What Common Bird Species Live in DC Year-Round?

Brown-headed Cowbird

(Molothrus ater)

The 7-inch males are glossy black with dark brown heads. The drab brown females lay their eggs in the nests of other birds. In the past, cowbirds followed bison herds and ate the insects stirred up by their passing. Now, livestock and lawn mowers take the place of bison.

American Crow

(Corvus brachyrhynchos)

Large (17–18 inches) and entirely shiny black, crows are known for their intelligence and ability to adapt to a wide range of habitats. They are omnivorous and seem to eat almost anything, including dead, rotting animals. Yum!

House Sparrow

(Passer domesticus)

Large, chirping flocks of 6-inch house sparrows can be found throughout the urban environment foraging for seeds and small insects. During the spring breeding season, the male's black throat becomes darker and the light cheek turns from gray to white.

Common Starling

(Sturnus vulgaris)

The black feathers of this 8-inch spotted bird often have a greenish and purplish sheen. Starlings forage in open grassy areas where they can catch insects in mid-air or poke their beaks into the ground in search for hidden food.

More at the Smithsonian!

Smithsonian Institution

Discover more about resident and migratory birds in the *Birds of D.C.* exhibition on the ground floor of the National Museum of Natural History.

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