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BIRD'S-EYE *View*

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Accessorize! Minnesota's Grosbeaks Seasonal Notes

FEATURE ARTICLE

By Minnetonka–Westwind Plaza Store Manager **CAROL CHENAULT**

The Perfect Accessories

Just as a fashion accessory complements an outfit, the right accessories can enhance your bird-watching experience at home.

Perches & Feeders

A 24-inch branch-shaped quick-connect arm can be added to any 1-inch diameter pole, creating extra space for birds to perch while also providing a place to hang additional feeders.

To make tube feeders more cardinal-friendly, try attaching a tray, which increases the feeding area and accommodates their preference for trays or U-shaped perches over the short, straight perches of some tube feeders.

Rain guards can help keep both seeds and birds dry, encouraging birds to continue feeding even during wet weather.

Nesting & Protection

For birdhouses, metal portal guards prevent squirrels and birds from enlarging entrance holes. To support nesting birds, a Best Nest Builder offers valuable materials. Placing a second one out in July specifically benefits goldfinches, the latest-nesting songbird.

Pest Prevention

Keeping ants away from nectar and jelly feeders is easy with ant moats, which create a water barrier between the hanger and feeder. Apply Nectar Fortress, a non-toxic cinnamon gel, around the pole or hanger to deter ants.

Continued on page 2...



Rain guard



Nectar Fortress



Branch arm



Ant moat



Best Nest Builder

Celebrating the Common Loon—Minnesota's Iconic State Bird

Discover the Magic of Loons and Support Conservation at the National Loon Center.



The loon's haunting call and striking appearance make it a favorite among nature lovers. Let's dive into the loon's history

and explore how you can get involved in conservation efforts at the National Loon Center in Crosslake, Minnesota.

Becoming Minnesota's State Bird

The loon wasn't always Minnesota's state bird. It took decades of debate and consideration of other species before the loon was officially chosen in 1961. Its unique characteristics and the advocacy of ornithologists and lawmakers finally secured its place as a state symbol. Today, the loon is not only a symbol but also a focus of conservation efforts.

Visit the National Loon Center

Located in Crosslake, Minnesota, the National Loon Center is a fantastic place to learn about loons and get involved in their conservation. Currently operating out of "The Nest" in Crosslake Town Square, the center offers a variety of engaging programs and activities for visitors of all ages.

Visitor Tips:

- Explore The Nest: Stop by The Nest to get a sneak peek into the center's mission and enjoy some interactive educational resources.
- Take a loon pontoon tour: Board the "StewardShip" for a unique floating classroom experience where you can observe loons and learn about conservation efforts on Cross Lake.
- Engage your kids: The Junior Loon Biologist Program is perfect for kids who love nature. They'll participate in real

data collection and conservation activities.

- Adopt a loon: Support conservation by symbolically adopting a loon. You'll receive educational materials and a loon plushie to remind you of your contribution.
- Learn about shoreline restoration: Discover how the center protects loon habitats through shoreline restoration and sustainable practices.

What's Next for the National Loon Center?

The National Loon Center is set to break ground on a new, state-of-the-art facility in spring 2025 and is projected to open in spring 2026. This expansion will feature interactive exhibits, educational spaces and sustainable design, making Crosslake an even more fantastic destination for nature enthusiasts.

*Al and Dave Netten
and the All Seasons Wild Bird Store Team*

FEATURE ARTICLE (continued from page 1)

By Minnetonka—Westwind Plaza Store Manager **CAROL CHENAULT**

For hummingbird feeders, **Hummingbird Feeder Bee Repellent** provides a natural, chemical-free way to keep bees away while remaining safe for birds, children, and pets.

Hummingbird Comfort

To give hummingbirds a place to rest, the **Copper Hummingbird Swing** offers a charming, swinging perch that can be placed near nectar feeders or nectar-rich flowers.

Water Features

Birdbaths are another essential feature of any bird-friendly yard, and keeping them clean is simple with a **birdbath brush** and **Bird Bath Protector**, a food-grade plant enzyme formula that prevents stains, sludge, and mineral buildup while reducing organic contamination.

