

25<sup>th</sup>

ALL SEASONS  
WILD BIRD  
STORE

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS!

# BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Volume 23 Issue 2 | March/April 2016

Indigo Buntings & Scarlet Tanagers:

## Coveted Gems

+ Spring Cleaning  
Feeder Swap Sale

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Photos by Jim Weisman

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(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

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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.

#### HEALTHY BIRDS

By Wayzata Manager MELISSA BLOCK

## *The Big Spring Clean!*

A dirty bird feeder, birdhouse or birdbath can harbor bacteria, mold or other diseases that can infect birds. These birds can then spread the illnesses to other wild populations. Clean feeders, baths and nest boxes are essential to the health of our backyard birds. Keeping your bird supplies clean ensures you're being a good steward of backyard birds and all of nature.

#### Clean Feeders Attract More Wild Birds

A clean feeder allows the seed to be at its most appealing and nutritious to birds. All feeders should be cleaned on a regular basis, a bare minimum of four times a year and ideally once a month. With our damp spring weather it is easy for feeders to develop mold and bacteria quickly.

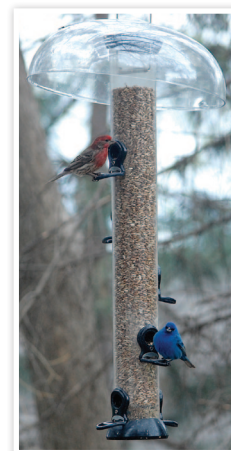
#### Tips to Clean Feeders

When cleaning a feeder, success lies in thoroughly reaching all parts. Each feeder should be cleaned inside and out, including all trays, ports, perches and lids. The best way to do this is to take the feeder apart as much as possible. A stiff bristle brush, preferably one with a long handle, is a good tool (especially for cleaning tube feeders). There are some commercial cleaners available;

Scoot® or Songbird Essentials Birdhouse and Feeder Cleaner are two good products to use. These are very effective, easy to use, non-toxic and biodegradable. Feeders can also be sanitized using a solution of one part bleach to 10 parts water. With any of these methods make sure to rinse thoroughly, then rinse again. Completely dry the feeder before refilling with seed. Any moisture could lead to mold and mildew.

#### Extra Care for Nectar Feeders

Nectar feeders require a little more maintenance. The nectar needs to be changed at least every three to five days to prevent mold and deadly fermentation. It's easiest to clean the hummingbird feeders every time you change the nectar. There are specialty brushes for cleaning the tiny feeder ports. Use a mild soap or diluted bleach (one part bleach to 10 parts water) to clean the feeder. Be sure to rinse thoroughly. Let the feeder dry before refilling the nectar. (continued page 4...)



*Optimally, clean seed feeders once a month.*



# Annual Feeder Swap

**Our Popular Sale Starts March 30**

Our annual Feeder Swap Sale begins March 30! The concept is simple. You get rid of something that may have been collecting dust in the garage and save money on something new.

Here's how it works:  
You bring in a used bird feeder and get 20% off

any new bird feeder (you don't have to buy a feeder to donate one). Then, we collect those used feeders, clean and refurbish them, and donate them to over 50 schools and local nature organizations around the Twin Cities.

Last year alone, we collected over 400 bird feeders. The majority of those were donated to places that normally don't have the extra funds to support wildlife-based educational and science programs. This is a way that we as a community are able to give back. You donate a bird feeder, we put in the time to clean and refurbish it, and then we get it to places where we know it will be used for educational purposes.

We believe that over time, programs like these can have an immeasurable impact in local communities. **If you know of a school or organization in need of this type of support, please send an email to me: dave@wildbirdstore.net.** We support the organizations that our customers believe in.

~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!

Like us on **Facebook.com/WildBirdStore** to post photos, ask questions and be the first to know about upcoming sales and events. Or follow us on **Twitter: @ASWildBirdStore.**

## FEEDER SWAP

MAR.  
&  
APR.

## SEASONAL CHECKLIST & OBSERVATIONS

# Early Spring

By Minnetonka Manager CAROL CHENAULT

- Watch oriole, hummingbird and monarch migration online at **journenorth.org.**

- Prepare for the early-March return of Eastern Bluebirds.

- Mount a Wood Duck house on a pole; then protect the entrance from predators with a baffle.

- Open Purple Martin houses once martins are seen in the area.

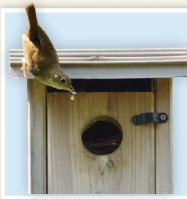
- Clean out birdhouses and nest boxes from last year.

- Provide nesting materials with **Best Nest Builder™.**

- **During the last week of April put out nectar feeders for hummingbirds and feeders for orioles. Offer half oranges, grape jelly, nectar and mealworms.**

- Reapply **WindowAlert™** decals each spring to prevent bird-window collisions. For especially problematic areas of the house, use **ABC Bird Tape** for full window coverage.

