



**ALL SEASONS
WILD BIRD
STORE**

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Volume 19 Issue 6 | November/December 2012

Woodpeckers

Early Winter To-Do List

Websites for Bird Lovers



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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.

FEATURE ARTICLE

Colder Days, Heartier Foods

By Wayzata Manager MELISSA BLOCK

A bird's ability to survive our cold winter nights depends on the availability and quality of their diet. Since the days are short and nights are long, birds have less time to forage for food, and oftentimes their natural food sources are covered with snow. Songbirds may lose 10% of their body weight overnight, so birds need to eat 25% more in winter than in warmer weather. They need foods high in calories and fat to keep up the high metabolic rate that's necessary for them to survive.

High Protein, High Fat Food

Black oil sunflower seed is a great winter offering. It has a high fat and protein content with a relatively thin shell. It's important to use fresh seed because the fat and oil content will diminish over time.

The majority of birds that visit our backyard feeders will enjoy black oil sunflower seed. **Golden safflower seed** is also high in protein and fat, with an added bonus: squirrels don't like it!



▲ Golden Safflower Seed

Nyjer™ is another seed that is high in calories and oil content. Chickadees, American Goldfinches, Common Redpolls and Pine Siskins are just a few of the birds that Nyjer attracts. Again, it's important that the Nyjer seed you offer is fresh. Nyjer will dry out after a couple of months and the birds will not eat it.

High-Energy Food

Peanuts and **suet** are other great foods to offer birds in the winter not only because of their high protein and fat levels but because of the extra boost of energy they offer. Peanuts don't freeze so they are an easy source of energy for your backyard birds. For high calories, suet is one of the best foods to offer birds. Suet is a high-energy, pure fat substance that is invaluable to our winter birds. Our **Pacific Bird Suets** also contain **mealworms**, which provide additional protein.



▲ Pacific Bird Suet

Providing well-stocked bird feeders will help birds survive and offer you the enjoyment of watching these rugged, beautiful birds throughout the North's coldest and darkest days of winter. ■

Thank You for Your Contributions!



Last May we rolled out our **Round Up for Birds** campaign to collect donations for and raise awareness

of Project BirdSafe. Project BirdSafe is a cooperative program headed by Audubon Minnesota that provides information and resources to reduce deadly bird collisions with buildings in urban and suburban areas. It's estimated that bird collisions with buildings and their windows is the largest killer of migratory bird species around the world. In the Twin Cities, we live in a large migratory flyway along the Mississippi River and therefore have the potential to make a huge impact in reducing deadly bird collisions. Thanks to your support and our matching contribution, we were able to raise over \$3,000! These funds were allocated directly to the Project BirdSafe program. Rounding up a few cents or even a dollar or two at the register made for a sizeable donation. Thank you!

~ 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.

NOV.
&
DEC.

Early Winter

by Bloomington Assistant Manager TRISH WAGLE



- ☐ **Add dried mealworms or live mealworms for a high-protein boost.**
- ☐ Put out additional suet feeders and add suet pellets to tray and dish feeders.
- ☐ Use Carol's Dry, Dry Birdie insert to prevent the birds from bathing. Keep the heated birdbath full and fresh.
- ☐ Avoid shell debris under the feeders by using no-shell food, like Kracker Jax, Medium Chips, #1 Select Chips or whole sunflower hearts.
- ☐ Feed goldfinches (now in their mustard brown winter plumage) Nyjer™, Finches' Choice, Nyjer & Chips, golden safflower, or Songbird Delight.
- ☐ Provide Peanut Pickouts and in-shell peanuts as energy food for chickadees, nuthatches, woodpeckers and Blue Jays.
- ☐ **Feed the birds (and not the squirrels)! Try the Squirrel Buster Peanut Feeder with Peanut Pickouts. ►**
- ☐ Attract cardinals, Mourning Doves, turkeys, pheasants, Blue Jays, rabbits and squirrels with Critter Crunch in a ground feeder.
- ☐ Sprinkle Finches' Choice on the ground for juncos, White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows and American Tree Sparrows.
- ☐ Identify winter visiting birds like Common Redpolls, Purple Finches, Pine Siskins and Red-breasted Nuthatches with the *Peterson Field Guide to Birds of North America*.
- ☐ Add an extension to your pole system to prepare for winter snow depth while also preventing deer and squirrels from raiding the feeder.



- ☐ Move some feeders to the deck rail bracket hangers for easy filling and close-up viewing.
- ☐ **Feed squirrels the Squirrel Kob Bungee Feeder ◀ (shown, left) and corn cobs, the Recycled Squirrel Jar Feeder or the Whole Peanut Wreath Feeder. Watching squirrels is a great way to entertain yourself, too!**

Black & White Wonders

Discover Winter's Dapper Woodpeckers

By Bloomington Staff Member JOE SCHMITZ

Though sometimes outshined by showier birds like Northern Cardinals or feeder darlings like Black-capped Chickadees, the formally attired Downy, Hairy and Pileated Woodpeckers are nonetheless fascinating. Seemingly unbothered by the snow, cold and wind that make Minnesota winters seem so long, they see-saw bounce along tree trunks in search of food.



Downy Woodpecker ▲

The smallest of our resident woodpeckers (6"), Downy males (note the male's red head patch) and females (no red head patch) lead somewhat separate lives throughout the fall and early winter. Downy Woodpeckers' ranges may overlap at this time, with the establishment of smaller, defensible breeding territories to follow mid-winter. Downy breeding territories may be as small as 40 feet in diameter or as large as 100 feet in diameter, and are centered upon the nesting cavity. Until courtship begins, males and females do not feed together; in fact, the males often drive the females away from feeders.

