

Songbirds of Missouri

House Finch



Vocabulary

Study the vocabulary words and their definitions, then write a sentence using each word. Share your sentences with the class.

- Natives** – An original resident of a particular area
- Urban** – Belonging to a town or city
- Courtship** – The act or rituals associated with attracting a mate
- Brood** – A family of young birds
- Population** – The number of birds found in a particular area or region
- Mammals** – Warm-blooded vertebrates that grow hair on their skin and, in females, produce milk for their young
- Avian Disease** – A disease that affects birds only
- Conjunctivitis** – An infection of the eye or eyes
- Resistance** – A force acting against another force, such as the ability to fight off disease
- Preventative** – To prevent something from happening

(Show-Me Standards: CA 1, CA 6, Goal 2.1)

Research Question:

Where does a house finch's color come from?

Classroom Activity

House finches are seen with many other birds at the feeder, and it can be a challenge to see and remember the characteristics that distinguish these birds from other common feeder visitors. This activity will assist in looking at key identification features that will give students more than a birds-eye view of the avian visitors to the backyard.

Materials: "Backyard Birdfeeding" and "Missouri Woodpeckers" booklets, free from the Missouri Department of Conservation. (Field guides and binoculars are useful for field observations.)

Objectives: To compare the features of the house finch with other common birds.

Procedure: Compare and contrast the male house finch with other listed birds using the booklets or a bird field guide for field observations. Mark an 'S' if the characteristic is similar to the house finch and a 'D' if it is different. The first comparison between the northern cardinal and house finch has been done as an example.

(Show-Me Standards: S 3; Goal 1.2, 1.3, 1.8)

Short Answer Q&A

1. What bird is the house finch often mistaken for?
2. What was the original range of the house finch?
3. What happened to the house finch before laws were put into place to protect it?
4. How did the house finch end up in the eastern U.S.?
5. When can you see the house finch in Missouri?
6. What disease are eastern house finches prone to getting?
7. What is the best way to prevent disease if you feed house finches?
8. Which birds are relatives of the house finch?
9. Why do biologists believe birds sing the most at dawn?
10. How many eggs do house finches incubate?

(Show-Me Standards: Goal 1.5)

Bird Species	Beak Shape	Head Color & Shape	Body Color & Shape	Feet Shape	Wing Markings	Tail Shape & Color	Bird Size
Northern Cardinal	S	D	D	S	D	D	D
Downy Woodpecker							
American Robin							
English Sparrow							
Blue Jay							
Eastern Bluebird							
Red-bellied Woodpecker							
White-breasted Nuthatch							