

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.

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Order: Anseriformes

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

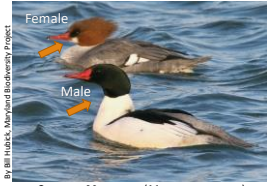


Male Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*)

Order: Anseriformes; Family Anatidae

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Mergansers- slender-bodied diving ducks w/ spikelike bill



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



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: Anseriformes; Family Anatidae

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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

Order: Galliformes

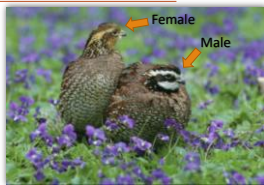
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Gallinaceous Birds



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: Galliformes

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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.

Order: Ciconiiformes

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Herons- 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*

Order: Ciconiiformes; Family Ardeidae

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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



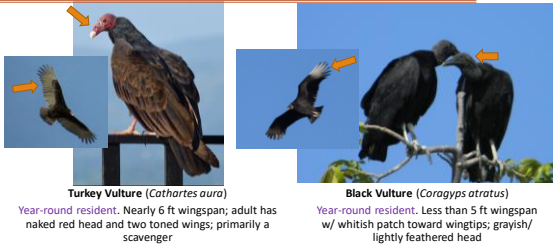
Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*)

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

Order: Ciconiiformes; Family Ardeidae

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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

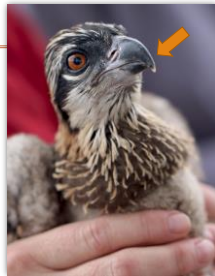
Order: **Ciconiiformes**; Family **Cathartidae**

By Stephen John Davies CC by NC 2.0

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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

Order: **Falconiformes**

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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

Order: **Falconiformes**; Family **Accipitridae**

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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-barred breast while immature has dark brown above; voice: *kik, kik, kik*



By Virginia Bauer 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*

Order: **Falconiformes**; Family **Accipitridae**

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Buteos- stocky hawks w/ broad wings



By Phyllis A. C. 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 Gijssels, WTD DMR 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: **Falconiformes**; Family **Accipitridae**

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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.

Order: **Charadriiformes**

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American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*)

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



Order: Charadriiformes; Family Scolopacidae

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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: Cuculiformes; Family Cuculidae

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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*)

Order: Strigiformes

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Medium-Large Owls



Great Horned Owl
(*Bubo virginianus*)

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



Barred Owl
(*Strix varia*)

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



Snowy Owl
(*Bubo scandiacus*)

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

Order: **Strigiformes**; Family **Strigidae**

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Eastern Screech Owl (*Megascops asio*)

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

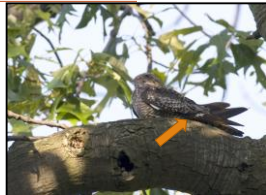


Order: **Strigiformes**; Family **Strigidae**

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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: **Caprimulgiformes**; Family **Caprimulgidae**

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Order: Piciformes

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



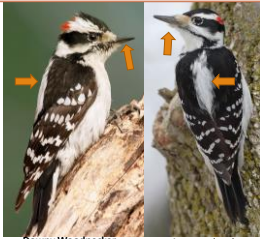
The Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) is a year-round resident in Maryland.

By: PAU/McGraw, MD DNR Photo Contest

Order: Piciformes, Family Picidae

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Downy vs Hairy Woodpecker



Downy Woodpecker
Wolfgang Wenzler
https://www.flickr.com/photos/wolfgangwenzler/2258141614/ CC BY-SA 3.0

Hairy Woodpecker
Murf 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!

Order: Piciformes, Family Picidae

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Other Woodpeckers



Red-bellied Woodpecker
(*Melanerpes carolinus*)

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

Northern Flicker
(*Colaptes auratus*)

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

Pileated Woodpecker
(*Dryocopus pileatus*)

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

Order: Piciformes, Family Picidae

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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 Wikted

Order: Passeriformes

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Mimidae



Brown Thrasher
(*Troxostoma 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 mewling.



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.

Order: Passeriformes; Family Mimidae

Photos By: Bill Hubick Maryland Biodiversity Project

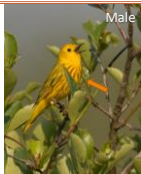
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Warblers



Northern Parula
(*Parula americana*)

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



Yellow Warbler
(*Dendroica petechia*)

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



Prothonotary Warbler
(*Protonotaria citrea*)

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

Order: Passeriformes; Family Parulidae

Photos By: Bill Hubick Maryland Biodiversity Project

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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.

Order: Passeriformes, Family Emberizidae Photos By: Bill Hubick Maryland Biodiversity Project

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Cardinals & Allies



Northern Cardinal
(*Cardinalis cardinalis*)
Year-round resident. Male all red w/ crest & black patch around conical bill; voice: *cheer-cheer-cheer*

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

Indigo Bunting
(*Passerina cyanea*)
Summer resident. Breeding male blue & small; female & immature medium brown; voice: song lively, usually paired *sweet-sweet*

Order: Passeriformes, Family Cardinalidae Photos By: Bill Hubick, Maryland Biodiversity Project

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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.

<https://www.fws.gov/birds/policies-and-regulation/new-legislation/migratory-bird-treaty-act.php>

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



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