



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Volume 31 Issue 2 | March/April 2024

ALL SEASONS
WILD BIRD
STORE

Orioles & Hummers

Small Space Bird Feeding
Seasonal Notes

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BLOOMINGTON

816 West 98th St.
(Clover Center)
Bloomington, MN 55420
952.884.4103

EAGAN

2143 Cliff Rd.
(Cedar Cliff Shopping Center)
Eagan, MN 55122
651.459.0084

MINNETONKA-RIDGE SQUARE AND WILD BIRD DELIVERS

12981 Ridgedale Dr Ste. 103
(Ridge Square North Shopping Center)
Minnetonka, MN 55305
952.473.4283

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4759 County Rd. 101
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Minnetonka, MN 55345
952.935.5892

NORTH OAKS

121 Village Center Drive
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North Oaks, MN 55127
651.482.1033

New
store!

WHITE BEAR LAKE

2703 East Cty. Hwy. E.
(Cty. Rd. E. and Hwy. 120)
White Bear Lake, MN 55110
651.653.8705

WILDBIRDSTORE.COM

BIRD BEHAVIOR

By Guest Contributor KATRINA HASE

A Season to Bond

Spring can be an exciting time to witness mated pairs of birds perform displays for each other. Displays may include grooming, presenting gifts, vocalizations, dancing, feeding, and more. These behaviors serve to strengthen the pair bond.

The Purpose of a Pair Bond

The primary goal of a pair bond is to produce healthy offspring. Monogamous bird parents share nest-building, incubation, territory defense and feeding responsibilities, increasing the odds for a successful brood.

Social Monogamy is Common

90% of perching bird species form socially monogamous pairs. Bonded pairs may stay together for a single brood or even a season. Less common are bonds that last between mated pairs for multiple seasons or until a partner is injured or dies.

How Long a Pair Bond Lasts

The length of a bond depends, in part, by the success of a brood. Successful couples will often stay together for multiple mating periods. In contrast, a mated pair that fails to produce healthy offspring will “divorce”.

Some birds, such as swans and geese, tend to form long-term pair bonds. This may be a function of a longer time to reach sexual maturity.

Examples of Pair Bond Behaviors

Pair bond behaviors vary widely between species of birds. Some, like Great Blue Herons, have a large repertoire of behaviors. The following are some examples across species.



Cedar Waxwing pairs may pass a small item—berry, flower petal, or twig—back and forth, interspersed with hopping away and back again. The sequence is repeated multiple times and may also include fast, circular flights around the nest site. This ritual is typically initiated by the male bird.

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Welcome, North Oaks!



It's with great pleasure and excitement that I announce our newest adventure: welcoming Kelsey's Wild Bird Store into our All Seasons family!

Kraig Kelsey, a legend in his own right, has decided to retire after more than three decades of unparalleled dedication to wild birds and the community that loves them. Kraig, your legacy is nothing short of inspiring and we have big shoes to fill.

We're committed to keeping the spirit of Kelsey's alive, and to help us do that, we've brought on board a fantastic local talent, Angie Mohrfeld, as the new store manager. Angie's passion for birds and her knack for connecting with people are exactly what we need to ensure that the transition is as smooth and as welcoming as possible.

For those of you who've been loyal customers of Kelsey's, I want you to know that we're thrilled about getting to know each of you! With Angie at the helm in North Oaks and our family's legacy of dedication to wild bird feeding, we're here to ensure that your experiences are nothing short of spectacular. We believe in community, in sharing our knowledge, and in offering products that we stand behind because we and our expert staff use them every day.

So, why not drop by and see what's new? We'd love to introduce you to Angie, show you around, and chat about all things birds. Your support means the world to us, and we're excited to embark on this journey together, honoring the past and looking forward to a future filled with the joy of beautiful birds. We're committed to being Your Window to Nature.

Warmest regards,

-Dave Netten (and Al too!)



Mourning Dove pairs may engage in a behavior called *allopreening*—grooming the feathers around the neck of the partner with its beak.



This **Sandhill Crane** is performing a bow to its partner. The bow is just one of many go-to dance moves a crane may bust out to strengthen a pair bond with its mate.



