

# Waterbirds of the Quinnipiac



**Great Blue Heron**  
These large, majestic birds are found here throughout the summer, stalking their prey of small fish and aquatic animals in the shallows.

## Which Birds Can You Find?

If you take the time to quietly observe with binoculars, a viewing scope, or even with your naked eye, you will see many different kinds of birds in this preserve, no matter the season.

### Something New Every Season

In **winter**, waterfowl congregate in large numbers offshore to feed and await the spring. Various species of sparrows find seeds in the meadow adjacent to the road.

**Spring** finds birds returning to the preserve from their southern wintering locations and advertising their presence through birdsongs as they seek mates. Tundra-nesting birds also visit our shoreline as they head north.

During **summer**, locally nesting species feed on plentiful fish or insects and raise their young. In late summer, tundra-nesting birds again visit our shoreline, this time as they migrate southwards.

**Fall** prompts locally nesting birds to gather for safety and to forage for food before migrating south for the winter. Waterfowl and bald eagles arrive, seeking ice-free waters for the winter.



**Double-crested Cormorant**  
The feathers of these unusual waterbirds get wet during long dives, so you'll often see them standing on posts drying out their feathers. Look for them during the summer.



**Bald Eagle**  
It would be difficult to mistake this iconic raptor. Once threatened by hunting and pesticides, the species disappeared from Connecticut for approximately forty years before returning.



**Red-breasted Merganser**  
These ducks stand out because of their spikey mohawks. Besides the red-breasted merganser, there are two other types of merganser you may see here: the common merganser and the hooded merganser.



**Osprey**  
These cunning raptors feed on live fish and can be found here at the preserve throughout their breeding season—from April until October. They nest on the several platforms we've installed—like the one just to your right. Check out the osprey sign on the River Walk Trail to learn more!



**American Black Duck**  
These birds look a lot like mallards but both males and females have darker plumage. You'll see them during the winter.



**Great Egret**  
You'll most often see these birds during the summer, standing still in shallow water, waiting for the perfect morsel to wander too close.



**Belted Kingfisher**  
Look for this large, brightly colored waterbird anytime of the year. You may find it perched on posts or trees looking for its next meal.



**Mute Swan**  
You may find these majestic birds floating down the Quinnipiac River and grazing on underwater vegetation all year round.



**Bufflehead**  
The bufflehead is the smallest diving duck found in North America. You'll most likely see them here in the fall or winter.

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