

FreshkillsPark / Summer Birds

Marsh/Tidal



Great Egret

Also known as the common egret, large egret, or great white heron. Up to 1m tall. Distinguished from other egrets by its yellow bill and black legs and feet. Males and females are identical in appearance. It has a slow flight, with its neck retracted, characteristic of herons and bitterns, and distinguishing them from storks, cranes, ibises, and spoonbills, which extend their necks in flight.



Green Heron

Relatively small. The neck is often pulled in tight against the body. Adults have a glossy, greenish-black cap, a greenish back and wings that are grey-black grading into green or blue, a chestnut neck with a white line down the front, grey underparts and short yellow legs. Females tend to be smaller than males, and have duller and lighter plumage. The green heron's call is a loud and sudden kyow.



Great Black-backed Gull

The largest member of the gull family, it is the largest gull in the world, noticeably outsize a herring gull. It is fairly distinctive, as no other very large gull with blackish coloration on its upperwings generally occurs in the North Atlantic. The call is a deep "laughing" cry, kaa-ga-ga.



Least Sandpiper

This species has greenish legs and a short, thin, dark bill. They nest on the ground near water, and forage on mudflats, picking up food by sight, sometimes probing.



Osprey

The osprey is a large raptor, reaching more than 2 ft. in length and almost 6 ft. in wingspan. Its diet consists almost exclusively of fish. It possesses specialized physical characteristics and exhibits unique behavior to assist in hunting and catching prey; as a result of these unique characteristics, it has been given its own taxonomic genus, Pandion, and family, Pandionidae.



Red-Winged Blackbird

A New World warbler, they are abundant breeders in North America, ranging from southern Canada to central Mexico. They are small songbirds that have olive backs, wings and tails, yellow throats and chests, and white bellies. Adult males have black face masks. Females are similar in appearance, but have paler underparts and lack the black mask.

Grasslands



Common Yellowthroat

A New World warbler, they are abundant breeders in North America, ranging from southern Canada to central Mexico. They are small songbirds that have olive backs, wings and tails, yellow throats and chests, and white bellies. Adult males have black face masks. Females are similar in appearance, but have paler underparts and lack the black mask.



Killdeer

A medium sized plover. The adults have a brown back and wings, a white belly, and a white breast with two black bands. The rump is tawny orange. The killdeer frequently uses a "broken wing act" to distract predators from the nest. During nesting season killdeer use open dry uplands and meadows.



Grasshopper Sparrow

A new addition to the park! This bird had seen a 98% decline in NY State since 1985. They build their nests as well-concealed open cups on the ground under vegetation. The bird's song is a buzzy tik tuk zee, resembling the sound made by a grasshopper.

Opportunistic



Tree Swallow

The adult tree swallow has iridescent blue-green upperparts, white underparts, and a very slightly forked tail. They nest in natural or artificial cavities near water and are often found in large flocks. They readily use nest boxes and are the subject of a research study at Freshkills Park.



Barn Swallow

The most widespread species of swallow in the world. It is a distinctive passerine bird with blue underparts, deeply forked tail and curved, pointed wings. The barn swallow normally uses man-made structure to breed and consequently has spread with human expansion.



Northern Flicker

A medium-sized member of the woodpecker family. It is native to most of North America, Central America, Cuba, the Cayman Islands, and is one of the few woodpecker species that migrate. In addition to their ki ki ki ki call, one may hear constant knocking as they often drum on trees or even metal objects to declare territory.