

Governors Island Bird Reference Guide (Common Birds Spring: March – June)

ID Info adapted from allaboutbirds.org



Red-Bellied Woodpecker

Size & Shape: A sleek body with long tail, and round head.

Color Pattern: White under belly with some rusty red spots, a bright red head, and black and white striped back and wings. White patches near wingtips when flying.

Behavior: Woodpeckers like to perch on the side of a tree (like in the picture on the left), often picking or drilling into the bark which makes the classic drumming woodpecker noise.

Habitat: These birds live in woodlands, forests, and can be found in backyards.

Eastern Towhee

Size & Shape: Towhees are similar shaped to sparrows (they are in the same family), but a little bit bigger with a small round body and a thick triangular beak.

Color Pattern: Males (pictured above) have a sooty black on their back and head, a rusty red under-wing, and a white belly. Females (pictured below) are the same pattern but brown where males are black.

Behavior: Towhees spend most of their time on the ground, scratching leaves with both feet looking for worms or other tasty bugs. They spend time hiding in underbrush, or climbing into shrubs or low trees to sing. Their song sounds like “drink-your-teaaaaa!” The first note (drink) is sharp and metallic, while the final note (tea) is a musical trill.

Habitat: They can be found in forest edges where there is lots of leaves on the ground to forage in.



Black-Capped Chickadee

Size & Shape: These are tiny birds (5-6 inches) with short necks and large heads. They are almost spherical shaped with a long narrow tail.

Color Pattern: Black-Capped Chickadees are mostly white and grey with a signature black hat and chin area.

Behavior: These Chickadees have a bouncy flight. Although they are found in flocks, they often cross open areas and roads one at a time.

Habitat: They can be found in woody areas with shrubs or trees.

Tufted Titmouse

Size & Shape: These are small birds (5-6 inches) with full bodies. They have a distinctive pointy tuft on the top of their head.

Color Pattern: They are silvery grey on top and white underneath. Sometimes with rusty peachy marks down their sides.

Behavior: These birds have a fluttery level flight and often travel with other types of birds (chickadees or woodpeckers).

Habitat: They live in eastern woodlands, deciduous forests, and often found in backyards or parks.



Common Grackle

Size & Shape: Large (11-13 inches) lanky birds with long legs and tails. Flat heads with long bills. When flying the wings look shorter than the tail.

Color Pattern: Appear black from a distance, up close you can see their iridescent glossy bodies and purple/blue iridescent heads. They have golden eyes.

Behavior: Grackles are often found in flocks flying or foraging on lawns. Their calls sound almost like a rusty gate, with a “readle-eak” accompanied by high pitched whistles.

Habitat: These birds thrive in fields, cities, parks, or open habitats like woodlands and marshes.