



Photo by Al Erickson



# Bird Tales

## Northern Cardinal

Holding the bird model provides the opportunity to examine the bird up close and appreciate the details of each bird.

### Look

#### Look at the color patterns

The cardinal is named after the red robes the Cardinal of the Catholic church wears. Even his beak is red! The black mask is a nice feature to match him up to a female cardinal, which is not bright red.

#### Look at the crest

The tuft of feathers on the top of its head might make it look like he is having a bad hair day—help him out! The crest can also be folded back to show that he is calm.

### Listen

*To hear the song of the bird,  
squeeze its belly.*

The male cardinal song is loud, to attract a female. It sounds like he is saying **“I’m PURDY-PURDY-PURDY.”**

Cardinals are often the first to sing in the morning, even before sunrise.

Outside, there is plenty of variation in their song. You might here them say **“Cheer, Cheer”** or **“Birdy, Birdy, Birdy.”**

### Feel

#### Feel the shape of the beak

The beak is very large and cone-shaped to break open seeds.

#### Feel the crest

The tuft on its head is soft and fluffy. It uses it to show other cardinals when it is upset or calm.

### Fun Facts

The male cardinal fiercely defends its breeding territory from other males. When a male sees its reflection in glass surfaces, it frequently will spend hours fighting the imaginary intruder.

A perennial favorite among people, the northern cardinal is the state bird of seven states.

