



**ALL SEASONS
WILD BIRD
STORE**

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Volume 25 Issue 4 | July/August 2018

MINNESOTA'S STATE BIRD

Common Loon

+ **Late-Summer Nesters**
Identifying MN's 3 Wren Species

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(Clover Center)
Bloomington, MN 55420
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EAGAN

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(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
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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 HAPPENINGS

Late Nesters

By Guest Contributor MELISSA BLOCK

Spring is just the beginning of the nesting season for our backyard birds. Some birds will produce numerous broods over the entire summer season and some birds will wait until mid-summer to start nesting.

Multiple Broods Extend the Nesting Season

For instance, American Robins can produce 3 or 4 broods from May through August. Each brood can take up to a month from laying the eggs to the fledging of the babies. Eastern Bluebirds also can produce 2 to 3 broods per season, with each brood taking 5–6 weeks. And Northern Cardinals produce 2–3 broods each season, taking 3–4 weeks from laying the eggs until the babies leave the nest.

Late-Summer Nesters

American Goldfinches are our latest nesters. They don't even begin to nest until late June or July, sometimes even into August. Unlike many other species of nesting birds, Goldfinches do not feed their babies insects—just seeds. By waiting

until later in the season, goldfinches can take advantage of wildflowers in full seed production. They also like to use the seed fluff from milkweed and thistle to build their nests. By waiting until later in the season they are assured of a good source of food and nesting materials.

You Can Assist Late Nesters

Planting some late-blooming flowers, like goldenrod, aster, and sunflowers will help late-nesting birds. Offering water sources can help when the babies leave the nest. They love to splash around in water. ■



Local & Family Business Connections

According to the Small Business Administration, Minnesota small businesses employed 1.2 million people or 47.9% of the state's private employees. That's about half of our state's private workforce and a significant portion of the local economy. We at All Seasons Wild Bird Stores continuously try to source as many of our products from locally-based businesses within the Midwest region as we can. The statistics don't lie, buying local helps us all. When you spend \$100 at an independent local retail business, \$68 of local economic activity is generated versus only \$48 if that money is spent is with a big box retailer. The same things happen when we as a small business spend our money with local providers of goods and services. The vast majority of the products we sell in dollar volume are products that are sourced in the Midwest region from other small businesses. Some examples are; The Bug Company (Ham Lake, MN), where we source all of our live mealworms, Sunbird Seed (Minnetonka, MN) and Upper Midwest Seed (Fridley, MN), where we source all of our packaged bird seed and much of our suet, Backyard Nature Products (Chilton, WI), where we source some of our most popular recycled bird feeders and bird houses, and the list goes on. It's proven that buying locally builds community, helps the local economy and is better for the environment. Why would you buy anywhere else?

Al and Dave Netten



Worry-Free Guarantee!

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 us online!

WILDBIRDSTORE.COM  

Which Wren?

What bird is making such a bubbly, boisterous racket at such an early hour? Depending upon the time of year here in the upper Midwest, the belligerent songster is probably one of three species of wren, tiny packages of avian pugnacity.

House Wrens are most common in this area.

Short-distance migrants (wintering in the Gulf states and Mexico), they arrive here in early May and leave late September. Virtually any "cavity" is suitable for a nest site. Birdhouses with an opening anywhere from wren- to bluebird-sized are used, along with old woodpecker holes, holes in human houses, drainpipes or brush piles. Males will pile small sticks in "any suitable place" (which has included a swimsuit hanging on a clothesline), females choose the actual nest site. House Wrens eat mostly insects but may take to live mealworms or suet pellets during extended periods of inclement weather.



Winter Wrens can be distinguished from House Wrens by their even smaller size, and brownish (as opposed to whitish) bellies. They breed in the northern part of our area and migrate through very early spring and very late fall. Occasionally they will overwinter near open water, hiding out in nearby brush piles or other warmth-retaining areas. They will also very occasionally enjoy live mealworms or suet (cakes, plugs or pellets) as a supplement to their normal bug-laden diet.

The large, colorful Carolina Wren appears to be increasing in number in our area, especially in winter. Most "cavities" are sufficient to provide cover, including surprise stays in mailboxes. Their diet expands beyond the bugs and grubs of House and Winter Wrens to include berries, fruits, seed and suet.



Attract Wrens with Water

For all of these wrens, and any backyard birds you have, available open water is essential to their well-being. Please be generous in all seasons with your birdbaths and other water sources.

