



JIM PRUSKE

Scrub Jay

This frequent visitor to backyards and parks in the western United States is intelligent, bold, quarrelsome, playful and noisy. Scrub jays eat acorns, seeds, nuts, fruit, termites, butterflies, snails, eggs, baby birds, mice and many other forest critters. They will store nuts in crevices in trees and eat them later. While the female incubates the eggs on the nest, the male will feed her. Sometimes young scrub jays from the previous year will help the parents feed and care for young of the current year.



JIM ROBERTSON

Steller's Jay

The Steller's jay is the only crested jay of the western United States. It is a beautiful dark blue color and is very good at mimicking other birds, especially hawks. The Steller's jay is frequently called a blue jay, and although it is a jay and it is blue, it is not a blue jay. The real blue jay lives only in the United States east of the Rocky Mountains. The Steller's jay generally lives at higher elevations than the scrub jay, but here their ranges overlap. This bird loves to collect bright, shiny objects to decorate its nest.



BART RULON

Black-capped Chickadee

The black-capped chickadee gets its name from the black top of its head and its familiar "chickadee-dee-dee" call. It is a very agile bird that darts around, climbs trees and can even hang upside down. It eats insects, caterpillars, spiders and seeds. When it eats seeds, it will take one seed at a time and then fly to a perch to eat it. Chickadees will also hide seeds in crevices in trees and return later to eat them. Chickadees are very sociable and fly around in small groups, vocalizing frequently.

Spotted Towhee

The spotted towhee is a black-headed bird with rufous colored sides and red eyes! It spends most of the time on the ground searching for food. It scratches vigorously and noisily searching for seeds in the winter and insects in the summer. Its persistent buzzing call is a familiar sound in the summertime. To digest seeds in the winter, the digestive system must change so the intestine lengthens. This allows seeds to remain in the system longer, which allows more nutrients to be absorbed. It will also eat more grit in the winter to aid the grinding of seeds to help digestion.



Adult

KEITH BRADY



Juvenile

KEITH BRADY



BART RULON

Dark-eyed Junco

Dark-eyed juncos are small, dark headed birds with pink bills that live on the edge of forested areas. When they fly you can see the flash of their white outer tail feathers. They nest on the ground and eat seeds and grain. Juncos will frequently fly to a tall grass stem with a seed cluster on the top and then, using their body weight, ride the stem to the ground where they hold the stem steady while they pluck off the seeds and eat them.



DAN LOGEN

American Goldfinch

American goldfinches have bright yellow bodies with a dark top of the head and dark wings. They are sometimes inaccurately called "wild canaries." Goldfinches eat mostly seeds and a few insects and berries. Females incubate the eggs while the male defends the nest site. Both parents feed the babies by regurgitating partially digested food. The nest of the goldfinch is a thick-walled open cup of tightly woven plant material. This nest is so tight that it will hold rain water unless the adults shield the nest with their wings like an umbrella.



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Red-breasted Nuthatch

The red-breasted nuthatch is a small, forest bird that nests in cavities. They mainly eat conifer seeds which they get by prying open cones with their bills and extracting the seed. Nuthatches are the only tree trunk foraging bird that regularly feed moving down a tree trunk. They have strong, short legs with long sharp toes that allow them to do that. Woodpeckers and creepers always move upward and when they reach the top they fly down and start over.

American Crow

The American crow is probably the best known bird in rural North America. It is a scavenger and will eat almost anything. Crows are big birds with wingspans of more than three feet. They have many calls besides the well known "caw-caw," and can even mimic other birds. Crows will work together to harass larger hawks and owls to drive them away from nest sites. During migration, crows have been known to gather in huge flocks of over 100,000 birds to roost for the night. It is a very noisy roost site.



DICK MCNEELY



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Welcome to the world of birds at Elijah Bristow State Park! This brochure will help you get to know 18 of the more common birds found in the park. As you visit different habitats, watch for birds that make their home in that area. For example, watch for the great blue heron in wetlands, the American goldfinch in open fields, the spotted towhee in brushy areas, and the black-capped chickadee in the forest. Many birds are most active in the early morning and late afternoon. Try walking trails that border two habitats at those times to see the most birds. And don't forget to simply stop and listen to their songs and calls.

Many other kinds of birds can be seen in the park beyond those in this brochure. For further information on birds, please contact the interpreter at your nearest Oregon State Park or your local Audubon Society Chapter. Both organizations offer guided bird walks and special events focused on birds.

