



Northern Flicker

Coloring Instructions

Red - Mustache of the male bird

Orange - Underside of the wings

Dark gray - the neck, bill and feet

Grayish brown - the face, top side of wings, breast and belly

White - the rump patch

Length: 11"

Habitat: Resident in open woodlands

Field marks: White rump and the bright reddish-orange underwings and undertail

Northern Flicker

The Northern Flicker has several distinctive field marks. Field marks are something that can easily be seen in the field, even if the bird is moving at a distance. Most people don't recognize the flicker even though it is a large, flashy, common bird in our area. But once you learn the field marks, you will be amazed at how common this bird is and how easy it is to identify, even if you see it for only a second flying away from you.

This will be your usual view of the flicker. But as it flies away, you can't help but see a large white rump patch where the body and tail meet. Another thing you will notice, especially if you see the bird from the side, is that the underwing has a prominent orange color. Each time the wings flap upward, they will flash orange.

These field marks of white rump and orange underwing allow you to identify the Northern Flicker in a second. Each time you color the page of a new bird, pay close attention to the field marks. These will be the things that help you identify the bird the first time. Once you can identify a bird, you will start noticing more subtle markings and interesting behaviors.

The Northern Flicker is one of our larger woodpeckers. It flies like a woodpecker and hammers its bill against wood like a woodpecker. But the flicker is different from other woodpeckers in that it spends a lot of its time on the ground, not in the trees. This is because the flicker eats ants. Flickers eat ants more than any other bird in North America. That is why you will usually see them flying up from the ground. Check where they were standing, and you will probably find ants.

Northern Flicker Challenges

- See the field marks of a Northern Flicker.
- Identify a male Northern Flicker. The male has a red "mustache."
- Identify a female Northern Flicker. The female does not have a "mustache."
- See its distinctive roller-coaster flight. The bird rises as it flaps vigorously several times and then glides downward as it folds its wings and coasts for a second. This alternating up and down flight characterizes the flight of most woodpeckers.
- See a flicker feeding on the ground. Find where it was feeding and see if there are ants there.
- In the spring, trace rapid bursts of rat-a-tat drumming to their source until you see a male flicker. The male making that sound drums against something hollow to announce his presence to other flickers.
- Hear and identify the flicker's loud "Flic-flic-flic-flic-flic..." call, which is especially common in the spring.

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