Northern Cardinal males may feed their female partner. Another pair bonding ritual includes *song-dance displays* performed by both male and female cardinals



A female **Great Blue Heron** fluffs out her neck feathers in response to her male partner bringing a stick to the nest. ■

STAFF TIPS: ORIOLES & HUMMINGBIRDS By Bloomington Sales Associate JIM NELSON

This time of year, we wait impatiently for winter to pass and for the arrival of spring favorites like hummingbirds and orioles, usually in late April or early May.

Plantings

It's too early to be digging in the garden yet but we can plan now for plantings that will attract these two beauties.

There are many native plants that are attractive to these birds and everyone has their favorites. I have

had particularly good luck attracting hummingbirds with red canna lillies, butterfly weed, and Mexican sunflowers.

Orioles are all over the serviceberry bushes in our garden.

Enticing Orioles to Stay

Sadly, many of the orioles are transitory in this part of the state and are only seen for a few weeks during the spring migration and on the flip side in the fall. Some lucky souls will attract a

mealworms, especially for their hatchlings.

During migration, orioles are attracted to grape jelly and to orange halves, and nectar to a lesser extent. I recommend a **dual jelly/nectar feeder with pegs for orange halves**.

Hummers: Keep it Simple

Hummingbirds are with us for the whole summer and are similarly known to be site loyal—returning year after year to the same feeders. A simple feeder, that is easy to clean, works best. Choose one with a **built-in ant moat** or hang the feeder from an **add-on moat**. Keep the nectar fresh, especially if it's in full sunshine. **Bee guards** or **bee repellent** will keep the wasps from attacking the hummers. ■



Red Canna Lillies attract hummingbirds.

nesting pair in their yard. Once they establish, they are known to return yearly to the same site. If they do nest near you, they will appreciate the protein from

Orioles *and* Hummingbirds

Each spring, the arrival of orioles and hummingbirds is celebrated by many of our customers, as well as our store staff. Providing many feeding options for orioles and hummingbirds will attract more of these birds to your yard.

ORIOLES

I am sure many of you, like me, wait patiently in late April or early May for the laughing chatter of the bright-colored male Baltimore Oriole. This vibrant, flame-orange bird arrives a couple of days ahead of his brownish-yellow partner. The birds have traveled from the Caribbean, Central America and the northern tip of South America. Often, they return year after year to nest in the same yard and even the same tree, building a new nest each year.

When to Expect Them

To attract orioles, you need to be sure to get your feeders up by mid-April. Some experts even say late March to not miss the early arrivals. The web site journorth.org tracks sightings, so you can see the movement of orioles—or hummingbirds—as they head north.

Attracting Orioles

One way to attract orioles to your yard is to have one feeding station in a quiet, secluded corner of the yard. Planting orange flowers or having orange color near the station can help as well. Once the orioles start coming, you can draw them to feeders right under the eaves of your house.

Most recently, my favorite feeder has become the **Oriolefest Nectar Feeder**. After relying on grape jelly for many seasons, I filled my Oriolefest with our **Gold Crest Distributing Orange Concentrate Nectar**, which is mixed three-to-one. Often, I was surprised to see more orioles come to the Oriolefest feeder than my grape



Photo: Linelle Johnson
Oriolefest Feeder with orange concentrate nectar

jelly dishes. Last spring, I had an Orchard Oriole visit the nectar regularly for a couple of weeks before moving farther north!

Providing fresh, clean water is another easy way to attract orioles. These birds are drawn to splashing, sparkling water, so a clean basin with some movement from a fountain, dripper, or bubbler will catch their attention the most.

Oriole visits do slow during nesting, since these birds primarily eat insects and insects become more numerous in late spring and summer. They know their young need the protein the insects provide. Once the young birds can fly, it's fun to have adults feed their young from our jelly or nectar feeders. Orioles do actively return to the jelly and nectar feeders in late summer before their long trip south.

HUMMINGBIRDS

Hummingbirds usually arrive a little ahead of the orioles in the spring. The most common Minnesota hummingbird is the Ruby-throated. Other species may migrate to Minnesota, but sightings are very rare.

Attracting Hummingbirds

All Seasons Wild Bird Store has a large variety of hummingbird feeders. The mix for hummingbird nectar is: one cup sugar to four cups of water. Our store also sells pre-mixed nectar.

