

House Finch Profile

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff



Up until 1940, House Finches were strictly western birds. When trappers began to ship them illegally to New York City for sale as cage birds, some of them were released in New York. They soon began to thrive in Long Island. Since that time, House Finches have spread from New York throughout the East and Midwest. Their range is still expanding. Their bright red chests and friendly behavior make them a backyard favorite.



Interesting Facts:

Family: Ploceidae

Scientific Name: *Carpodacus mexicanus*

Location: In the west, House Finches range from southern Canada to southern Mexico and east to Nebraska. After being introduced in the east, they now are widespread in the east and Midwest.

Migration: House Finches are non-migratory to partially migratory. They tend to stay within or near their nesting areas over winter, but they may wander widely for food. Yard feeders have helped their year-round survival.

Nesting: House Finches nest early, in March in most of the country. Each pair breeds 2-4 times each season. Nests are shallow cups made of twigs, grasses, hair, string, or fibers. They use a wide variety of nesting sites, but prefer coniferous trees. Nests have also been found in vents, ledges, ivy on buildings, hanging planters, and even abandoned nests of other birds.

Females do most of the nest building and all of the incubating, although the male does bring her food. She lays between 3 and 6 speckled, blue-white eggs. The young develop rapidly and leave the nest after about two weeks.

Diet:	The diet of the House Finch consists of seeds, dandelions, sunflower seed, grasses, and occasionally fruit. They will eat a few insects and feed them to their young in spring.
Size and Color:	House Finches range from 5" - 6" long; the male has red on the head and upper breast. He has brown streaks on the belly and flanks. Females are plain brown, with heavily streaked white chests.
Special Characteristics:	Both male and female House Finches sing lovely canary-like songs and carry on sweet, quiet chatter amongst each other all day long. They are very social birds, and, after the nesting season, they merge into family flocks for the rest of the year.
Attract Them:	They will come to feeders, especially those filled with sunflower seed. They will also eat thistle, white proso millet and canary seeds.
Life Span:	Usually 9 - 10 years