



**ALL SEASONS
WILD BIRD
STORE**

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Volume 30 Issue 6 | November/December 2023

Winter beauties

Feed Birds, Feel Better
+
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 **KATRINA HASE**

The Gift of Feeling Good

Feeding, watching and listening to birds leads to lasting improvements in your mental wellbeing. Here are some ideas to make the most of these gifts.

In a 2016 peer-reviewed study, *Urban Bird Feeding: Connecting People with Nature*, authors Daniel T.C. Cox and Kevin J. Gaston reported that:

- Most people feel connected to nature when they watch birds in their garden.
- The feeling of being relaxed and connected to nature increases in people who notice birds for a greater proportion of their day.
- Bird feeding is increasingly recognized as an important part of many people's daily nature interactions.

Additional studies presented evidence that:

- People's sense of life satisfaction increased with the number of bird species they encountered in their daily lives¹
- Listening to bird song can reduce feelings of anxiety and depression in healthy participants²
- Everyday encounters with birds were associated with time-lasting improvements in mental wellbeing.³

- Improvements in mental wellbeing from bird watching last up to eight hours.³

In other words: *Feed Birds, Feel Better.*

A Non-Traditional Holiday Gift Guide

In lieu of a traditional holiday gift guide in this year's November/December Bird's-Eye View, we'd like to share with you some ideas to make the most of the boost in mental wellbeing that feeding and watching birds provides.

1) When you go outside, listen and watch for birds. Remind yourself to pay attention to the sights and sounds of birds around you. Use a tool like the Merlin app to help you identify birds by their sounds.

2) Feed birds and watch them from the comfort of your home. Place feeders near—or on—windows for the best viewing. Be a responsible steward for their health by keeping feeders clean. Ask about our feeder cleaning service or visit our website for tips: wildbirdstore.com/resources/troubleshooting/keep-birds-healthy.

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Join the Flock at All Seasons Wild Bird Store!

Greetings to our Twin Cities community!

Have you ever paused to marvel at a flock of migratory birds flying overhead? Or wondered about the incredible journey they embark upon, across seasons and continents? If your heart beats a tad faster at the mere thought of the feathered world and nature's intricate dance, we might have the perfect position for you.

All Seasons Wild Bird Store is more than just a store. For over three decades, we've been a haven for bird enthusiasts, nature lovers, and curious souls. As a family-owned local business with five locations across the Twin Cities, MN area, we pride ourselves on connecting our community with the wonders of our natural world.

We're Now Hiring! Why Join Us?

Passion-Driven Work Environment: Be a part of a team that shares your love and curiosity for the natural world. Every day is an opportunity to learn, share, and connect over common passions.

Local Legacy: Become a part of our long-standing history in the Twin Cities. For over 30 years, our family-owned business has been a cornerstone of the community.

Engage with the Seasons: Revel in the beauty of Minnesota's changing seasons and understand its impact on our feathered friends.

Reach out to us at info@wildbirdstore.net. We look forward to soaring to new heights together! *Note: not all locations may be hiring, but feel free to inquire.*

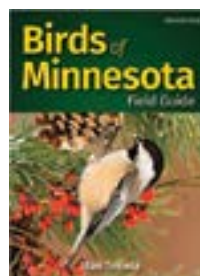
Warm regards,

~ Dave Netten

Co-Owner, All Seasons Wild Bird Store



3) Keep a list of birds you see. There's nothing more exciting than seeing a bird for the first time! Some people keep separate lists for birds they've seen in their lifetime and those they've seen in their yards. Many field guides include checklists in the back, including Stan Tekiela's *Birds of Minnesota*.



Field guides, like this one, include a checklist.

4) Get involved in a larger birding community. Consider submitting your sightings to eBird.com or participating in the annual Christmas Bird Count.



Sign up for the Christmas Bird Count

5) Share the gift of bird feeding with a loved one.

Our favorites to give as gifts to beginners include: a Squirrel Buster feeder with some no-mess Kracker Jax, a tail-prop suet feeder with suet cakes, or a Mr. Bird seed cylinder feeder with a Flaming Hot Feast seed cylinder.