Having blooming flowers in your yard will greatly increase hummingbird activity as well.

Territorial Behaviors

Our Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are very territorial. Several years ago I visited my sister in the mountains at Crested Butte, Colorado. I was surprised to see Rufous Hummingbirds sharing time at the feeder. There must have been a dozen or more hummers taking turns at the nectar. But for us in Minnesota, there is very little sharing. I like to place feeders on all sides of my house to let more hummingbirds feed without being chased away by the dominant bird. ■



Photo: Don Curle
Best-1 hummingbird feeder filled with clear nectar.

FUN FACTS: ORIOLES AND HUMMINGBIRDS

Baltimore Orioles use a technique called gapping to juice berries. They stab a dark ripe berry with a closed bill then open wide and lap up the juice with their tongue.

Orioles will eat fuzzy caterpillars that other birds won't touch. They remove the fuzz by



pounding the caterpillar against a branch before eating them.

It's not the wing speed but rather the structure of the hummingbird wing joints that allows it to hover.

Hummingbirds can rotate their wings as they flap. This lifts them into the air on both the forward and backward wing strokes.



A Ruby-throated Hummingbird beats its wings about 53 times per second.

The humming sound of their flight is caused by air movement around the wings.

Hummingbirds are with us for the whole summer and are similarly known to be site loyal—they return year after year to the same feeders. ■

March & April

Prepare for Nesting Season!

- ✓ Install Wood Duck boxes: mount pole near the water's edge and add a baffle to foil predators.
- ✓ Clean out nest boxes. Replace cracked or damaged houses.
- ✓ Add nest boxes/bird houses for Black-capped chickadees, Eastern Bluebirds and House Wrens—depending on your habitat. Review our *Nesting Notes* for details.

- ✓ Hang **The Best Nest Builder** or use **Birdie Tweats nesting material** (shown) to assist birds with nest building.



- ✓ Use **Pacific Bird year-round suet** (or **Insect & Hot Pepper suet** if you are battling squirrels) to provide dried mealworms, nutrient dense fat and calcium rich suet to ensure strong egg shells this nesting season.

- ✓ Add **suet pellets** and **dried mealworms** to **hopper feeders** or **tray feeders** feed Northern Cardinals. Cardinals typically don't cling to suet cages but still greatly benefit from these foods.
- ✓ Eastern Bluebirds seem to prefer **live mealworms**. However, some yards have success feeding them suet pellets and dried mealworms. Drizzle some olive oil over the dried mealworms to make them more enticing. Our stores stock live mealworms, dried mealworms and suet pellets.

Problem Solvers

- ✓ Deter over-indulging Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles when they return in March by switching to **golden safflower** (shown). They're less fond of this seed, so they won't rapidly empty the feeders. Cardinals, goldfinches, chickadees and others love it!
- ✓ Apply **WindowAlert™ clings** to help birds see your windows and avoid dangerous window strikes. Replace every March and September.
- ✓ Install a **squirrel-resistant pole system**. Place your pole system within a 12-ft. radius from trees, fences and structures. Install a squirrel baffle for squirrel-resistant bird feeding. See our *Discouraging Squirrels* handout for more advice. Call the Minnetonka—Ridge Square store at 952-473-4283 to have our expert staff install a pole system for you (fees apply).



Find our free, helpful handouts on a variety of topics by the register.

Spring Cleaning

- ✓ Bring feeders to your neighborhood store for cleaning (fees apply).
- ✓ Scrub your bird bath with one part bleach and nine parts water. Rinse well. Add Bird Bath protector to keep the bath clean longer.

Seasonal Notes

- ✓ **Put out hummingbird and oriole feeders the last week of April!** Here they come! Orioles love mealworms, grape jelly, oranges and nectar.



- ✓ Add berry-producing plants to your landscape to make it more bird friendly. See our *Birdscaping Basics* handout for details
- ✓ Make space for a seasonal feeder (hummingbird feeder, oriole feeder or mealworm feeder). Install a new feeding station or simply add a coil mount branch arm to your existing set up. The Erva clamp-on deck mounted bird bath is also an option—and a staff favorite!

Find us online!

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- youtube.com/@allseasonswildbirdstore

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.