

# Birds of the Wissahickon

In Philadelphia, the Wissahickon Valley is a steep and rugged gorge cut by the Wissahickon Creek, located in Northwest Philadelphia. It is part of Fairmount Park, the largest municipally-owned park in the United States and it extends for seven miles from Harpers Meadow to the Schuylkill River. The Wissahickon's 1,850 acres of woodlands, fields and streamside corridors provide habitat for a wide variety of birdlife.

This list includes birds that are seen in the park and also those that are only seen overhead, but on a fairly regular basis. There are 167 species on the list, including 66 species that breed in the area. Birds that have been seen only a few times during the past 20 years (i.e. Mississippi Kite; Common Moorhen, etc.) are not listed, nor are many waterfowl that are seen in reservoirs and major waterways in other areas of Philadelphia, but seldom -- if ever -- over or in the Wissahickon, such as ruddy duck, canvasback, scoters, etc.

Carpenters Woods, a small wooded section of the park dominated by tall oaks, has proven to be the best area to observe spring warbler migration. All 35 species of warblers that have been observed in the Wissahickon have also been found in Carpenters Woods.

This list is in accordance with the Seventh American Ornithological Union check-list, with the exception of vultures and owls, which are included under Raptors.

This bird list has been a project of the Wildlife Committee of the Friends of the Wissahickon, in cooperation with the Fairmount Park Commission. Additional information has been provided by members of the Wyncote Chapter of the National Audubon Society and of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club.

<b>Seasonal Occurrence:</b>				
W	=	winter (December-February)		
Sp	=	spring (March-May)		
Su	=	summer (June-August 15)		
F	=	fall (August 15-November)		
<b>Relative Abundance and Status:</b>				
a	=	abundant		
c	=	common		
u	=	uncommon		
o	=	occasional		
r	=	rare		
*	=	regular breeder		
**	=	irregular or former breeder		

	W	Sp	Su	F
<b>Waterbirds</b>				
__ Common Loon		u		
__ Double-crested Cormorant		o		
__ American Bittern		r		
__ Great Blue Heron	r	o	u	o
__ Great Egret		r	o	
__ Green Heron*		u	o	
__ Black-crowned Night Heron		r	r	
__ Canada Goose*	u	u	u	c
__ Wood Duck*		c	u	o
__ American Black Duck	o	o	o	o
__ Mallard*	c	c	c	c
__ Hooded Merganser	r	r		r
<b>Raptors</b>				
__ Black Vulture			o	
__ Turkey Vulture	o	u	u	u
__ Osprey		u		o
__ Bald Eagle		r		r
__ Northern Harrier	r	o		o
__ Sharp-shinned Hawk	u	u		u
__ Cooper's Hawk	u	u	r	u
__ Northern Goshawk	r			r
__ Broad-winged Hawk**		c	r	u
__ Red-tailed Hawk*	c	c	u	c

	W	Sp	Su	F
<b>Raptors (cont.)</b>				
__ American Kestrel	o	o	o	u
__ Merlin	r	r		u
__ Peregrine Falcon				r
__ Eastern Screech Owl*	u	u	u	u
__ Great Horned Owl*	u	u	u	u
__ Barred Owl*	r	r	r	r
__ Long-eared Owl	r			
__ Northern Saw-whet Owl	r	r		r

<b>Shorebirds and Gulls</b>				
__ Killdeer		r		o
__ Solitary Sandpiper		o		r
__ Spotted Sandpiper		o		o
__ American Woodcock*	r	o	o	r
__ Ring-billed Gull	u	o	r	u
__ Herring Gull	r	r		r

<b>Doves to Woodpeckers</b>				
__ Rock Dove (pigeon)*	c	c	c	c
__ Mourning Dove*	c	c	c	c
__ Black-billed Cuckoo		r	r	
__ Yellow-billed Cuckoo**		o	r	r
__ Common Nighthawk		u	o	u
__ Chimney Swift*		c	c	a
__ Ruby-throated Hummingbird*		c	c	u
__ Belted Kingfisher**	o	u	u	o
__ Red-headed Woodpecker		r		
__ Red-bellied Woodpecker*	c	c	c	c
__ Pileated Woodpecker*	o	o	o	o
__ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	o	o		u
__ Downy Woodpecker*	c	c	c	c
__ Hairy Woodpecker*	u	u	u	u
__ Northern Flicker*	o	c	c	c

<b>Flycatchers</b>				
__ Olive-sided Flycatcher		o		u
__ Eastern Wood Peewee*		c	c	o
__ Yellow-bellied Flycatcher		r		o

	W	Sp	Su	F
<b>Flycatchers (cont.)</b>				
__ Acadian Flycatcher*		c		c
__ Willow Flycatcher*		o	r	o
__ Least Flycatcher		u		o
__ Eastern Phoebe*		c		u
__ Great Crested Flycatcher*		c		u
__ Eastern Kingbird*		u		c

<b>Vireos to Wrens</b>				
__ White-eyed Vireo*		u		u
__ Blue-headed Vireo		c		u
__ Yellow-throated Vireo		u		o
__ Warbling Vireo		o		
__ Philadelphia Vireo				u
__ Red-eyed Vireo*		a	c	u
__ Blue Jay*	u	c	c	c
__ American Crow*	a	c	c	a
__ Fish Crow	o	o	o	o
__ Purple Martin		r		r
__ Tree Swallow		c		u
__ N. Rough-winged Swallow		c		c
__ Cliff Swallow		o		
__ Bank Swallow		u		
__ Barn Swallow*		c	u	o
__ Carolina Chickadee*	c	c	c	c
__ Black-capped Chickadee	r	r		r
__ Tufted Titmouse*	c	c	c	c
__ Red-breasted Nuthatch	o	o		o
__ White-breasted Nuthatch*	u	u	u	u
__ Brown Creeper	r	u		o
__ Carolina Wren*	c	c	c	c
__ House Wren*		c	c	o
__ Winter Wren	o	u		c

