

Birds of Coastal Georgia



Created by Lindsay Bertch (2009)



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Mainland Birds

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Boat-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus major*)

Male



Female



Photos courtesy of Lindsay Bertch

Size: 13-16" from beak to tail tip

Description: The male is all black with a long wedge-shaped tail and yellow eyes. The female is brown, lacks the yellow eyes, and has a slightly smaller tail.

Similar Species: Compared to the male boat-tailed grackle, the **fish crow** is larger with a thicker bill and shorter tail.

Behavior: Usually seen in the winter in large flocks of males and females perched in trees or on dry ground.

Fish Crow (*Corvus ossifragus*)



Photo courtesy of Lindsay Bertch

Size: 16-20" from beak to tail tip

Description: An all black bird with black bill and legs.

Similar Species: The **boat-tailed grackle** male is smaller with a more petite beak and larger tail.

Behavior: A frequent visitor of picnic areas. Regularly seen in trees and on dry ground along the coast. Very vocal and intelligent.

Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*)



Photos courtesy of Lindsay Bertch



Size: 7½" from beak to tail tip

Description: A small blackbird with a thick, short bill. The male has a black body and a brown head. The female has a gray/brown body and a lighter gray throat.

Similar Species: The **boat-tailed grackle** male has a longer tail, a black head, and a longer bill; the female is a dark brown with a longer tail and bill. The larger **fish crow** is all black.

Behavior: Usually seen in flocks of males and females perched in trees or foraging on dry ground. This is an introduced species that parasitizes the nests of native birds.

European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)



Photo courtesy of Lindsay Bertch

Size: 7½ - 8½" from beak to tail tip

Description: A blackbird-like bird with pink legs and an iridescent speckled body. During the breeding season the bill is bright yellow, in the winter it is dark gray.

Similar Species: None, heavy speckling and pink legs make the European starling distinct.

Behavior: Often seen in large flocks perched in trees or foraging on dry ground. A common resident of urban areas. Introduced to North America from Eurasia.

Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*)



Photos courtesy of Lindsay Bertch

Size: 9-11" from beak to tail tip

Description: A slim gray bird about robin-sized with a long tail and small bill. Large white patches on tail and wings seen during flight.

Similar Species: The **loggerhead shrike** has a smaller tail, a heavier bill, and a black mask.

Behavior: Regularly seen in trees and on dry ground along the coast and in residential areas. Known for its melodious calls.

Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)



Photo courtesy of Lindsay Bertch

Size: 9" from beak to tail tip

Description: A small gray bird with a large head. White breast, black mask, and a thick, hooked bill. Small white patches on tail and wings seen during flight.

Similar Species: The **northern mockingbird** has a thinner bill, longer tail, and lacks the black mask.

Behavior: Regularly seen in trees, on wires, or on the top of fence posts.

Eastern Bluebird (*Sialis sialis*)



Photos courtesy of Lindsay Bertch

Size: 7" from beak to tail tip

Description: A small song bird with a petite bill. Males have bright blue backs and heads as well as a rusty red breast. Females are the same color but much duller.

Similar Species: None. Bright blue color distinguishes the eastern bluebird from other birds on the coast.

Behavior: Frequently seen perched in trees, power lines, or atop bird houses.

House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*)



Photos courtesy of Lindsay Bertch

Size: 5-5½" from beak to tail tip

Description: A small sparrow-like bird with striped sides and breast. The male has a bright red head and a reddish breast. The female is all brown with a heavily streaked breast. Note thick, short bill.

Similar Species: The red head of the male and the heavily streaked breast of the female make this species unique.

Behavior: May be seen foraging on the ground or in trees. Frequent visitor of bird feeders. In the spring, males sing in the tops of trees. This bird is native to the western United States and was introduced to the east around 1940.

Carolina Chickadee (*Poecile carolinensis*)



Photo courtesy of Lindsay Bertch

Size: 4½” from beak to tail tip

Description: A small song bird with a “chick-a-dee-dee” call. Black cap, black bib, white cheeks, gray back, and white/tan underside.

Similar Species: None, small size, unique voice, and black markings on head make the Carolina chickadee distinct.

Behavior: Flits around tree tops from branch to branch. A frequent visitor of bird feeders. Nests in cavities.

Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Dedroica coronata*)

Photos courtesy of
Lindsay Bertch



Size: 5-6" from beak to tail tip

Description: A small warbler with a yellow rump, yellow crown patch, and yellow below each wing. During the breeding season the male is blue/gray above with a black mask and breast patch. The females and nonbreeding males are brown above and streaked below.

Similar Species: The **yellow-throated warbler** has a yellow throat and no yellow around the wings.

Behavior: Usually seen foraging on the ground or near the ends of tree branches. Males sing in the tops of trees during the breeding season.

Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*)



Photo courtesy of Lindsay Bertch

Size: 5-5½" from beak to tail tip

Description: A small warbler with a yellow throat, gray back, black mask, white belly and eye brow stripe, and black stripes on the shoulders.

Similar Species: The **yellow-rumped warbler** has a yellow rump, yellow crown patch, and yellow below each wing.

Behavior: Usually seen foraging on the ground or near the ends of tree branches. Males sing in the tops of trees during the breeding season. Nests in tree tops.

Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*)



Photo courtesy of Lindsay Bertch

Size: 9-11" from beak to tail tip

Description: A big plover with a brown back and white belly. Note two distinct black breast stripes and large bill.

Similar Species: The two black breast stripes distinguish the killdeer from any of the other plovers.

Behavior: Commonly seen in fields and near parking lots. Nests on lawns. Adults feign a broken wing when their nest is approached.

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)



Photos courtesy of Lindsay Bertch

Size: 17" from beak to tail tip

Description: A small, stocky egret with a yellow bill. The legs are pink and the crown, breast, and back show a buff yellow during the breeding season. Legs are dark and the buff color is absent the rest of the year.

Similar Species: The **snowy egret** has a black bill, the **great egret** is much larger, and immature the **little blue heron** has a dark bill. The **white ibis** has a curved pink bill and pink legs. The larger **wood stork** has a black head.

Behavior: Often seen probing the vegetation of fields for insects or flying overhead with its neck pulled in. Associates with cattle and farm equipment. Originally from Africa.

References

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