



# BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Volume 26 Issue 4 | July/August 2019

ALL SEASONS  
WILD BIRD  
STORE

DELVING INTO THE LIVES OF

## Heron & Egrets

Small Space Bird Feeding  
+ July/August Seasonal Notes



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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.

### SMALL SPACE SOLUTIONS

By Guest Contributor MELISSA BLOCK

## Small Spaces, Bird Oasis

You can attract birds to your home even if you only have a small space. A balcony or a small patio can offer all the essentials to attract the birds: food, shelter, and water. Since it is a small space you'll need to plan and maximize these opportunities.

#### Window Feeders

Window feeders, which attach directly to the glass with suction cups, are a great way to attract birds and come in a variety of styles. You can also purchase suction cup hooks to hang a small tube feeder from your window.



*Window feeders are ideal for small spaces.*

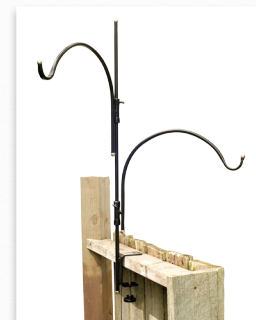


#### Use What You've Got

We have feeder designs that work for most spaces, based on what you have available. In some spaces you can hang a feeder from the

eaves. For example, hanging a simple "sock" feeder from your roof eaves for finch food is easy and effective.

You can also hang a feeder from a variety of available railing attachments, or mount a small tray feeder to a railing. Tray feeders are great because they accommodate a variety of perching styles and body sizes, thereby attracting a good variety of birds.



*Consider hanging a feeder from a deck railing*

#### Select Seed for Your Space's Needs

Make sure you use a seed mix that will attract a variety of birds. For instance, Joe's Mix is a great all-purpose mix to offer. If you're concerned about seed mess, try Kracker Jax or Medium Sunflower Chips, which have the hulls removed.

#### Provide a Water Source

One of the best ways to attract birds to your small space is to provide a water source for birds to get a drink or a bath. You may attract birds that otherwise don't come to feeders. (*Small Space Solutions: continued on page 2*)



## Kids Flock to Bird Feeding

As a parent of four, the last of which will soon be leaving the nest, I've firmly held the belief that one of the best ways to separate people from their money is through their children. I don't mean to sound crass, as it's often for a good cause, spirited activity or wonderful learning opportunity, but we parents tend to follow our children's interests with our time, energy and money. I've certainly been living proof and will continue to be for the next 4-5 years I'm sure.

On that note, a trend we've been noticing in our stores recently is the entry of more kids with their families in tow. It seems that the kids are the catalyst for the visit and are interested in having a bird feeder at home.

This is exciting for many reasons; it seems that kids are getting interested in the wonders that lie just beyond their back door (very exciting, especially if you sell nature products, wink wink). It's also a large leap from all of the "organized activities" they travel to and fro for along with the hours typically spent in front of screens. It shows they'd like to at least spend some of their time in front of a window or involved in helping local wildlife.

How refreshing! The schools seem to be a driving force in this new-found interest. The evolution of curriculum has been wise to include everyday wildlife experiences and kids are getting exposed to and really enjoying the experience of watching and listing the things they see around their schools and neighborhoods. Kudos to all of the organizations like the Cornell Lab of Ornithology for spawning these new programs being utilized by local teachers.

A local radio host will often use the phrase "have a care" and that's what comes to mind when I envision kids connecting in a more meaningful way to their natural surroundings. They are noticing and more importantly caring about what's happening. That's a hopeful thought and a great one to conclude with.

*~Dave Netten*



### Join the Conversation!

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## SMALL SPACE SOLUTIONS *(continued from page 1)*

There are so many beautiful, small, lightweight birdbaths from which to choose. Just providing a shallow bowl of water can help. Adding a Water Wiggler™ to the birdbath will add to the appeal, since birds are attracted to the sound of moving water. Make sure to keep the water source clean.

### Help Birds Take Cover

Providing some shelter or natural cover near the feeder will make it more attractive to visiting birds. Container plants can offer shelter to the birds. Try a small potted evergreen or shrub. You can also add a window box and fill it full of flowers to provide nectar for the hummingbirds and butterflies.

If the birds feel secure enough you may even find that a bird has used your potted plant as a nesting spot. Flowering annuals, like fuchsia, impatiens and petunias, will attract hummingbirds.