Enjoy these energetic little birds, even if it does mean waking up a little earlier in the day! ■

The Stately Loon

Why Are We So Fascinated With Minnesota's State Bird?

If ever there were a celebrity bird, it might be the Common Loon. Named as the State Bird of Minnesota, it is also a name of one of seven Ojibwe clans. Its name forms the call letters of a popular Up North classic rock radio station, and its image graces everything from license plates to dinner plates. Why are we so fascinated with this large, black-and-white aquatic bird?

For Starters, There's its Name

Several sources trace the word *loon* back to the Old English word *lumme*, meaning “lummox” or “awkward person” Other sources point to the Scandinavian word *lum* or Icelandic word *lomr*, both meaning “lame” or “crazy”.

A likely reason for the loon's nom de plume is their awkward gait on land. They owe this to the fact that their legs are set far back on their bodies—an adaptation that aids in their ability to swim. As a result, its land stride is a sequence of comical flopping and flailing motions.

The *Peterson Guide to North American Birds* offers another potential explanation for the loon's “loony” namesake, this one involving the sounds the bird makes. Describing the Common Loon's voice, author Rory Peterson writes, “in breeding

season, falsetto wails, weird yodeling, maniacal quavering laughter.

At night, a tremulous *ha-oo-oo*. In flight, a barking *kwuk*.” Peterson is describing the loon's four unique sounds: the tremolo, the yodel, the wail and the hoot—each of which communicates a different message. Still, the description of the calls does evoke a rather crazy-sounding bird!

Plus, Loons are Synonymous with Up North

For the time being—barring a projected change in their breeding range as our climate shifts*—Minnesota hosts more loons than any state besides Alaska. As summer residents of Minnesota and parts further north, Common Loons have the southern-most breeding range of five North American loon species. The other species, Red-throated Loons, Pacific Loons, Arctic Loons and Yellow-billed Loons, confine their breeding ranges to far northern regions of the northern

hemisphere. Their long migration is impressive; Common Loons overwinter on the coasts and in states bordering the Gulf of Mexico.

But more than their range, the evening call of the loon is a peaceful emblem of the spirit of Up North for Minnesotans—a slower pace and a reconnection to nature.

And Then There Are Loons' Red Eyes

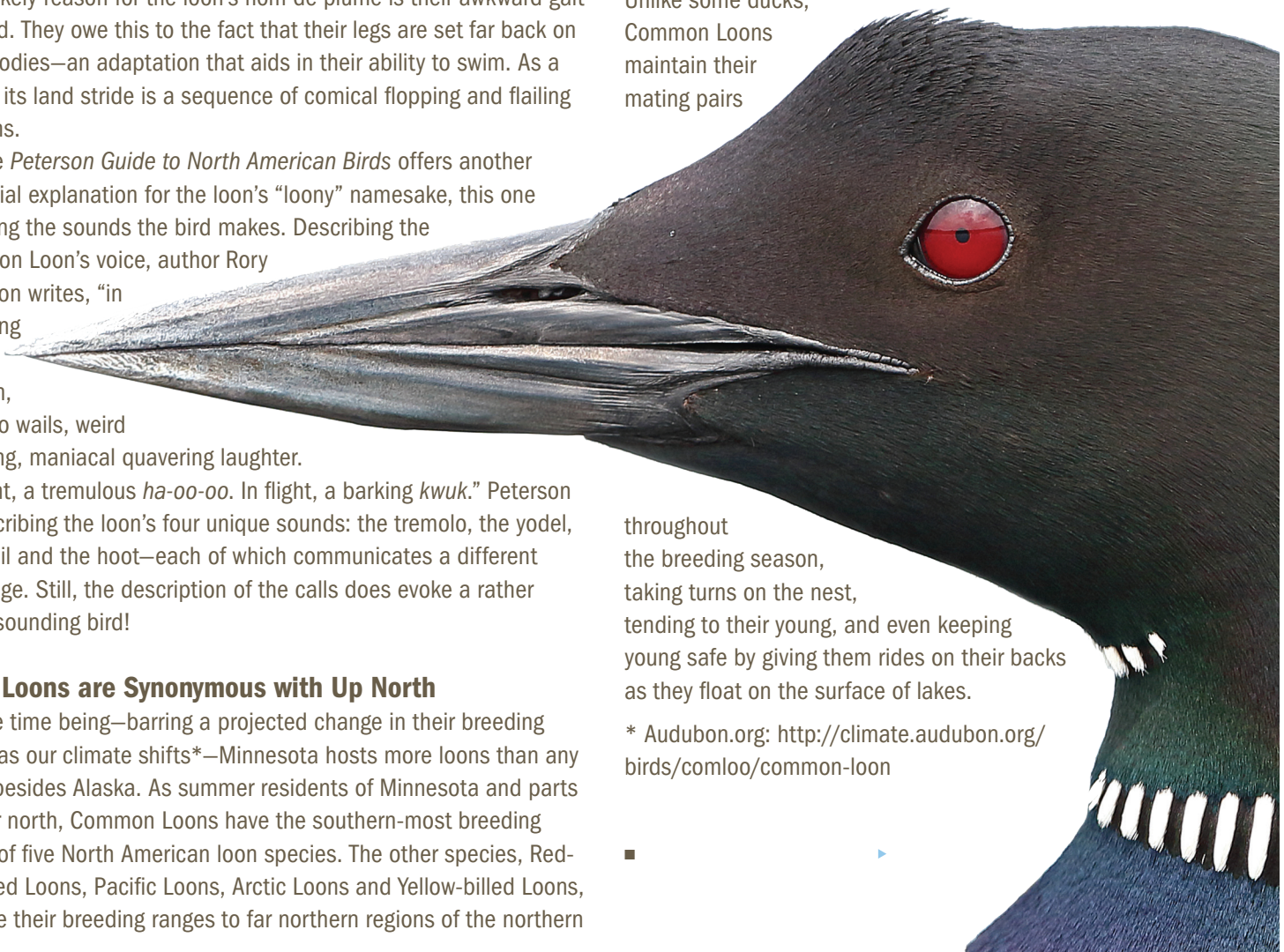
A memorable and striking feature of the Common Loon is their red eyes. Science is inconclusive about why loons' eyes are red, though some have hypothesized that it may be an adaptation for seeing underwater or for attracting a mate. Supporting the latter hypothesis, loons' eyes turn a dull gray during winter months.

