



BIRD'S-EYE *View*

Volume 32
Issue 5
Sep/Oct
2025

BLOOMINGTON
Clover Center
 816 West 98th St.
 Bloomington 55420
(952) 884-4103

EAGAN
Cedar Cliff
Shopping Center
 2143 Cliff Rd.
 Eagan 55122
(651) 459-0084

**MINNETONKA-
 RIDGE SQUARE**
Ridge Square North
Shopping Center
 12981 Ridgedale Dr.
 Ste. 103
 Minnetonka 55305
(952) 473-4283

**MINNETONKA-
 WESTWIND PLAZA**
 4759 Co. Rd. 101
 Minnetonka 55345
(952) 935-5892

NORTH OAKS
Village Shopping
Center
 121 Village Cntr Dr.
 North Oaks 55127
(651) 482-1033

WHITE BEAR LAKE
 2703 E. Co. Rd. E
 White Bear Lake
 55110
(651) 653-8705

DELIVERY SERVICES
(952) 737-6626

wildbirdstore.com

In this issue...

Feature Article.....	1
Chirps.....	2
Bird Bios.....	3
Seasonal Notes.....	4



FEATURE ARTICLE

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

Prep Now for **Spring Wood Ducks**

Wood Ducks are much-loved visitors to Minnesota yards, especially those with a small pond or wetland nearby. Known for their striking plumage and unique nesting habits, these beautiful birds often raise their young in backyard nest boxes when natural tree cavities are scarce. Providing a safe and well-placed Wood Duck house is a rewarding way to support local wildlife and enjoy the charm of one of Minnesota's most iconic waterfowl species.

Why Fall is the Perfect Time

Autumn is a great time to prepare for the upcoming Wood Duck nesting season. Install a Wood Duck box now while the weather is still cooperative. Cooler temperatures and fewer insects make installation more pleasant, and with no active nests, there's no risk of disturbing birds.

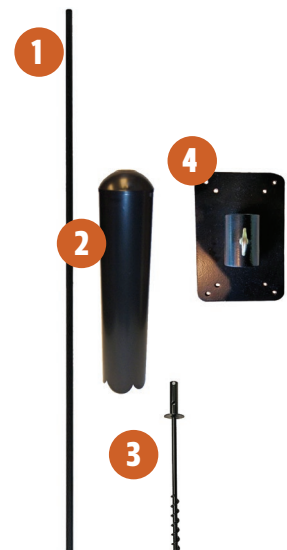
Fall installation also gives Wood Ducks plenty of time to find and familiarize themselves with the box before spring.

Recommended Mounting System

Mounting a Wood Duck house on a pole rather than in a tree makes monitoring and cleaning much easier. We recommend using our:

- 1) 80-inch pole**
- 2) domed raccoon baffle**
- 3) twist-in ground anchor**
- 4) vertical mounting flange**

The vertical mounting flange attaches to the back of the house and easily slides onto the pole—just tighten the thumb screw to secure the house in place.



Continued on page 2...

Smoke, Black Birds, and Black Bears

It's been an unusual summer in the natural world—at least in the areas where I live. Like many of you, I've been inundated with Grackles and Red-winged Blackbirds this year. It's as if they emerged from the smoky skies, breathing fire and devouring everything in sight! It felt like a scene straight out of a horror movie.

They emptied my feeders at an alarming pace, setting up camp on my four-pronged pole and lingering all day long—until I finally took some action to curb their gluttony. You've probably heard this tip from us before, but it really works: I switched to white safflower and golden safflower seed. Sure enough, they moved on to easier pickings.

I thought I was in the clear and that my seed was safe again.

Wrong.

While we were visiting relatives in Iowa, I noticed a post on our neighborhood chat: a black bear had been spotted wandering

through the neighborhood. And sure enough, it had found its way to my feeders. Not only were they emptied, but the steel pole was completely bent to give the bear easier access. It's not easy to bend a one-inch steel pole—but apparently, it was no problem for this hungry visitor.