Squirrel Buster Plus feeder

- 1 *The importance of species diversity for human well-being in Europe.* (March 2021). Joel Methorst, Katrin Rehdanz, Thomas Mueller, Bernd Hansjürgens, Aletta Bonn, Katrin Böhning-Gaese.
- 2 *Birdsongs alleviate anxiety and paranoia in healthy participants.* (October 2022). E. Stobbe, J. Sundermann, L. Ascone & S. Kühn.
- 3 *Smartphone-based ecological momentary assessment reveals mental health benefits of birdlife.* (October 2022). Ryan Hammoud, Stefania Tognin, Lucie Burgess, Nicol Bergou, Michael Smythe, Johanna Gibbons, Neil Davidson, Alia Afifi, Ioannis Bakolis & Andrea Mechelli.

STAFF FAVORITE

By Minnetonka–Westwind Plaza team member KATHY HOFF

Stalwarts of the Feeding Station

Feeding wild birds is an intriguing life-long hobby that brings hours of joy. We get to observe and identify many types of birds as they come to feed in our yards. Intrigue comes into play as we adjust our feeding strategies to accommodate season changes, migration, nesting and mischievous squirrels.

A few bird feeding items are continual favorites in my backyard feeding arsenal:

1) Double Suet Cake Tail Prop Feeder

Woodpeckers love this suet feeder that allows larger woodpeckers like Pileated, Red-bellied and Northern Flickers to dine more comfortably using the tail prop.

Serving Pacific Bird Insect + Hot Pepper suet cakes in the feeder provides energy and protein for the birds while the hot pepper deters squirrels.



2) Erva Branch Style Hook



Adding this versatile hook to your feeding station will provide you with numerous options for adjusting feeders and hanging seasonal items for hummingbirds and orioles. The orioles visiting my yard this year

were drawn to Songbird Birdberry Jelly and More Birds Grape Hummingbird and Oriole Nectar Concentrate. As the season has changed, my branch-style hook offerings have switched to dried mealworms and suet nuggets.

3) Fly-Through Feeder

Cardinals will be delighted if they spot a fly-through feeder in your yard. You will be able to watch them gather with other birds as we move into fall and winter. My cardinals love to visit my fly-through to dine on black oil sunflower seeds and white safflower.



I hope you have many enjoyable hours viewing and identifying the birds lucky enough to discover the feeding options provided in your yard. ■

BEST of Winter Birds

Winter is a season of simplicity. Deciduous trees trade showy leaves for stark branches. Summer grasses and florals fade to shades of brown. And numerous species of Neotropical birds migrate south, allowing us to focus on the beautiful winter species that remain. Here are some favorites.

Northern Cardinal

The Northern Cardinal is probably everyone's favorite winter bird because of how its bright red plumage glows against our snowy landscape.

- **Behaviors:** Northern Cardinals will stay in your area all winter if you have a well-stocked feeder and a pine tree for cover. They will likely nest nearby next spring.
- **Observations:** Northern Cardinals generally feed at dawn and dusk. They can often be seen on the ground searching for sunflower seed. Cardinals prefer flat surfaces such as tray feeders, ground feeders, and large tube feeders with perches and trays.
- **Attracting:** Northern Cardinals love black oil sunflower seeds. Use #1 Select Hearts, Dakota Mix, or Joe's Mix to attract cardinals.
- **Feeders:** Aspects seed tube and Bird's Choice hanging trays.



Black-capped Chickadee

The Black-capped Chickadee is always a favorite at our bird feeders because of their gregarious nature, and their seemingly friendly personality.

- **Behaviors:** Black-capped Chickadees are very social. During the winter months, they will roost in tree cavities and roosting boxes with others to conserve energy. They also have the unique ability to conserve energy by inducing a regulated hypothermia of sorts during the night.
- **Observations:** Black-capped Chickadees cache (store) seeds in little hide-away "pantries" such as tree cavities. They are very active at bird feeders and heated birdbaths throughout the day.
- **Attracting:** Black-capped Chickadees love high fat foods such as peanut pick-outs, sunflower hearts, and suet.
- **Feeders:** Aspects seed tube, Aspects peanut mesh, suet cages and suet logs, and Bird's Choice hanging trays.



Blue Jays

This bright blue, crested bird has a reputation of being aggressive. Yet, Blue Jays warn other birds of predators with their alarm calls—a great reason to entice them to your feeding stations.

- **Observations:** Blue Jays cache thousands of acorns, beech nuts, corn kernels, and black oilers. Many of the stored seed grows into plants and even trees.
- **Attracting:** Blue Jays absolutely love peanuts, whole corn, cob corn, cracked corn, black oilers, in-shell peanuts, and peanut pick-outs.
- **Feeders:** Aspects seed tube with large accompanying tray, peanut wreaths, Bird's Choice hanging trays, and ground feeders.



