Winter’s silence is over

By January, even though the landscape is snow covered, many birds begin their spring calls. The Northern Cardinals’ “what cheer, cheer, cheer” resounds (A). Black-capped Chickadees call “fee bee” back and forth to one another. Woodpeckers drum on everything from trees to metal flashing as they define the acreage of their territory. The White-breasted Nuthatches’ nasal “whi, whi, whi” the Blue Jays’ loud “pump handle” call, and the House Finches’ spring songs add to the orchestra.

The hooting and whinnying of several types of owls resound in the early months of the New Year as the Great Horned Owl, the earliest bird to nest in Minnesota, begins incubating eggs (B). In mid February the “cooing” song of the mourning dove begins, as does as the “wicker” call of the Red-bellied Woodpecker. In late February, listen for the gobble of the Wild tom Turkeys and the loud double squawk courting call of the Ring-necked Pheasant.

Bird sounds ring clearly on a calm winter day and are easy to pinpoint through the bare branches of trees. Enjoy a walk to listen to our winter residents as they sing spring’s pending arrival.

Other signs of spring

Patches of bright yellow begin to show on male goldfinches as they molt into their mating plumage. Migration begins in early February with the arrival of the Horned Lark (C); they’re followed by the Red-winged Blackbirds in the last days of the month.
Happy New Year!

Celebrating Generosity
We at All Seasons Wild Bird Store have much to be grateful for as we start this new year and much of that credit belongs to you, our terrific customers, who continue to enjoy the generous act of feeding birds.

A quote I recently read from a 9-year-old girl when asked about feeding her birds, states it perfectly: “It makes me feel happy and generous.” Is there a better way to pass the colder and darker days of winter than engaging in something that makes you feel happy and generous? We don’t think so.

As we reflect on 2011, one of the highlights for us was celebrating our 20th anniversary. That’s a lot of years of happiness and generosity and we continue to have faith that it’s the little things we do every day that make the biggest differences. Thanks for choosing us, we truly appreciate you and strive to give you our best in return.

~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.

Who’s Who At Your Feeders This Winter

By Wayzata Manager Melissa Block

Part of the joy in backyard birding is identifying and keeping track of the birds that come to your yard over the years. Equipped with a field guide, it’s relatively easy to identify birds like Northern Cardinals, Blue Jays and Black-capped Chickadees based on their colors, sizes or shapes. Other birds, like nuthatches and woodpeckers, display characteristic behaviors that divulge their identities.

Far more tricky can be identifying all of the little brown birds that gather on the ground or at feeders. With similar colors, sizes, shapes, and behaviors, their defining characteristics are less apparent. Further complicating things is that many of these brown birds may be disguised with winter coloring or belong to irruptive species—temporary visitors that are forced into an irregular migration due to habitat changes. Here’s a guide to help you master who’s who at your feeders this winter:

YEAR-ROUND SPECIES

American Goldfinch
While goldfinches are here year-round, they can become difficult to spot in the winter, since males lose their bright yellow feathers and look very similar to females. Goldfinches’ habits change during the winter too: they form larger flocks, travel over larger areas, and expand their diet beyond their summer favorite of Nyjer® to include sunflower chips, canary seed, millet and flax seeds.

House Finch
The House Finch lives here year-round, but like goldfinches they travel in nomadic flocks. One of several types of reddish-colored finches, adult males have a rosy red bluish around the face and upper breast. Females do not have the rosy blush; they’re a grayish brown with blurry streaks on their breasts. House finches will eat almost any birdseed.

IRRUPTIVE SPECIES

Some of our common visiting winter finches, such as Dark-Eyed Juncos, Common Redpolls, Pine Siskins and Crossbills migrate to our area depending on the success of crops they depend on for their food sources.

The 2011-12 Finch Forecast predicts fewer migrants this year, since most of the seed crops are excellent.

Dark-eyed Junco
Juncos are the “snowbirds” of the Upper Midwest. They migrate from northern Minnesota to winter here. They prefer to feed on the ground in flocks.

Common Redpoll
Common Redpolls are small finches that typically travel in flocks. Redpolls have internal throat pouches that they fill with seeds, and then fly to a more protected spot to swallow.

White-winged Crossbill
These rather uncommon finches are either reddish (males) or greenish-yellow (females) in color. They prefer the shelter of spruce and fir forests, but will also come to feeders.

