Bird Anatomy

Basics of BIRD ANATOMY

IN ORDER TO IDENTIFY BIRDS, IT’S HELPFUL TO KNOW THE BASIC ANATOMY OF A BIRD.

Field guides often use field marks to provide a description of a bird. Field marks are distinctive colors, stripes, patterns, or spots. You’ll often see descriptions like “red mark on the nape” or “white breast,” so it helps if you know a little bit about a bird’s anatomy.

Ornithologists often divide a bird’s body into regions. The main regions are: beak, head, back, throat, breast, wings, tail and legs. These regions can be divided even further.

HEAD
A bird’s head is one of the easiest places to look for field marks. The nape is the back of the head, the crown is the top of the head, and the chin and throat are immediately under the beak. The other area of the head to look for distinctive markings is the eye. Does the bird have an eye ring (circle of color around the eye)? Does it have an eye line (line through the eye), or an eyebrow stripe (line over the eye)?

NECK
Sometimes the neck of a bird can help with identification, although it is hard to see on many species. The neck of wading birds is much more prominent and therefore easier to check for field marks.

BREAST AND BELLY
The breast and belly of a bird often show distinctive field markings. For instance, the White-breasted Nuthatch is distinct in its white color from the throat to its belly. The Red-bellied Woodpecker has a small patch of red on its belly, not on its breast. It also has a red patch on its nape, a part of the head.

RUMP
A bird’s rump is just where you’d think it would be—on its back, just above the tail (think Yellow-rumped Warbler, aka “butterbutt”). Sometimes the field marks on the rump can be hard to see and don’t stand out.

TAIL
A tail can have many distinctive field marks. What is the length, the shape, the color?

Continued on page 2 . . .
Your Window to Nature for Over 30 Years!

As we’ve mentioned previously, 2021 commemorates our 30th anniversary as All Seasons Wild Bird Store. In that 30 years, we’ve seen many changes, but ultimately, the most important things have stayed the same.

• We’ve seen the excitement that fun new products have brought to our customers, like various iterations of squirrel-resistant feeders: some that spin, some that spring and some that simply shut the door on invaders. We’ve seen squirrel feeders that bounce up and down like bungee cords with a corn cob swinging as the prize.
• We’ve witnessed the trend of cleaner bird foods that don’t germinate in our lawns and gardens—the less mess or no mess trend.
• We’ve seen an explosion in interest in feeding hummingbirds and orioles when they arrive each spring.
• We’ve seen many more flavors, shapes and sizes of suet and seed cakes come to market—most with gourmet ingredients like peanut butter and insects.
• We’ve seen people become very comfortable with offering mealworms at their feeding stations year-round.
• We know many of you probably still experience the singing songs of birds as your bird clock strikes the hour.
• The mix that started it all for us, Joe’s Mix, has been our steady top seller for every year of the last 30 years.
• Steve, our Bloomington store manager has been a steadfast overseer of that store and customer favorite for every day we’ve been in business.

The joy that we all experience while watching and listening to the song birds that grace our yards year-round remains the single reason that our business has survived this long. We are grateful to all of our wonderful staff and especially to our customers who remain loyal and continue to choose to shop with us. We wouldn’t have made it without all of you and we truly appreciate you.

~Al and Dave Netten

FEATURE ARTICLE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

There are undertail coverts (the short feathers underneath the tail) and upper tail coverts (feathers on top of the tail).

WING

Many distinctive field markings can be found on a bird’s wing. Does it have a wing bar (stripes across a folded wing)? Check for wing patches (blocks of color on the wing). What do the wing tips look like? There’s also the primaries (long flight feathers on the outer half of the wing) and secondaries (flight feathers on the inner half of the wing). The length of the wing compared to the length of the tail can also be a good field mark.

Being able to identify birds is a lot of fun and knowing a bird’s basic anatomy can be very helpful.

STAFF TIPS

By Minnetonka Manager CAROL CHENAULT

It’s Oriole and Hummingbird Season!

