

House Finch

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Up until 1940, House Finches were strictly western birds. But trappers illegally shipped many to New York City for sale as cagebirds. Threatened with prosecution there, some pet dealers released their birds, which soon began to thrive in Long Island. Since then House Finches have spread from New York throughout the East and the Midwest. They are now among the most common of all garden birds throughout the continent.

Their bright red chests and sociable behavior make them a feeder favorite! They gather together at most feeding stations enjoying your food and each others' company.



Interesting Facts:

Family:	Ploceidae
Scientific Name:	<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>
Location:	Resident throughout West, from southern Canada to southern Mexico, and east to Nebraska. Introduced and now widespread in eastern North America.
Migration:	House Finches are non-migrators to partial migrators. They tend to remain on or near their breeding areas over winter, though extensive wandering for food may also occur. Yard feeders have aided or enabled their year-round survival.
Nesting:	House finches are early nesters, beginning in March in most of the country, with each pair breeding 2-4 times. Nests are shallow cups made of twigs, grasses, hair, string, cigarette butts, 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 primarily of seeds: dandelions, [sunflower seed](#), grasses, etc., and occasionally fruit. They will eat a few insects and feed them to their young in spring.
- Size and Color:** Sparrows range from 5 - 6"; the male has orange-red coloration on the crown, chest and rump with brown streaked flanks. Females are plain brown, with heavily streaked white chests.
- Special Characteristics:** Both males and females sing lovely canary-like warbling songs and carry on continuous sweet queet chatter among themselves all day long. They are very social birds, and after the nesting season, they merge into family and extended family flocks for the remainder of the year.
- Attracting:** At Western feeding stations just about any feeder and type of food attracts the House Finch including [suet](#), all types of [birdseed](#), most fruits, bakery crumbs and nectar at [hummingbird feeders](#). In their Eastern range. they feed

primarily on birdseed, with [sunflower](#), [thistle](#), [white proso millet](#) and canary seeds being their favorites.

Life Span: Usually 9 - 10 years