



# American Pipit

**February 2026 - Bird of The Month**

The American Pipit is a welcome winter visitor to our parks and open spaces with wide expanses of grassy scrubland. This diminutive songbird breeds in the most northerly arctic tundras and lofty arid mountain tops. Pipits then escape that increasingly frozen terrain in the fall, descending in noisy flocks to safely overwinter in our far more hospitable climate where food sources still remain accessible to ground feeding birds.

Inconspicuous and sparrow-like, they walk rather than hop through scrubby fields seeking insects, spiders, grass and weed seeds. Pipits are one of the few songbirds found walking, not hopping like most small birds. They walk with quick, purposeful steps, tail bobbing as they go. It's a quirky behavior that makes them stand out in a flock of drab ground feeding birds.

Large flocks of pipits will often go unnoticed as their brown, buff and tan coloring blends perfectly into the dry winter scrubland. We notice them when the flock is suddenly flushed into the air emitting their tell-tale high, thin "pip-it" flight call before resettling, once again disappearing into the straw-colored grassland.

Photos by James Kendall    Written by Betty Kanne

