Winter's Wonderful Backyard Birds MADISON AUDUBON

Wisconsin is home to a wonderful diversity of birds, many of which stay here through our cold, snowy winters. You may see many of these birds in your backyard in Wisconsin's coldest months, but your chances are greatly increased if you provide winter shelter (shrubs, trees, and native grasses), food (seed or suet), and water (heated bird bath). Keeping house cats indoors will ensure your feeder birds are safe from feline hunting too.

Below are 13 common species you might see in a Madison-area backyard through the winter. You can hear their calls and find details about their food preferences on apps like Audubon or on websites like AllAboutBirds.org. Happy birdwatching!

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE



Eats a variety of seeds

Says "chicka-dee-dee-dee"

and "cheeseburger."

HAIRY & DOWNY WOODPECKERS



Both prefer suet

Look similar; downy (R) is a
"downsized" verson of hairy (L).

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH



Prefers sunflower and nyger seeds Males and females have a duller winter plumage than in spring.

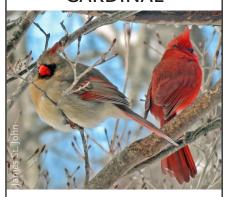
BLUE JAY



Prefers peanuts and sunflower seeds on tray feeders

A smart, noisy, bold bird!

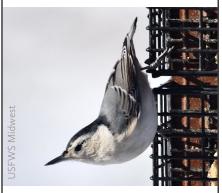
NORTHERN CARDINAL



Eats a variety of seeds

Male (red) and female (olive) both with orange beaks.

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH



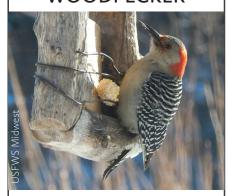
Prefers sunflower seeds, peanuts, and suet Often perches upside down.

DARK-EYED JUNCO



Eats a variety of seeds Migrates here for the winter from further north.

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER



Prefers suet Makes a "churrr" call that sounds similar to a squirrel.

MOURNING DOVE



Prefers millet on the ground Their call is sometime mistaken for an owl's "hoot."

AMERICAN TREE SPARROW



Eats a variety of seeds Native winter species, with a tell-tale dark dot on the chest.

HOUSE FINCH



Eats black oil sunflower or nyger Non-native, less red and purple than the native purple finch.

HOUSE SPARROW



Eats a variety of seeds Non-native with a signature black eye and throat.

Bird Conservation, Close to Home

If you're reading this, chances are you love birds. We do too! Madison Audubon is the local Audubon chapter in southern Wisconsin, a separate but similar organization to National Audubon. We focus on bird conservation, right here in your backyard!

We encourage you to explore our website (madisonaudubon.org), wildlife sanctuaries (Faville Grove near Lake Mills; Goose Pond near DeForest; Otsego Marsh near Rio, and other properties), and programming to dive deeper into the wonderful world of birds.