- Bring feeders to your neighborhood All Seasons store for cleaning (fees apply).



- **Put up a wren house and a chickadee house. Place the chickadee house out of direct sight line of nesting wrens to reduce conflict between the two.**



- Replace damaged feeders with new easy-to-clean versions, such as the **Squirrel Buster®** family of feeders or **Aspects Quick Clean®** Feeders. Cracked feeders allow water to pool in the birdseed, causing mold and mildew growth.

- Scrub birdbaths with 10 parts water and one part bleach, then use **BirdBath Protector™** to keep them clean.

- Rake up shell debris and dispose in the trash.

- Use no-mess seed and mixes, such as **Medium Chips** and **Kracker Jax.** No-mess products offer enjoyable bird feeding without the hassle of shell clean-up.

- Measure 12 feet from trees and install a pole with squirrel baffle for squirrel-resistant birdfeeding. See **our handout, Discouraging Squirrels** for advice.

- Plan to add bird-, bee- and butterfly-friendly plants to your landscape. Check out **our Birdscaping Basics handout** for helpful ideas.

- Install your **Water Wiggler™** in the bath and/or an **Easy Mister** in your garden. Moving water attracts birds.

- Watch Bald Eagles raise their young online at **ustream.tv/decoraheagles.**



# Coveted Gems

## Seeking Scarlet Tanagers & Indigo Buntings

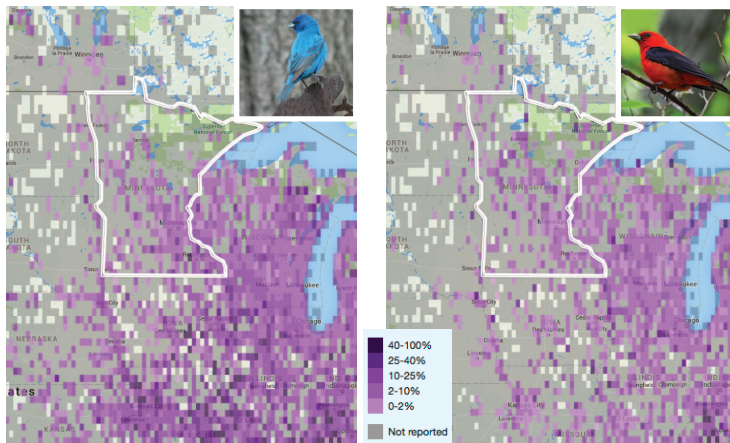
I've lived in Minnesota for all of my 40+ years, but it wasn't until about 3 years ago that I saw my first ever Scarlet Tanager and Indigo Bunting. It was May 1st—May Day—and something about the day just felt different. It was warmer and more summer-like. It had rained the night before, giving everything a bit of shimmer in my backyard. As I sat down to breakfast, I glanced out the kitchen's bay windows and a neon red glow caught my eye. It was a Scarlet Tanager, and it was perched—even posing—in all of its crimson-and-black glory on the branch of an oak tree, just feet from the window.

I crept out of the kitchen to grab my camera, loudly whispering to my husband and son, "look out the window!" Then, as I snapped photos like a paparazzo, an Indigo Bunting also flitted into view, cautiously investigating seeds that had fallen below my feeder. Its brilliant blue was indescribably beautiful. What a day!

Indigo Buntings returned to our yard the following spring, but I've yet to see the Scarlet Tanager again. But I hold out hope. After all, I waited 37 years to see my first!

### Commonly Uncommon

As it turns out, while these neo-tropical beauties are relatively common spring and summer visitors to Minnesota, the experience of seeing either the Scarlet Tanager or Indigo Bunting in our backyard habitats is often fleeting. Scarlet Tanagers settle in large tracks of mature forest to breed, while Indigo Buntings seek out brushy and weedy areas. Still, like my experience, a single visit can be enough of a hook for folks to hold out hope of a sighting for years to come.



March–May Indigo Bunting (left) and Scarlet Tanager (right) sightings over the last 10 years, as reported on eBird.org\*.

### An Urban Sighting in Wild Weather

Take, for example, All Seasons Wild Bird Store Eagan Manager, Linda Gorr. "I'm in a residential area, close to downtown St. Paul, so I don't often get some of the less common species at my feeders. But once,

# WANTED

## SCARLET TANAGER



## INDIGO BUNTING



Photos by Katrina Hase

after a storm, an Indigo Bunting appeared at my Nyjer™ feeder. It was thrilling! Their color is a fluorescent, teal blue. They're so pretty!" Of her odds of seeing another—or even a Scarlet Tanager—she says, "I always hold out a hope that it'll come back. After a storm you might see unusual birds that you might not otherwise get at your feeders . . . the weather can push them out of their flight patterns and behaviors they follow."