Moving water is particularly effective in attracting birds, and the **Water Wiggler** stirs

the surface to create continuous ripples. This not only draws in birds but also prevents mosquitoes from laying eggs. The device operates silently, runs on batteries, and is easy to use.

Window Strike Prevention

Protecting birds from window strikes is crucial. Applying **Window Gems** or **Window Alerts** to the outside of glass surfaces can help birds recognize the barrier. Another option is attaching feeders directly to windows with a **Window Hanger** or using suction-cup feeders, which further prevent birds from misjudging windows as fly-through spaces.

Accessorize and enhance your bird-watching experience. Enjoy the birds! ■



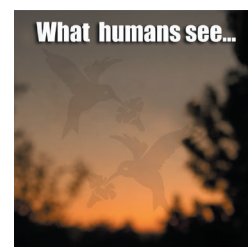
Hummingbird Swing



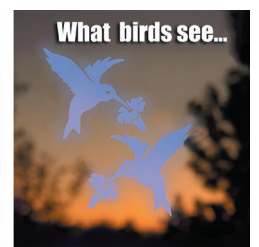
Water Wiggler



Birdbath brush



What humans see...



What birds see...

Window Alerts

Minnesota's Grosbeaks

Minnesota is home to several species of grosbeaks, striking songbirds known for their thick, seed-cracking bills. Here's a look at a few species you may encounter in your backyard or while exploring the outdoors.

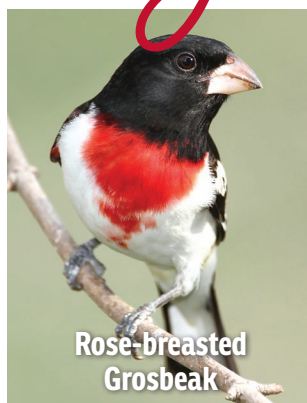
What Is a Grosbeak?

Grosbeaks are birds named for their large, thick bills; a name derived from the French phrase meaning "large beak." Despite their shared name, grosbeaks belong to different families. Rose-breasted and Black-headed Grosbeaks are cardinals, Evening and Pine Grosbeaks are finches, and the Blue Grosbeak is related to buntings.

Which Grosbeaks Are Common in Minnesota?

Minnesota is home to three commonly observed grosbeak species: the Rose-breasted Grosbeak, the Evening Grosbeak, and the Pine Grosbeak. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are regular spring migrants, seen throughout the state, and are most frequently found in deciduous forests where they breed during the summer months. Evening Grosbeaks are most often spotted in the northern and northeastern parts of Minnesota, particularly in winter, though during irruption years, they may extend their range farther south in search of food. Pine Grosbeaks, another winter visitor, are typically found in the north and northeast, where they forage on fruiting trees and seeds.

Two other grosbeak species are less commonly seen in the state. The Black-headed Grosbeak (shown) was last recorded in Minnesota in 2015, making it a rare visitor. The Blue Grosbeak is occasionally spotted in the far



Rose-breasted
Grosbeak



Evening
Grosbeak



Pine
Grosbeak

southwest corner of the state, primarily during spring and fall migration, though some remain to nest during the summer.

How Do Minnesota's Grosbeaks Differ?

Among the grosbeaks found in Minnesota, the Pine Grosbeak and Evening Grosbeak belong to the finch family, while the Rose-breasted Grosbeak is part of the cardinal family.

Pine Grosbeak breeding males are reddish-orange, females grayish-gold, both with white wing bars. About robin-sized, they favor pine forests and fruiting trees like crabapples and mountain ash.

Evening Grosbeaks, in contrast, have a more striking appearance. Males are a bright yellow with a dark head and tail, a bold yellow eyebrow, and a white wing patch. Females are olive-yellow with black wings and prominent white wing bars. Both sexes have large, conical bills and short tails and are roughly the size of a starling. Evening Grosbeaks are often seen in coniferous forests and may visit feeders in large flocks, particularly in winter when natural food sources become scarce.

