Birding is an activity enjoyed by many New Yorkers of all ages and abilities and is a great way to connect with the outdoor world. Like people, different birds like to live in different places or habitats. The following common birds are typical of habitats in New York State. Use your observation skills and see if you can find these birds in their preferred habitats near your own home. Successfully complete your challenge and you will be entered into a drawing for fun birding accessories. Open to NYS residents 16 years old and younger.

**Name of Bird Detective:** ______________________________________  **Age:** ________

**Address:** ___________________________________________________________

**City:** __________________  **State:** __________  **Zip:** __________

**Email:** ___________________________________________________________  

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**House Sparrow**

The house sparrow is one of the more common birds in the world. Not native to this country, it was first introduced to the United States in Brooklyn in 1851. Male house sparrows have a gray cap on their heads framed by brown with white cheeks and a black neck.

Length: 5 to 7 inches.

**Date Sighted:** ___/___/___  **Time:** __________

**Where Sighted:** Town/City __________________

**Habitat:** □Woode Area  □Field  □Roadside
□Wetland  □Pond, Lake, or Stream  □Ocean
□Birdfeeder  □Park  □Playground
□Other: ____________________________

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**American Robin**

One of the first birds seen as spring arrives in New York, robins can often be seen hopping around the ground pulling earthworms. The robin’s cheery call can be heard at first light. Robins can be identified by their rusty orange chest.

Length: 9 to 11 inches.

**Date Sighted:** ___/___/___  **Time:** __________

**Where Sighted:** Town/City __________________

**Habitat:** □Woode Area  □Field  □Roadside
□Wetland  □Pond, Lake, or Stream  □Ocean
□Birdfeeder  □Park  □Playground
□Other: ____________________________

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**European Starling**

Like the house sparrow, the starling is not native to this country. They were first introduced to North America in 1890 from Europe. Starlings can form large flocks in fall and winter. Starlings change color by season, from purplish green in the summer to brownish black with white spots in the winter.

Length: approx. 8 inches.

**Date Sighted:** ___/___/___  **Time:** __________

**Where Sighted:** Town/City __________________

**Habitat:** □Woode Area  □Field  □Roadside
□Wetland  □Pond, Lake, or Stream  □Ocean
□Birdfeeder  □Park  □Playground
□Other: ____________________________

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**Northern Cardinal**

The northern cardinal is one of the country’s most distinguishable birds given the male’s bright red color. The cardinal has slowly expanded its range northward and is now found in most states east of the Mississippi River. Male cardinals are bright red in color. Female cardinals are brownish-gray with red tinges on their crest (top of head), wings and tail.

Length: 8 to 9 inches.

**Date Sighted:** ___/___/___  **Time:** __________

**Where Sighted:** Town/City __________________

**Habitat:** □Woode Area  □Field  □Roadside
□Wetland  □Pond, Lake, or Stream  □Ocean
□Birdfeeder  □Park  □Playground
□Other: ____________________________

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**Blue Jay**

Noisy, raucous, and aggressive at feeders, the blue jay is a bright blue bird with a noticeable crest atop its head. It has a grayish face and underside, and a black necklace. Common in woods and near homes, jays will mob hawks and owls to drive them away. Listen for its loud “Jay” call; you might hear it before you see it!

Length: 11 to 12 inches.

**Date Sighted:** ___/___/___  **Time:** __________

**Where Sighted:** Town/City __________________

**Habitat:** □Woode Area  □Field  □Roadside
□Wetland  □Pond, Lake, or Stream  □Ocean
□Birdfeeder  □Park  □Playground
□Other: ____________________________
Date Sighted: ___/___/___   Time: ____________
Where Sighted: Town/City _____________________
Habitat: □ Wooded Area  □ Field  □ Roadside
□ Wetland  □ Pond, Lake, or Stream  □ Ocean
□ Birdfeeder  □ Park  □ Playground
□ Other: ________________________________

Return completed challenge forms to:
I BIRD NY Beginners Birding Challenge
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-1010
Or complete online and email to: birdingchallenge@dec.ny.gov

Rules:
1) Challenge open to contestants 16 years of age and younger.  
2) One entry per individual.  
3) Challenge open now through September 30th.  
4) All entries must be received by October 14th.

Challenge winners will be announced in October.  
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www.dec.ny.gov | www.ibirdny.org