



ALL SEASONS  
WILD BIRD  
STORE

# BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Volume 20 Issue 4 | July/August 2013

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAKS:

## Dapper Delights



Stop Raccoon Raids

Late Summer Checklist

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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.

#### TROUBLESHOOTING

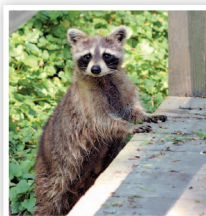
## Stop Raccoon Raids!

By Wayzata Manager MELISSA BLOCK

If you wake up to find your feeders empty, on the ground or even destroyed, blame the night shift. Yep, you've got raccoons.

### Know Your Enemy

Although they're often thought to be close relatives to weasels, raccoons are more closely related to pandas. They sleep in dens during the day and forage at night. Summer finds raccoons devouring copious amounts of food to build a thick fat layer over their entire body, even their tails. Each winter, raccoons primarily stay in their dens and sleep, but they don't hibernate—when temps are above 28°F, they'll come out and forage for food. By spring they weigh about half the amount they did the previous autumn.



▲ A raccoon caught in morning's first light

### Formidable Opponents

These sneaky, masked night invaders make formidable opponents to backyard birders. They have excellent night vision, sensitive hearing

and dexterous, five-fingered forepaws that can handle, rub and manipulate everything that interests them. They can unscrew, open and unhook just about anything that you hang within their reach. Raccoons can climb any pole larger than ¼" diameter, drop from 35–40 ft. heights unharmed and sprint at speeds of up to 15 mph.

### Feeder-Saving Strategies

**□ Place a large, 28" cylindrical baffle on your pole system.** When the baffle is mounted at least 4–5 ft. from the ground, the raccoons cannot climb up the pole to reach your feeders. Make sure the pole is positioned away from trees and over-hanging branches!



▲ A cylindrical baffle

**□ Secure hanging deck feeders to deck poles using a snap lock or cable ties.** This will prevent raccoons from snatching feeders from their hangers. However, it won't stop them from shaking your feeders to get spilled seed. (continued on page 4...)



## Helping Minnesota Birds Together



In June, we were fortunate to be able to make a \$2,000 donation to Audubon Minnesota. We choose to support Audubon Minnesota ([mnaudubon.org](http://mnaudubon.org)) because those funds directly support programs with the objectives of improving habitats, cleaning waterways, reducing bird/building collisions and making Minnesota a better place for birds. **Thanks to your help, over the past three years we've been able to donate over \$10,000** to this important organization.

Supporting local organizations is an important part of being a responsible corporate citizen, and at All Seasons we take that responsibility seriously. In 2012, **we donated to over 36 local organizations and causes**, accounting for over 5% of our profit. Thank you for shopping with us, because it's you, our customers, that makes it possible for us to do what we do every day.

*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!**

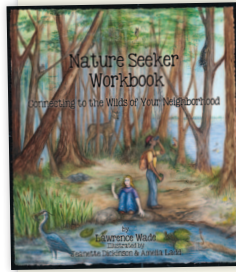
Visit our Facebook page to post photos, ask questions and be the first to know about upcoming sales and events.

JUL.  
&  
AUG.

## Late Summer

by Minnetonka Manager CAROL CHENAULT

- ☐ **PLAN** for your birds when you're on vacation by booking our **Vacation Feed-and-Fill service**. We'll check and fill feeders for you using your existing seed or supplement with seed we bring with us. We also clean and fill birdbaths. **Call our Wayzata Store: 952.473.4283.**



- ☐ **PLAY** Bird Bingo or Nature Bingo, assemble bird-themed puzzles or explore the natural world with the children in your life with the **Nature Seeker Workbook** from our gift section.
- ☐ **PLANT** additional sunflowers from seeds by July 1st to provide blooms into the fall. American Goldfinches, House Finches and Black-capped Chickadees will eat from the seed heads as the plants mature.

- ☐ **PROVIDE** a **Best Nest Builder™** ball for late-summer nesters like American Goldfinches, and make sure to keep your Nyjer® feeders clean and full.
- ☐ **CHECK** your bluebird nest boxes and remove the old nest and debris between nestings. Bluebirds may nest 2-3 times in the same birdhouse.
- ☐ **SUPPLY mealworms**, suet pellets and suet for nestlings. ►
- ☐ **HYDRATE** thirsty birds by providing clean, plentiful sources of water. Add **Bird Bath Protector™** to your just-cleaned birdbath to provide healthy drinking water. Clean baths with 9 parts water to 1 part bleach, then rinse well.
- ☐ **REMEMBER** that most fledglings do not need human assistance. Adult birds are nearby and will return to feed the young after you leave the area.
- ☐ **REPLACE** nectar every 3 days, well into October, to feed the last Hummingbirds and their young before migration.
- ☐ **DAB** mint extract on hummingbird feeder nectar ports to repel bees, wasps and bald-faced hornets.



- ☐ **REFRESH WindowAlert™ decals** yearly to prevent deadly window strikes.
- ☐ **ENCOURAGE** beneficial Blue Jays to visit your yard with an **in-shell peanut feeder**, hung with a baffle above it and away from your main feeding station. Blue Jays alert songbirds to the presence of hawks and other predators.
- ☐ **AVOID** overwhelming numbers of migrating grackles and starlings by swapping your usual sunflower or seed mix with **golden or white safflower**. If you prefer to serve a mix, try **Bye, Bye Starling** to discourage European Starlings.



# Rose-breasted Grosbeaks

Get to Know One of Summer's Coveted Backyard Beauties

One of our most dapper summer migrants, the male Rose-breasted Grosbeak is a coveted, yet covert, backyard visitor. Spending much of the summer mating season gleaning insects from treetop branches, the grosbeak is often heard before seen. Here's more about this striking summer songbird.

