

American Dippers

American dippers are medium sized, gray birds that have long legs and constantly bob their bodies up and down. Dippers are America's only true aquatic songbirds. They live along clear moving waters. Dippers eat insects that live in these waters. They are year-round residents in Colorado and migrate only as far as the closest unfrozen stream or river.

American dippers breed twice a year. Males and females often rejoin and reuse the same nest. Chicks stay in the nest for about 24 days. When they leave, they can already swim and dive to catch food. Dippers can hold their breath underwater for up to 30 seconds! These birds have a heavy layer of waterproof feathers and can withstand even the coldest waters. In the late summer, American dippers molt their wing and tail feathers together. This leaves the birds flightless for a short time.