We carry a small, hanging hummingbird feeder that includes a hook to place into your flowering planter pots. There are also small, metal hooks available that can go into potted plants for hanging a small tube feeder.

It can take a little time before the birds discover your bird-friendly small space. Don't give up, keep your feeders clean and full and they will come. ■



*A potted evergreen provides shelter for visiting birds.*

## STAFF PICKS

By Minnetonka Manager CAROL CHENAULT

## Best Foods and Feeders for Small Spaces

### 1. CUTEST CHICKADEE FEEDER

Small size with adjustable height dome to limit the size of visiting birds. Serve any type of seed.

### 2. FLAMING HOT FEAST SEED CAKE

Defeats squirrels with hot pepper that animals can taste but birds don't. Packed with nutrition and low-mess ingredients.

### 3. BIRDOLA CAKE FEEDER

Simple and compact feeder for serving suet or seed cakes.

### 4. MR. BIRD GOLDEN SAFFLOWER BELL

Feeder and food combined as one!

### 5. BIRDS' CHOICE SEED CYLINDER FEEDER

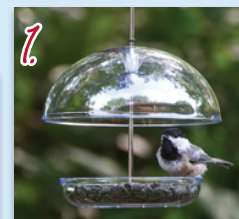
Provides perching spots and protection from rain while serving a lot of seed in a compact form.

### 6. WINDOW MOUNT SUET FEEDER

Simply slide a suet or seed cake into the feeder and suction-adhere to window for easy feeding and viewing a variety of birds.

### 7. GARDEN STAKE HUMMINGBIRD FEEDER

Small size fits right into a patio planter or hanging plant. Requires less nectar than traditional hummingbird feeders.





# Great Blue Heron & Great Egret: BEYOND THE POND

Iconic, solitary statues of the shoreline or deadly, territorial predators with complex social interactions? There's so much more to Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets when you look beyond the pond.

## Opportunistic and Formidable Hunters

Not long ago, I clicked on a viral video circulating in social media that showed a Great Blue Heron catching and devouring (whole!) a gopher in someone's backyard. Not only was it curious to see a Great Blue Heron away from its post along the lake shore, but I couldn't help but wonder, "since when do herons eat mammals?"

Upon investigation, I've discovered that Great Blue Herons—and, by association, their close relatives, Great Egrets—are opportunistic hunters that will eat what they can catch, whether it's mammalian, reptilian, amphibian, avian, or fish, if they think it'll make a good meal. That said, it's most common for these birds to eat fish, frogs, insects, snakes and crayfish.

Both Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets lay patiently in wait for prey to come near them until they strike. They may use their long bills as bayonets to spear their prey or to powerfully clamp around their catch to immobilize it.

With a high density of light-sensing rod-type receptors in their retinas, Great Blue Herons are capable of hunting at night and in low light conditions.

And yes, while it's most common for both species to hunt along shorelines, they may also hunt in marshes, damp fields, tidal flats, and even the occasional backyard.



*This Great Blue Heron devours a vole.*

territories, they return each evening to individual nest sites within the larger, communal rookeries.

Rookeries emerge in places with ideal nesting conditions, typically large trees or groups of larger trees within wetland areas.

Benefits of nesting in colonies include a greater capacity to identify predators and the ability to defend the colony against predators as a group. The colony may also function as a source of information, with birds following others to successful hunting sites.

## Courtship and Pair Bonding

Both Great Egrets and Great Blue Herons perform courtship displays to gain favor with a potential mate. Male Great Egrets preen their wings, duck and stretch their necks, and hold and shake twigs in their bills. Great Blue Herons perform a number of displays as well, including snapping their bills, stretching their necks, raising their crests, preening, circular flights and twig shaking. In one of the sweeter gestures, the male heron presents a stick for the nest as a gesture of acceptance of the female as a mate.

Once a mate is selected, both Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets are monogamous for the season. The couple develops rituals to lower territorial defenses and to identify one another at the nest within the colony, such as stick transfers, clapping bills or raising their plumes.

