



**ALL SEASONS  
WILD BIRD  
STORE**

# BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Volume 29 Issue 4 | July/August 2022

## Flycatchers

**Jim Gilbert Update  
+ 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.

### FEATURE ARTICLE

By Guest Contributor MELISSA BLOCK

## Bird Feeder Hygiene Tips

**Along with the joy we experience watching our backyard birds at our feeders comes the responsibility for keeping our feeders safe and clean for those birds.**

### Feeder Selection

It begins when you select your bird feeders. Ask yourself: will the feeder serve the types of birds you want to see? Is it made to be durable and easy to fill? Will it be easy to clean?

More and more manufacturers are paying attention to the ease of cleaning their bird feeders. For example, a series of Aspect tube feeders for seed and finch food, called "Quick Clean," have bottoms that pop right off. Wooden feeders are the hardest to clean, since the wood tends to absorb oil and other debris. The best bet are feeders that are made from plastic, metal, or recycled plastic. Other low maintenance feeders are ones that accommodate seed cylinders, seed cakes or bells—there's no tube or hopper to clean.



*Aspects Quick Clean feeders have an easy to remove base for cleaning*

### Feeder-Cleaning Tools

If you're going to clean your feeders yourself, assemble the tools you'll need ahead of time. I keep mine in a plastic tub ready to use.

You'll need:

- Gloves
- Mild, unscented dish soap
- Bleach
- Vinegar
- Bottle brush
- Scrub brush
- Measuring cup
- Clean rags
- Tiny brush, toothbrush, or pipe cleaners



*Most cleaning materials are simple items you already have.*

Use the rubber gloves to avoid any contamination. A mild dish soap can be used to generally clean the feeders. Use bleach (use 9 parts water to 1 part bleach) or vinegar (7 parts water to 3 parts vinegar) to disinfect feeders. Use a measuring cup when using bleach or vinegar. Be sure to rinse thoroughly when finished.

A stiff bottle brush makes cleaning tube feeders much easier. A good scrub brush is needed to clean any flat surfaces and trays.

The tiny brush, a toothbrush or pipe cleaners are great to use on small feeder ports, like on finch and hummingbird feeders. *... continued on page 2*

## What is Jim Gilbert up to now?

We get asked quite often by our customers “What’s Jim Gilbert doing these days?”

All Seasons Wild Bird Stores have had a long association with Jim. He wrote the phenology for our Bird’s-Eye View newsletter for many years and was kind enough to autograph his books and the *Weatherguide* calendar for our customers in our stores several times.

As many of you know, after 30 years as a science teacher and naturalist, Jim retired from the Hopkins School District in 1998. He then became the director of the Gustavus Adolphus college arboretum. He was asked to return to teaching by the college and taught in the Environmental Studies department. After nearly 20 years he retired from teaching yet again in 2017.

Jim has taught a weekend class at the North House Folks School for many years. This year’s offering is a class entitled *Spring Phenology in the Field: Wildflowers and Beyond*.

He writes a weekly column for the Star Tribune newspaper in the Outdoors Weekend section of the Sports page called *Nature Notes*, which has been posting for 20 years.

Jim continues to co-author the *Minnesota Weatherguide* calendars, writing the monthly phenology.

Jim and his wife Sandy led eco tours to many places around the world including Costa Rica, Peru, Ecuador, the Galapagos Islands, Kenya, Egypt, Jordan, Iceland and others. The pandemic allowed for a change in direction and they are no longer leading travel tours.

Jim and Sandy feel very fortunate to be able to keep busy with volunteering and with their three sons and their families. They are active grandparents cheering at sporting events and following the lives of their seven grandchildren. ■

~ Carol Chenault

Manager, Minnetonka All Seasons Wild Bird Store

## FEATURE ARTICLE (continued from page 1)

Use clean rags to wipe the surfaces after cleaning.

Take your feeder apart (keeping track of all the smaller screws, pegs, etc.) to ensure a proper cleaning.

### Consider Rotating Your Feeders

Cleaning all your bird feeders at the same time can seem like a daunting task. You could keep a couple of extra feeders available to rotate in so that you can clean just a couple of feeders at a time. That also makes cleaning the feeders easier during the winter months.