It's as if they emerged from the smoky skies, breathing fire and devouring everything in sight!

I nicknamed him "Smokey," a nod to those old forest fire commercials from my childhood. I thought I could outsmart him by waiting a few weeks before putting the feeder pole back up in a different spot.

Wrong again.

A few mornings later, I woke up to yet another bent pole and more empty feeders. We haven't seen Smokey in person yet, but we've seen plenty of video footage. He's a big

Sometimes unwelcome—and unexpected—visitors arrive in the backyard.



one—and clearly enjoying the easy meals.

Now that summer is winding down, I find myself wondering what this fall will bring after such a strange season of unexpected—and less-than-welcome—visitors.

Time will tell.

—
Dave Netten,
Co-owner, All Seasons Wild Bird Store



“Delicious autumn! My very soul is wedded to it, and if I were a bird I would fly about the Earth seeking the successive autumns” —British Novelist George Eliot (pen name of Mary Ann Evans; 1819–1880)

FEATURE ARTICLE (continued from page 1)

The domed baffle helps prevent predators from climbing the pole. To install the ground anchor, insert a long-handled screwdriver into the holes and twist to drill it into the ground.

Tips for Proper Placement

If you're mounting the box in water, be sure to position it above typical high-water levels.

Face the nesting box toward the water to provide a clear, unobstructed flight path to the entrance hole. To prevent squirrels from jumping onto the box, position it at least twelve feet away from overhanging branches. Mount the house well away from human activity and other nest boxes to reduce disturbance and competition.

A Rewarding Spring Awaits

A little effort in the fall can lead to the unforgettable experience of watching Wood Ducks raise their young come spring—right in your own backyard. ■



A Wood Duck hen and chicks.
Photo by Scott Knight.



A Wood Duck hen attends to her nest.
Photo by Margo Ziegler.



Left: White-breasted Nuthatches (Katrina Hase) Right: Red-breasted Nuthatches (Audrey Manka, Russ Sandstrom)

Get to Know These Topsy-Turvy Tree Acrobats

Nuthatches are small, energetic songbirds that you might see moving headfirst down tree trunks—a behavior that sets them apart from most other birds. They are built for this acrobatic foraging, with strong bills for probing bark crevices, sturdy feet for clinging in any direction, and short tails that don't get in the way. Males and females of each species look mostly alike, and all nuthatches share a taste for insects gleaned from bark, as well as seeds and nuts.

How to Tell Them Apart

Of the four nuthatch species found in North America—White-breasted, Red-breasted, Pygmy, and Brown-headed—Minnesota is home to just two: the White-breasted and the Red-breasted. The White-breasted Nuthatch is the larger of the two, measuring about 5 to 6 inches long. It has a crisp white face and underparts, a glossy black cap in males (grayish in females), slate-blue back, and chestnut-colored undertail feathers. The smaller Red-breasted Nuthatch (about 4.5 inches long) is more colorful overall, with blue-gray upperparts, a rusty-orange breast and belly, and a striking black-and-white head pattern that includes a bold black eye line.

Sounds of the Nuthatch

Both species have distinctive voices. The White-breasted Nuthatch's call is a nasal, somewhat impatient-sounding “yank, yank,” often repeated in a deliberate rhythm. The Red-breasted Nuthatch's voice is higher and more insistent, producing a fast, tinny “yank-yank-yank” or “eenk-eenk,”

reminiscent of a toy horn. While both species use these calls to stay in contact or announce territory, the Red-breasted tends to sound more rapid-fire and buzzy compared to the slower, more measured White-breasted.

Where to Find Them in Minnesota

The White-breasted Nuthatch is a year-round, common resident throughout Minnesota. You can find it in deciduous woodlands, mixed forests, parks, and backyards no matter the season.

The Red-breasted Nuthatch is also present year-round but is more common in the northeast and north-central regions, where it breeds primarily in coniferous and mixed forests. It can be found across the state during migration, particularly in late August in fall and in May in spring, as some individuals migrate south for winter. In summer, breeding populations are concentrated in the north and parts of the east-central region.

