Birding in Hell’s Half Acre

This guide...
covers 21 of the 80 bird species known to frequent Hell’s Half Acre and have also been spotted in other areas along the Urban Charles River. The birds in this guide are attracted to one or more of the following native plant species: Elderberry, Flowering Dogwood, Pokeweed, Staghorn Sumac, and Wild Cherry, which you can learn more about on the final page of this guide.

This 7.5 acre undeveloped zone along Greenough Boulevard has provided a refuge for Cambridge's human and wildlife populations alike for decades. The CRC is part of a joint restoration effort with DCR to return more native plants (including those listed above) to the area and create a more robust ecosystem that can support native species.
American Goldfinch  
*Spinus Tristis*

- **Seasons in New England**
  - Spring
  - Summer
  - Fall

- **Seen at**
  - Herter Park
  - Magazine Beach
  - North Point Park
  - Watertown Square

- **Habitat**
  Semi-open areas with shrubs, bushes, and weeds. At edges of areas like streams, roads, woodlands.

- **Diet**
  Seeds, Insects, Flower Buds, Twig Bark, Maple Sap

- **Climate Threats**
  - Fire Weather
  - Heavy Rain
  - Spring Heat Waves

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American Robin  
*Spinus Tristis*

- **Seasons in New England**
  - Spring
  - Summer
  - Fall

- **Seen at**
  - Herter Park
  - Magazine Beach
  - North Point Park
  - Watertown Square

- **Habitat**
  Semi-open areas with shrubs, bushes, and weeds. At edges of areas like streams, roads, woodlands.

- **Diet**
  Insects, flower buds, twig bark, maple sap, fruits

- **Climate Threats**
  - Fire Weather
  - Heavy Rain
  - Spring Heat Waves

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Baltimore Oriole  
*Icterus Galbula*

- **Seasons in New England**
  - Summer
  - Fall

- **Seen at**
  - Herter Park
  - Magazine Beach
  - North Point Park
  - Watertown Square

- **Habitat**
  Open woods or forest edge, typically elms, deciduous and mixed woods. Can be found in trees in towns

- **Diet**
  Insects (Hairy Caterpillars, Beetles, Grashoppers, Wasps, Bugs, Spiders), Fruit (Berries, Nectar), Snails

- **Climate Threats**
  - Fire Weather
  - Heavy Rain
  - Sea Level Rise
  - Spring Heat Waves
  - Urbanization

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Black-capped Chickadee  
*Poecile Atricapillus*

- **Seasons in New England**
  - Spring
  - Summer
  - Fall
  - Winter

- **Seen at**
  - Herter Park
  - Magazine Beach
  - North Point Park
  - Watertown Square

- **Habitat**
  Open woods or forest edge, typically willow thickets, birch, deciduous groves, suburbs if nesting areas are available

- **Diet**
  Insects (Hairy Caterpillars, Beetles, Grashoppers, Wasps, Bugs, Spiders), Fruit (Berries, Nectar), Snails

- **Climate Threats**
  - Fire Weather
  - Heavy Rain
  - Spring Heat Waves
**Blue Jay**  
*Cyanocitta Cristata*

- **Habitat**: Oak and pine woods, low forest suburban gardens, well-wooded suburbs or city parks.
- **Diet**: Seeds, Grain, Berries, Small Fruits, Nuts, Acorns, Insects (Caterpillars, Beetles, Grasshoppers, Spiders), Small Animals (Snails, Bird Eggs, Small Rodents, Frogs, Baby Birds)
- **Climate Threats**: Fire Weather, Spring Heat Waves, Urbanization

**Cedar Waxwing**  
*Bombycilla Cedrorum*

- **Habitat**: Open woods with fruiting trees and berries. At edges of areas like streams, forests, swamps, and suburban yards
- **Diet**: Berries, Small Fruits, Insects, Flowers, Sap
- **Climate Threats**: Fire Weather, Spring Heat Waves, Urbanization

**Downy Woodpecker**  
*Dryobates Pubescens*

- **Habitat**: A wide variety, wilderness areas to suburban yards, deciduous trees, orchards, river groves.
- **Diet**: A wide variety, wilderness areas to suburban yards, deciduous trees, orchards, river groves.
- **Climate Threats**: Fire Weather, Spring Heat Waves, Urbanization

