

# BIRDS OF NEW YORK CITY

OVER 350 SPECIES RECORDED IN THE FIVE BOROUGHS

# BIRDING BY SUBWAY



**Songbirds.** Park forests are the best places to see colorful warblers, tanagers, orioles, and more during migration; over 30 species of warbler can be seen here, including the coveted Blackburnian Warbler (above). Songbirds such as the Warbling Vireo, Yellow Warbler, American Redstart, Cedar Waxwing, and Baltimore Oriole breed in larger parks in the City.



**Shorebirds.** Birds of the City's shores and wetlands include threatened species such as breeding Piping Plovers and American Oystercatchers (above), as well as migrating Red Knots. In all, over 30 sandpiper species are seen in the City each year.



**Wading Birds.** Of the nine species of long-legged wading birds that breed regularly in New York City, seven nest on the wild and protected Harbor Heron Islands. Species including the Great Egret (above), Little Blue Heron, Glossy Ibis, and Yellow-crowned Night Heron can be found feeding in wetlands throughout the City.



**Waterfowl.** In winter, species such as the American Wigeon, Northern Shoveler, and Snow Goose congregate by the thousands in New York City ponds and harbor inlets. Diving ducks such as scoters, loons, and the Long-Tailed Duck (above) are also found in large bays and on the open ocean.



**Grassland Birds.** Among the City's most threatened species, these birds specializing in grassy habitat include the Savannah Sparrow (above), Grasshopper Sparrow, and Eastern Meadowlark. New green spaces such as Freshkills Park and Shirley Chisholm State Park are providing more habitat for grassland birds in the City.



**Seabirds.** Gulls, terns, and related birds like the Black Skimmer (above) and Double-crested Cormorant are commonly seen in the harbor; a number of these species breed on New York City beaches and islands. Birds of the open ocean such as the Northern Gannet are also regularly spotted from shore.



**Marsh Birds.** Several of these secretive species, such as the Clapper Rail (above), Marsh Wren, and Saltmarsh Sparrow, breed in the City's marshes. Jamaica Bay is the best and most accessible bet in the City. During migration, rarer species such as the American Bittern and Sora sometimes make surprise appearances in Central Park, Prospect Park, and even smaller parks.



**Raptors.** Birds of prey are especially abundant during fall migration, but are also found year-round. Osprey (above) and three owl species nest in wilder areas of the City, while Peregrine Falcons, Kestrels, and Red-tailed Hawks nest in parks and on bridges and building ledges. Bald Eagles have become year-round residents and Snowy Owls are sometimes seen here in winter.

Photography: David Spitzer (except where otherwise noted), Cover: Sander Tanager @Lloyd Spindler Duggan, Christina Rubin, Editorial: Anne Schwartz, Joel Winston



# NEW YORK CITY IS FOR THE BIRDS

From Central Park to Jamaica Bay, New York City boasts some of the very best birding in the United States: over 350 species have been recorded in the five boroughs. The City owes this rich birdlife to a lucky confluence of location and habitat. Situated at a pivotal point along the Atlantic

Flyway, it is a major migratory stopover. Many species also stay to breed or spend the winter in the City's diverse landscape of forest, marsh, grasslands, and shoreline. Many of these prime birding spots are just a subway or bus ride away. Let's get birding on the MTA!



Photo: Central Park © Neil Howard (CC BY 2.0, flickr.com/photos/nelshoward/70647616869)

## BIRDING TIPS

- **Bird in the early morning or late afternoon**, particularly in spring when songbirds are actively singing.
- **Bring the right gear.** Binoculars are great for songbirds, but a spotting scope is key when observing shorebirds or waterfowl.
- **Bird your patch.** Small parks such as Bryant Park and even tiny “pocket parks” can yield surprising visitors during migration.
- **Bird with a friend.** Even in the busiest places such as Central Park, it's safest to bird with a companion.

