Backyard Birding in Nova Scotia

Presented by Nova Scotia Bird Society
PART 1 OF 3 - 2021



Introduction

Birds bring us great joy!

It's an unexpected pleasure to look out the window and see a flock of European Starlings poking around on the ground. Or perhaps your attention is drawn to the loud call, "jay, jay" coming from the ubiquitous Blue Jay.

The Nova Scotia Bird Society is pleased to share the following information and suggestions to enhance your bird-watching pleasure. Some of Nova Scotia's most common backyard birds have been selected for this educational piece, along with tips to create a more interesting bird-watching experience.

Binoculars (8 x 42 suggested) will also add to your viewing pleasure.

Our sincere appreciation goes to the members of Nova Scotia Bird Society for photos.

Written permission has been generously provided by David M. Bird, Ph.D. Emeritus Professor of Wildlife Biology, McGill University, Consultant Editor, and DK Publishing for inclusion of information from Birds of Canada, 2nd Edition.



Canada Jay, D. MacNeill



Golden-crowned Kinglet, C. Moser

Bird Identification Tips

Bird identification can be challenging. Nova Scotia Bird Society (NSBS) Facebook site is a great resource to check daily for birds seen in our province.

On the Facebook site you will see fabulous amateur and professional quality photos, learn names and pointers for identification, and have an appreciative audience with whom to share your photos. A book such as <u>Birds of Canada</u> by Professor David M. Bird, <u>Sibley Birds</u> <u>East</u> or <u>ebird.org</u> are great resources to help you identify and learn more about the birds you observe. Birds are fascinating and there is so much to learn!

If you are able to identify at least three attributes, NSBS suggests that you use the <u>Merlin Bird ID</u> app from The Cornell Lab to easily identify most birds.

Size Is it larger or smaller than a Chickadee, a Blue Jay, a Pigeon, or an Eagle?

Colors What are the main colors?

Are there different colors on the wings, throat, head, chest, tail?

Patterns Is the belly speckled or striped?

Are there circles around the eyes?

Is there a different color on the edge of the wing feathers?

Are there lines on the tail?

Is it pointed? Is it spoon-like? It is hooked?

Does one end of the bill cross over the other end?

Behaviour Does the bird sit still? In a tree, on the ground, or in the bushes?

Is the bird constantly flitting about? How would you describe its song or call?

When it flies, does it flap its wings quickly and constantly; does it fly in a straight line,

or this way and that?

Does its head bob up and down as it walks?

Does its tail flick up and down?

Social habits Is the bird alone or part of a large or small flock?

Is it part of a mixed group?

Are there two, suggesting that they are a mated pair?

Is it aggressive or timid?

Food Is it eating from the feeder? What seeds does it prefer?

Is it poking the ground for grubs?

Is it eating pine cones, or Black-eyed Susan flower seeds from your garden?

Is it pecking a tree trunk or climbing around on a tree trunk?

End of Part 1 of 3.

See Parts 2 and 3 for Nova Scotia's most common yard birds and additional identification tips. NSBS April 2021