Pine Siskin
The Pine Siskin shares many characteristics with other finches, making them especially difficult to identify! Tell them apart from the American Goldfinch by their streaked bodies. Distinguish them from House Finches by a smaller size, wingbars and pointier bill; and from Common Redpolls by a lack of red on
**HOUSE FINCH**

**LOOK FOR:**
- Medium: 6 to 6.5"
- Pinkish bill
- Bright white belly with gray head, back and wings

**ATTRACT:**
- Finches’ Choice and White Millet
- Ground feeder

---

**COMMON REDPOLL**

**LOOK FOR:**
- Small: 5.25"
- Bright red forehead and black chin; male has pinkish breast
- Smaller than a House Finch

**ATTRACT:**
- Nyjer®, Fine Chips, and Finches’ Choice
- Finch feeders

---

**WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL**

**LOOK FOR:**
- Medium: 6.5"
- Thick, curved bill with crossed tips
- Two large white wingbars
- Short tail

**ATTRACT:**
- Most likely to come to finch or seed feeders—tube or hopper.

---

**PINE SISKIN**

**LOOK FOR:**
- Small: 5"
- Buff-colored wingbars
- Touch of yellow on the sides of their tails
- Heavily streaked bodies
- Noticeably small and pointy beak

**ATTRACT:**
- Nyjer®, Fine Chips, and Finches’ Choice
- Tube feeders—Nyjer® or seed, hopper feeders

---

**SEASONAL CHECKLIST**

**By Minnetonka Manager CAROL CHENAULT**

- Celebrate January 25th, statistically the coldest day of the year, by making sure your feeders are full, don’t forget the suet!
- Scatter Critter Crunch for over-wintering Mourning Doves, Blue Jays, cardinals, pheasants and Wild Turkeys.
- Stock Nyjer™ feeders for year-round and irruptive finches.
- Try the new and improved Berry Nutty in a hopper feeder, tray feeder or Vista Dome style feeder.
- Buy Backyard Birds CD.

- Fill a window feeder with no-shell Kracker Jax or shelled sunflower (#1 Select Chips, Medium Chips or Fine Chips) for faster foraging, using less of the bird’s energy.

---

**YEAR-ROUND SPECIES**

**American Goldfinch**

**LOOK FOR:**
- Small: 5"
- Dark, cone-shaped bill
- Wing bars

**ATTRACT:**
- Nyjer®, Fine Chips, and Finches’ Choice mix
- Tube or tray feeder

---

**House Finch**

**LOOK FOR:**
- Medium: 5.75 to 6"
- Longer, square-tipped tail
- Dark streaks on sides and belly
- Red head and chest

**ATTRACT:**
- Finches’ Choice and White Millet
- Ground feeder

---

**Dark-eyed Junco**

**LOOK FOR:**
- Medium: 6 to 6.5"
- Pinkish bill
- Bright white belly with gray head, back and wings

**ATTRACT:**
- Finches’ Choice and White Millet
- Ground feeder

---

**Pine Siskin**

**LOOK FOR:**
- Small to medium: 5.25 to 6"
- Longer, square-tipped tail
- Dark streaks on sides and belly
- Red head and chest

**ATTRACT:**
- Finches’ Choice and White Millet
- Ground feeder

---

**Common Redpoll**

**LOOK FOR:**
- Small: 5.25"
- Bright red forehead and black chin; male has pinkish breast
- Smaller than a House Finch

**ATTRACT:**
- Nyjer®, Fine Chips, and Finches’ Choice
- Finch feeders

---

**White-winged Crossbill**

**LOOK FOR:**
- Medium: 6.5"
- Thick, curved bill with crossed tips
- Two large white wingbars
- Short tail

**ATTRACT:**
- Most likely to come to finch or seed feeders—tube or hopper.

---

**SEASONAL CHECKLIST**

**By Minnetonka Manager CAROL CHENAULT**

- Celebrate January 25th, statistically the coldest day of the year, by making sure your feeders are full, don’t forget the suet!
- Scatter Critter Crunch for over-wintering Mourning Doves, Blue Jays, cardinals, pheasants and Wild Turkeys.
- Stock Nyjer™ feeders for year-round and irruptive finches.
- Try the new and improved Berry Nutty in a hopper feeder, tray feeder or Vista Dome style feeder.
- Buy Backyard Birds CD.