Sign up for NYC Bird Alliance's birding trips, classes, and bird walks at [www.nycbirdalliance.org/ea](http://www.nycbirdalliance.org/ea)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

- NYC Bird Alliance's online guide [www.nycbirdalliance.org/go-birding](http://www.nycbirdalliance.org/go-birding)
- *Birdwatching in New York City and on Long Island*, by Deborah Rivel and Kellye Rosenheim
- *The New York City Audubon Society Guide to Finding Birds in the Metropolitan Area*, by Marcia T. Fowle and Paul Kerlinger
- *Field Guide to the Neighborhood Birds of New York City*, by Leslie Day

# BIRDING BY THE SEASON



## WINTER

Waterfowl at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Pelham Bay Park, Fort Tilden, and park lakes and reservoirs. Snow Buntings and occasional Snowy Owls at Floyd Bennett Field and Freshkills Park, and Bald Eagles on Hudson River ice floes near Inwood Hill Park.



## SPRING

Migrating songbirds in Central, Prospect, Forest, Clove Lakes, Van Cortlandt, and other City parks. Migrating shorebirds at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge.



## SUMMER

Red-tailed Hawks and Peregrine Falcons throughout the City. Beach-nesting birds on Rockaway beaches and breeding songbirds and waterbirds at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Inwood Hill Park, and Staten Island parks. In late summer, migrating shorebirds at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge.



## FALL

Migrating songbirds in Central, Prospect, Forest, Conference House, Van Cortlandt, and other City parks. Migrating raptors at Fort Tilden and the Staten Island Greenbelt.

# NEW YORK CITY BIRDS NEED YOUR HELP

NYC Bird Alliance is the only organization solely dedicated to safeguarding birds and their habitats in the five boroughs. Join us! As a contributing member, you make possible our research, conservation, education, and advocacy for New York City's more than 350 species of wild birds.

**Project Safe Flight** seeks to ensure safe passage for the millions of birds migrating through our city by reducing collisions with glass and expanding habitat. We helped pass new City laws in 2019 that require bird-friendly construction and green roofs.

**Waterbirds of New York Harbor** monitors and tracks wading birds and shorebirds that nest or stop over at the City's wetlands, islands, and beaches.

**Education and Outreach** brings the joy of birding and the rewards of conserving nature to diverse communities all across the City, offering bird walks, classes, wildlife festivals, hands-on volunteering, and a seasonal center on Governors Island.

## BECOME A MEMBER

Benefits include free members-only bird walks, discounts on trips and classes, the quarterly *Urban Bird Call* newsletter, the eGret enewsletter—and knowing that you are making a difference for birds. Join now at [www.nycbirdalliance.org](http://www.nycbirdalliance.org).

## NYC BIRD ALLIANCE

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*This guide has been updated and reprinted thanks to the generous support of Con Edison.*



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**BIRDING BY SUBWAY**

**NYC BIRD ALLIANCE**  
 A CHAPTER OF NATIONAL AUDUBON

CONSERVATION | ADVOCACY | ENGAGEMENT

**TOP 10 BIRDING STOPS**

**1. CENTRAL PARK, MANHATTAN (SpFW)**  
 ① ② 72nd St., 103rd St.  
 Manhattan's 843-acre centerpiece is a magnet for spring and fall migrants, making it one of the best birding spots in the United States. When shifting weather patterns cause a migrant "fall-out," the density of songbirds is what birders dream of.  
**WHERE TO GO:** Enter at 72nd Street to Strawberry Fields and bird to the Lake and Ramble, or at 103rd Street and explore the Great Hill and North Woods. Visit the Reservoir for wintering waterfowl.  
**BIRDS TO SEE:** songbirds, wading birds, waterfowl, and raptors