ORIOLE TIPS
• Offer orange slices and grape jelly (not jam)
• Consider serving live or dried mealworms
• Orioles will also come to nectar feeders

HUMMINGBIRD TIPS
• Change nectar every couple of days
• Do not add food coloring to nectar
• Hang feeders from an ant moat filled with water
• Apply mint extract to feeder ports to deter insects
• Consider adding a rain guard over the feeder to protect it from water

Join the Conversation!
Facebook.com/WildBirdStore
Twitter: ASWildBirdStore
Instagram: AllSeasonsWildBirdStore

Share your photos!
Share your photos for our in-store displays and Facebook page! Send digital files to: carol@wildbirdstore.net
For many of us backyard birders, we’re perfectly content to put out seed and see what comes to visit. And why not? We have the best views, the birds are fantastic, and we don’t have to leave our homes! But going birding—beyond the home—can also be rewarding, especially with a small group of friends, and can help you to see species of birds beyond your local habitat. So grab your binoculars, a field guide and your smart phone and head to these popular Twin Cities birding destinations!

**BIRDING beyond the backyard**

Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary  
4500 Rice Street, Vadnais Heights, MN 55127  
Trail that runs between lakes. Loons, swans and Ospreys, plus a variety of songbirds.

Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary  
1 Theodore Wirth Pkwy, Minneapolis, MN 55405  
Spectacular seasonal displays of native wildflowers in woodland, wetland and prairie areas. Frequently hosts Scarlet Tanagers and Indigo Buntings.

Thomas Sadler Roberts Bird Sanctuary  
4124 Roseway Rd, Minneapolis, MN 55409  
31 acres, including woodlands, wetlands and gardens by Lake Harriet. Warblers, vireos, flycatchers, Cedar Waxwings, Wood Ducks are common.

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge  
3815 American Blvd E, Bloomington, MN 55425  
Floodplain forests, prairie and wetlands along the Minnesota River. Expect a diversity of waterfowl and other migratory birds.

Richardson Nature Center  
8737 E Bush Lake Rd, Bloomington, MN 55438  
Hiking trails weave between the diverse habitats of restored prairie, oak forests, and wetlands. Nesting pairs of Ospreys and Trumpeter Swans arrive seasonally.

Harriet Alexander Nature Center  
2520 Dale St N, Roseville, MN 55113  
Boardwalk and trails that circulate through 52 acres of marsh, prairie and forest habitats. Wood Ducks, herons, egrets, Common Yellow Throuts, Eastern Kingbirds, Marsh Wrens, flycatchers and more.

Vadnais-Sucker Lake Regional Park  
4500 Rice Street, Vadnais Heights, MN 55127  
Trail that runs between lakes. Loons, swans and Ospreys, plus a variety of songbirds.

Lake Elmo Park Reserve  
1515 Keats Ave N, Lake Elmo, MN 55042  
Gently rolling hills with a variety of landscape types, including forest and prairie. Look for pheasants, woodpeckers, cardinals, bluebirds.

Afton State Park  
6959 Peller Ave S, Hastings, MN 55033  
Oak forests, prairie, ravines and floodplains. Observe hawks, waterfowl, bluebirds, meadowlarks and migratory birds.

For an interactive map with links to each location and their websites, visit:  
bit.ly/331q9Wk

Check locations’ websites for information on COVID-19 closures and procedures.
# Seasonal Notes