- Fill a window feeder with no-shell Kracker Jax or shelled sunflower (#1 Select Chips, Medium Chips or Fine Chips) for faster foraging, using less of the bird’s energy.
How to Attract Brown Creepers

Contributed by Minnetonka Customer Don Grussing, Author of The Seasons of the Robin and How to Control House Sparrows

Just like the migrating raptors that prefer to fly down the Minnesota shore of Lake Superior rather than venture above Lake Superior’s water, the little Brown Creeper is very uncomfortable away from the trunks of trees.

In fact, I have never seen a Brown Creeper at a bird feeder mounted on a pole or hanging from a branch. That doesn’t mean it can’t happen. But I think it is rare.

Nevertheless, I like to see the little birds around—and you can too. Simply feed suet from a feeder mounted on the trunk of a tree where visiting Brown Creepers are most likely to approach it (other suet eaters can access it here too).

Creepers live on tiny insects and insect eggs, and generally consume similar-sized morsels of suet. Sometimes they will climb from the foot of the tree up to the suet feeder to eat from the base or sides of the suet.

(My feeder is about five and a half feet high and fastened to the trunk by fencing staples).

More often, though, they will just pick up the tiniest of scraps that have fallen to the ground or lodged in cracks and crevices in the bark as a result of the pecking on the suet by woodpeckers and other birds.

Brown Creepers are hard to see, and hard to hear (when you get older), but it is quite satisfying to know that you can help these tiny birds survive Minnesota’s extremes just by offering suet where they are comfortable consuming it.

Effectc camouflage coloring can make Brown Creepers difficult to see.

Q) HOW DO BIRDS STAY WARM?

A) Through a trio of adaptations, including:

Anatomical adaptations. Birds’ legs and feet of are covered with special scales that minimize heat loss. Also, in the fall, birds grow extra feathers for insulation and their bodies build up fat reserves for extra energy.

Physiological adaptations. Birds can control the temperature of their legs and feet separately from their bodies by constricting blood flow to their extremities. They can also lower their metabolic rate—a condition called “torpor” to shift energy to maintaining body temperature.

Behavioral adaptations. Birds will fluff out their feathers to create air pockets for additional insulation and will shiver to raise their metabolic rate and generate more body heat. Some of the small birds will gather in large flocks at night and crowd together in a small tight space to share body heat.

How to Attract Brown Creepers

Contributed by Minnetonka Customer Don Grussing, Author of The Seasons of the Robin and How to Control House Sparrows

Just like the migrating raptors that prefer to fly down the Minnesota shore of Lake Superior rather than venture above Lake Superior’s water, the little Brown Creeper is very uncomfortable away from the trunks of trees.

In fact, I have never seen a Brown Creeper at a bird feeder mounted on a pole or hanging from a branch. That doesn’t mean it can’t happen. But I think it is rare.

Nevertheless, I like to see the little birds around—and you can too. Simply feed suet from a feeder mounted on the trunk of a tree where visiting Brown Creepers are most likely to approach it (other suet eaters can access it here too).

Creepers live on tiny insects and insect eggs, and generally consume similar-sized morsels of suet. Sometimes they will climb from the foot of the tree up to the suet feeder to eat from the base or sides of the suet.

(My feeder is about five and a half feet high and fastened to the trunk by fencing staples).

More often, though, they will just pick up the tiniest of scraps that have fallen to the ground or lodged in cracks and crevices in the bark as a result of the pecking on the suet by woodpeckers and other birds.

Brown Creepers are hard to see, and hard to hear (when you get older), but it is quite satisfying to know that you can help these tiny birds survive Minnesota’s extremes just by offering suet where they are comfortable consuming it.

Effectc camouflage coloring can make Brown Creepers difficult to see.

Q) HOW DO BIRDS STAY WARM?

A) Through a trio of adaptations, including:

Anatomical adaptations. Birds’ legs and feet of are covered with special scales that minimize heat loss. Also, in the fall, birds grow extra feathers for insulation and their bodies build up fat reserves for extra energy.

Physiological adaptations. Birds can control the temperature of their legs and feet separately from their bodies by constricting blood flow to their extremities. They can also lower their metabolic rate—a condition called “torpor” to shift energy to maintaining body temperature.

Behavioral adaptations. Birds will fluff out their feathers to create air pockets for additional insulation and will shiver to raise their metabolic rate and generate more body heat. Some of the small birds will gather in large flocks at night and crowd together in a small tight space to share body heat.

