



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Volume 20 Issue 2 | March/April 2013

ALL SEASONS
WILD BIRD
STORE

Raptors!

A Guide to Minnesota
Birds of Prey

+ Attracting Bluebirds



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BLOOMINGTON

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EAGAN

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MINNETONKA

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WHITE BEAR LAKE

2703 East Cty. Hwy. E.
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White Bear Lake, MN 55110
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WAYZATA & WILD BIRD DELIVERS

15710 Wayzata Blvd.
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Bird's-Eye View is published to share the joy of backyard birds with All Seasons Wild Bird Store's customers and friends.

SEASONAL CHECKLIST

MARCH
&
APRIL

Early Spring

By Minnetonka Manager CAROL CHENAULT

- Start a bluebird trail!

See details at bbrp.org



- Open purple martin houses as soon as martins are sighted in the area (check [Facebook.com/wildbirdstore](https://www.facebook.com/wildbirdstore) for customer sightings!).
- Add bird houses for chickadees and wrens and clean out existing bird houses.



- Hang a Best Nest Builder** to provide nesting material.

- Install a nesting ledge for American Robins, House Finches or Eastern Phoebe.

- Anticipate the return of Eastern Bluebirds- (early March), Baltimore Orioles (late April) and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds (late April to early May).

- Follow birds' spring migration at journeynorth.org

- Reapply WindowAlert™ decals each spring to prevent window collisions.** ▶



- Bring your feeders to any All Seasons Wild Bird Store for cleaning (*fees apply*).

- Scrub bird baths with 9 parts water and 1 part bleach then add a **Water Wiggler™**, mister or dripper to your bird bath.

- Replace cracked and damaged feeders with easy-to-clean Ring Pull™ or Clever Clean™ tube feeders from Droll Yankees®.** ▶



- Rake up shell debris and trash.
- Clean, repair or replace oriole and hummingbird feeders.
- Plan to add berry-producing plants, like highbush cranberry, and plants for cover, such as arborvitae, to your backyard.

Fresh Starts

A Season of New Beginnings



Spring is synonymous with new beginnings, fresh starts, and rebirth across the natural world. For bird lovers in the Midwest, it signals the return of many of our favorite backyard visitors. They are returning to find partners, raise families, forage for food and then ultimately continue the miraculous cycle of migration with a new generation at their wingtips.

Nesting and mating season has already begun for many of our local raptor species and will continue for several more months for our favorite songbird species. You'll begin seeing the bright, beautiful mating plumages and hearing the accompanying "love" chorales as the weather and the mood heats up. If springtime doesn't put a smile on your face, lighten your step a bit and remind you of nature's beauty and bounty, then stop in—we'd love to help. Enjoy the season!

Al and Dave Netten



Worry-free Guarantee!

We want our customers to have a worry-free experience with every purchase. If you're not completely satisfied with *any item* purchased from our store, simply return it to us for an exchange or refund.

No worries . . . ever.

 **Join the conversation online!**

Visit our Facebook page to post photos, ask questions and be the first to know about upcoming sales and events.

Raptors!

A Guide to Identifying Minnesota's Birds of Prey

By Minnetonka Manager CAROL CHENAULT

A *raptor*, also known as a *bird of prey*, is a carnivorous, meat-eating bird. All raptors share at least three characteristics: **keen eyesight**, **eight sharp talons** and a **hooked beak**. The word "raptor" comes from a Latin term *rapere* meaning "to seize or grab."

Minnesota raptors include eagles, falcons, hawks, kites, osprey, owls and vultures. Most Minnesota raptors have plumage in some combination of earth tones to better blend in with their environment: light to dark brown, black and white or grayish blue. **The following is an introduction to identifying some of Minnesota's more prevalent birds of prey.**

KEY FEATURES FOR IDENTIFYING RAPTORS

Identifying raptors can be a tricky undertaking. For one thing, juvenile birds don't look like parent birds for at least a couple years.

Another complication: male and female birds of prey most often look identical, with only size to distinguish between the two (the female is typically larger than the male!).

