



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

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ALL SEASONS
WILD BIRD
STORE

SUMMER'S LATE-NESTING

Goldfinches

Birds in Minnesota Update

July/August Seasonal Notes

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BLOOMINGTON

816 West 98th St.
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952.473.4283

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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.

BIRDS IN MINNESOTA: REVISED & EXPANDED

By Guest Contributor KATRINA HASE

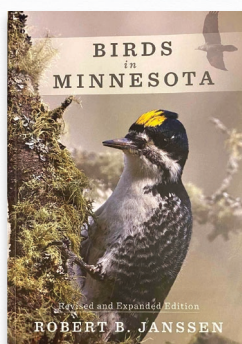
A Legacy of Tracking MN Birds

Published in January of 2020, local birding expert and author Robert Janssen's latest edition of *Birds in Minnesota* carries on a legacy that began in 1932.

The Third Tool in Your Birding Toolkit

While *Birds in Minnesota: Revised and Expanded* is absolutely essential to understanding Minnesota's birds, it's not the text you'll keep in your pocket while you're out birding, explains author Robert Janssen.

Instead, along with a field guide and a good pair of binoculars, this book is the third essential tool for birding, providing information about which of Minnesota's 443 species you should expect to see and when in the area where you're birding.



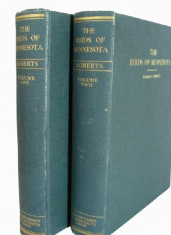
Continually Updated—Because Birds are Mobile

The original *Birds of Minnesota* was written in 1932—the year Janssen was born—by ornithologist Thomas Sadler Roberts. Janssen picked up the

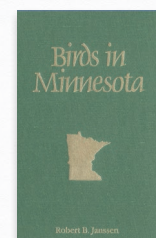
last copy of the two-volume book at his local bookstore at age 13. By the time he'd read it through completely, it became clear to Janssen that the book would need to be continuously updated because birds are mobile—their ranges change from year-to-year and decade-to-decade. He committed to continue Roberts' legacy by keeping the content up to date. So from an early age, Janssen began tracking his bird observations as Roberts had done.

In the early 1970s, Janssen and Duluth-area birder Janet Green worked with the Bell Museum of Natural History to update the original Roberts book. Their efforts were published by the University Press in 1975 as *Minnesota Birds: Where, When, and How Many*. Janssen revised and republished the book as *Birds of Minnesota* in 1987.

As years passed, computers made recording and compiling of data (*continued on page 2*)



Thomas Sadler Roberts' 1932 *Birds of Minnesota*



Janssen's 1987 edition

We're Going to be OK

I often find myself wondering how many of the local businesses that I frequent or used to frequent are doing during this new pandemic era. That got me to thinking that you may be wondering about how we're doing? Simply stated, we're doing fine and we're going to be okay.

Like many retailers, we've had to innovate and adjust to new methods and models of serving our customers. Even now, we're only open 2-3 days per week to foot traffic. In-store shopping was our primary mode of business and it's now a secondary mode behind our all-new contact-free curbside pickup service, to which we shifted when this all began. Just like that, a new model was born and it's succeeding. It makes sense, because it's the safest for everyone involved and this pandemic isn't going to magically end even though businesses and activities are allowed to resume. We also adjusted our online shipping fees to work for local customers that wanted to order online for delivery. That part of our business has grown tremendously too, because it's easy and safe.

The silver lining in folks staying at home due to a pandemic is that they're very interested in what's happening in their yards and are enjoying the natural experiences that have been right outside their windows all along. More people seem to be feeding the birds. Hopefully that will be one of the habits that will endure beyond the pandemic as it creates happier and healthier people.

All in all, we have a lot to be grateful for. Our employees have been amazing and although our business isn't the same as it was a few months ago, due to being adaptable and you adapting along with us, we're going to be okay. Here's to getting through all of this together and embracing all the silver linings!

Dave Netten



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much easier. In addition, a vast number of citizen scientists (birding is the 2nd most popular hobby in the United States) contributed population, distribution and species data that begged to be analyzed and published. Janssen once again set out to update *Birds of Minnesota*, leading to the 2020 edition.

Says Janssen, "It's my hope that birders will keep [Birds in Minnesota] updated", as he did for Roberts' original publication. "Minnesota has the best record of bird life in the United States," he explains. And he'd like to see that legacy continue.

Notable Observations in the 2020 Edition

Janssen relays both hopeful and worrisome observations about Minnesota's bird species that came out of the research for the 2020 edition of *Birds in Minnesota*.

- **The number of species in Minnesota increased, with many species of birds making significant comebacks.**

One of those species is the Trumpeter Swan. Janssen credits Carol Henderson's work with the Department of Natural Resources for the successful return of the Trumpeter Swan to Minnesota. "You can now find Trumpeter Swans nesting in almost every county in Minnesota," Janssen reports.

