

BIRD OF THE MONTH - MAY

GOLDFINCH!

“There’s Gold in them there trees!”



American Goldfinches at left, second from right & right. The other two birds are Lesser Goldfinches. Photos by James Kendall

Look-up and be astounded by the beauty of these dynamic songsters as they rapidly flit among the trees, often in the upper canopy and quite often in mixed groups. Active and gregarious they flourish in the company of red-tinged, brown striped House Finches with which they share the characteristic, cone-shaped FINCH bill, so perfectly adapted to crack and eat seeds of many sizes. If you have a back-yard bird feeder, you’ll easily recognize them as familiar friends with a penchant for sunflower and shiny black Nyjer seeds.

Springtime brings out the best in these flashy yellow and black acrobats. Male goldfinch transform from a duller winter aspect into their flashy yellow breeding plumage. Females brighten up as well, but keep a toned down look to conceal themselves as they dutifully sit on nests and feed chicks.

A male American Goldfinch in breeding plumage is a real showstopper. His bright yellow body, back and face are nicely set off by a spiffy black cap and wings. The male Lesser Goldfinch shows off a bright yellow

body but with a dark back and full size black hat. His shiny black wings show a bigger splash of white by way of sharp contrast.



Photos by James Kendall

Winter, non-breeding males and females, on the other hand, don’t immediately draw your attention. They’re more of a smudgy brown and mustard color, with striped black and white wings. So enjoy the dazzling sunflower yellow of these social dynamos as they dash from tree to bush and back again all spring and summer.

A dedicated team of birders survey and tally all the birds and bird species each month producing a report viewable on the website. It’s accompanied by extraordinary photos that can be a useful learning tool when preparing for a visit to the Urban Forest. It’s great to know what birds can be expected each month, and a thrill to encounter them on your own. To learn more about the fascinating range of distinctive birds appearing in the Urban Forest and along the Shipley to Shore Nature Trail, visit:

hbtrees.org/urban-forest-2/bird-watching-in-the-urban-forest