

Bird of the Month



DESCRIPTION: PURPLE FINCH

Carpodacus purpureus

MALE: 6" Raspberry-red head, cap, breast, back and rump. Little or no brown streaking on breast and flanks. Brownish wings and tail.

FEMALE: A plain brown bird with a heavily blurred streaked chest and prominent white eyebrows.

IMMATURE: Same as female, immature plumage in males is kept one year.

NESTING:

Female and male build a cup nest of twigs, grasses, rootlets, and moss lined with horsehair, moss and rootlets, placed on a horizontal branch far from the trunk 5-60 ft. high. Female incubates 3-6 eggs which are light green-blue with dark marks. Both parents feed young. Nest in May.

FEEDING:

Gleans the ground and canopy foliage for seeds and insects. Eats fruit in summer and tree buds and blossoms in winter and spring. Comes to bird feeders for sunflower seed and millet, mostly in winter. Travel in flocks of up to 50.

RECOMMENDED FEED: Rogue Deluxe: All-purpose mix.

RECOMMENDED FEEDERS: Any tube feeder or sunflower seed feeder.

HABITAT:

A year-round resident, common in non-residential areas, preferring open woods or edges of low to mid-elevations conifer forests. Also found in riparian and mixed oak woodlands as well as suburban yards.

OTHER INTERESTING FACTS:

Roger Tory Peterson described this finch best when he said it looked like a "sparrow dipped in raspberry juice." First year males, still in immature plumage, may sing and breed. They have a continuous, bubbly, musical warble song. Their call in flight is a distinctive short "pik".

COMPARE TO:

The **House Finch** is often hard to tell apart from the Purple Finch. The male House Finch tends to be more orange-red and has a brown cap, brown marking behind the eyes and a white belly with brown streaks. The female is overall brown streaked without the distinctive white eyebrow of the Purple finch.

The **Cassin's Finch** resides primarily in the eastern Cascade mountain ranges and eastern Oregon. They have dark eyes and pale spectacles around their eyes.

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