

American Goldfinch *Carduelis tristis*



Photo credit: Erin Alvey, May 2009



Photo credit: Ken Thomas, May 2007

The American Goldfinch is the state bird of New Jersey, Iowa, and Washington and is a highly recognizable and very handsome bird. They are very active foragers and welcomed guests of bird feeders that mostly eat seeds, especially thistle, and mainly eat sunflowers and nyjer at feeders. They are a common summer visitor to the Garden City Bird Sanctuary which has special "finch" feeders.

Description

Size and Shape- A small finch with a short, conical beak, small wings, and a notched tail.

Color Pattern- Males are bright yellow with black cap. Females are golden yellow. Both have black and white striped wings and tail. Both are browner during winter.

Behavior- Nimble and acrobatic birds that live in flocks outside of the breeding season. They forage actively and fly in an undulating pattern.

Song- Varied; descending or random chirps.

Habitat- Live where weeds, brush, and thistles are common; including weedy fields, meadows, flood plains, roadsides, and orchards. Also found near birdfeeders.

Range- Northeast, Central, and Northwest America year-round. Southern part of the US in the winter and Southern Canada during breeding season.

Diet- Among the strictest vegetarians- Mainly seeds (especially thistle).

Bird Statistics

Scientific name- *Carduelis (Spinus) tristis*

Family- Fringillidae

Conservation Status- Least concern

Length- 4.3-5.1 in (11-13 cm)

Wingspan- 7.5-8.7 in (19-22 cm)

Weight- 0.4-0.7 oz (11-20 g)

Egg Statistics

Color- Very pale blue-white with some brown spots near the large end

Nest- Tightly-woven rootlets and plant fibers lined with plant down

Clutch size- 2-7 eggs

Number of broods- 1-2

Length- 0.6-0.7 in (1.62-1.69 cm)

Width- 0.5-0.5 in (1.2-1.3 cm)

Incubation period- 12-14 days

Nestling period- 11-17 days

Additional Information

http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/American_Goldfinch/id
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_goldfinch

Thanks to Crystal Chang for preparing this bird data page.