**2. JAMAICA BAY WILDLIFE REFUGE, QUEENS (SpSuFW)**  
 ① Broad Channel, Q52-SBS, Q53-SBS Bus  
 Part of Gateway National Recreation Area, the refuge covers 9,000 acres of open bay, salt marsh, mudflats, ponds, fields, and woods. Over 300 species have been recorded in the bay, world-renowned for its shorebird migration.  
**WHERE TO GO:** Walk north about three-quarters of a mile (or take the Q52 or Q53 bus) to the Visitor Center. Explore the East and West Ponds and the forested paths of the North and South Gardens.  
**BIRDS TO SEE:** shorebirds, waterfowl, wading birds, marsh birds, songbirds, and raptors

**3. PROSPECT PARK/ BROOKLYN BOTANIC GARDEN (SpFW)**  
 ① ② Prospect Park or ③ Grand Army Plaza / ④ Eastern Parkway-Brooklyn Museum or ⑤ Prospect Park  
 With 526 acres of woods, meadows, and bodies of water, Prospect Park offers a striking diversity of bird habitat. On peak spring days, nearly 100 species have been spotted here. The nearby Brooklyn Botanic Garden offers excellent birding as well.  
**WHERE TO GO:** Enter at Lincoln Road, Grand Army Plaza, or Bartel Pritchard Square. Explore the Vale of Cashmere, Midwood, Long Meadow, Lookout Hill, Peninsula, Lullwater, and Prospect Lake.  
**BIRDS TO SEE:** songbirds, wading birds, waterfowl, and raptors

**4. VAN CORTLANDT PARK, BRONX (SpF)**  
 ① Van Cortlandt Park-242nd St.  
 Over half of this accessible park's 1,146 acres offer excellent bird habitat, including deciduous forests, meadows, wetlands, and a constructed lake. Over 60 species breed here.  
**WHERE TO GO:** Enter at West 242nd Street and explore the Putnam Trail, John Kieran Nature Trail, Van Cortlandt Lake, Tibbetts Brook, and nearby freshwater wetlands.  
**BIRDS TO SEE:** songbirds, wading birds, waterfowl, and raptors

**5. THE AMUNDSEN TRAIL: GREAT KILLS PARK AND THE GREENBELT, STATEN ISLAND (SpSuFW)**  
 SIR Oakwood Heights  
 Walk two blocks to the Amundsen Trail (White Trail), which connects High Rock Park and the Staten Island Greenbelt to the north with Gateway National Recreation Area's 1,200-acre Great Kills Park to the south.  
**WHERE TO GO:** Hike south to visit the beaches, marsh trails, mudflats, and woodland of Great Kills Park (Crooke's Point is particularly productive)—or northwards toward the wooded trails of High Rock Park and visit the Greenbelt Nature Center.  
**BIRDS TO SEE:** songbirds, raptors, waterfowl, wading birds, shorebirds, marsh birds, and seabirds

**6. FOREST PARK, QUEENS (SpF)**  
 ① Kew Gardens-Union Turnpike, Q37 Bus  
 The forested eastern end of this 538-acre park is a songbird migration hotspot; the park's "knob and kettle" terrain, a leftover from the last ice age, hosts magnificent oak and pine groves.  
**WHERE TO GO:** From the subway, walk or take the Q37 bus to enter at Metropolitan Avenue and Forest Park Drive and explore the "Waterhole," a migrant songbird haven, as well as the Little Gully, Gully, and Horseshoe. Bird with a friend; it's easy to get lost.  
**BIRDS TO SEE:** songbirds and raptors

**7. PELHAM BAY PARK, BRONX (SpSuFW)**  
 ① Pelham Bay Park  
 At 2,765 acres, this remote and wild New York City Park includes open water, salt marsh, rocky shore, old- and new-growth forest, shrubland, rare coastal tall grass meadows, and dry and wet oak savanna.  
**WHERE TO GO:** The most accessible part is the southern zone. Cross the walkway over I-95 and turn left into the park to reach the Pelham Bay Nature Center and explore Huntington Woods, wet meadows, and the waterfront. A visit to Hunter and Twin Islands in the beautiful and rugged northern part of the park is also well worth the effort.  
**BIRDS TO SEE:** songbirds, raptors, waterfowl, wading birds, shorebirds, marsh birds, and seabirds

