



# BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Volume 22 Issue 4 | July/August 2015

ALL SEASONS  
WILD BIRD  
STORE

**American Robins:**

## All-Season Songsters

**+ Discovering the Raptor Center**

**Late Summer Seasonal Checklist**

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#### **BLOOMINGTON**

816 West 98th St.  
(Clover Center)  
Bloomington, MN 55420  
**952.884.4103**

#### **EAGAN**

2143 Cliff Rd.  
(Cedar Cliff Shopping Center)  
Eagan, MN 55122  
**651.459.0084**

#### **MINNETONKA**

4759 County Rd. 101  
(Westwind Plaza)  
Minnetonka, MN 55345  
**952.935.5892**

#### **WHITE BEAR LAKE**

2703 East Cty. Hwy. E.  
(Cty. Rd. E. and Hwy. 120)  
White Bear Lake, MN 55110  
**651.653.8705**

#### **WAYZATA & WILD BIRD DELIVERS**

15710 Wayzata Blvd.  
(394 Frontage Rd.)  
Wayzata, MN 55391  
**952.473.4283**

#### **WILDBIRDSTORE.COM**

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

#### **BACKYARD BIRD BIO**

## *American Robins*

By Wayzata Manager MELISSA BLOCK

### **No Longer a Sure Sign of Spring**

It used to be that the sighting of a robin was a harbinger of spring. Now we are seeing more and more robins overwinter here in Minnesota. Still, their unique dawn song ushers in spring.



### **Nesting Behavior**

The American Robin can have as many as three broods in a year, nesting from April through July. On average though, only 40–50% of the nests produce young and only 25% of the fledglings survive until November. Robins, on average, live to be 2–3 years old. The oldest banded robin in the wild was almost 14 years old!

The female robin chooses the nest site, which is usually on horizontal branches or “shelves.” The female will then lay 3–5 blue eggs and

incubate them for 12–14 days. Upon hatching, both parents feed them.

During the fall and winter, American Robins often roost in large flocks and spend much more time in the trees. A group of robins is called a “worm” of robins.

### **Diet**

Worms only make up about 15–20% of a robin's diet during the summer. The rest of their diet is made up of fruit, nuts, berries and other insects. Robins love juniper berries, chokecherries, dogwood berries, mountain ash berries and sumac fruits.

Have you ever seen an American Robin listening for worms? They are actually looking for them. They cock their head to one side, using each eye to look for signs of worms.

### **Attracting Robins to Your Backyard**

Robins can be attracted to your backyard by offering mealworms, suet pellets, nuts, fruit and a birdbath. Take special note: since they forage mostly on lawns, robins are vulnerable to pesticide poisoning. ■





## Enjoy Summer's Abundant Birds

### *Tis the season for summer family fun!*

While you're out and about enjoying the warm weather, we'd like to remind you that this is also a great time for backyard birding. Whether you're exploring your own neighborhood or headed up north, there's so much to see if you just pay a little bit of attention to the natural wonders surrounding us, especially in the avian world. You can see oodles of new bird families with their awkward juveniles finding their way to feeders, sometimes being fed by mom or dad and other times getting a little instruction. It's a great time to offer a full menu of bird foods: sunflower-rich mixes for the many seed eaters, suet for the woodpeckers, grape jelly for the orioles, mealworms for the robins, nectar for the hummingbirds—and don't forget some fresh water to wash it all down. We will not have a larger number of species so readily visible in our backyards as we do in the summertime. It's a great time to set the bird table at your lake place or favorite destination, too. We've compiled a list of cabin essentials that we'd never leave home without, and we hope you find it helpful too. Enjoy your summer family fun and all the excitement happening just outside the back door.

*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.**



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

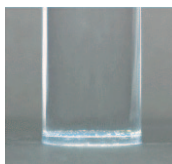
## Cabin Essentials

### Take the Joy of Backyard Birding With You to Your Cabin!

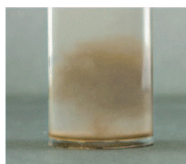
Heading up north sometime soon? You may have a chance to enjoy some birds you don't commonly spot at home, plus you'll have the pleasure of bringing nature up close and personal from morning to evening! Below are some products we recommend for enjoying uninterrupted weekends at the cabin.