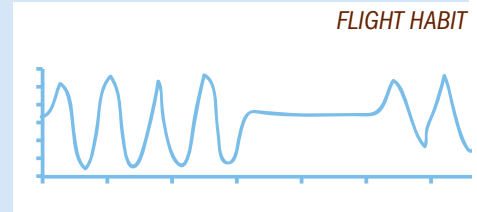
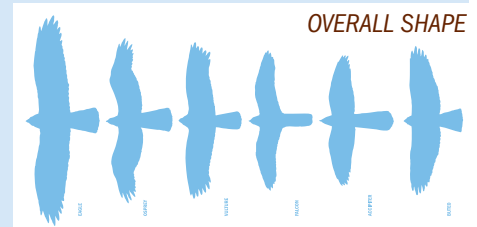
Complications aside, there are some key features you can look for when attempting to identify a raptor:

Overall Shape. Note the overall shape of the bird—shape of the head, wings, tail and body.

Flight Habits. Does the bird use "active flight"—meaning flapping wing beats—or does it primarily soar, glide or hover?

General Habitat. Look at the general habitat and determine if it would be considered prairie, woodlands or roadside.

Perching Habits. In general, perching raptors sit upright, whereas non-raptors, such as crows, lean forward over their feet.



Bald Eagle



LOOK FOR:

- Large: 31-37"
- Wingspan 7-8'
- Deep, powerful flaps in flight
- Can soar for long distances
- In flight: hold their wings directly out from the body



NOTES:

- Tend to be found near lakes and rivers
- Takes 4-6 years to develop adult white head & tail

Turkey Vulture



LOOK FOR:

- Large: 26-27"
- Wingspan 6'
- Featherless heads
- Gliding, teeter totter-like flight pattern peppered with a few shallow wing beats. Wings raised in a noticeable V-shape when gliding.



NOTES:

- Scavenge, don't hunt—so not *raptors* by strict definition.

Osprey



LOOK FOR:

- Med/Large: 23-24.5"
- Wingspan to 6'
- Narrow, angled wings
- Flap frequently with only occasional gliding
- Body and head bobs up and down with each pump



NOTES:

- Plunge feet first into the water and can completely submerge in order to catch fish

Falcons



LOOK FOR:

- Varies: 16-25"
- Long, tapered wings and small bodies
- Active fliers, seldom glide
- Able to hover, change direction quickly and reach incredible speeds when diving



NOTES:

- Minnesota hosts American Kestrel, Gyrfalcon, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, and Prairie Falcon

Kites



LOOK FOR:

- Medium: 22-23"
- Slim bodies with long falcon-like wings and long tails
- Active fliers—bouncy without much gliding—and can change flight direction quickly



NOTES:

- Minnesota hosts the Swallow-tailed Kite* (*shown)
- Feeds mainly on snakes
- Prefers wooded river swamps and pine lands

Harriers



LOOK FOR:

- Medium: 18-21"
- Slim with long, narrow, round-tipped wings and long tail
- Smooth, full wing beats with sudden drops to the ground to pounce on prey
- Fly extremely low to the ground along landscape



NOTES:

- Minnesota hosts Northern Harriers
- Wings are slightly raised in a V shape when gliding

Buteo-type Hawks



LOOK FOR:

- Varies: 15-24"
- Broad wings, wide, rounded tail
- Slow, heavy flaps for 3-6 beats followed by gliding
- Gain altitude by flying in consecutive tight circles until high enough to soar



NOTES:

- Minnesota hosts Broad winged, Red-shouldered, Swainson's, Red-tailed*, Rough-legged and Ferruginous Hawks (*shown, most common).

Accipiter-type Hawks ("Bird Hawks")



LOOK FOR:

- Small to medium: 10-26"
- Short, rounded wings
- Slender bodies and long tails
- Flight is burst of quick flutters and a glide
- Compacted size equips them for rapid maneuvering around trees in pursuit of small birds



NOTES:

- Minnesota Hawks in this grouping are Cooper's*, Sharp-shinned, Northern Goshawk (*shown).