How to Attract Brown Creepers

Contributed by Minnetonka Customer Don Grussing, Author of The Seasons of the Robin and How to Control House Sparrows

Just like the migrating raptors that prefer to fly down the Minnesota shore of Lake Superior rather than venture above Lake Superior’s water, the little Brown Creeper is very uncomfortable away from the trunks of trees.

In fact, I have never seen a Brown Creeper at a bird feeder mounted on a pole or hanging from a branch. That doesn’t mean it can’t happen. But I think it is rare.

Nevertheless, I like to see the little birds around—and you can too. Simply feed suet from a feeder mounted on the trunk of a tree where visiting Brown Creepers are most likely to approach it (other suet eaters can access it here too).

Creepers live on tiny insects and insect eggs, and generally consume similar-sized morsels of suet. Sometimes they will climb from the foot of the tree up to the suet feeder to eat from the base or sides of the suet.

(My feeder is about five and a half feet high and fastened to the trunk by fencing staples).

More often, though, they will just pick up the tiniest of scraps that have fallen to the ground or lodged in cracks and crevices in the bark as a result of the pecking on the suet by woodpeckers and other birds.

Brown Creepers are hard to see, and hard to hear (when you get older), but it is quite satisfying to know that you can help these tiny birds survive Minnesota’s extremes just by offering suet where they are comfortable consuming it.

Effectc camouflage coloring can make Brown Creepers difficult to see.

Q) HOW DO BIRDS STAY WARM?

A) Through a trio of adaptations, including:

Anatomical adaptations. Birds’ legs and feet of are covered with special scales that minimize heat loss. Also, in the fall, birds grow extra feathers for insulation and their bodies build up fat reserves for extra energy.

Physiological adaptations. Birds can control the temperature of their legs and feet separately from their bodies by constricting blood flow to their extremities. They can also lower their metabolic rate—a condition called “torpor” to shift energy to maintaining body temperature.

Behavioral adaptations. Birds will fluff out their feathers to create air pockets for additional insulation and will shiver to raise their metabolic rate and generate more body heat. Some of the small birds will gather in large flocks at night and crowd together in a small tight space to share body heat.

How to Attract Brown Creepers

Contributed by Minnetonka Customer Don Grussing, Author of The Seasons of the Robin and How to Control House Sparrows

Just like the migrating raptors that prefer to fly down the Minnesota shore of Lake Superior rather than venture above Lake Superior’s water, the little Brown Creeper is very uncomfortable away from the trunks of trees.

In fact, I have never seen a Brown Creeper at a bird feeder mounted on a pole or hanging from a branch. That doesn’t mean it can’t happen. But I think it is rare.

Nevertheless, I like to see the little birds around—and you can too. Simply feed suet from a feeder mounted on the trunk of a tree where visiting Brown Creepers are most likely to approach it (other suet eaters can access it here too).

Creepers live on tiny insects and insect eggs, and generally consume similar-sized morsels of suet. Sometimes they will climb from the foot of the tree up to the suet feeder to eat from the base or sides of the suet.

(My feeder is about five and a half feet high and fastened to the trunk by fencing staples).

More often, though, they will just pick up the tiniest of scraps that have fallen to the ground or lodged in cracks and crevices in the bark as a result of the pecking on the suet by woodpeckers and other birds.

Brown Creepers are hard to see, and hard to hear (when you get older), but it is quite satisfying to know that you can help these tiny birds survive Minnesota’s extremes just by offering suet where they are comfortable consuming it.

Effective camouflage coloring can make Brown Creepers difficult to see.

Q) HOW DO BIRDS STAY WARM?

A) Through a trio of adaptations, including:

Anatomical adaptations. Birds’ legs and feet of are covered with special scales that minimize heat loss. Also, in the fall, birds grow extra feathers for insulation and their bodies build up fat reserves for extra energy.

Physiological adaptations. Birds can control the temperature of their legs and feet separately from their bodies by constricting blood flow to their extremities. They can also lower their metabolic rate—a condition called “torpor” to shift energy to maintaining body temperature.

Behavioral adaptations. Birds will fluff out their feathers to create air pockets for additional insulation and will shiver to raise their metabolic rate and generate more body heat. Some of the small birds will gather in large flocks at night and crowd together in a small tight space to share body heat.