**Eastern Towhee**  
*Pipilo Erythrophthalmus*

- **Habitat**: Open woods, brush areas, forest understory
- **Diet**: Insects (Spiders, Snails, Millipedes), Small Animals (Small Salamanders, Lizards, Snakes) Seeds, Acorns, Berries, Small Fruits
- **Climate Threats**: Fire Weather, Heavy Rain, Spring Heat Waves, Urbanization
| **Gray Catbird**  
| *Dumetella Carolinensis* |
| ![Gray Catbird](image1) |
| **Seasons in New England** |
| Spring · Summer · Fall |
| **Seen at** |
| - Herter Park |
| - Magazine Beach |
| - North Point Park |
| - Watertown Square |
| **Habitat** |
| Areas with dense low growth, leafy thickets, overgrown brush fields, garden hedges |
| **Diet** |
| Insects (Beetles, Ants, Caterpillars, Grasshoppers, Crickets), Berries, Small Fish |
| **Climate Threats** |
| - Fire Weather |
| - Heavy Rain |
| - Sea Level Rise |
| - Spring Heat Waves |
| - Urbanization |

| **Hermit Thrush**  
| *Catharus Guttatus* |
| ![Hermit Thrush](image2) |
| **Seasons in New England** |
| Spring · Fall |
| **Seen at** |
| - Herter Park |
| - Magazine Beach |
| - North Point Park |
| - Watertown Square |
| **Habitat** |
| Mixed woods, forest floor, thickets, parks, bogs, second growth in burn areas |
| **Diet** |
| Insects (Beetles, Ants, Caterpillars, Grasshoppers, Spiders), Berries, Earthworms, Small Salamanders |
| **Climate Threats** |
| - Shift out of Contiguous 48 States |
| - Spring Heat Waves |

| **House Finch**  
| *Haemorhous Mexicanus* |
| ![House Finch](image3) |
| **Seasons in New England** |
| Spring · Summer · Fall · Winter |
| **Seen at** |
| - Herter Park |
| - Magazine Beach |
| - North Point Park |
| - Watertown Square |
| **Habitat** |
| Dry brush, cities, suburbs, canyons, farmland, lawns, weedy areas |
| **Diet** |
| Seeds, Berries, Flower Buds, Small Fruits, Aphids |
| **Climate Threats** |
| - Fire Weather |
| - Spring Heat Waves |

| **Mourning Dove**  
| *Zenaida Macroura* |
| ![Mourning Dove](image4) |
| **Seasons in New England** |
| Spring · Fall · Winter |
| **Seen at** |
| - Herter Park |
| - Magazine Beach |
| - North Point Park |
| - Watertown Square |
| **Habitat** |
| Open and semi-open areas, edge areas with trees and open ground, forest clearings, farmland, suburbs, prairies, roadsides. |
| **Diet** |
| Seeds (Grains, Grasses, Weeds), Snails, Insects |
| **Climate Threats** |
| - Fire Weather |
| - Spring Heat Waves |
| - Urbanization |
Northern Cardinal
*Cardinalis Cardinalis*

- **Diet**: Seeds, Insects (Beetles, Grasshoppers, Ants, Flies, Spiders, Centipedes), Berries, Snails
- **Habitat**: Brushy and semi-open habitats, forest clearings, swamps, city parks, areas with dense bushes, tall brush, streamside thickets, suburban gardens
- **Climate Threats**: Fire Weather, Spring Heat Waves, Urbanization
- **Seasons in New England**: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter
- **Seen at**: Herter Park, Magazine Beach, North Point Park, Watertown Square

Northern Flicker
*Colaptes Auratus*

- **Diet**: Insects (beetles, termites, caterpillars), Fruits, Berries, Seeds, Nuts
- **Habitat**: Open forests, towns, semi-open country, requires open ground foraging
- **Climate Threats**: Fire Weather, Spring Heat Waves
- **Seasons in New England**: Spring, Summer, Fall
- **Seen at**: Herter Park, Magazine Beach, North Point Park, Watertown Square

Northern Mockingbird
*Mimus Polyglottos*

- **Diet**: Berries, Fruits, Insects (Beetles, Grasshoppers, Caterpillars, Wasps, Spiders Ants), Animals (Snails, Earthworms, Crayfish, Lizards)
- **Habitat**: Thickets, brushy areas with dense low shrubs and open ground. Suburban hedges and open ground, second growth
- **Climate Threats**: Fire Weather, Spring Heat Waves
- **Seasons in New England**: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter
- **Seen at**: Herter Park, Magazine Beach, North Point Park, Watertown Square

Red-bellied Woodpecker
*Melanerpes Carolinus*

- **Diet**: Insects, Acorns, Nuts, Berries, Fruits, Seeds, Small Animals (Tree Frogs, Eggs Of Small Birds, Sap, Small Fish)
- **Habitat**: Woodlands, towns, deciduous forest along rivers and in swamps. Open areas like forest edges and clearings, groves in farm country
- **Climate Threats**: Urbanization
- **Seasons in New England**: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter
- **Seen at**: Herter Park, Magazine Beach, North Point Park, Watertown Square
Red-eyed Vireo
*Vireo Olivaceus*

**Habitat**
Open woods with saplings, areas along streams in solid forest, well-wooded suburbs and parks

**Diet**
Insects (Caterpillars, Moths, Beetles, Wasps, Bees, Ants, Bugs, Flies, Walkingsticks, Cicadas, Treehoppers, Spiders), Snails, Berries, Small Fruit