**A LARGE-CAPACITY HUMMER FEEDER**, like the **12-oz. Hummerfest** (left) or the **20-oz. Garnet hummingbird feeder** (right), both with built-in ant moats.



▲ Nectar with Nectar Defender™



▲ Without Nectar Defender

### FEEDER FRESH WITH NECTAR DEFENDER.

A mineral micronutrient in this nectar stops spoilage and preserves freshness between fillings.



### BIRDBATH PROTECTOR.

Natural enzymes keep the birdbath fresh, so you can go longer between cleaning and refills, if needed. It's non-toxic and safe for birds, pets and wildlife.



**A 30# BAG OF CABIN MIX**, great for up north feeding. It attracts cardinals, nuthatches, grosbeaks and chickadees in particular, but with its mix of both large and small basic seeds, it will be popular with all your backyard birds.



**A LARGE-CAPACITY SEED FEEDER**, like the **Sky Café** or **Quick Clean Big Tube**. Keep feeders full between cabin visits!



# Rapt with Wonder

## My Path to the Raptor Center

By Guest Columnist JUDY MORAN

### A Curious Visitor, a Call to the Center

One cold March day I glanced out my kitchen window to watch the regular backyard visitors: chickadees darting between sunflower feeders, grabbing a seed before flying off to hammer it open; nuthatches creeping head-first down tree trunks, alerting me to their presence with subdued nasal calls; goldfinches hungrily eating from the Nyjer™ feeder, consuming much-needed energy to molt in their brilliant yellow feathers.

While admiring the new yellow feathers, I noticed a large silhouette in a leafless tree, maybe 10 feet away from all of the feeder activity. At first I thought it was a crow, but this bird was sitting at attention, not slumped over as crows often do. No, this was not a crow. Looking closer I noticed the feathers were shaded the appropriate browns and tans to perfectly camouflage the bird in my backyard. It took a couple minutes for me to realize that I was looking at a hawk. Not the smaller and leaner hawks that swiftly fly in and scatter birds in every direction—no, this bird was big!

As I watched the new visitor sit motionless, as if holding court over the feeders, I began to wonder why the smaller birds stayed. Surely they knew a hawk was sitting, watching, a short distance away. As I pondered the situation I remembered hearing about a place that cares for hawks and other birds of prey at the University of Minnesota, and decided to give them a call to see if they could offer insight.

### "The Raptor Center, How Can I Help You?"

This scenario occurred 13 years ago. It was my first contact with the organization that has changed my life. Two years after the phone call, I began volunteering on the Wednesday morning education crew at The Raptor Center (TRC). It was during this time I met many of my favorite people and my knowledge of the raptor world grew. As an education crew member, it was my responsibility to care for the education birds by cleaning their mews (a birdhouse designed for birds of prey),



▲ A raptor like this one triggered my first call to the Raptor Center

preparing their food and cleaning some more. It was not glamorous work but I enjoyed spending time with the birds and the people.

### From Volunteer to Staff Member to Student

During this time, I also began studying raptors so I could start leading public tours and presenting raptor programs onsite. After a couple of years as a volunteer, I was asked to join the part-time staff team. In my new role, I began presenting raptor programs at fairs, festivals, community events and schools.

Eleven years later I am still happily teaching raptor programs and assisting with other care-giving tasks while working on the part-time staff team in the education department. The extraordinary experiences I've had teaching students about raptors inspired me to return to graduate school and attain my Minnesota K-6 elementary teaching license. I now teach kids to observe the world around them, because you never know what you'll find right outside your window.



▲ "I now teach kids to observe the world around them, because you never know what you'll find right outside your window."

### About that Hawk . . .

Are you curious to know what I learned about the backyard behavior of the hawk and songbirds long ago on that March day? I discovered that I was hosting a one-year-old Red-tailed Hawk. You can identify this young hawk because the tail feathers are brown with dark bands. They begin to molt in the reddish tail feathers after their first year. Mammals are most often on the menu for Red-tailed Hawks. They will also eat larger birds as well as snakes. The small songbirds at my feeder could sense they were not on the lunch buffet so they stayed at the feeders. Later that day I witnessed the hawk fly down and catch a vole that emerged from the ground to grab fallen birdseed.