### Stocking Feeders to Increase Odds

Julie Ziemer, White Bear Lake's store manager, hedges her bets for seeing these and other spring stunners by offering the right food and feeders (for Scarlet Tanagers: **suet**, **mealworms** and **grape jelly**; for Indigo Buntings: **millet**, **Nyjer** and **Joe's Mix**), even though she has yet to see either the Scarlet Tanager or Indigo Bunting since she moved from her Sommerset home—where they were occasional visitors—to Stillwater. She's not discouraged that they haven't visited in her new locale, adding "when you do attract them, they're very beautiful . . . it's pretty special."

### Unexpected Visitor to Oriole Feeder

Wayzata staff member, Jim Weisman, echoes the sentiment. "I just feel like it's a treat when they're here. You know how it goes—some years you don't have them, but that's OK. It's just a thrill when they come." He's been fortunate to see the Scarlet Tanager for the last three years, but adds that, "before that, I'd never seen one!" The Scarlet Tanager was in the habit of coming to his oriole feeder [serving oranges and grape jelly]. "I just saw him for a few days in a row and then didn't see him again that year."

While Jim didn't see any Indigo Buntings last year, in previous years they've been pretty regular visitors to his yard, dining on a mix of millet and dried fruit—available in our **Berry Nutty** mix—served in a tube feeder with a tray. Of the Indigo Bunting, Jim says, "You can't believe what it looks like until you really see it . . . it's like BB King—how blue can you get?" ■



Visit [wildbirdstore.com/blog](http://wildbirdstore.com/blog) for suggestions to tip the scales in your favor for spotting Scarlet Tanagers and Indigo Buntings in your yard!

(... continued from page 1)

**Nectar feeder tip:** Don't put oil or any other sticky substance around ports to deter bees, wasps or ants. You may contaminate the nectar.



## Clean House, Happy Home

For birds, a clean house is one they'll call home. And just like clean feeders, clean houses help maintain a healthy bird population. Dirty birdhouses can harbor rodents, insects, mites, fungi and bacteria that spread disease. The best time to clean a birdhouse is after the nesting brood completely fledges for the season.

Birdhouses usually have swinging sides, hinged roofs or removable bottoms. Open the birdhouse, partially disassemble it, and thoroughly clean it. First, put on disposable gloves to remove all the old nesting material, then scrape out any clumped matter. Dispose of this material in a plastic bag to prevent spreading parasites. Next, scrub the house thoroughly using a weak bleach solution,



Clean birdhouses to keep nesting birds safe.

making sure to get all corners, the entrance hole and drainage and ventilation holes. Rinse the house with clean water for several minutes. Let the house dry thoroughly in full sun for at least several hours. Finally, check the house for any protruding nails, screws or splinters and make repairs as necessary.

## Give Birdbaths a Bath Too

Keeping your birdbath clean can be a challenge but it's absolutely worth your time. After all, you offer the bath to birds because you want them to use it! Who wants to soak in a dirty tub? Clean your birdbaths every two to three days. Lots of critters, besides the birds, like to use birdbaths. The downside to such a popular amenity is that it gets very dirty. A good, strong bristle brush is your best defense to an undesirable bath. To remove lime scale, use a mixture of water and white vinegar—remember to cover the birdbath while it's soaking in the vinegar. Using Birdbath Protector™ also helps keep the algae under control, but does not substitute for frequent water changes. ■



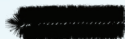
A simple mix of vinegar and water removes lime scale.

## SPRING CLEANING PICKS

### Brushes

#### Songbird Essentials Best Long Brush

This brush is 24" long with a wood handle and black nylon bristles for easy and effective cleaning.



#### Best Combo Brush Set (for hummingbird and oriole feeders)

This set comes with two brushes—a 14" double-ended brush, great for hummer and tube feeders, and a smaller brush that's sized to clean tiny ports on hummingbird feeders.



#### Birdbath Brush

This brush has an easy-grip handle and stiff bristles to effectively clean birdbaths.



### Cleaners

#### Scoot® Bird Feeder Cleaner

This enzyme-based powder formula is fast acting and environmentally friendly. It's strong enough to remove stubborn bird droppings and safe to use on all types of feeders.



#### Songbird Essentials Birdhouse and Feeder Cleaner

This cleaner was developed to clear birdhouses and bird feeders of parasites, resulting in a clean habitat for birds. It is a non-toxic spray made of all natural, food-grade enzymes.



#### Birdbath Protector

This solution is formulated for outdoor birdbaths to prevent stains, organic contaminants and mineral deposits. It keeps water clean and clear naturally.



## Cleaning Services

### Feeder Cleaning

Bring in your feeders to any of our All Seasons Wild Bird Store locations for cleaning. Prices range from \$15 for small tube feeders to \$30 for electronic feeders. Please allow 2-3 days turnaround.

We can also repair most feeders and order parts as needed. Why not treat your favorite feeders to a tune-up? ■



**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.