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TOM ECKERT

American Robin

The American robin is one of the most abundant and familiar birds in North America. The red breast and black head of the male are well known. The female is a little paler and the youngsters have a spotted breast. Look for robins on the ground searching for worms and juicy insects to eat. They locate worms by sight, not by sound, which is commonly believed.

Red-tailed Hawk

An adult red-tailed hawk can be recognized by its pale red, sometimes pinkish, broad tail. This common hawk of open fields, wooded areas and even deserts lives throughout North America. It is usually seen soaring high overhead looking for a meal of small mammals, birds, snakes and lizards. Their high-pitched scream is often recognized. This large hawk has a wingspan of more than 4½ feet.



BRIAN WHEELER



JIM PRUSKE

Northern Flicker

The northern flicker is a woodpecker who spends much of the time on the ground. Although the flicker nests in tree cavities like other woodpeckers, it feeds mainly on the ground, where it eats fruit, seeds and insects, particularly ants. It consumes more ants than any other North American bird. The flicker has two main variations of color under the wing, seen best when it flies. The flicker here has red under the wings and the flicker in the eastern United States has yellow.



BART RULON

Song Sparrow

The song sparrow is one of the best known sparrows in North America; it can be recognized by the large, dark spot in the middle of its breast. It is named after its persistent and melodious songs. It eats primarily insects in the summer and seeds in the winter so it does not have to migrate to find food. It nests on the ground or up two to four feet in small trees and shrubs.



BRIAN SMALL

Breeding



BARRY WAHL

Nonbreeding

European Starlings

European starlings are not native to North America. Sixty birds were imported from England to New York in 1890 and released in Central Park. 40 more were released the next year. They quickly spread across the United States and arrived in Oregon in 1947. Today, tens of millions of starlings inhabit all of the United States and compete unfairly with native birds for food and nesting cavities. Starlings are aggressive and adaptive and will kill baby birds of native species and peck open eggs. During winter migration they form enormous flocks of tens of thousands of birds, producing a constant noisy chatter as they fly.

Turkey Vulture

Turkey vultures are carrion (dead meat) eaters. They locate fresh or decaying meat by their well-developed sense of smell. Most birds have a very weak sense of smell. Vultures are large, dark, soaring birds that can be easily distinguished from hawks by their “naked” red head. Its unfeathered head is well suited for sticking into dead animal carcasses. Vultures glide with their wings in a “V” shape, whereas hawks and eagles hold their wings relatively flat when gliding.



JIM ROSSO

Great Blue Heron

The great blue heron is the largest heron in North America. It stands four feet tall and has a wingspan of more than six feet. It is also the best known and most widespread of all herons, living in all 48 contiguous states and in most of Canada. Herons hunt by day and by night in the shallow waters of lakes, rivers and marshes looking for small fish, frogs, crustaceans, insects, lizards and snakes. Great blue herons nest in tall trees in groups called heronries which may consist of a few pairs to hundreds of pairs.



BARRY WAHL



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Mourning Dove

The mourning dove is named for its mournful call—a low-pitched, soft, sad song. It nests in all 48 contiguous states and lives in many different types of habitats. Mourning doves are swift and strong flyers and they mate for life. They store food in a chamber of the digestive system called the crop, which allows them to eat briefly in dangerous, exposed areas where the food is located and then digest it later in a safe place. Doves also have a large muscular section of the stomach called the gizzard, which contains grit that helps grind up seeds and nuts. They must replenish the grit regularly by eating small pieces of sand or gravel.



WILLIAM ZITTRICH

Rufous Hummingbird

The rufous hummingbird is a spring and summer resident of the park only. It winters in Mexico and summers further north than any other hummingbird, with some going all the way to Alaska. Hummingbirds are named after the subdued humming sound that their wings make in flight. They eat nectar from flowers, but also small insects, spiders and tree sap. They lay only two eggs in a tiny nest only 1½ to 2 inches in diameter. An adult rufous hummingbird weighs only 3.4 grams (.12 oz) which is about what one nickel coin weighs.



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Violet-green Swallow

The diet of violet-green swallows is composed entirely of insects taken in flight. They are slender, sleek flyers who cruise low over open fields, small lakes and rivers looking for insects. Swallows have short bills and wide mouths, which help them catch flying insects. They are specialized for flying but their feet are so small and weak that they can barely walk. Violet-green swallows are named for the iridescent metallic blue-green color of their backs and heads.