

Cedar Waxwing

Bombycilla cedrorum

A treat to find in your binocular viewfield, the Cedar Waxwing is a silky, shiny collection of brown, gray, and lemon-yellow, accented with a subdued crest, rakish black mask, and brilliant-red wax droplets on the wing feathers. In fall these birds gather by the hundreds to eat berries, filling the air with their high, thin, whistles. In summer you're as likely to find them flitting about over rivers in pursuit of flying insects, where they show off dazzling aeronautics for a forest bird.

Keys to Identification

Size and Shape

The Cedar Waxwing is a medium-sized, sleek bird with a large head, short neck, and short, wide bill. Waxwings have a crest that often lies flat and droops over the back of the head. The wings are broad and pointed, like a starling's. The tail is fairly short and square-tipped.

Color Pattern

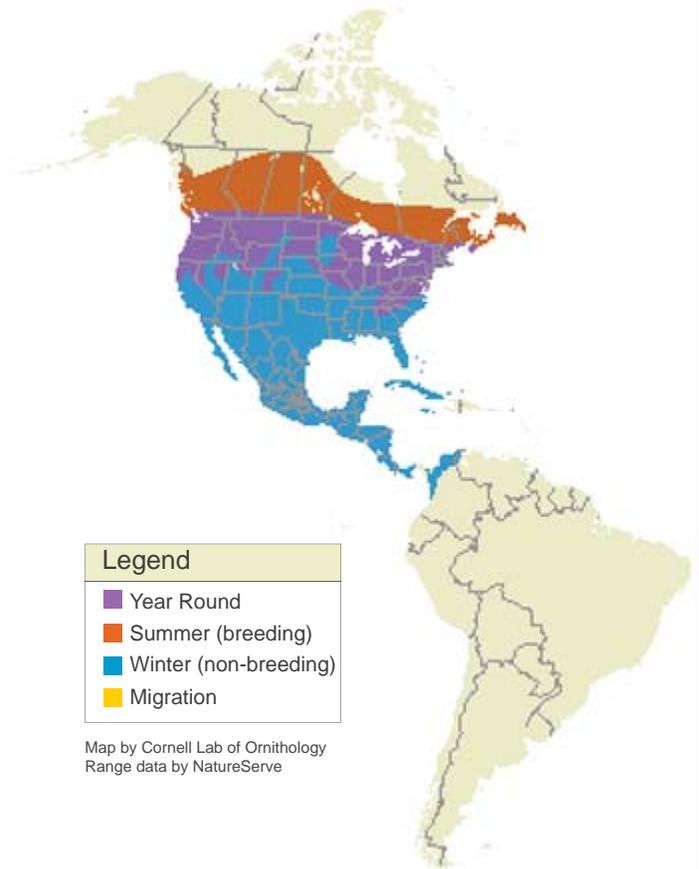
Cedar Waxwings are pale brown on the head and chest fading to soft gray on the wings. The belly is pale yellow, and the tail is gray with a bright yellow tip. The face has a narrow black mask neatly outlined in white. The red waxy tips to the wing feathers are not always easy to see.

Behavior

Cedar Waxwings are social birds that you're likely to see in flocks year-round. They sit in fruiting trees swallowing berries whole, or pluck them in mid-air with a brief fluttering hover. They also course over water for insects, flying like tubby, slightly clumsy swallows.

Habitat

Look for Cedar Waxwings in woodlands of all kinds, and at farms, orchards, and suburban gardens where there are fruiting trees or shrubs.



Measurements

Both Sexes

- Length - 5.5 - 6.7 inches
- Wingspan - 8.7 - 11.8 inches
- Weight - 1.1 ounce