**8. CLOVE LAKES PARK, STATEN ISLAND (SpF)**  
 From St. George Ferry Terminal: S61/62 Bus Victory Blvd. & Clove Rd or S48 Bus Forest Ave.  
 Over half of this 196-acre park is made up of hilly woodlands, ponds, and streams, and is known on Staten Island as the place to see warblers and other neotropical migrants, particularly in spring.  
**WHERE TO GO:** Start at Martling Avenue and explore the wooded paths along the stream that runs between Brooks, Martling, and Clove Lakes. A pair of Great Blue Herons has nested in recent years next to the Martling Avenue Bridge.  
**BIRDS TO SEE:** songbirds, waterfowl, wading birds, and raptors

**9. INWOOD HILL PARK, MANHATTAN (SpFW)**  
 ① Inwood-207th St. or ② 215th Street  
 This 196-acre park is the site of Manhattan's only old-growth forest, a tulip poplar and oak woodland that hosts nesting forest birds. The park also includes a small adjacent salt marsh and offers great views of the Hudson River.  
**WHERE TO GO:** Enter at 218th Street and Indian Road to explore the park's bays, shoreline, and mudflats; hike up forested "Inwood Hill"; and check the ball fields for grassland birds. The Dyckman Street Pier may offer wintertime views of Bald Eagles.  
**BIRDS TO SEE:** songbirds, waterfowl, shorebirds, and raptors

**10. THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN, BRONX (SpF)**  
 ① Bedford Park Blvd., B26 Bus  
 This 250-acre preserve, home to resident Wood Ducks and Great Horned Owls, comprises gardens, ponds, wetland areas, a 40-acre old-growth forest, and a wild portion of the Bronx River.  
**WHERE TO GO:** Walk nine blocks (or take the B26 bus) and enter at the Moshulu Gate to explore the Twin Lakes area and forest trail; cross Hester Bridge to reach the River Trail.  
**BIRDS TO SEE:** songbirds, wading birds, and raptors

- MORE BIRDING STOPS**
- 11) Conference House Park: SIR Tottenville
  - 12) Mount Loretto Union Area: SIR Pleasant Plains or Richmond Valley
  - 13) Freshkills Park (open for special events): S62 Bus from St. George Ferry Terminal
  - 14) The Battery/Governors Island, NYC Bird Alliance's environmental Center  
 ① South Ferry, Ferry Service (summer only)

- 15) Bryant Park: ① ② ③ ④ 42nd St.-Bryant Park
- 16) Carl Schurz Park/East River Promenade: ① 86th St.
- 17) Randall's Island: ① ② ③ ④ 125th St., M35 Bus
- 18) Riverside Park Bird Sanctuary: ① 116th St.-Columbia University
- 19) Wave Hill: ① Van Cortlandt Park-242nd St., free shuttle
- 20) Woodlawn Cemetery: ④ Woodlawn
- 21) Crotona Park: ② ③ 174th St.
- 22) Flushing Meadows Corona Park: ⑦ Mets-Willets Point
- 23) Alley Pond Park: ① ② Kew Gardens-Union Turnpike, Q46 Bus
- 24) Shirley Chisholm State Park: ③ Pennsylvania Ave., B83 Bus
- 25) Fort Tilden and Jacob Riis Park: ② ③ Flatbush Ave.-Brooklyn College, Q35 Bus
- 26) Floyd Bennett Field: ② ③ Flatbush Ave.-Brooklyn College, Q35 Bus
- 27) Marine Park: ① Ave. U, B3 Bus or Kings Hwy., B31 Bus
- 28) Calvert Vaux Park: ① Bay 50th St., B82 Bus
- 29) Green-Wood Cemetery: ① 25th St.
- 30) Bush Terminal Piers Park: ① 45th St.

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Find more details at [www.nycbirdalliance.org/go-birding](http://www.nycbirdalliance.org/go-birding)

Sp: spring Su: summer F: fall W: winter

