



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

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ALL SEASONS
WILD BIRD
STORE

Yellow-bellied *Sapsuckers*

+ Winter Migration
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.

WINTER MIGRATION

By Guest Contributor MELISSA BLOCK

WHERE ARE THEY *Now?*

Seasonal bird migration is fascinating. Birds migrate to move from areas of low or decreasing resources (nesting capabilities, food, etc.) to areas of high or increasing resources. Some of these migrations are amazing.

Some summer visiting birds that nest in our area come up from the south to take advantage of the increasing insect populations, budding plants, and abundance of nesting locations. As the cold weather approaches, the birds then move southward again, following the insects and vegetation.

Of course, our permanent birds, like cardinals and chickadees, etc., do not migrate. They can find adequate sources of food year-round.

Long-Distance Migrants

Long-distance migrants are the ones that make the trip to the Neotropics. If you were in Central America during the winter, you would see flocks of birds from all over the US and Canada: tanagers, vireos, Western Kingbirds, Indigo Buntings, and American Redstarts—all in the same area. Baltimore Orioles migrate to Central America. Wood Thrushes and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds spend at least half the year in

Where exactly are the Neotropics?

The Neotropics sound like a really good place to go over the winter, but where exactly are they?

The Neotropics includes a lot of countries and areas, such as South America, Central America, the Caribbean Islands, and the Yucatan Peninsula.

Some of south Florida and the Rio Grande Valley coastal areas are also sometimes considered to be part of the Neotropics.



Neotropics

this area. Some of these birds cross the Gulf of Mexico to get there, while others travel down the coast of Texas and around the Gulf. Some of our summer birds, like Black-throated and Cape May Warblers fly to the Caribbean. Barn Swallows travel to Panama and south to Argentina.

Many birds migrate all the way to South America. *(continued on page 2 . . .)*

New Year, New Recipe

Happy New Year!

Along with most of you, we're happy to be turning the page to 2021! 2020 will not be a time any of us ever forgets. Whether it be for the blessings bestowed or the sorrows experienced, it has changed us all.

We feel nothing but gratitude to have been able to navigate through the challenges put in our path. *We're most grateful for our wonderful store managers and their teams that have been available to service our customers safely day in and day out.* They've worked tirelessly and joyfully and their spirit has impacted many others along the way. We can't thank them all enough.

New Songbird Delight Recipe

If it ain't broke, don't fix it, right? Not quite. Songbird Delight is one of our most popular seed blends, and for good reason: it has high quality ingredients that most songbirds prefer. Many of you swear by it and it's actually my preferred mix offering at my house.

Starting this January, it might look slightly different, as we've improved it a bit by increasing the amount of Golden Safflower and reducing the amount of White Safflower. Birds are proving to us that they prefer Golden Safflower over the traditional White Safflower, so this should result in a more attractive mix with less waste. We hope you like it as much as we do!

Al and Dave Netten

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WINTER MIGRATION

(... continued from page 1) Some Rose-breasted Grosbeaks winter in Mexico, while others go all the way to Ecuador. Scarlet Tanagers, Eastern Kingbirds, Bobolinks and Chimney Swifts go to South America. All Purple Martins go to the Amazon Basin for the winter. Certain shorebirds, like the American Gold-plover travel from the Arctic to the southern tip of South America.

One of our favorite summer visitors, the Baltimore Oriole, spends the majority of the year in South America and only ventures north for a few months. They head up north to nest in early April to late May. Some return to South America—usually the males—as early as July.

Most of our beloved Ruby-throated Hummingbirds spend their winters in southern Mexico and Central America. They get there by flying across the Gulf of Mexico non-stop, which is an amazing feat considering their size.

Short-Distance Migrants

There are short-distance migrants that move relatively locally, like from higher to lower elevations on a mountainside. Medium-distance migrants move only a few hundred miles. For instance, House Wrens, Eastern



A Baltimore Oriole in Anton Valley, Panama

Bluebirds, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Red-winged Blackbirds and Wood Ducks migrate to southern states. Great Blue Herons fly to southern states and into Mexico.

