

Ohio Backyard Bird Count list

This checklist contains birds regularly seen from backyards during February. It has a few quick field marks, but it's meant to be used with a field guide or app. A few rarities are included with names in *italics*; these birds should be documented carefully and photographed if at all possible. There are common species in **bold** that are regularly confused with other birds; the similar species are detailed in the comments. Birds that are not on the list are extremely unusual either in February or in Ohio generally; very careful documentation should be gathered! Identification questions can be posted on Facebook in groups such as Ohio Backyard Birding, Birding Ohio, or What's This Bird?

Species	Field marks and similar birds
<input type="checkbox"/> Wild Turkey	Huge and unmistakable with bare head and black body
<input type="checkbox"/> Ring-necked Pheasant	Males are unmistakable, females are duller brown but still show long tails
<input type="checkbox"/> Rock Pigeon	Very big. Can come in a variety of colors, including solid white
<input type="checkbox"/> Mourning Dove	Slimmer dove, warm gray-brown with long pointed tail and black spots on back
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Eurasian Collared-Dove</i>	Very local; verify black collar and pale unspotted back
<input type="checkbox"/> Bald Eagle	Huge; young birds are all dark with mottled black and white below
<input type="checkbox"/> Sharp-shinned Hawk	Easily confused with Cooper's Hawk. Look for solid dark hood and squared tail while perched.
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooper's Hawk	Easily confused with Sharp-shinned Hawk. Look for rounded tail with broad white tip and contrasting black cap with pale nape.
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-shouldered Hawk	Easily confused with Red-tailed Hawk. Look for checkered wings and banded tail
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-tailed Hawk	Easily confused with Red-Shouldered Hawk. Look for band of dark streaks separating a white chest and belly
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Screech-Owl	Tiny, with yellow eyes and often with raised ear tufts. Can be red or gray.
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Horned Owl	Huge, with yellow eyes and often with raised ear tufts
<input type="checkbox"/> Barred Owl	Big, grayish-brown all over with dark eyes. Vertical stripes on a pale front.
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-headed Woodpecker	Sometimes confused with Red-bellied Woodpecker; usually shows a solid red head, but sometimes blackish on immatures. Black back and bold white wing patches on adults; immature has white patches with black spots
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-bellied Woodpecker	Shows red on the nape and crown of head, and usually a plain white below. Checkered black-and-white on back

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<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Adults show bold white wing patch, males show red on throat and forehead. Immature is black on the back, but mottled all over with grayish-brown and looks almost dirty. Yellow belly is not often obvious.
<input type="checkbox"/> Downy Woodpecker	Often confused with Hairy Woodpecker, but smaller with a shorter bill. White on the sides and bottom of the tail will show some black spots or stripes, but can sometimes be hard to see.
<input type="checkbox"/> Hairy Woodpecker	Often confused with Downy Woodpecker, but larger with a longer bill. Clean white on the sides and bottom of the tail.
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Flicker	Brownish-gray woodpecker with black spots all over back, wings, and underside. Gray head and big black band across the chest; shows yellow on wings and tail, especially in flight
<input type="checkbox"/> Pileated Woodpecker	Huge, and mostly black with white stripes on the head and a red crest
<input type="checkbox"/> American Kestrel	Only occurs in wide open areas like farm fields
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Merlin</i>	Not a frequent backyard visitor; check the field marks for hawks, especially Sharp-shinned Hawk
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue Jay	Big, blue birds with heavy black bills
<input type="checkbox"/> American Crow	Huge and black all over. Sometimes confused with ravens, which are very rare in Ohio
<input type="checkbox"/> Carolina Chickadee	The only likely chickadee species if you're south of U.S. 30
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-capped Chickadee	The only likely chickadee species if you're north of U.S. 30
<input type="checkbox"/> Tufted Titmouse	Small and gray with big dark eyes and a crest that can be lowered; white below, usually with rusty flanks
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-breasted Nuthatch	Rare some winters. Tiny, and usually boldly reddish-brown underneath. Bold black line through the eye with white stripe above.
<input type="checkbox"/> White-breasted Nuthatch	Bluish-gray on back with white face and underside
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown Creeper	Small, with unique squat shape and long, thin bill; usually acting like nuthatches
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>House Wren</i>	Common in summer, but very unusual in winter
<input type="checkbox"/> Winter Wren	Tiny, solidly dark. Usually frequents wood piles or brush.
<input type="checkbox"/> Carolina Wren	Tiny with a thin bill and bold white stripe over the eye and rich chestnut red color underneath
<input type="checkbox"/> Golden-crowned Kinglet	Very tiny, olive bird with dark line through the eye and over the eyebrow. Yellow or orange crest is usually visible.
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Ruby-crowned Kinglet</i>	Common in spring, rare in winter; look for bold white eye-ring on a tiny, olive bird.
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Bluebird	Males are bright blue and reddish underneath, females are more grayish-brown with white bellies and blue on the wings and tail.