The Rose-breasted Grosbeak, a member of the cardinal family, has a distinct appearance that sets it apart from its finch relatives. Adult males are strikingly black and white, with a bold red triangle on the chest, black wings with white wing bars, and a large, pale seed-crushing bill. Females, by contrast, resemble large female House Finches, with

streaked brown plumage, a noticeable white eye stripe, and white wing bars. Measuring about eight inches long, these birds are most frequently seen at feeders during spring migration but can also be found in deciduous forests, orchards, groves, and thickets throughout the summer.

How Can I Attract Grosbeaks?

Providing the right food and habitat can encourage grosbeaks to visit your yard.

Grosbeaks will readily eat white or golden safflower, black-oil sunflower seeds, sunflower hearts, roasted peanuts, dried mealworms, suet, and even small fruits like crabapples or dried fruits. The Mr. Bird **Bugs, Nuts & Fruit seed cylinder**—a mix of seeds, nuts, mealworms and dried fruit—is an excellent match for grosbeaks.

Grosbeaks will appreciate a source of water—consider adding a birdbath and keeping it clean and fresh. Additionally, planting native fruiting trees and shrubs, such as serviceberries, crabapples, and mountain ash, can create a natural food supply that will attract these beautiful birds throughout the year. With the right combination of food, water, and shelter, grosbeaks can become regular visitors, adding color and song to your backyard. ■



**Bugs, Nuts & Fruit
Seed Cylinder**

May & June

Find tips and seasonal updates online!

instagram: @allseasonswildbirdstore
facebook.com/allseasonswildbirdstore
youtube.com/allseasonswildbirdstore

Early May brings the return of warblers, Scarlet Tanagers, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, along with the continued arrival of orioles and hummingbirds.



Place decorations such as garden spinners, chimes, and flags away from bird feeders and houses. Movement may deter birds from using them.

Birdhouses and nest boxes should be placed well away from feeding stations. Put out at least two—one for chickadees and one for wrens. Position the chickadee house out of direct sight of the wren house to keep the peace.

Discourage birds from fighting their reflections by covering windows with landscaping cloth or protective netting. Cover bushes and side mirrors of cars with plastic bags.

Naturally Fresh Hummingbird Nectar with Nectar Defender® provides hummingbirds and orioles with fresh, healthy nectar. Made from premium cane sugar, it contains copper, a natural micronutrient in their diet, for longer freshness.



Deter bees from hummingbird feeders by applying mint extract or Hummingbird Bee Repellent on nectar ports. Rubbing crushed mint leaves on the ports also helps.

Keep ants away by using an ant moat, AntGuard, or Nectar Fortress repellent around poles or hangers to protect nectar and jelly feeders.



In late May, Orchard Orioles, Common Nighthawks, Eastern Kingbirds, and Least Flycatchers return. The arrival of Eastern Wood-Pewees signals the end of spring migration.

Wood Ducks jump from nest boxes between Memorial Day and the first week of June. Watch nest boxes around 8 a.m. for this exciting event!

Meteorological summer begins June 1st, marking the 90 warmest days of the year and a historically snow-free stretch. Astronomical summer starts June 20, bringing the longest daylight hours.

Orioles are attracted to mealworm feeders after their nestlings hatch. Place live mealworms in a cup feeder with 1–2" sides. Soaking dried mealworms in oriole nectar works, too.

Clean birdbaths with a 9:1 water-to-bleach solution. Add Bird Bath Protector for safety. The Water Wiggler attracts birds and prevents mosquitoes.

Store seed in the freezer or in metal cans kept in the garage, shed, or on the deck. Hang a moth trap inside the lid. Visit your neighborhood store for cans and moth traps.

Eastern Bluebirds will nest 2–3 times in the same box if you remove old nesting material after the young fledge.



Goldfinches are our latest nesting songbird. Hang another The Best Nest Builder to provide nesting material.

Found a baby bird? Nestlings (sparsely feathered) need to be returned to their nest or a safe branch. Fledglings (feathered, hopping) should be left alone—parents are nearby, watching and feeding them.



Found an injured bird? Contact the Wildlife Rehab Center at (651) 486-9453 or visit wrcmn.org.

Purchase our Feed-and-Fill Service before leaving on vacation to keep feeders full and fresh. Call our Minnetonka—Ridge Square store at (952) 473-4283 to arrange service.