Ann McCarthy

Dark-eyed Junco

The Dark-eyed Junco is a busy, little bird that comes down from our northern pine forests to spend its winter with us. They love millet and hulled millet. They prefer flat surfaces and may often be seen foraging on the ground.

- **Behaviors:** Dark-eyed Juncos are known as the "snowbird" because they arrive in October and leave in March.
- **Observations:** Dark-eyed Juncos are fun to watch as they hunt for little seeds in the snow.
- **Attracting:** Cast a handful of Finches' Choice or millet on the ground and enjoy the show.
- **Feeders:** Bird's Choice hanging trays, and ground feeders. ■

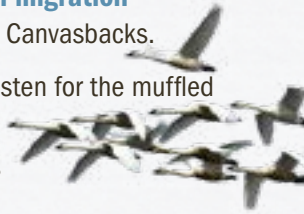


Ann McCarthy

November & December

November is a big month for waterfowl migration—watch for American Wigeons, Pintails and Canvasbacks.

Look for Tundra Swans overhead and listen for the muffled musical whistles of the flock. They are migrating to their wintering grounds along the Atlantic Coast.



Install Wood Duck houses before ponds freeze over.

Switch at least one feeder to golden safflower. Migrating Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles find it less appealing than black oil sunflower mixes but goldfinches, cardinals, chickadees, finches and others love it!



Golden safflower

Finches' Choice

Bye-Bye Starling

Scatter some Finches' Choice or white millet on the ground for White-throated and Fox Sparrows.

Use Bye-Bye Starling or golden safflower in seed feeders, upside-down suet feeders and Nyjer® feeders. This will selectively discourage starlings while still being inviting to other birds.

Fill heated birdbaths with cold water to reduce evaporation. Cedar Waxwings and American Robins will visit baths, though they are not typical visitors to seed feeders.

Northern Flickers may join other woodpeckers at suet feeders during the winter.



Pine Siskin on Nyjer® feeder.

Nyjer® feeders may host Pine Siskins, Common Redpolls, House Finches, Purple Finches, and American Goldfinches (now in dull winter plumage) as winter continues. Keep feeders full of fresh seed and shake feeders periodically to loosen frozen or stuck on seeds. These birds also flock to a heated birdbath!

Watch for Brown Creepers going up and around tree trunks searching for larvae.

Crows are regulars throughout the winter in the southern half of MN. They gather in large flocks to roost together in trees overnight.

Blue Jays cache peanuts in preparation for colder temps. Use a **peanut wreath** or fly-through feeder to offer in-shell peanuts.

December 1st is statistically the start of the coldest 90 days of the year. Brrrr, it's cold! Feed the birds!



Leah Coughlin Cunningham

Decorate your deck and yard with seed bells. Use Flaming Hot seed bells to deter the squirrels but feed the birds.

Prepare to participate in the Audubon Christmas Bird Count: audubon.org/conservation/join-christmas-bird-count

Switch some of your feeders to out-of-the-shell seed, like #1 Select Hearts or Kracker Jax. Birds are able to replenish faster and there is no shell mess for you to clean up.

Northern MN bird feeders host Pine Grosbeaks. Red-breasted Nuthatches visit feeders throughout the state.



Don Currie

A Weather Guard installed on a Squirrel Buster Plus feeder keeps birds and seed dry

Add a Weather Guard to your Squirrel Buster Plus to keep the seed drier.

Toss Finches' Choice on the ground under feeding stations to attract Dark-eyed Juncos, Mourning Doves and Northern Cardinals.

Add a mealworm sock feeder or mix in dried mealworms, peanut pick-outs or suet nuggets to hopper and tray feeders to help

birds survive the cold with these high fat and protein foods.

Scatter dried mealworms and Berry Nutty where the snow is lightest under the snow shadow of pine trees to feed robins and cardinals.

Use a large Wild Bird Feast seed cylinder or Flaming Hot Feast seed cylinder in a covered feeder to provide seed while you are out of town. Better yet, call the Ridge Square store to set up **Feed & Fill service!** ■



Wild Bird Feast large seed cylinder

Flaming Hot Feast large seed cylinder

Have an idea for a future issue of Birds-Eye View? Photos and articles may be submitted by email to carol@wildbirdstore.net.
Sign up for our weekly e-newsletter at WildBirdStore.com to receive information about backyard birding, store events and exclusive discounts.