At my White Bear Lake home, Red-breasted Nuthatches are only occasional visitors, but I always enjoy watching their

busy movements between the feeders, tree, and birdbath when they do arrive. Their quick, darting movements and endless energy make them a delight to observe.



A Red-breasted Nuthatch tucks a seed under some bark. Photo: Katrina Hase

Attracting Nuthatches to Your Yard

Both species readily visit feeders and are comfortable on clinging-style setups. To tempt them, offer suet, Joe's Mix, black-oil sunflower seeds, sunflower hearts, peanut pick-outs, or golden safflower. Nuthatches will often take seeds away to stash in bark crevices for later—so you might be helping them prepare for leaner days. Whether it's the bold White-breasted or the dapper Red-breasted, nuthatches bring a lively charm to any backyard feeding station. ■

September & October

Find tips and seasonal updates online!

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

September 1 is the first day of meteorological fall. The month is typically drier and less humid, with brilliant blue skies. Monarchs migrate south, visiting Autumn Joy sedum, wild asters, goldenrod, and Mexican sunflowers as they travel to the mountain forests west of Mexico City.

The second week of September is a great time to visit Hawk Ridge for migration viewing. For more information, visit hawkridge.org.

Peak migration of Yellow-rumped Warblers occurs around the autumnal equinox, September 22, 2025. Groups of Common Loons gather on lakes in preparation for migration to the Gulf Coast or Atlantic Seaboard.

Soon it will be time for the heated birdbath. Fill with a 50/50 vinegar and water mix, let sit overnight, scrub, and rinse. Add Bird Bath Protector™ to prevent contamination.

Orioles leave Minnesota by September 7 for the Neo-Tropics. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds continue using nectar feeders into October in southern Minnesota. Hummingbirds winter from South Texas to Costa Rica.

By mid-September, Dark-eyed Juncos arrive. They feed on the ground under bird feeders and will soon be joined by native sparrows: American Tree Sparrows, Fox Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows, and possibly White-crowned Sparrows.

Keep Nyjer® feeders full of fresh seed for goldfinches, the last songbird to fledge young. By late October, they will be in olive-yellow winter plumage.

October is also a great time to clean bird houses. Remove nests and debris, then wash with equal parts water and vinegar.

Switch to golden safflower or white safflower until Common Grackles and Red-winged Blackbirds migrate through. These seeds are less appealing to them than black-oil sunflower seed mixes.

White millet scattered on the ground will feed birds but is less appealing to squirrels. Zinnias produce seeds that attract goldfinches. Bees and butterflies also visit fall-blooming plants. Leave seed heads on perennials so birds can eat from them through winter.

Goldfinches do not fully migrate; populations may shift. They visit Nyjer® feeders year-round and also feed from golden safflower and shelled sunflower. Pine Siskins and redpolls may join them as fall becomes winter.

Give bird feeders a fall cleaning. Remove perches and feeder ports, disassemble, spray with Bird Saver cleaner, scrub with a feeder brush, rinse, and air dry.

European Starlings are non-native, don't migrate, and may feed in your yard year-round. Use Bye-Bye Starling to feed a mix but avoid feeding starlings. Golden or white safflower seeds are in the shell and less appealing than shelled seed, peanut pick-outs, and suet.

Indian Meal Moths are active in September. Store seed in garbage cans or tins outside or in the garage; smaller bags can go in the freezer. To remove moths, place a sticky moth trap under the can lid. Use traps made for Indian Meal Moths, available in stores and online.

Rotate feeder seed by emptying it into a paper bag outside. Put fresh seed in the bottom, filling the rest with older seed. Goldfinches prefer upper perches and will eat the older seed first. An Aspects Quick-Clean feeder makes rotation easy—no more stale seed!

A massive leaf drop often occurs the last week of October. Rake some leaves onto gardens to create habitat for overwintering insects like bees.

