaks as tools for breaking open seeds. The birds in this guide have thick beaks that help them break open the shells of the black-oil sunflowerseed to get to the kernels inside. These birds are also relatively small, so they can get a lot of the energy they need from eating seeds.



### You can attract many birds with sunflower seeds!

Beak size and shape has a lot to do with it. The birds in this guide have adaptations that allow them to crack open the seeds. These birds also find the seeds nutritious enough to make it worth the effort to break them open.

### What is an adaptation?

Adaptations are traits that help organisms survive in their habitats. These traits make it easier to find food, evade predators, and attract mates.

### Bird watching tips:

Birds feed in many different ways. Finches and sparrows are perching birds and woodpeckers are clinging birds. **You may want to hang your bird feeders in a tree near small branches AND near the trunk if you want a better chance of seeing both types of birds**

Birds show a variation in color and size depending on where they live. For example, the Dark-eyed Junco varies across the United States in shade and color. These birds are the same species, but they have adapted to their local habitats. **Remember this when you travel.**

The birds described in this guide are adults. Young birds, or juveniles, are usually slightly different in coloration. **If you are having trouble identifying a bird, sometimes it helps to look up the photos of juvenile coloration.** Many guides and online resources have photos of juvenile coloration.

### References

All About Birds. (n.d.). Retrieved August 4, 2015, from [www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/search](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/search)  
*The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Western North America*, New York: Knopf.

## Now let's make a birdfeeder!

### Supplies

Pine cone • Yarn • Peanut butter or lard (Crisco) • Sunflower seed

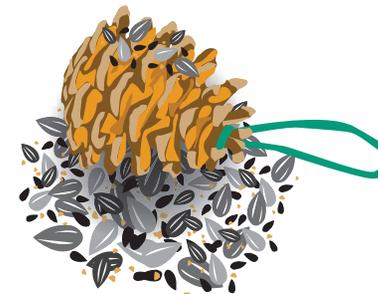
- 1** Tie the yarn to the top of the pine cone.



- 2** Spread the peanut butter or lard on the pine cone.



- 3** Roll the pine cone in the sunflower seed.



- 4** Hang the feeder in a tree or on a stand.



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