

Northern Cardinal - *Cardinalis cardinalis*



Nest with Cardinal babies at GCBS July 2002
Photo credit R Alvey



Male Cardinal being measured and banded at GCBS Oct 2012
Photo credit R Alvey

The Northern cardinal is easily distinguishable from other birds by their bright red color and prominent crest, the Northern Cardinal is a territorial songbird often found in gardens as well as around the Garden City Bird Sanctuary. They prefer nesting in shrubs and trees.

Description

Size and Shape- Mid-sized songbird with a short and stout beak, a long tail, and a crested head

Color Pattern- Males are mostly bright red with darker red wings. Females are more grayish tinged with red. Both sexes have a reddish beak and black around the beak

Behavior- Often found foraging on or near the ground near shrubbery. Males are territorial and can be aggressive

Song- Series of high-pitched chirps

Habitat- Live in dense and brushy areas such as edges of woodlands, thickets, swamps, overgrown fields, and gardens

Range- Year-round in northern and central part of the US, parts of southern Canada, Mexico, and around the Gulf of Mexico

Diet- Mostly grains, seeds, and fruits from bird feeders and the ground supplemented with insects such as grasshoppers and cicadas

Bird Statistics

Scientific name- *Cardinalis cardinalis*

Family- Cardinalidae

Conservation Status- Least concern

Length- 8.3-9.1 in (21-23 cm)

Wingspan- 9.8-12.2 in (25-31 cm)

Weight- 1.5-1.7 oz (42-48 g)

Egg Statistics

Color- Brownish or grayish white speckled with dark brown

Nest- Bowl-shaped that consists of twigs, leaves, and grasses

Clutch size- 2-5 eggs

Number of broods- 1-2

Length- 0.9-1.1 in (1.7-2 cm)

Width- 0.7-0.8 in (1.7-2 cm)

Incubation period- 11-13 days

Nestling period- 7-13 days

Additional Information:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_cardinal

<http://birds.audubon.org/birds/northern-cardinal>