### How to Get Started

Volunteering is not only about giving your time for a cause. You get a lot out of it, and you never know where the path of volunteering could lead you. For more information visit: [www.Raptor.cvm.umn.edu](http://www.Raptor.cvm.umn.edu). ■



▲ Author presenting an off-site program as TRC staff member

The Raptor Center  
1920 Fitch Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55108  
Tele. 612-624-4745  
Email: [raptor@umn.edu](mailto:raptor@umn.edu)

Tues.-Fri.: 10am-4pm  
Sat.-Sun: 12pm-4pm  
Closed Mondays, U of MN holidays and when hosting special events

The center offers a Raptors of Minnesota program at 1pm on Saturdays and Sundays. No RSVP necessary; the programs are first come, first served.



JULY  
&  
AUGUST

# Late Summer

By Minnetonka Manager CAROL CHENAULT

- ❑ Avoid mess and seed germination in your garden and patio areas by using **Kracker Jax** or **medium chips** (sunflower out of the shell). Both work great in window feeders as well.



▲ Kracker Jax

- ❑ Schedule your **Feed and Fill service** to take care of your birds while you are on vacation. Call our Wayzata store at 952-473-4283 for more details.

- ❑ Remove old nest and debris between nestings in bluebird boxes. Bluebirds may nest 2-3 times in the same bird house.

- ❑ Attract goldfinches with **Best Nest Builder™** nesting material. Goldfinches are our latest nesting songbird, nesting in July and fledging young in August.



▲ Goldfinch on Best Nest Builder



Nyjer and Chips

- ❑ Keep your feeders clean and full to attract goldfinches. Unlike most songbirds, goldfinches feed their young a sundry of seed, such as **Nyjer™** and **Chips**.

- ❑ Help adult birds feed their young by providing **mealworms, suet pellets and suet**. Remember, most fledglings do not need human assistance. Adult birds are nearby and will return to feed the young after you leave the area.



▲ Dried mealworms, suet pellets and suet dough



▲ Water Wiggler

- ❑ Add additional birdbaths to help birds beat the heat in your backyard. Moving water attracts more birds and prevents mosquitoes from laying eggs in stagnant water. Use a **Water Wiggler™** in your birdbath.

- ❑ Clean your birdbath, then add **Birdbath Protector** to provide healthy drinking water. Clean baths with 9 parts water to 1 part bleach, and rinse well.



- ❑ Keep all of your feeders filled! Orioles visit backyard feeders through the first week of September for mealworms, nectar, grape jelly, oranges or dark grapes.



▲ Baltimore Oriole



▲ Nectar feeder

- ❑ Fill your **nectar feeders!** Hummingbirds are active at nectar feeders and flowers into October, with the females and juveniles staying the latest in the fall.

- ❑ Protect your nectar feeders from ants, bees and other unwanted guests. Mint extract on nectar ports helps to repel bees, wasps and bald-faced hornets. Hanging the feeder from an ant trap prevents ants from reaching the nectar. Or, apply non-toxic **Nectar Fortress™**, a cinnamon oil gel, on hooks or poles to create a barrier that ants won't cross.



▲ Nectar Fortress

- ❑ Create a feeding area just for Blue Jays, because smaller birds fly off a feeding station when Blue Jays fly in. Hang an **in-shell peanut feeder** under a baffle from a tree branch, or on a pole with a squirrel baffle, and place the feeder well away from other feeders. Blue Jays are beneficial because they sound the alarm and alert songbirds to the presence of hawks and other predators.



▲ In-shell peanut feeder



▲ WindowAlert

- ❑ Replace your **WindowAlert™** decals every six months to prevent window strikes. For some birds, migration begins in August.

- ❑ Deter grackles and starlings from your feeders as birds gather in pre-migration flocks by filling feeders with **golden safflower** or **white safflower**.

Use **Bye-Bye Starling** to provide a sunflower mix that discourages European starlings.



▲ Bye-Bye Starling

**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). Sign up for our weekly e-newsletter at [WildBirdStore.com](http://WildBirdStore.com) to receive information about backyard birding, store events and exclusive discounts.