

# WCNY's Guide to Birdwatching

Central New York is home to an expansive array of wildlife, especially vast flocks of bird species. As the days grow warmer and nature awakens, embrace the season with a refreshing birdwatching adventure! From backyard feeders to scenic hiking trails, keep an eagle eye on the sky—you never know what colorful species you might spot. A little bird told us that birdwatching is the perfect way to celebrate spring and reconnect with the region's natural beauty.

## Did You Know?

Over 400 bird species can be seen around Central New York throughout the year!



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## Popular Sightings

Whether you are an experienced birdwatcher or just starting, these common birds are always a pleasant sight.



### Black-Capped Chickadee

This small, stocky songbird is easy to identify by its black cap and bib, bright white cheeks, and soft gray back, wings, and tail. These hardy birds stay in Central New York year-round, bringing their cheerful presence to backyards and forests alike. Known for their curiosity and boldness, Black-Capped Chickadees often flit close to humans, especially near feeders stocked with sunflower seeds or suet.

### Blue Jay

The Blue Jay is a year-round resident of Central New York, easily recognized by its brilliant blue plumage, black "necklace," and white underparts. This medium-sized songbird also sports a distinctive crest. Common in woodlands, parks, and suburban areas, Blue Jays frequently visit backyard feeders. Known for their intelligence and wide range of vocalizations, they can even mimic other birds and sounds, making their presence unmistakable.



### Downy Woodpecker



The smallest woodpecker in North America, the Downy Woodpecker measures just 6–7 inches long with a 10–12 inch wingspan. It is easily recognized by its white breast, black-and-white patterned back, and the distinctive red patch on the males' heads. A year-round resident of Central New York, this adaptable bird can be spotted in all seasons, frequenting forests, parks, and backyard feeders.

### Eastern Bluebird

Recognized as New York's state bird, the Eastern Bluebird is a small thrush with vibrant blue wings and back, a rusty-red throat and breast, and a white belly. They thrive in open fields, pastures, parks, and suburban areas, where they can often be spotted perched on wires or fence posts, scanning for insects. While some migrate, many remain in New York year-round.



### Northern Cardinal



A year-round favorite in Central New York, the Northern Cardinal is known for its striking appearance and melodic song. This medium-sized bird has a wingspan of 9–12 inches and is easily recognized by its bright orange beak, long tail, and distinctive pointed crest. Males are a brilliant red with a bold black mask around their face, while females display a softer blend of warm brown and red tones.

## Locations

Explore the Central New York landscape while observing and learning about the birds that reside in the region.

### **Bear Spring Mountain Wildlife Management Area** **512 East Trout Brook Road, Downsville, NY 13755**

Enjoy a day of birdwatching on 7,000 acres of upland habitat in Delaware County. The breathtaking area is filled with mountains, valleys, fields, and forests. Don't forget your binoculars!

### **Clark Reservation State Park** **6105 East Seneca Turnpike, Jamesville, NY 13078**

This scenic state park is a birdwatcher's paradise. Its natural features, including cliffs, a meadow, and a glacial plunge basin lake, are the perfect backdrop for some incredible photos. With several hiking trails to explore, you never know what bird species might be nearby—so don't forget to bring your camera!

### **Cornell Lab of Ornithology** **159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, NY 14850**

Delve deep into the world of ornithology at the stunning 220-acre Sapsucker Woods Sanctuary. This popular observation spot has indoor and outdoor opportunities for visitors of all ages. Spend the day hiking through the wooded trails or explore interactive indoor exhibits, where you can learn about rare and endangered birds and enjoy films in the observatory.

## Backyard Birdwatching

If you can't travel across Central New York to observe the birds, these tips will help you prepare your yard for when they visit you.

### **Bird Feeder**

Give your feathery friends a place to perch and snack with this DIY bird feeder (see page 28). With some basic household items, you can craft this simple creation and attract birds to your yard in no time.

### **Accessories**

To give birds a place to relax when they're not eating, consider adding birdhouses and bird baths around your yard. You can even use hooks to maximize your space and create more hanging spots.

### **Equipment**

No birdwatching session is complete without the essentials. Keep some binoculars, a field guide, and a notebook handy to get a closer look and record your observations. If you're into wildlife photography, don't forget to have your camera ready!



## Easy No-Bake Protein Energy Bites

### 24 Servings

A recipe packed with a great balance of complex carbohydrates, fiber, protein, and healthy omega-3 fatty acids.

### Ingredients

- 1 cup oats (use gluten-free oats if needed)
- 1/2 cup chunky peanut butter (non-oil-at-the-top kinds)
- 1/2 cup unsweetened desiccated coconut
- 1/2 cup mini chocolate chips
- 1/3 cup honey
- 1/4 cup chia seeds
- 2 tablespoons vanilla protein powder (use gluten-free if needed)
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

### Directions

1. Mix all the ingredients together in a bowl until an evenly distributed, uniform dough forms.
2. Roll the dough into twenty-four 1½-inch bites.
3. Refrigerate the bites for 30 minutes.
4. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to a week.

## Foodie-guide

WCNY's monthly Foodie-guide looks at the best of PBS Food content, recipes, cooking videos, and more!

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