### Feeder Cleaning Service

If you don’t have the time or inclination to clean the feeders yourself, but still want to enjoy your backyard birds, bring the feeders into your local All Seasons Wild Bird Store. We have the facilities, cleaning equipment and knowledge to clean any bird feeder. Fees depend on the type and size of the feeder. You can pick them up, all shiny and clean after a few days. ■



*The Best Combo Brush Set is great for cleaning most tube feeders and hummingbird feeders. Its smaller brush is designed for cleaning feeding ports.*

*The Best Long Brush is great for scrubbing inside longer tube feeders.*



*Seed cylinders and seed cakes are a nice alternative if you don't have the time or inclination to clean feeders.*

## More Cleaning Resources on our YouTube Channel!



Step-by-step instructions and demonstration of how to clean nectar feeders for healthy hummingbirds.

<https://youtu.be/zlWwxQn8H2o>



Advice on cleaning your birdbath and keeping the water clear for healthy birds by using Bird Bath Protector and a Water Wiggler.

<https://youtu.be/PDQq2Nya6pl>

### 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](mailto:carol@wildbirdstore.net)

# MINNESOTA'S Flycatchers

*Flycatchers* are songbirds that feed mostly on insects that are caught on the wing, including all kinds of flies, as well as insects such as moths, butterflies, crickets, bees, beetles, grasshoppers, wasps, and even spiders and caterpillars. Flycatchers are common worldwide, but here in North America, we are home to a family of *Tyrant* (New World) *flycatchers*. These birds make up the largest family of birds in the world, with over 425 species identified.

In Minnesota, there are records of up to 19 of those flycatcher species, though less than a dozen are likely to frequent our state in a given year.

Identifying flycatchers can be tricky—their coloring, shapes and sizes can be quite similar. However, their hunting territories, songs/calls and behaviors can all be helpful as aids in identification.

Below are 5 of Minnesota's most common species of flycatchers, with some tips on how to see them—and even find them in your own backyards.

Though flycatchers are not likely to come to feeding stations, don't rule out visits of these insect-gobbling birds to your backyards. Many will come to a source of clean water for bathing and drinking. Others will use a nest box or a cavity in a dead tree for nesting. Most flycatchers also supplement their diets with fruit. Planting fruit-bearing plants will attract flycatchers and songbirds to your yard.



Elderberry  
(*Sambucus canadensis*)



Redosier  
Dogwood



Smooth  
Serviceberry  
(*Amelanchier laevis*)



Don Curle

## EASTERN WOOD-PEEWEE

**Call:** "pee-a-wee!"

**Appearance:** Grayer overall and longer wings than other flycatchers.

**Habitat:** Forages higher in the trees than Least Flycatchers, but lower than Great Crested Flycatcher.

Most likely to see them in wooded backyards.



Ray Marshall

## EASTERN KINGBIRD

**Call:** sounds like an electric spark or zap.

**Appearance:** Dark gray with white underparts and distinct white tip on tail.

**Habitat:** Often perches on wires and fences in open areas to hunt over tops of grasses.

Relies on insects and fruit for moisture.



## GREAT-CRESTED FLYCATCHER

**Call:** loud, recognizable "Wee-eeep".

**Appearance:** Medium size, cinnamon wings and tail, bright yellow belly, olive-colored back.

**Habitat:** Prefers broadleaf forest edges. Hunts insects in the high tree canopy.

Will use nest boxes.



## EASTERN PHOEBE

**Call:** *Phoe-be* or *fi-bree*.

**Appearance:** No eye-ring or wing bars; all dark bill and dark head. Downward tail-bobbing is a behavioral identifier.

**Habitat:** Typical in streamsides, bridges, farms, roadsides, towns.

Uses buildings, overhangs, and nest structures to build grass and mud nest.



## LEAST FLYCATCHER

**Call:** *che-BEK* or *whit*.

**Appearance:** Small, grayish, pale below, bold white eye-ring. Active tail flicking is a behavioral identifier.

**Habitat:** Frequents farms, orchards, groves, open woods.

Among other *Empidonax* flycatchers, voice is the best identification tool.

# Seasonal Notes

By Minnetonka Manager CAROL CHENAULT

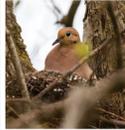
## July: WEEK BY WEEK

July is Minnesota's warmest, sunniest month.

