



ALL SEASONS  
WILD BIRD  
STORE

# BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Volume 18 Issue 1 | March/April 2011

## Chickadees!

Why they're a feeder favorite

The perfect chickadee nest box

inside >



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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.

#### FEATURE ARTICLE

## Backyard Habitat Tips

By Wayzata Manager MELISSA BLOCK

These are the months to prepare for our spring and summer arrivals. Make an inventory of what your backyard offers to the birds—does it offer natural cover? Nesting sites? Food sources?

### Provide nesting sites

Chickadees, nuthatches, woodpeckers and wrens are all cavity nesters. That means they look for or make holes in trees to build their nests. Cavity nesters will use nest boxes, so now is the time to put up some new nest boxes and clean out any that were left outside over the winter. You can help the birds by putting out nesting materials, like short pieces of yarn and string, or by hanging out a **Best Nest Builder** ball of cotton fiber. Do not use dryer lint; it may contain synthetic materials that will not do well in the weather.

Robins, some swallows and house finches build cup-shaped nests in trees, on ledges and under eaves. Cardinals, orioles, hummingbirds, and goldfinches also build cup-shaped nests in trees and shrubs; they rely on dense coverage

to protect their nests. Keep small brush piles in your yard to provide cover until the trees have sprouted leaves.

### Clean up seed debris

After the snow melts it is a good time to clean up all the seed debris that has accumulated under your feeders. Old seed debris not only inhibits grass growth, but also can be detrimental to birds' health. It's best to throw this debris in the trash.

### Plan spring plantings

Spring is a great time to plant new trees and shrubs, so choose those that will provide something for your backyard birds. Some examples of bird-friendly trees and shrubs that provide food and cover are: eastern red cedar, white spruce, chokecherry, elderberry, green ash, winterberry, dogwood, viburnum, white oak, and pin oak.

In addition to putting up your hummingbird feeders, think ahead to your summer garden and plan to add nectar plants to attract the hummingbirds that are *(continued page 2...)*





## Newly Hatched...

Welcome to the first edition of our "new" *Bird's-Eye View*.

You can now enjoy this informative publication six times per year, bringing you current, and seasonally fresh backyard birding content. And best of all, it's available to everyone free of charge. Pick up the latest issue while shopping in our stores, or opt to have it delivered hot off the presses via email. We'll do our part by collecting and publishing the knowledge and expertise that we've gleaned over the last 20 years. We can proudly say that we are your local backyard birding experts. Thanks for your business!

~ Al and Dave Netten



## Become a Frequent Feeder Member

Members receive a 10% discount on purchases throughout the year and special member-only offers.. Register or renew at any All Seasons Wild Bird Store location for just \$15/1 year or \$25/2 years (may not be applied to gift certificates, delivery, services or membership fees).



## Now birding is even more convenient.

In addition to premium birdseed, feeders, and expert backyard birding advice, All Seasons offers a **Feed and Fill Program**,

**home delivery and feeder cleaning and repair.** Call or visit any location for details!

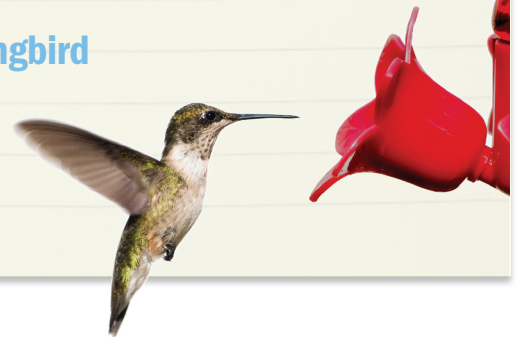
## SEASONAL CHECKLIST

MARCH  
&  
APRIL

# Spring Cleaning

by Minnetonka Manager CAROL CHENAULT

- ☐ Clean out birdhouses.
- ☐ Add a birdhouse or nesting ledge.
- ☐ **Hang a Best Nest Builder** (see page 4).
- ☐ Clean bird feeders. *(We can help!)*
- ☐ Repair or replace cracked tube feeders. *(We can help!)*
- ☐ Clean or replace hummingbird and oriole feeders.
- ☐ Rake up old seed debris for trash.
- ☐ Apply **WindowAlert** decals to prevent spring window collisions *(see below)*.
- ☐ Follow the spring migration at **[www.journeynorth.org](http://www.journeynorth.org)**
- ☐ **Put up oriole and hummingbird feeders, around April 26.**
- ☐ Review garden plans.



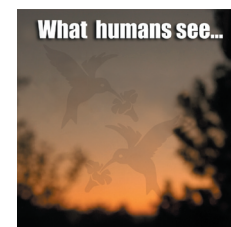
## Backyard Habitat Tips *(continued from page 1)*

headed our way (you can follow their progress at **[www.journeynorth.org](http://www.journeynorth.org)**). Some great nectar-producing plants include: bee balm, purple coneflower, liatris, fuchsia, zinnia, lobelia, impatiens, and nicotiana.