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<input type="checkbox"/> Hermit Thrush	The only brown thrush likely to be seen in winter
<input type="checkbox"/> American Robin	Dark gray on the back and solid orange belly
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Gray Catbird</i>	Common in summer, rare in winter; slim and mostly solid gray with a long tail
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Brown Thrasher</i>	Common in summer, rare in winter; longer bill and tail, more heavily spotted than Hermit Thrush
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Mockingbird	Gray with yellow eyes, long black bill and tail. Tail and wings flash bold white in flight
<input type="checkbox"/> European Starling	Squat, black bird; spotted white all over in winter. Thin, sharp bill is sometimes dark but usually yellow.
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Cedar Waxwing</i>	Common in summer, rare in winter; warm brown with small crest, black mask, and yellow tail-tip
<input type="checkbox"/> House Sparrow	Big sparrows, brown on the back and gray underneath with heavy bills. Males are more reddish-brown and have black on the throat and chest. Females are more plain brownish all over and have yellow on the bottom of the bill.
<input type="checkbox"/> House Finch	Very common; Males are red or sometimes orange with streaks on the flanks. Females are dull brown or gray with heavy streaking.
<input type="checkbox"/> Purple Finch	Uncommon, and rare some winters; compare to House Finch. Males have plain white sides with no streaks. Females are more spotted than streaked with a bold white eyebrow.
<input type="checkbox"/> American Goldfinch	Common in winter, but mostly dull golden brown
<input type="checkbox"/> Pine Siskin	Common some winters, rare in others. Tiny and heavily streaked with very thin bill and yellow on the wings that can be hard to see. Compare to female House Finch.
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Common Redpoll</i>	Rare most years, uncommon in others. Very tiny with yellow bill, brown back, and whiter front; sometimes heavily streaked on flanks. Red spot on the head is tiny. Compare to much more common House Finch.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-rumped Warbler	The only warbler expected in winter
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pine Warbler</i>	Rarely stays the winter; look for yellow throat and white bars on gray wings
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Orange-crowned Warbler</i>	Rarely stays the winter; Gray head with a broken white eye-ring. Otherwise very yellow all over, especially under the base of the tail.
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Towhee	Rufous-sided Towhee in older field guides
<input type="checkbox"/> American Tree Sparrow	Small sparrow with white wing-bars and a black spot in the center of a gray chest. Yellow bottom mandible is unique but hard to see from a distance.
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Chipping Sparrow</i>	Common in summer, rare in winter; compare to American Tree Sparrow. Tiny with dark line through the eye and yellowish eyebrow.

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<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Field Sparrow</i>	Common in summer, rare in winter; tiny, with pink bill and bold white eye-ring
<input type="checkbox"/> Fox Sparrow	Big, chunky sparrow with heavy streaks and rich reddish color
<input type="checkbox"/> Song Sparrow	Tiny and very streaky with bold black spot on chest
<input type="checkbox"/> White-throated Sparrow	Often confused with White-crowned sparrow; both species can show white stripes on the head, but namesake white-throat is not found on a White-crowned Sparrow.
<input type="checkbox"/> White-crowned Sparrow	Adults often confused with White-throated sparrow; bold black-and-white crown stripes with pinkish bill. Immature has brownish crown, but keeps the pink bill.
<input type="checkbox"/> Dark-eyed Junco	Dark gray on top, clean white underneath. Shows white on tail in flight.
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Cardinal	Bright red male is unmistakable; female is brown with red bill, wings, crest, and tail.
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Evening Grosbeak</i>	Very rare most winters. Very large yellow birds with heavy bills. Males are bolder yellow with yellow and white wings; females more grayish yellow with black wings
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-winged Blackbird	Uncommon and often confusing in winter. Females and immature are dark and streaky all over, but often show orangish coloration on the face or throat. Adult males are mostly solid black, the red shoulder is usually hidden in winter.
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Rusty Blackbird</i>	Very uncommon, compare yellow eyes to Common Grackle. Females are bronze-colored all over with contrasting black mask, males are blackish with rusty brown on head and back.
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Grackle	Uncommon in winter; big blackbirds with yellow eyes, long tail, and heavy bill
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown-headed Cowbird	Uncommon in winter; females are plain brown all over with heavy bill and paler throat. Males are glossy black with contrasting brown head.
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Baltimore Oriole</i>	Common in summer, rare in winter. Males are unmistakable, but female and young birds are often mostly gray with orange concentrated on the throat and under the tail.