Week 1	2nd Week	3rd Week	4th Week
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Barn Swallows</b> fledge.</li> <li>✓ A new generation of <b>Monarch butterflies</b> emerges.</li> <li>✓ <b>Purple Martin</b> colonies are noisy with adults feeding young.</li> <li>✓ <b>Goldfinches</b> are our latest nesting songbird, nesting in July and fledging young in August.</li> <li>✓ 5-8 <b>House Wren</b> young are still in the nest.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tips:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Attract more goldfinches with <b>The Best Nest Builder</b>.</li> <li>❑ Offer nesting orioles <b>live mealworms</b> or <b>dried mealworms</b> soaked in nectar.</li> <li>❑ Plant additional sunflowers from seed July 1 to provide blooms into the fall. Goldfinches, House Finches and chickadees will eat from the seed heads as the plants mature.</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Bird song decreases dramatically as nesting season wraps up for many species. Some birds have two or more broods such as <b>House Wrens</b> and <b>Eastern Bluebirds</b>.</li> <li>✓ 2nd generation of Eastern Swallowtail butterflies emerge</li> <li>✓ <b>Osprey</b> young are still in the nest.</li> <li>✓ <b>Great Blue Heron</b> juveniles leave the nest.</li> <li>✓ Monarchs lay eggs on common milkweed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tip:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Birdbaths will help birds beat the heat in your backyard. Clean birdbaths with 9 parts water to 1 part bleach; rinse well; add <b>Bird Bath Protector</b> to keep it clean longer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Canada Geese</b> are flying again, now that their molting is complete.</li> <li>✓ Bird migration season begins as several shorebird species such as <b>Lesser Yellowlegs</b> and <b>Sandpipers</b> begin migrating. Many species of shorebirds nest in the tundra and migrate through Minnesota to places as far south as Argentina.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tip:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Bluebirds seem to prefer live mealworms. Our stores have <b>mealworm feeders</b> and <b>live mealworms</b> to feed these beauties.</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Juvenile <b>Canada Geese</b> begin to fly, testing their new flight feathers.</li> <li>✓ 2nd broods of <b>Barn Swallows</b> hatch.</li> <li>✓ <b>Mallards</b> are on the wing again following their molt.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tips:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Hummingbirds are active at nectar feeders and flowers into October. Feeders should be emptied and cleaned every two to three days, or sooner if the nectar looks cloudy. Scrub the feeder with hot water or use a vinegar and water solution. Add <b>Feeder Fresh Nectar Defender</b> to protect the freshness of nectar.</li> </ul> 

We lose 2-3 minutes of daylight in August.

## August: WEEK BY WEEK

Week 1	2nd Week	3rd Week	4th Week
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Mourning Doves</b> are on their third clutch of eggs.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tips:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Unlike most songbirds, goldfinches feed their young seeds that have been shelled and partially digested. Keep your feeders clean and full to attract them.</li> <li>❑ Spray <b>Hummingbird Bee Repellent</b> on nectar ports to repel bees, wasps and bald-faced hornets. Hanging the feeder from an <b>ant trap</b> prevents ants from reaching the nectar.</li> <li>❑ Replace your <b>Window Alert</b> decals every six months to prevent window strikes by migrating warblers and others.</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The white-lined sphinx moth, often called the hummingbird moth, feeds during the daytime on petunias and other garden flowers.</li> <li>✓ 2nd generation of Monarch butterflies is on the wing.</li> <li>✓ In preparation for migration, <b>Purple Martins</b> group together on utility lines.</li> <li>✓ Some warblers such as <b>Nashville</b> and <b>Yellow Warblers</b> begin migrating.</li> <li>✓ <b>Common Nighthawks</b> migrate through in the afternoons and early evenings while eating flying insects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Chimney Swifts (shown)</b>, <b>Franklin's Gulls</b> and various shorebirds are in migration.</li> <li>✓ <b>Great Egrets</b> gather a dozen or two at a time along the shorelines.</li> <li>✓ Clusters of Monarchs in trees signals migration is beginning. 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 Minnesota.</li> <li>✓ <b>Mourning Doves</b> continue nesting—they can have as many as 5 broods a year.</li> <li>✓ A second brood of <b>Barn Swallows</b> leaves the nest.</li> </ul>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Juvenile <b>Wood Ducks</b> now look more like the adults.</li> <li>✓ Juvenile <b>Common Loons</b> are still with the adults but begin to have more adult plumage.</li> <li>✓ After the second brood fledges, <b>House Wrens</b> become less vocal.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tip:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ As birds gather in pre-migration flocks, avoid large numbers of grackles and starlings at feeders by filling feeders with <b>white safflower</b>. Use <b>Bye, Bye Starling</b> to provide a sunflower mix but still discourage European Starlings.</li> </ul> 