



House Finch

August 2025 - BIRD OF THE MONTH

House Finches are one of the most numerous and commonly seen and heard birds in our neighborhoods and tree-filled residential parks. Although native to Mexico and the Southwest, they have rapidly expanded coast to coast due to introduction and colonization and are now the default finch in US urban and suburban settings.

These adaptable seed eaters literally flock to backyard feeders and colorful planted gardens. Strict vegetarians, they stick to a nutritious seed diet even when feeding their dependent young.

The rich red, and sometimes orange to yellow colored feathers males sport on their crown, throat, and chest come from essential compounds in their food. These natural pigments are known as carotenoids and are the same pigments found in the vitamin-rich carrots and tomatoes that we consume.

Females feast on the same seeds but do not convert these pigments into colored feathers. They do however select their mate based on the vibrancy of the male's feather color. Female House Finches tend to choose males with bigger and brighter red patches—it's a sign of a well-fed, healthy mate who will likely be able to gather and provide an ample nutritious diet for the chicks they raise together and help to ensure their survival into a healthy adulthood.

Listen for their spirited, cheerful, musical song year-round and their familiar soft muttered chip call as they stay in close contact with their flock in the trees and bushes nearby.

Photos by James Kendall Written by Betty Kanne