Other birds that have made impressive comebacks include: Bald Eagles, Turkey Vultures and Osprey. These are birds, Janssen points out, that are able to live compatibly with humans.

- **The overall population of birds in Minnesota is declining.**

Janssen related a personal story about this decline in populations. "When I was young, I would see thousands of ducks migrating and would see hundreds and hundreds of warblers. Now I might see 10 at once, or 3 or 4 here and there. I'm just not seeing the numbers anymore."

The declining population data in Minnesota are consistent with a recent finding by Cornell University that shows since 1970, the bird population in North America has decreased by 2.9 billion birds.

Grassland birds and some waterfowl are examples of birds that are particularly affected. The range of the birds like the Western Meadowlark has retreated as grassland habitats are destroyed. Janssen points out that there are areas where he's observed meadowlarks since the 1960s that he returns to today and has yet to spot a single one.

Burrowing Owls are another example. Back in the 1930s, Burrowing Owls nested extensively in western tier counties in Minnesota. Their range has retreated out of Minnesota today—they are very difficult to find in our state now.

The Gift of Being Aware

A young "Bobby Janssen" deftly identified a tray full of fall warbler specimens at the museum office of his predecessor, Thomas Sadler Roberts. Years later, Robert Janssen has authored a number of books about Minnesota's birds. All the while, Janssen has retained his ability to be aware of the things around him and appreciate their beauty and complexity. Things like birds, which provide an endless source of fascination and make him more aware of the world. He's thankful and greatly appreciative of this ability to be aware. In fact, it's the theme of his upcoming memoir—*Awareness*. Stay tuned. ■



Trumpeter Swans are making a comeback in Minnesota. (photo by Terri Zuehlke)



The range of Western Meadowlarks is retreating from Minnesota.

Late summer nester AMERICAN GOLDFINCH

Late Nesting Timed to Thistles

One of the latest nesting songbirds, goldfinches don't get started nesting until late June or early July. This appears to be timed with the life cycle of the late-blooming thistle plant which provides both nesting material and food for goldfinches. This correlation between the thistle seed ripening and goldfinch nesting may explain why goldfinches seem so much more attracted to Nyjer feeders during nesting season. Often in late fall and throughout the winter, goldfinches are more interested in golden safflower and shelled sunflower than Nyjer and Nyjer mixes.

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The bird seed sold and commonly called "thistle" is actually Nyjer™. Nyjer is a trademark name of the Wild Bird Feeding Institute—the scientific name is *Guizotia abyssinica*. The plant has a yellow flower, not the pink to purple bloom of the native Canadian thistle plant. If you see the Canadian thistle plant on your property, the seeds could have traveled on the goldfinches' plumage but it didn't germinate from your feeders.

To remove the meat from the Nyjer seed, a goldfinch uses its tongue and bill to move the seed into position to be cracked by the sharp edges of the bill. Each of those tiny Nyjer seeds must be cracked, the meat removed and shell dropped to the ground or feeder tray. Seems like an awful lot of work!

In addition to weed seeds like Canadian thistle and dandelions, goldfinches especially like small seeds from alder, birch, cedar and elm trees. They can also eat from cones and catkins as well as the buds of fruit trees.

Nesting Sites and Materials

Goldfinches favor nesting in the fork of a deciduous shrub or small tree but can be found in small conifers. The nest is a small compact cup of plant fibers, grass, spider silk lined with plant down and hair. In addition to feeders, providing nesting material will assist adult birds during this busy season. Suet feeders filled with dog, cat, horse or human hair or **The Best Nest Builder** hung in a bush or from a shepherd's hook provides great backyard entertainment. It's a wonder the birds can see to fly with their bills so stuffed with nesting material pulled from these items.

Nesting Behavior

The female incubates the clutch of 4–6 pale blue eggs in the nest for 10–12 days and only has one brood a year. The male arrives nearly hourly to feed her regurgitated seeds. American Goldfinches raise their young on seeds, unlike other songbirds who typically feed their young insects. Adult goldfinches partially digest seeds and regurgitate them for the young. The adults feed the fledglings for 11–17 days after they leave the nest.

Attracting Goldfinches

American Goldfinches prefer yards mixed with low shrubs, deciduous saplings and mature trees. Planting purple coneflower, zinnia, cup plant and sunflower will also help to attract goldfinches to your backyard. Keeping feeders clean and well maintained and filled with fresh seed is a must for these particular birds. Seed that has become too dried out by wind or moldy from moisture is ignored by goldfinches. Providing a variety of feeders for **Nyjer**, **Nyjer and Chips** or a Nyjer mix, **golden safflower** or **sunflower out of the shell** will attract more birds, as will locating birdbaths throughout the yard. ■

STAFF PICKS

By Minnetonka Manager CAROL CHENAULT

Goldfinch Product Picks

1. BEST NEST BUILDER. The Best Nest Builder is made of all-natural nesting material. Goldfinches love this white fluffy material! Many birds will use this material including chickadees, House Finches and cardinals.