Blue Jays are interesting. Some migrate just a few hundred miles south of wherever they spend the summer. So, your winter Blue Jays might not be the same ones you had over the summer. Some Blue Jays don't migrate at all, and some migrate every other year—scientists really haven't figured out why yet.

Be it from a few hundred miles to a few thousand miles, we always look forward to our summer visitors returning. We'll keep the feeders filled for their arrivals! ■

STAFF PICKS

Squirrely fun!

Squirrels are surely a hassle to backyard birders, but if you find ways to keep them distracted, they can be pretty entertaining!



Squngee

Add corn cobs to the two eyebolts and watch as squirrels bounce on the attached spring line.

Cob Corn

Available in stores, use with a feeder or place a few below bird feeders. Great for use with Squngee.

Nut'n Sweet Corn Squirrellogs

One of these Nut'n Sweet Corn logs replaces 12-24 ears of corn!

Squirrel Jar Feeder

Squirrels puzzle how to get to the seed inside, eventually crawling inside to dine!

A DIFFERENT SORT *of woodpecker*

It meows like a cat, laps up sap, performs a complete migration yearly, and reuses its nesting site. The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker is a woodpecker of a different sort.

Sap Searchers

In early spring, the parallel, horizontal rows of holes drilled in the tree bark are a sure sign that Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers are in the area. These holes, called *sapwells*, are used to release tree sap and attract insects. Despite its name, the bird doesn't actually suck the sap but rather uses its paint-brush-like bristly tongue to lap up the sticky liquid sap. This woodpecker also eats the insects that are attracted to the sap and the spiders that are attracted by the insects. Like flycatchers, these birds can also launch from a branch and catch flying insects in midair.

Unlike other woodpeckers, sapsuckers don't rely on dead trees for feeding. They need lots of fast-growing trees to tap for sapwells. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers prefer trees with higher sugar concentrations in their sap such as paper birch, yellow birch, sugar maple, red maple and hickory trees. The sapsucker maintains these sapwells throughout the spring and summer, tapping larger areas that become more square-shaped throughout the season.

In addition to sap and insects, sapsuckers also regularly dine on berries and other fruits.

Appearance

Measuring 8-9" in length this sapsucker is larger than a Downy but smaller than a Hairy Woodpecker. The male sports a red crown, red chin and black bib. The face profile is black and white. The bird has a large white wing patch. Look for a long white stripe along the folded wing. The females have a red crown and a white chin.



Photo by Don Curle

Nesting

These birds prefer to excavate a 10" deep nesting cavity in a live poplar or birch with heart rot. Unlike some other woodpeckers,



A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker with a sapwell.

nesting cavities may be used for several breeding seasons. Other woodpeckers abandon their excavated holes, benefiting other cavity nesters with premade nest sites.

Both male and female sapsuckers excavate the hole. They have one brood a year. The female incubates the 5-6 plain white eggs during the day and the male does so at night. Both parents feed the young, which fledge at 25-29 days.

Sounds

A quiet bird, the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker will meow like a cat. The drumming of the sapsucker differs from other woodpeckers. According to "the dean of Minnesota birders" Bob Janssen—listen for a loud drum roll with clearly separated taps at the end, sounding like a motor running out of gas.

Attracting

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers are not easily drawn to feeders but may visit suet feeders. They are more likely to find a tree in the backyard to tap for sap. Other birds benefit from the activity of sapsuckers such as hummingbirds, kinglets, warblers and waxwings. These birds check out the sapsucker's sapwells for insects and sap.

Migration

Unlike other Minnesota woodpeckers, Yellow-bellied sapsuckers are not permanent residents. They migrate in the fall to the southern states, Mexico and South America.

