

## Pine Siskin

*Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff*

The Pine Siskin is known to be an irruptive species, arriving suddenly, and is most often seen in very large numbers. This species is considered to be highly sociable and can be observed "visiting" each other during nesting season. The Pine Siskin is often seen in the same areas as the [American Goldfinch](#). The Pine Siskin resembles the Goldfinch and sparrow, especially during winter, due to their similar size and actions, however, the Pine Siskin's signature call distinguishes it from the others. These entertaining birds can even be found perching upside down while foraging for seeds from pine cones.

### Interesting Facts:

**Family:** Fringillidae

**Scientific Name:** *Carduelis pinus*

**Location:** The Pine Siskin can be found in coniferous or coniferous-deciduous mixed woods, shrubs, thickets, weedy areas, and suburban yards.

**Migration:** The Pine Siskin does not have a regular migration pattern. One year, this species may be abundant in a particular area, and might be completely absent the next year. Fluctuation in a reliable food source is thought to be a factor in their irregular migration. The Pine Siskin breeds in the spring and summer, anywhere from southern Canada and Alaska to the southern United States. This species winters as far south as northern Mexico.

**Nesting:** The Pine Siskin makes a well-hidden, shallow nest of twigs, grasses, leaves, weeds, and strips of bark. They are most often lined with fur, hair, feathers, or grass. This species often builds their nests relatively close together.

**Diet:** In nature, the Pine Siskin forages for the seeds in conifer cones, weed seeds, insects, and flower buds.

**Size and Color:** A small finch, the Pine Siskin ranges from 4"-6". This species is a combination of lighter brown on bottom and dark brown on top and has heavy streaks. There is a slight hint of yellow coloring on the wings and tail base. The bill is very short and pointy. The male and female are similar in coloration, although the male may have slightly more yellow. A juvenile Pine Siskin is more buff in color than an

adult.

**Song:** Calls are said to be raspy and coarse. You can recognize this species by its distinguishing, ascending "zrreeeee" call.

**Attracting:** You can attract this species when you place a [thistle feeder](#) in your yard filled with [Nyjer thistle seed](#). You may also attract the Pine Siskin to your yard with a tube feeder filled with [black oil sunflower seed](#).