

# Birds at MB Johnson Park

## Characteristics of our Winged Friends

### Brown-headed cowbird

Best noted as a parasite; they lay their eggs in nests of other songbirds, leaving the host species to raise their young. Combined with the more important fact of habitat loss, this species has resulted in the decline of other songbirds. They are identified by their black bodies and brown heads.



### Chipping sparrow

This sparrow is easily identified by its chestnut crown, white eyestripe black line that extends from its bill to the back of its head. Listen for its rapid trill "chip" notes.



### Red-winged blackbird

This blackbird is easily recognized by its gurgling and trill song. It has an all black body with bright red shoulder patches tipped with yellow. Common in any area near water, they are primarily found in marshes and sloughs. Look for them by the wetland and in MB Johnson Park.



### Tree swallow

Swallows are characterized by their slender bodies with long, pointed wings. They are truly acrobatic, feeding with dart-like movements in mid-air. Look for them in their nest holes in dead trees along the riverbank.



### Coopers hawk

This bird belongs to a group of hawks called Accipiters. Accipiters are characterized from other hawks by their long tails and short rounded wings. They prey on songbirds in forests, while sticking to bird feeders in town. A cooper's hawk has a rufous-streaked breast and a dark blue-grey overall back. Look for them perched in dense trees along the river.



### American goldfinch

A common bird in most of the United States, the American goldfinch is a yellow bird with black wings, tall and cap. Its rump and undertail are white. Its distinctive flight call of "per-pe-po-pip", so make sure to listen. They can often be found at bird feeders and be seen flying among the trees.



### Yellow warbler

One of the most common warblers in the United States is the yellow warbler. All yellow with reddish/brown streaks on its breast, it also has a dark eye. A good vocalist, as all warblers are, listen for its "sweet" song. It prefers riparian habitat, so look for it among the mature deciduous trees along the river.



### American redstart

A bright species of warbler, it is characterized by its all black body and patches of orange on its side, wings and tail. A common woodland bird in the eastern and northern United States, it can be seen moving through shrub layers and trees along the river.



### Downy & Hairy woodpeckers

These two woodpeckers are very similar in plumage and behavior. Some experience and perhaps a guidebook is needed to separate the two species in the field. They are best identified with vocalization; the downy call is higher-pitched "pic" while the hairy has a loud sharp "peak". Both plumages are similar; the downy is generally smaller with a short bill. The hairy is larger with a bill that is nearly as long as its head. Look for them pecking on trees along the river.



### Baltimore oriole

A striking songbird of the eastern United States, the Baltimore oriole has an all black head and black on the upper part of its back with a contrasting bright orange rump and underside. It also has a line of white on its wing. It is noted for its musical song. Look for it in the wooded areas.



### Rose-breasted grosbeak

A large songbird of the northern forest, they have a very unique plumage. The pink breast contrasts with the white and black. Note its large heavy bill, it's characteristic of all grosbeaks. Look for it in the wooded areas along the river.



### Black-capped chickadee

One of the hardiest and most common songbirds, the black-capped chickadee is a year-round resident. They are known as feeder birds as well as woodland species. They are most known for the black cap and black chin. Look for them at the feeders of in the trees!



### Least flycatcher

This bird belongs to a group of flycatchers called the Empidonax, or known to birdwatchers as "empids". They are difficult to identify by sight alone; often they are identified by sound. Its gray back, white under parts and cream-colored wingbars are its most distinctive features. Look for it perched in low branches along the riverbank or fluttering in the air as it picks insects from midair.



### Belted kingfisher

This distinctive bird is characterized by its large bill and head, short legs, crest and blue plumage that contrasts with its belly and chin of white, which forms a "belt" along its chest. The kingfisher hunts for fish along rivers and lakes. Listen for their "rattle" call. They dive like an arrow, head first when hunting prey. Look for them flying along the riverbanks or perched in low hanging branches.



### Song sparrow

A common sparrow in the area, the song sparrow has a brown and black streaked back and black/brown and white streaked breast. It has a spot of dark color in the middle of its breast. Look for this sparrow in treed areas along the river; it will be foraging on the ground or in low-lying shrubs.



### White-breasted nuthatch

Another common year-round resident. The black on their head extends down their neck giving the appearance of a hood. They feed on insects found in tree bark and are defined by their frequent head down search for them. Listen for repeated nasal "yank" calls. Look for their darting flights from tree to tree.



### Grey catbird

A very distinctive songbird of the eastern and west-central part of the United States, the grey catbird is characterized by their gray bodies, tall and cap of black. They can be found fluttering and feeding in the underbrush and shrub layer of forested and riparian areas. Catbirds are in a group of birds known as mimics. Not as well known as their mockingbird cousins, they will imitate other bird's songs. However, they are most likely to make their customary catlike "meow" notes.



### Spotted sandpiper

The sandpiper is a widespread shorebird throughout most of the U.S. It is brown barred above and white with brown spots below and orange bill. Look for it, usually alone, actively feeding and making quick flights along the riverbank.



## DID YOU KNOW?

The Red River riparian area provides food, shelter, water and space which are the four basic needs of wildlife.