Owls



LOOK FOR:

- Size varies widely by species
- Flattened facial disk with large, forward-facing eyes
- Nocturnal; perch during the day.
- Flight is noiseless, "mothlike"
- May have ear-like tufts

NOTES:

- MN: Great Gray, Snowy*, Barred, Barn, Northern Hawk-Owl, Burrowing, Boreal, and Northern Saw-whet Owls (no tufts); Great Horned, Long-eared, Short-eared and Eastern Screech Owls** (tufts) (*shown, top right; **top left).

ATTRACTING BLUEBIRDS

Bluebird Basics

By Wayzata Manager MELISSA BLOCK

Just as in the people real estate business, the key to bluebird real estate is location, location, location. Eastern Bluebirds like open areas rich with insects, such as a good-sized yard, prairies, or fields like golf courses and cemeteries. George Brown, the 2010 Bluebirder of the year, has maintained a bluebird trail of almost 24 boxes on a golf course in White Bear Lake.

Over the past few years, George has noticed an increase of bluebirds in suburban areas. If you have the right location for a bluebird house or you've seen them in your neighborhood, adding a correctly placed bluebird house will attract them to stay.

We recommend pairing two houses, at least 20 feet apart. One house will provide housing choices to sparrows or swallows, leaving the other house available for bluebirds.

A bluebird house should be mounted on a post or pole, 4–5 feet above the ground. George suggests that bluebird houses should be 100 feet away from any trees. He also recommends that bluebird houses face a tree, shrub or fence line so that when the young fledge they have a perch to land on. A nearby high perch is also helpful; bluebirds use it to look for insects and to watch over the nest box. ■

A Few Bluebird Facts:

- ✧ **Insects like grasshoppers, crickets and beetles make up most of bluebirds' diets. They also love mealworms!**

- ✧ **Primarily the female builds nests. The male guards the nest box during construction.**
- ✧ **Bluebirds can fly up to 17 mph.**



With thoughtful placement, your bluebird houses will have residents this summer!

FEATURED PRODUCTS

Bluebird Nest Boxes

We've got what you need to get started.

If you're ready to attract bluebirds to your yard, we recommend purchasing a pair of either the Gilbertson PVC nest box or the Gilwood nest box.

Gilbertson PVC Nest Box

Made from weatherproof PVC, this bluebird nest box is easy to install, easy to clean and lasts a long time. You can open the house by squeezing the PVC, which releases the base from the roof. The roof hangs over on all four sides to protect the house. It has a predrilled hole in the roof, which fits over the conduit in our Rebar Mounting System.



▲ Customer photo by Rick & Kathy Fagen

Gilwood Nest Box

The U-shaped entrance hole near the roof of this nest box allows a lot of light to enter and helps to ventilate the box. There's a small metal bar at the top of the entrance to deter starlings. The front panel opens smoothly for monitoring and cleaning. A coupler and a flange are used to easily attach the Gilwood Nest Box to the Rebar Mounting System.



To mount your nest boxes, we recommend the **Conduit/Rebar Pole Mounting System**. It consists of a conduit, coupler, long screws and rebar. It's easy to install and perfect for mounting a bluebird, chickadee or wren house. ■

Mealworms

Live and dried mealworms are a treat for migration-worn birds.

Now that migration season is upon us, it's a great time to offer mealworms for the many insect-eating songbird species that will be returning to our neck of the woods. *▲ Bluebirds love mealworms!*

Mealworms come in various-sized packages of either living or freeze-dried specimens. Live mealworms work best in a shallow dish feeder, refilling it as needed. The dried mealworms can be fed in a similar fashion or also mixed with your favorite seed mix, like Joe's Mix, and offered in tube, hopper or platform feeders.

The extra protein will be a welcome addition to your regular menu this spring. ■



Have an idea for a future issue of *Birds-Eye View*? Photos and articles may be submitted by email to info@wildbirdstore.net. **Sign up for our weekly e-newsletter** at WildBirdStore.com to receive information about backyard birding, store events and exclusive discounts.