**Climate Threats**
- Fire Weather
- Spring Heat Waves

**Seen at**
- Magazine Beach
- North Point Park
- Watertown Square

Veery
*Catharus Fuscescens*

**Habitat**
Deciduous woods with damp understory

**Diet**
Insects (Beetles, Ants, Small Wasps, Caterpillars, Crickets, And Others, Also Spiders, Centipedes), Berries, Small Fruit, Small Frogs, Salamanders, Snails

**Climate Threats**
- Shift out of Contiguous 48 States

**Seen at**
- Herter Park
- Magazine Beach
- Watertown Square

Wilson’s Warbler
*Cardellina Pusilla*

**Habitat**
Dense understory of tall coniferous forest, during migration: deciduous shrubs and low trees.

**Diet**
Insects (Bees, Wasps, Beetles, Caterpillars, Aphids, Spiders), Berries, Protein Corpuscles

**Climate Threats**
- Heavy Rain
- Sea Level Rise
- Spring Heat Waves
- Urbanization

**Seen at**
- Magazine Beach
- North Point Park
- Watertown Square

Yellow Warbler
*Setophaga Petechia*

**Habitat**
Conifer forests, thickets, gardens, sometimes beaches.

**Diet**
Insects (Caterpillars, Mayflies, Moths, Mosquitos, Spiders), Berries

**Climate Threats**
- Fire Weather
- Spring Heat Waves

**Seen at**
- Herter Park
- Magazine Beach
- North Point Park
- Watertown Square
**Seasons in New England**

- **Spring**
  - Herter Park
  - Magazine Beach
  - North Point Park
  - Watertown Square

- **Fall**
  - Herter Park
  - Magazine Beach
  - North Point Park
  - Watertown Square

**Habitat**

- Woods and thickets along water bodies, typically in damp plants, semi-open country, woodland edges, and towns

**Diet**

- Insects (Wasps, Caterpillars, Grasshoppers, Gnats, Spiders), Berries

**Climate Threats**

- Fire Weather
- Shift out of Contiguous 48 States
- Spring Heat Waves
- Urbanization

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### Bird Species by Season

#### Spring
- American Robin
- Blue Jay
- Gray Catbird
- Hermit Thrush
- Northern Cardinal
- Northern Flicker
- Northern Mockingbird
- Red-bellied Woodpecker
- American Goldfinch
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Downy Woodpecker
- House Finch
- Mourning Dove
- Veery
- Wilson's Warbler
- Yellow-Rumped Warbler

#### Summer
- American Robin
- Blue Jay
- Gray Catbird
- Northern Cardinal
- Northern Flicker
- Northern Mockingbird
- Red-bellied Woodpecker
- American Goldfinch
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Downy Woodpecker
- House Finch
- Veery
- Cedar Waxwing
- Yellow Warbler
- Baltimore Oriole
- Eastern Towhee
- Red-eyed Vireo

#### Fall
- American Robin
- Blue Jay
- Gray Catbird
- Northern Cardinal
- Northern Flicker
- Northern Mockingbird
- Red-bellied Woodpecker
- American Goldfinch
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Downy Woodpecker
- House Finch
- Veery
- Cedar Waxwing
- Baltimore Oriole
- Eastern Towhee
- Mourning Dove

#### Winter
- Blue Jay
- Northern Cardinal
- Northern Mockingbird
- Red-bellied Woodpecker
- American Goldfinch
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Downy Woodpecker
- House Finch
- Veery
- Cedar Waxwing
- Baltimore Oriole
- Eastern Towhee
- Mourning Dove

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### Birds in this guide are attracted to...

#### Elderberry

The Elderberry shrub is a popular nesting location for birds. It attracts insects with its tiny white flowers in the spring, and birds in the early fall with its dark clumps of berries. In Hell's Half Acre, Elderberry is sprinkled throughout the area.

#### Flowering Dogwood

The tall Flowering Dogwood tree attracts insects with its showy white flowers, and supports butterflies and moths. Its red fruit is a favorite snack among many birds. In Hell's Half Acre, it's rare but can be found between road's edge and the wetland.

#### Pokeweed

Pokeweed, a herbaceous plant, blooms small white flowers that attract insects, these flowers later become deep purple berries, which are eaten by a number of species. In Hell's Half Acre, Pokeweed is found mainly at the rivers edge and in the successional upland forest.

#### Staghorn Sumac

The deciduous tree or shrub, Staghorn Sumac is known for its fuzzy bark and red, cone-shaped fruit. Sumac hosts insects and nesting birds in it's thickets. In Hell's Half Acre, Staghorn Sumac is found at the rivers edge and in the successional upland forest.

#### Wild Cherry

Wild Cherry trees and shrubs host nesting birds and caterpillars. Their white flowers attract insects in the spring, and cherries attract many birds in the summer. In Hell's Half Acre, Wild Cherry can be found at the rivers edge and in the successional upland forest.

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**All bird photos in this guide courtesy of Mike Bryant @naturemanmike**