Downy Woodpecker courtship may begin as early as February in our region, with a noted increase in drumming to announce the onset of pairs bonding. This increase in activity places huge demands on the individual bird's energy budget, so it's a great time to provide additional food options in your backyard feeders.



Hairy Woodpecker ▲

Like the Downy Woodpecker, male Hairy Woodpeckers are distinguished from females by the presence or absence of the red head patch. To distinguish the larger Hairy Woodpeckers (9") from Downy Woodpeckers, look closer at the bills of each species: if you were to turn the bill of the Hairy Woodpecker backwards it would extend past the eyeball—this is not the case for Downy Woodpeckers, which have shorter bills.

Hairy Woodpeckers begin their courtship and nest-building earlier than other woodpeckers, starting as early as mid-December. As members of the same sex vie for a mate, you may see bill-waving displays. The birds move their heads rapidly in a left to right motion while braced against a tree trunk and then sit in their "still pose" for up to twenty minutes. It will look like a woodpecker standoff right in your own backyard. Once pairs bond, Hairy Woodpeckers may defend territories as large as a quarter acre.



Red-bellied Woodpecker ▲

The Red-bellied Woodpecker is zebra-backed with a red cap and a black-and-white speckled rump. It's a medium-sized bird (9")

with a fairly long bill, short wings and heavy body. These birds are often mistakenly called "red-headed woodpeckers," since they sport brilliant red markings that extend from the bill to the back of the head (males) or at the nape of the neck (females). In fact, the Red-bellied Woodpecker's name refers to a subtle, rusty red blush on the underside, down near the feet. This red blush is difficult to see in the field and is easier to spot when the bird is at a feeder.

The Red-bellied Woodpecker has a loud, rich "quirrr" call. Listen for their calls in woodlands and towns, and especially at your feeders.



Pileated Woodpecker ▲

Pileated Woodpeckers, pronounced either as "pill-E-ated," or "pile-E-ated" (both forms are acceptable), are the largest of our overwintering woodpeckers (19"). Females have blackish foreheads—compared to the males' red forehead—and lack the males' red "moustaches" below their eyes. The large oblong holes they drill in trees as they search for carpenter ants and other insect prey are sure signs of their presence in our local woods. Pileated Woodpeckers defend large feeding territories year-round. Their numbers at our feeders may increase briefly during the winter, as juveniles seek suitable territories of their own. "Kek-kek" repeated six to eight times, *(continued next page . . .)*

(. . .from previous page)

followed by low, resonant drumming—as often as twice a minute—may indicate a lone male looking for a mate in late winter. From mid-March into mid-May, head waving displays as they call “Awoik-Awoik” signify either a courting pair or a dispute between territorial rivals.

Woodpeckers can be some of the most entertaining winter visitors to our backyards. To help them keep up with their increased need for protein and fat reserves, provide a consistent food source and be sure to

include suet and Peanut Pickout feeders to your offerings. Chickadees, White-breasted Nuthatches, and Red-breasted Nuthatches will also thank you for the added protein and fat. ■

DID YOU KNOW? . . .

. . . Woodpeckers' tongues wrap around their skulls and can be extended to great lengths—an excellent tool for extracting insects from deep within tree trunks.

FEATURED PRODUCT

Squirrel Buster® Peanut Feeder

NEW From Brome. Serve Birds, Not Squirrels.

Peanuts are an incredibly popular food at the feeder. However, they are also very popular with squirrels, which is one reason many backyard birders shy away from serving them. Finally there's a solution! This feeder has a wire mesh opening with ports that will close when a squirrel jumps on the feeder. It features a large tail prop area so woodpeckers can easily balance on the rim. It's also designed so that the peanuts won't easily fall out of the mesh, making the area under the feeder cleaner. In addition to woodpeckers, the chickadees, nuthatches and Blue Jays will love this feeder.



GREAT IDEAS

Suet Pellets

A High-Energy Snack

A convenient, no-mess solution is to add suet pellets to your tray, dish or hopper-style feeders. Suet pellets contain insect protein and provide both fat and protein for your birds, especially chickadees, nuthatches and woodpeckers!



Mealworms

Birds Love 'Em—Dried or Fresh

Our selection of farm-raised dried mealworms provide the perfect balance of protein, fat and fiber to promote bird health, vigor and song! Easy and convenient to use, simply place the desired amount of dried mealworms in a dish or feeder, or mix the worms with birdseed in your favorite feeder. Dried mealworms come in an easy-to-pour pouch or a 14-oz. container for best value.



Cabin Mix

Metabolism Boost

As cold weather sets in, consider offering Cabin Mix in your feeders.

This rich mix of black oilers, sunflower hearts, cracked corn, peanuts and millet is high in fat and protein so that the birds can stoke their metabolisms. 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. If your birds like Joe's Mix, treat them to Cabin Mix during the cold weather.



WEBSITES FOR BIRD LOVERS

By Bloomington Assistant Manager
TRISH WAGLE

Minnesotans face a long cold dark winter so we arm ourselves with coping tools. One of mine is a list of websites I can visit to fill my eyes and my mind with visions of warmer seasons. If you find yourself missing the backyard birds of spring, summer or fall, they are only a click away. These sites offer information, community and the sights and sounds of the birds we love.

✧ birds.cornell.edu

This is the website of the Cornell University Lab of Ornithology.

✧ mybirdz.org

This website is supported by the Wild Bird Feeding Industry Research Foundation.

✧ phoebeallens.com

This is a streaming website showing a hummingbird nest at a home in southern California. The nesting season runs from October to May.

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.