## Identification

Black plumage on the breeding male's head, throat, back and wings and a gleaming white belly call to mind a tuxedo-like suit, stunningly accessorized with a cravat-shaped, rosy-red breast patch. White wing patches and a light pink beak complete the profile of this beautiful backyard bird.

Female Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are similar in shape and size, but display drastically different coloration from males (a characteristic called *sexual dimorphism*).

The female's body is primarily brown with white wingbars and a white breast finely streaked with brown. Bold, contrasting white stripes stretch across the female's head.

Adult females (and similarly colored immature males) may be mistaken for large sparrows or female Red-winged Blackbirds at first glance.

## Namesake

The Rose-breasted Grosbeak's name comes, in part, from the French *grosbec*, which translates to "large" (*gros*) and "beak" (*bec*). The grosbeak's powerful, conical-shaped bill

enables them to crack the shells of large, tough seeds and is similar in appearance to that of fellow subfamily *Cardinalidae* member, the Northern Cardinal.

## Diet and Habitat

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are summer migrants to eastern and midwestern North America. They prefer open fields, moist, deciduous woodlands and old, overgrown orchards.

Their diet consists primarily of insects, seeds and berries, though they particularly love to eat caterpillars and cherry blossoms. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks may catch insects in flight, or pluck them from nectar feeders.

In September, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks return to their wintering grounds in Southern Mexico and Central America. There, they'll gather in small flocks, which—comically—are called a *gross of grosbeaks*.

## Singing and Nesting Behavior

Male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks arrive first to nesting grounds and begin to sing once females arrive. Their sweet, warbling song is often described as one of an American Robin's that's been perfected with singing lessons.

Once mating pairs are established, female Rose-breasted Grosbeaks sing too: while nest-building, incubating and brooding. Female singing is a relative rarity among birds of songbird species, with the exception of another grosbeak, the Northern Cardinal.

Nests of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are a loose collection of twigs, often lined with horsehair and built about 10 feet from the ground in large bushes or trees.

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks may have two broods a season. Both genders share the responsibility of incubating and caring for their young.

## Attracting

If you'd like to lure a grosbeak to your backyard, supply black oil sunflower seeds, Joe's Mix or Berry Nutty in a platform or hopper feeder, or in a tube feeder with a seed tray for easy perching. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks may also dine on suet containing fruit, like Pine Tree Farms' Raisin and Nut blend.

Be sure to enjoy Rose-breasted Grosbeaks while they're here in Minnesota—their presence is a limited-time engagement!



▲ A female Rose-breasted Grosbeak.



## Stop Raccoon Raids

(... Continued from page 1) The best solution is to bring these feeders inside or lock them in a shed at night.

- ❑ **Consider placing feeders away from trees.** There's no real way to protect feeders hanging in trees from raccoons. You can make it more difficult for raccoons to remove feeders by trading carabiners for your S hooks. Still, the best advice is to bring these feeders in at night. ■



▲ Keep feeders out of reach of raccoons!

### FYI: RACCOON REMOVAL

Raccoons inhabit urban and suburban areas throughout Minnesota. If raccoons cause property damage, consult with local authorities about how to properly capture and relocate the animal in accordance with city ordinances.

For more information: [www.dnr.state.mn.us/livingwith\\_wildlife/raccoons](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/livingwith_wildlife/raccoons)

### FEATURED PRODUCT

## Aspects Quick Clean® Feeder

### Features Revolutionary Removable Base

These seed and Nyjer® tube feeders feature a revolutionary removable base. All you need to do is squeeze two buttons and the base easily slides out. When a seed tray is attached to a feeder, simply remove the base for cleaning (with the tray still attached).



Once you remove the base of the feeder, use a gentle cleaner like Dawn® dish soap and a long-handled, bird-feeder cleaning brush (available at any of our locations) to scrub the feeder, then rinse well. A half-and-half white vinegar and water rinse will remove any soap film on the plastic and further disinfect your feeders, if desired.

### GREAT IDEAS

## Baffles

### Protect Feeders & Nest Boxes

Baffles are an effective means of keeping squirrels and raccoons from your birdfeeders and birdhouses. **Cylindrical baffles** come in 17" and 28" lengths and fit poles with up to 1 5/8" in diameter. We recommend the 28" length to prevent raccoons from scaling poles. Cylindrical baffles slip over the top of your pole and rest on a mount that screws tight to the pole.



▲ A cylindrical baffle.



▲ A wrap-around baffle.

are also available.

All baffles should be mounted 4-5' from the ground. All of the baffles we sell are weather-resistant and made of galvanized steel to prevent rusting.

## Feeder Trays

### Increase Tube Feeder Function

Some birds, like Northern Cardinals, prefer a place to perch, so adding a tray to your Droll Yankees® or Aspects® tube feeder is the ideal answer. Installation is easy;

a **wrap-around baffle**. This style of baffle fits poles from 1/2" to 1 3/8" in diameter. Baffles for 4 x 4" posts

simply fasten the tray onto the bottom of your feeder with the threaded black plug sold with the tray. **Droll Yankees trays** come in two sizes: 7 1/2" and 10 1/2". **Aspects® Bigfoot trays**, for the large-sized **Clever Clean®** feeders, line up with the quick release buttons on the base, allowing you to remove the bottom of the feeder without removing the tray.



▲ Aspects® Bigfoot Tray.

A tray also helps keep the area under your feeder cleaner, by catching seed hulls and saving seed pushed out by aggressive birds like sparrows. ■

**Have an idea for a future issue of *Birds-Eye View*?** Photos and articles may be submitted by email to [info@wildbirdstore.net](mailto:info@wildbirdstore.net).  
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