And Finally, They're Adorably Family-Oriented

Unlike some ducks, Common Loons maintain their mating pairs

throughout the breeding season, taking turns on the nest, tending to their young, and even keeping young safe by giving them rides on their backs as they float on the surface of lakes.

* Audubon.org: <http://climate.audubon.org/birds/comloo/common-loon>



FEATURED PRODUCTS

Welcome Wrens to Your Yard

A Few of Our Favorite Wren Houses



Green Solutions Wren House

This birdhouse is made from 98% recycled material and easy to clean, weather resistant and retains its appearance. The house features a seamless overhang roof, vents and drainage. The roof lifts

opens for easy cleaning. Fifteen plastic containers were used to make this house.



Natural Cedar Wren House

This all-natural cedar wren house can be hung or post-mounted. Made from durable 7/8" inland red cedar this house features a side-opening door for easy clean out, an overhanging roof for protection and air vents for proper ventilation. Made in the USA. ■

Birds Choice Recycled Wren House

This recycled wren house with a green roof and taupe base features a large roof overhang, and is made out of recycled poly lumber. To clean out, simply remove the clear plexiglass at the base of this house. This house will never rot, split or crack.



Mealworms

Help Bird Parents Feed Their Young

Most of our upland songbirds feed their young insects.

Adult birds will benefit from mealworms as a source of protein as well.

Orioles and bluebirds in particular are attracted to mealworm feeders. A large portion of an oriole's diet consists of caterpillars, especially when they are raising young. Offering mealworms helps to keep your orioles coming to your backyard all summer long. You may choose from live mealworms or dried mealworms. Live mealworms need to be placed in a dish with about 1" tall slick sides such as a plastic or glass custard cup. Dried mealworms can be mixed with seed for cardinals and chickadees or soaked in nectar, water or a bit of olive oil for orioles, wrens and bluebirds.



For best results,
keep live mealworms
refrigerated >



Vacation Feed-and-Fill Service

Ensure Your Birds Stay While You're Away

You've worked hard to attract birds to your yard—we'll make sure it's still bustling with activity when you return! Through our Vacation Feed-and-Fill program we can: check and fill your feeders for you (we can use your existing seed supply or supplement with seed we bring with us) and clean and fill birdbaths. We can visit once or more a week while you're gone—you decide! Simply call our Wayzata store to set up your Vacation Feed and Fill: 952.473.4283.



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.