



Refer to this handout to help you spot birds near the Emerson Riparian Woods, the Woodland Path, Esopus Walk and in the sky! Use the enclosed “Emerson Hot Spot” checklist to record your sightings, and submit to the eBird app.

The Emerson Resort & Spa provides complimentary binoculars at the Front Desk. Available on a first come, first serve basis starting at 8am. Binoculars must be returned by 8pm.



In The Sky!

Bald Eagles are a very special treat around the resort. You may be lucky enough to see one as you drive in or as you sit on one of the patios and enjoy the view of the Esopus Creek. Distinguish them from Turkey Vultures by their bright white heads and tails.

Turkey Vultures will soar above the resort effortlessly, smelling out their next meal. One way to tell Turkey Vultures from other soaring hawks and eagles is by the shape of their wings. Vultures tend to hold their wings in a V shape, whereas hawks and eagles hold their wings flat. Since these birds are typically seen flying, be sure to borrow a pair of binoculars from the Front Desk for best views.



Woodland Path



4 Male



Female

Baltimore Orioles are one of the brightest birds you will find around the Emerson. They love spending time high in the canopy, so look for their orange plumage in the tree tops. Males sing a gorgeous loud, fluty song, so listen for them while you walk the grounds. They are only around in the spring and summer, so enjoy them if you are here at the right time!

Scarlet Tanagers are hard to find and are usually only in wooded areas, so keep your eyes peeled for this stunningly bright red bird with black wings as you walk the Woodland Path. Females are an olive green color and look so different from the males you might think they are different species.



6 Male



Female



Male



Female

Downy Woodpeckers are the smallest woodpecker in North America, and thankfully also one of the most common! They often visit bird feeders, loving sunflower and suet in particular because of the high fat content of those foods. Look for them along the Woodland Path or in your own backyards if you provide a feeder, especially in winter!



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Blue Jays are one of the most conspicuous blue birds you can find at the resort. They are resourceful birds and are very intelligent. They are large, boisterous, and often disliked for their aggressive nature towards other birds, but this personality trait is balanced by their cooperative behavior with one another. They have tight family bonds and will mate for life.



Esopus Walk

Great Blue Herons forage around the Emerson and are easily recognizable by their huge size! Watch them standing in the shallows looking for passing fish or frogs.



Belted Kingfishers zoom around the Emerson property and perch high in the trees on open branches so they can stay on the lookout for fish. Although some northern populations migrate south for winter, in this region some individuals stick around all winter. As long as there is open water for fishing, they can handle the cold.



Yellow Warbler males sing their diagnostic songs in spring, “sweet sweet I’m so sweet,” and nest in bushes along the river. The females are around too, but are a bit less flashy than the bright yellow males. You can find them here from mid-March until late summer, when they are not in their Central and South American wintering grounds.



Male



Female

Common Mergansers are a real treat to observe in the Esopus Creek. They are ducks with a very different bill – not a normal duck-shaped bill, but instead a bill with sharp serrations and a slender shape, perfect for catching fish. They dive underwater to chase their prey, so you’ll often see them appear and disappear from the water’s surface as they hunt.



Cedar Waxwing Do you hear a soft “seeeee” sound coming from above? Do you see a flock of agile golden birds catching insects on the wing or eating berries from a tree? You are probably seeing Cedar Waxwings, a gorgeous bird that lives in New York year round. Their feathers are so smooth that they appear to be porcelain, and their black face masks give them an especially svelte appearance. They get their name from tiny bit of red wax on the tips of their wing feathers.



Female



Male



Emerson Riparian Woods

Gray Catbirds are sneaky little birds, often hiding in the cover of dense brush. They may be very close to you yet hard to see because they like such thick understorey. Listen for their cat-like call, for which they are named, in spring and summer. If you are lucky enough to see them you can recognize them by their small black cap and rusty red vent on an otherwise all gray body.

Northern Cardinals are everyone's favorites! They like to nest and spend time in thick vegetation, but they also will come out to sing from high vantage points in spring, and will spend hours munching sunflower seeds at bird feeders. They do not migrate, so you can enjoy these gorgeous birds year-round.

Song Sparrows are tricky to identify, but their songs may give them away in spring and summer. Listen for them singing from the tops of bushes around the property. If you see one, notice the dark spot on their breast, which is a good way to confirm that the simple-looking songster is in fact a song sparrow.

House Wrens are one of the smallest birds you'll encounter at the Emerson Resort. They love brush piles and thick vegetation, and will bounce around almost invisibly, but they sing a loud and characteristic song in spring and summer.

Barn Swallows flit over the river like little boomerangs, catching insects on the wing. They have a forked tail, which helps distinguish them from Chimney Swifts, which are one of the other agile fliers of the region. Both species are here only in the spring and summer, so enjoy these acrobats if you visit the Emerson during these times of year.

Chimney Swifts look like swallows but are actually more closely related to hummingbirds. The name of their group is called "Apodimorphae" which means "footless" in Greek, and refers to the fact that these birds spend so much time flying that you wouldn't think they have legs (they do, of course!). Distinguish them from Barn Swallows by their short stubby tails and their constant chatter while flying.

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~ Please be aware that birds included in this booklet and on checklist may be migratory and so, depending on the time of year, may not be seen. ~