2. ASPECTS QUICK CLEAN MEDIUM SPRUCE MESH FEEDER. This Quick Clean mesh feeder offers unlimited potential for attracting goldfinches, siskins, redpolls, Purple and House Finches. These birds can cling to any open spot on the mesh tube and up to a dozen birds might feed at once.

3. ASPECTS QUICK CLEAN NICKEL TUBE FEEDER. This finch feeder features a brushed nickel metal base and top. It has a quick-clean removable base that allows the feeder to be thoroughly cleaned.

4. PRE-FILLED THISTLE POUCH This thistle sack is a pre-filled thistle feeder that can be refilled again and again. Finches and other small birds love to cling to the cloth mesh and pick seeds out of the pouch.



Seasonal Notes

By Minnetonka Manager CAROL CHENAULT

July: WEEK BY WEEK



Week 1	2nd Week	3rd Week	4th Week
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Barn Swallows fledge. ✓ A new generation of monarch butterflies emerges. ✓ Purple Martin colonies are noisy as adults feed young. ✓ House Wrens may still have 5-8 young in the nest at this time. ✓ Orioles feed their young caterpillars and insect larvae. <p><i>Tips:</i> Help nesting orioles by offering live mealworms or dried mealworms soaked in nectar.</p> <p>Check bluebird boxes and remove the old nest and debris between nestlings.</p> <p>Remember—most fledglings do not need human assistance. Adult birds are nearby and will return to feed the young after you leave the area.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bird song decreases dramatically as nesting season wraps up for many species. ✓ The 2nd generation of eastern swallowtail butterflies emerge. ✓ Monarchs lay eggs on common milkweed plants. ✓ Osprey young are still in the nest. ✓ Great Blue Heron juveniles leave the nest. <p><i>Tip:</i> Prevent seed loss due to bill sweeping behavior by using a hanging seed cylinder feeder with Mr. Bird seed cylinders.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Canada Geese are flying again, now that their molting is complete. ✓ Bird migration season begins as several shorebird species such as Lesser Yellowlegs and Sandpipers begin migrating. Many species of shorebirds nest in the tundra and migrate through Minnesota to places as far south as Argentina. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Juvenile Canada Geese begin to fly, testing their new flight feathers. ✓ 2nd brood of Barn Swallows hatch. ✓ Mallards are on the wing again following their molt. <p><i>Tips:</i> Try a Nectar Dot feeder to feed hummingbirds by hand! Use Nectar Defender to keep nectar fresh longer.</p> <p>Divert squirrels from bird feeders with the Deluxe Squeegie—a bungee jumper for squirrels. Fill it with cob corn or Nut'n Sweet Corn logs.</p> 

August: WEEK BY WEEK

Week 1	2nd Week	3rd Week	4th Week
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We lose 2-3 minutes of daylight each day in August. ✓ Mourning Doves are on their third clutch of eggs. <p><i>Tips:</i> Unlike most songbirds, goldfinches feed their young seeds that have been shelled and partially digested. Keep your feeders clean and full to attract them.</p>  <p>Add a 24" coil-mount branch-shaped arm to your pole system as a perch and for additional places to hang feeders.</p> <p>Mint extract on nectar ports helps to repel bees, wasps and bald-faced hornets. Hanging the feeder from an ant trap prevents ants from reaching the nectar.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The white-lined sphinx moth, often called the <i>hummingbird moth</i>, feeds during the daytime on petunias and other garden flowers. ✓ 2nd generation of monarch butterflies is on the wing. ✓ Some warblers such as Nashville and Yellow Warblers begin migrating. ✓ Common Nighthawks migrate through in the afternoons and early evenings while eating flying insects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clusters of monarchs in trees signals migration is beginning. ✓ Chimney Swifts, Franklin's Gulls and various shorebirds are in migration. ✓ Great Egrets gather a dozen or two at a time along the shorelines. ✓ Mourning Doves continue nesting—they can have as many as 5 broods a year. <p><i>Tips:</i> Add Fire Mix powder 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"> ✓ Juvenile Wood Ducks now look more like the adults. ✓ Common Nighthawks begin migration—watch the skies! ✓ Juvenile Common Loons are still with the adults but begin have more adult plumage. ✓ Migrating monarchs are flying south one by one, anywhere from ground level to 7,000 feet up. Migrant monarchs live up to 11 months. Non-migrants live for 30 days. There can be 2-3 generations of monarchs in a summer in MN. <p><i>Tips:</i> Avoid large numbers of grackles and starlings at feeders by filling feeders with golden safflower or white safflower. Use Bye, Bye Starling to provide a sunflower mix but still discourage European Starlings.</p>