## Apply window decals

Birds often collide with windows during these early spring days. They see a reflection of the outdoors in the window and try to fly through it. Applying decals to the outside of the windows helps them to "see" the window. **WindowAlert** decals reflect ultraviolet sunlight and are almost invisible to humans, but they glow for the birds.

Warm weather and spring migration will be here soon, so be prepared! ■



*WindowAlert decals.*

# Black-capped Chickadees!



By White Bear Lake Manager BOB ELLIS

The black-capped chickadee is one of our favorite feeder birds—they're bold, active little feather balls that aren't shy about sharing their yard with you. Chickadees are often the first birds to explore a new feeder and show the other birds how it's done. Their territorial "fee-bee" call can make you smile, as it is a welcome sound of the emerging spring. Their characteristic bouncing flight seems to reflect their light-hearted nature; sort of like the bird equivalent of skipping down the sidewalk.

## Why chickadees dine and dash

With their constant flying in and out, you may think that your chickadees aren't too fond

of your feeder, but don't be alarmed. These little guys don't have as strong a cracking action in their tiny beaks as most other feeder birds. They will ferry the seed to a safe spot and either hold it with a foot or wedge it in a crevice and proceed to hammer it open.

## How to attract chickadees

Chickadees will sometimes spend more time on a feeder if there are medium or fine sunflower chips or hearts around. You will also see them visiting feeders stocked with Nyjer or Nyjer and Chips. One of our favorite mixes for chickadees is **Songbird Delight**—lots of medium chips and black-oilers, with peanuts and safflower for good measure.

## Helping chickadees feel at home

Chickadees will readily use nest boxes and are not particularly fussy as to the style or shape of the house. The size of the hole is important, however. A 1 1/8" diameter opening is perfect for chickadees. They will use boxes with holes up to 1 1/4" but that larger size tempts house sparrows to take over the box. Nest boxes should be in place by late March or early April so all of your birds can become familiar with them. Your chickadees also appreciate a ball of **Best Nest Builder** nesting material, as their nest building is part of the courtship ritual. ■

## CHICKADEE TRIVIA

Though there's no marked difference in the plumage of males and females, you can tell them apart by observing their behaviors: in late winter through nesting, look for the male to give the "fee-bee" call and to feed the female. Another giveaway? Only females incubate the eggs.

## CHICKADEE HABITAT

# Chickadee Nest Boxes

By Wayzata Manager MELISSA BLOCK

Chickadees are pretty flexible when it comes to selecting a place to live, but they do have a few preferences to consider:

### 1) They prefer houses that are stable, not hanging or swinging. Try this:

Place your nest box 5 to 15 feet above the ground, where it will receive morning sunlight.

### 2) They like to keep their cool. Try this:

Create or purchase nest boxes with ventilation slots near the roof to help keep the interior cool during hot summer days.

### 3) They prefer a clean house. Try this:

Select a nest box with a hinged opening that's easy to clean out at the end of the season.

### 4) They need the right kind of entrance.

**Try this:** For best results, select a nest box

with a 1 1/8" diameter hole, with no perch in front, as perches serve as an invitation to predators.

**Enjoy your nest box!** Chickadees lay between 5 and 7 very small eggs that are white with fine reddish-brown dots or spots. After an incubation period of 12 to 13 days, the hatchlings emerge. The babies stay in the nest for about two weeks after hatching. ■



## BOB'S FAVORITE SEED

# Chickadees' Favorite Treat

## Try the Songbird Delight mix

According to the PROJECT WILDBIRD study on seed and feeder preferences of wild birds, chickadees' favorite foods are black-oil sunflower, sunflower chips, safflower and peanuts. They can also be attracted to suet and mealworm feeders. My favorite mix for attracting chickadees is Songbird Delight. It contains more peanut pickouts than many of our other mixes and is rounded out with large portions of black oilers, medium sunflower chips and safflower, making it the perfect recipe for attracting more chickadees.



*Songbird Delight mix.*



## CHICKADEE FEEDER

# New! Ring Pull Feeders

## Easy-to-clean feeders from Droll Yankees

Chickadees aren't fussy about feeder style, so use a feeder that is easy to clean and maintain. The revolutionary Ring Pull tube feeder by Droll Yankees is so named because you simply pull the ring and the feeder comes apart in seconds. It couldn't be easier! It comes in two colors and two sizes, 15" or 23". Accessories include the Clever Clean Tray and Ring-Pull Perch Rings.



*Ring Pull feeders: maximum clean for the birds, minimum fuss for you.*

## FEATURED PRODUCT

# Best Nest Builder

## Enjoy watching birds create their nests!

The Havegärd Best Nest Builder provides all-natural nesting material for your backyard birds. While many bird species will use this material, it's especially attractive to goldfinches, because it mimics thistle down in texture. You'll get a thrill watching birds pull long strands from the ball and fly them back to their nests!



*A hummingbird visits the Best Nest Builder.*

Photos and articles may be submitted by email to [info@wildbirdstore.net](mailto:info@wildbirdstore.net).