<b>Kinglets to Starlings</b>				
__ Golden-crowned Kinglet	o	u		o
__ Ruby-crowned Kinglet	r	c		u
__ Blue-gray Gnatcatcher*		c	c	o
__ Eastern Bluebird		o		r
__ Veery*		c	c	
__ Gray-cheeked Thrush		o		
__ Bicknell's Thrush		r		
__ Swainson's Thrush		c		o
__ Hermit Thrush	o	c		c

	W	Sp	Su	F
<b>Kinglets to Starlings</b> <i>(cont.)</i>				
__ Wood Thrush*		c	c	o
__ American Robin*	c	a	a	c
__ Gray Catbird*	r	c	a	u
__ Northern Mockingbird*	c	c	c	c
__ Brown Thrasher*		o	o	r
__ European Thrasher*	a	a	a	a
__ Cedar Waxwing*	o	u	o	c

	W	Sp	Su	F
<b>Warblers</b>				
__ Blue-winged Warbler**		c	o	o
__ Golden-winged Warbler		r		r
__ Tennessee Warbler		u		o
__ Nashville Warbler		u		o
__ Northern Parula		c	o	u
__ Yellow Warbler*		u	o	u
__ Chestnut-sided Warbler**		c	r	u
__ Magnolia Warbler		c		u
__ Cape May Warbler		r		r
__ Black-throated Blue Warbler		c		c
__ Yellow-rumped Warbler	r	a		c
__ Black-throated Green Warbler		c		u
__ Blackburnian Warbler		u		o
__ Yellow-throated Warbler		r	r	
__ Pine Warbler		o	o	r
__ Prairie Warbler		u		o
__ Palm Warbler		c		u
__ Bay-breasted Warbler		o		o
__ Blackpoll Warbler		c		o
__ Cerulean Warbler**		o	r	
__ Black & White Warbler*		c	r	u
__ American Redstart*		c	o	u
__ Prothonotary Warbler		r		
__ Worm-eating Warbler*		u	r	o
__ Ovenbird*		a	o	u
__ Northern Waterthrush		u		o
__ Louisiana Waterthrush*		u	u	o
__ Kentucky Warbler**		o	r	o
__ Connecticut Warbler				r
__ Mourning Warbler		r		
__ Common Yellowthroat*		c	u	c
__ Hooded Warbler**		u	r	o
__ Wilson's Warbler		o		o
__ Canada Warbler		c		o
__ Yellow-breasted Chat**		r	r	

	W	Sp	Su	F
<b>Tanagers to Buntings</b>				
__ Summer Tanager			r	
__ Scarlet Tanager*			c	u u
__ Eastern Towhee*		r	c	u u
__ American Tree Sparrow		o		o
__ Chipping Sparrow*			c	u c
__ Field Sparrow*		r	u	o u
__ Savannah Sparrow				o
__ Fox Sparrow		r	u	o
__ Song Sparrow*		u	c	c c
__ Lincoln's Sparrow			r	r
__ Swamp Sparrow			o	u
__ White-throated Sparrow		a	c	c
__ White-crowned Sparrow		r	o	o
__ Dark-eyed Junco		a	u	c
__ Northern Cardinal*		c	c	c c
__ Rose-breasted Grosbeak*			u	o o
__ Blue Grosbeak			r	r
__ Indigo Bunting*			u	o o

	W	Sp	Su	F
<b>Blackbirds to Finches</b>				
__ Bobolink			o	o
__ Red-winged Blackbird*		r	c	o u
__ Rusty Blackbird			o	o
__ Common Grackle*		r	c	u c
__ Brown-headed Cowbird*		o	c	u u
__ Orchard Oriole*			o	o
__ Baltimore Oriole*		r	c	c o
__ Purple Finch		r	o	o
__ House Finch*		c	c	c c
__ Red Crossbill		r		r
__ White-winged Crossbill		r		r
__ Common Redpoll		r		
__ Pine Siskin		o	o	o
__ American Goldfinch*		u	c	c c
__ Evening Grosbeak		r	o	o
__ House Sparrow*		c	c	c c

## This bird check-list is sponsored by the Friends of the Wissahickon.

Please join the Friends of the Wissahickon and help to protect, preserve and restore one of the last great natural areas in the region. Basic annual membership is \$35.00. For information or an application form, please call 215-247-0417.

For information about bird walks or local birding organizations, call the Fairmount Park Commission's Wissahickon Environmental Center at 215-685-9285.

Birders are encouraged to support the creation of a wildlife sanctuary at the former Roxborough Reservoir site. Let your councilperson know you are behind this. Call the Friends at the number above for information on how you can help.

Special thanks to Steve Lawrence for his contributions to this list, based on 40 years of birding experience in the Wissahickon and to Keith Russell for authenticating and carefully checking the list. The cover illustration of the Wood Duck in the Wissahickon is reproduced through courtesy of the artist, Michael McNelly.

### **Friends of the** **Wissahickon**

8708 Germantown Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19118  
215-247-0417  
friends.wis@verizon.net  
www.fow.org



# Checklist of the Birds of the Wissahickon

*The Wissahickon  
section of Fairmount Park  
from Harper's Meadow to  
the Schuylkill River*