**By Minnetonka Manager CAROL CHENAULT**

## May: WEEK BY WEEK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st Week</th>
<th>2nd Week</th>
<th>3rd Week</th>
<th>4th Week</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ On May 1st, sunrise is at 6:02 am, and sunset is at 8:19 pm.</td>
<td>✓ House Wrens and orioles are very vocal.</td>
<td>✓ Orioles are nest building.</td>
<td>✓ Tiger swallowtail butterflies take wing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Early May sees the return of warblers, Scarlet Tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and the continued return of orioles and hummingbirds.</td>
<td>✓ Warbler migration is at peak.</td>
<td>✓ Gray Catbirds and Indigo Buntings arrive.</td>
<td>✓ Loons incubate eggs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ 5/5/2018 tied for the latest ice-out date on Lake Minnetonka.</td>
<td>Tip: Change nectar in oriole and hummingbird feeders every couple of days. Or, use liquid or powder nectar with Nectar Defender already added to keep your nectar fresh longer. Great for use at the cabin when larger-capacity nectar feeders will be unattended for a week. Do not use Kool-Aid®, honey, or sweeteners in nectar feeders.</td>
<td>First monarch butterflies return.</td>
<td>✓ Chipping Sparrows call and Common Grackles fledge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Robin eggs are hatching and Blue Jays and Northern Cardinals incubate eggs.</td>
<td>🗣️ Put out at least two bird houses—one for chickadees and one for wrens. Place the chickadee house out of direct sight line of the wren house to keep the peace.</td>
<td>✓ Wood Ducks jump from nest boxes around Memorial Day into the first week of June.</td>
<td>✓ White-tailed deer give birth to fawns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Canada Geese goslings follow the adults to eat grass.</td>
<td>Tip: Discourage birds from fighting with their reflections by covering windows with landscaping cloth and side mirrors of cars with plastic bags.</td>
<td>✓ 3rd Week</td>
<td>✓ 4th Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Young gray squirrels leave the nest.</td>
<td>Tip:</td>
<td>All Seasons Wild Bird Store</td>
<td>Your local backyard birding experts</td>
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<td>Tip:</td>
<td></td>
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## June: WEEK BY WEEK

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<tr>
<td>✓ Cedar Waxwings are nest building.</td>
<td>✓ Lights attract luna moths.</td>
<td>✓ Many birds fledge: House Wrens, Song Sparrows, Blue Jays, cardinals and orioles.</td>
<td>✓ First monarch butterflies of the new generation are on the wing. Swamp milkweed begins to bloom.</td>
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<td>✓ Young Red-tailed Hawks practice flying.</td>
<td>✓ Orioles feed nestlings. They feed caterpillars to their young and are especially attracted to mealworm feeders while they have nestlings.</td>
<td>✓ Gray Catbirds and Indigo Buntings arrive.</td>
<td>✓ Common Nighthawks feed in the evening sky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Great bird sounds and songs fill the air. Especially vocal are: Song Sparrows, Warbling Vireos, House Wrens and Common Yellowthroats.</td>
<td>✓ Numerous dragonflies dine on mosquitoes.</td>
<td>June 20 is the official first day of summer and has the most hours of daylight: 15 hours, 37 minutes.</td>
<td>✓ Waterfowl are currently flightless as they molt.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓ Eastern Wood Pewees call.</td>
<td>✓ Robins sing bright and clear around 4:30 am and call for 40 minutes after sunset.</td>
<td>✓ Goldfinches are our latest nesting songbird.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓ Purple Martins hatch.</td>
<td>Tips:</td>
<td>Tips:</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>✓ Fledgling Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers come to feeders with the adults.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hang another Best Nest Builder to provide nesting material for goldfinches.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>June 10–20 are our earliest sunrises of the year.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Found an injured bird? Contact the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center at 651-486-9453. wrcmn.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tip:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Found a baby bird? Watch our short video to see if intervention is needed: bit.ly/32YY7e3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Tip: Cardinals have difficulty eating from a cage-style feeder, but will feed their young dried or live mealworms offered from a dish-style feeder.
- Tip: Prevent just-fledged juvenile birds from hitting your windows by applying UV-reflective decals by WindowAlert.
- Tip: Keep ants out of the nectar by hanging a feeder from an ant moat filled with water or an Antguard®, which repels ants. Or use Nectar Fortress Natural Ant Repellent gel in a ring around the pole to prevent ants from climbing.
- Tip: Scrub bird baths with 9 parts water to 1 part bleach—rinse well.