This spring, find the sapsucker by first listening for its distinctive drumming and by locating the rows of sapwells on the tree trunks. ■



Seasonal Notes

By Minnetonka Manager CAROL CHENAULT

January: WEEK BY WEEK

Week 1	2nd Week	3rd Week	4th Week
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ January is generally our coldest month, but we've gained 4 minutes of daylight since the winter solstice. ✓ Winter visiting birds like redpolls, Pine Siskins, Purple Finches and Dark-eyed Juncos will join our resident goldfinches and House Finches at feeders. ✓ The silence of winter has been broken by the calls of the nuthatch, Northern Cardinal, Black-capped Chickadee and the drumming of woodpeckers. ✓ Great Horned Owls hoot to declare their territories. <p>Tip:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Wintering-over American Robins eat the fruit of crabapple and hackberry trees. Put dried mealworms, Berry Nutty, and suet pellets or nuggets in a ground feeder to help them through the winter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Blue Jays liven the air with their pump handle call. <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ The seed cylinder feeder holds a compressed seed cylinder. The cylinder of seed prevents birds from "bill sweeping" the seed onto the ground and deer from licking seed out of the feeder. An added plus—Northern Cardinals love these feeders! ❑ Birds must refuel quickly during cold weather. Feeders filled with a combination of dried mealworms, suet pellets or suet nuggets, peanut pick outs and Songbird Delight attract birds galore! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To survive the cold, Black-capped Chickadees shiver to convert muscle energy into heat. Chickadees eat their body weight in food daily during the winter to maintain their body temperature of 108°F. ✓ Some winters we see Snowy Owls near the Mpls/St. Paul airport. <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Attract night-feeding flying squirrels with tray feeders filled with Critter Crunch. ❑ Provide a clean water source with a heated birdbath. Use Birdbath Protector in it to keep the bath clean and fresh. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Red oaks begin to lose their leaves—a first sign of the coming spring. ✓ Black bear cubs are born in the den. ✓ Woodpeckers are drumming to announce territory and attract a mate. ✓ The bills of European Starlings begin to turn yellow as breeding season approaches. <p>Tip:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Plan your garden with our Birdscaping Basics: Landscaping for Birds. Pick up a free copy at your neighborhood store. 

February: WEEK BY WEEK

Week 1	2nd Week	3rd Week	4th Week
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Wintering-over Eastern Bluebirds visit heated birdbaths and eat from feeders serving mealworms and suet pellets or nuggets. <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Provide foods loaded with fat and protein like mealworms, suet, suet pellets or nuggets, peanuts and sunflower chips to help birds refuel quickly during cold weather. Add suet pellets and dried mealworms to Kracker Jax for a full buffet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Great Horned Owls have eggs in the nest. ✓ American Goldfinches begin to molt into their bright yellow feathers. It's a sure sign of returning spring—eventually! ✓ House Finches' singing, Mourning Doves' cooing and Red-bellied Woodpeckers' "wicker" calls are signs of the coming spring. <p>Tip:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Sign up on our website to receive our email offers and helpful information: wildbirdstore.com 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Trumpeter Swans gather on the Mississippi near Monticello in the open water created by the power plant. Visit this web page for info: monticellocci.com/pages/swans ✓ Raccoons are more active and eastern chipmunks may be venturing out of their burrows. ✓ Migrating Red-tailed Hawks arrive to claim nesting territory. ✓ All Minnesota species of tree squirrels begin their mating season including flying, fox, gray and red squirrels. <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Our blog at wildbirdstore.com/blog has new content a few times a month. Check it out! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The first migrating Red-winged Blackbirds, American Robins and Common Grackles are returning. Watch for returning Wood Ducks and Canada Geese as well. ✓ The American Crow "rattle calls" are another sign of spring. ✓ Courting male pheasants make a double squawk call. ✓ Some winter visitors begin their northward retreat but many Dark-eyed Juncos remain until early spring. They love Finches' Choice sprinkled on the ground or served in a Nyjer tube or mesh feeder. <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count. See gbbc.birdcount.org for more information. ❑ We want your bird photos! Send your bird photos to carol@wildbirdstore.net to be used on our digital sign in the stores or on our Facebook page. 