

## Birds at Seattle University



Seattle University is blocks away from downtown, surrounded by dense urban infrastructure. So it makes it all the more impressive that we have had a distinction as Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife since 1989, and in 2007, the National Wildlife Federation qualified the campus as a Wildlife Habitat. This means that we provide necessary food, water, and shelter for birds, insects, and other animals.

Here is a list of some of the birds you can see on campus:

Black-capped chickadee (pictured) – This bold little bird travels in packs, often hanging on branches in precarious angles to get at insects on the stems and leaves. The coloring is highly recognizable, with black head and throat and white cheeks. They are social and can be seen in a variety of plant communities, from trees and forests to shrubs.

Bushtit – this is one of the smallest birds on campus, and they look like little gray ping-pong balls of fluffy feathers with a small beak and a tail. They travel in packs and fly from tree to shrub together, chattering all the while. They feed on insects and seeds on bark and stems of trees and shrubs.

Anna's hummingbird – These delightful birds can be seen on campus year-round. Both males and females have green backs and light gray undersides, and the males have a bright magenta head and throat. These feathers are iridescent and from many angles appear dark but from the front are a glowing pink. Anna's hummingbirds have long slender bills for eating nectar from flowers, and also eat small insects. They fly very quickly, and their call is a buzzing chatter. The west side of Admin and the Biodiversity garden west of Loyola are great places to see them on campus.

Bewick's wren – These little brown birds hold their tails at an upward angle above their backs, and flick them as they hop around on the ground. Bewick's wren is distinctive because of its bright white eyebrow. They have a loud sharp call, and eat insects and fruit in dense brush and on the ground.

Ruby-crowned kinglet – These little birds are active and curious. They flit about and seem nervous, flying out of shrubs to eat insects then quickly returning. They are small, gray with patterns in black and white on their wings, a white eye-ring. The males have a red crest on the tops of their heads that can be difficult to see.

Song sparrow – this bird has one of the sweetest songs of any on campus. They are high pitched, and quite variable. The most common is 3 or 4 clear high notes followed by a buzzing noise. They prefer open areas and shrubs to wooded areas, and are brown on their backs with brown streaking on their light chest, with several of the streaks joining together to form a blotch just below their throat.

White-crowned sparrow – The males of this sparrow have clear black and white stripes on their heads, and a light orange or reddish beak. They travel in flocks and prefer brushy areas. You will often see them feeding on the ground looking for insects on low branches or in the mulch.

Northern flicker – This large woodpecker is most often seen on the ground hunting for ants and other insects. It will even dig between pavers on sidewalks. At nearly a foot long and with a wingspan of 18", it is hard to mistake this bird for anything smaller. The markings are distinctive, and when in flight a white rump is visible.



# Grounds and Landscaping

Sharp-shinned hawk – This bird is very similar in appearance to the Northern Goshawk and the Cooper’s hawk, mainly distinguished by size. Cooper’s is small, only a foot tall, and the goshawk is closer to 2 feet tall. The sharp-shinned hawk on campus hangs out at the south end, usually around Campion and Logan field. You can see it perched on wires or in trees watching for its prey of small mammals and birds. Its agility makes it an excellent hunter.

Crow (Northwestern, American) – The populations of Northwestern and American crow converge in this area, and are undistinguishable to the naked eye. This all black bird is large, often found in large or small groups. They are ground scavengers, and have a distinctive *caw caw* call.

American robin – There is no mistaking this bird for anything else. We have all known “robin redbreast” since childhood. You can see it any time of year, often standing on lawns with head cocked watching for worms.

Nonnative birds on campus: house sparrow, house finch, starling, rock pigeon

For more information on these birds and pictures, see the Seattle Audubon Society’s webpage <http://www.seattleaudubon.org/> or Birdweb, Audubon’s guide to Washington’s birds at <http://www.birdweb.org/birdweb/index.aspx>