Each species raises a single brood per year of 2–3 eggs (egrets) or 3–5 eggs (herons). Born with their blue eyes open, nestlings must learn quickly to defend themselves against predators, including against their older siblings! ■



*Great Blue Heron pair bonding display.*



*A Great Egret rookery.*

## Safety in Numbers

Both Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets nest in large colonies of up to 100 birds called *rookeries*. After a day of solitary hunting in their

Great Blue Heron	Great Egret
45–47" tall	38–39" tall
Blue-gray with black stripe over eye, yellow bill	White with yellow bill and black legs
Male/female look similar, juveniles brownish with black crown, no plumes	Male/female look similar



# Seasonal Notes

By Minnetonka Manager CAROL CHENAULT

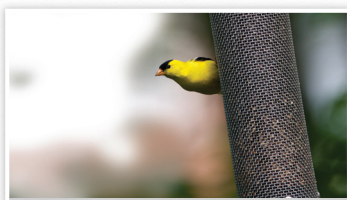
## July: WEEK BY WEEK

Early July / Week 1	2nd Week	Mid-month	3rd-4th Week
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Barn Swallows fledge.</li> <li>✓ Purple Martin colonies are noisy as adults feed young.</li> <li>✓ <b>Bluebirds</b> may nest 2-3 times in the same bird house. Check boxes and remove the old nest and debris between nestlings.</li> <li>✓ House Wrens still have 5-8 young in the bird house.</li> <li>✓ Orioles feed their young caterpillars and larvae. Help them out by offering live mealworms or dried mealworms soaked in nectar.</li> <li>✓ Bluebirds seem to prefer live mealworms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 2nd generation of Eastern Swallowtail butterflies emerge. Monarchs lay eggs on Common Milkweed.</li> <li>✓ Osprey young are still in the nest. Great Blue Heron juveniles leave the nest.</li> <li>✓ Goldfinches are our latest nesting songbird, nesting in July and fledging young in August.</li> </ul> <p><i>Tip:</i> Clean baths with 9 parts water to 1 part bleach; rinse well.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Canada Geese are flying again now that molt is completed.</li> <li>✓ Bird migration season begins as several shorebird species such as Lesser Yellowlegs and <b>sandpipers</b> begin migrating.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 2nd brood of Barn Swallows hatch.</li> <li>✓ Mallards are on the wing again following their molt.</li> <li>✓ Though some birds have two or more broods, for many species the nesting season is complete and as a result the backyard is noticeably quieter.</li> </ul> <p><i>Tip:</i> Use <b>Nectar Defender</b> to keep nectar fresh longer. Dab mint extract on nectar ports to repel bees and wasps.</p>

*Tips:* Prevent seed loss due to bill sweeping behavior by using a **hanging seed cylinder feeder** with **Mr. Bird seed cylinders**. No loose seed to scatter! 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.

## August: WEEK BY WEEK

Early August / Week 1	Mid-August	3rd Week	4th Week
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Mourning Doves are on their third clutch of eggs.</li> <li>✓ Unlike most songbirds, goldfinches feed their young seeds that have been shelled and partially digested. Keep your feeders clean and full to attract them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Purple Martins group together on utility lines in preparation for migration.</li> <li>✓ 2nd generation of Monarch butterflies is on the wing.</li> <li>✓ Some warblers such as Nashville and Yellow Warblers begin migrating.</li> <li>✓ <b>Common Nighthawks</b> migrate through in the afternoons and early evenings while eating flying insects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Clusters of monarchs in trees signals migration is beginning.</li> <li>✓ Chimney Swifts, Franklin's Gulls and various shorebirds are in migration.</li> <li>✓ Great Egrets gather a dozen or two at a time along the shorelines.</li> </ul> <p><i>Tips:</i> Add <b>Fire Mix powder</b> to bird seed to deter squirrels. One package treats 40 pounds of bird seed with cayenne chili pepper and ground pepper seeds. Birds have few taste buds and don't react to the powder.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Juvenile Wood Ducks now look more like the adults.</li> <li>✓ Migrating monarchs are flying south one by one, anywhere from ground level to 7,000 feet up.</li> <li>✓ Juvenile Common Loons are still with the adults but begin have more adult plumage.</li> <li>✓ After the second brood fledges, House Wrens are much less vocal.</li> </ul> <p><i>Tips:</i> As birds gather in pre-migration flocks, avoid large numbers of grackles and starlings at feeders by filling feeders with <b>golden safflower</b> or <b>white safflower</b>. Use <b>Bye, Bye Starling</b> to provide a sunflower mix but still discourage European starlings.</p>



*Tip:* Replace your **WindowAlert decals** every six months to prevent window strikes by migrating warblers and others.



Divert squirrels from bird feeders with the **Deluxe Squeezee**—a bungee jumper for squirrels. Fill it with **cob corn** or **Nut & Sweet Corn logs**.

