

Wild Bird Habitat Store

November Newsletter - 2021

South Lincoln

In the Alamo Plaza
56th & Hwy 2
Lincoln, NE 68516
(402) 420-2553

North Lincoln

4900 Dudley Street
South of N 48th & Holdrege
Lincoln, NE 68504
(402) 464-4055

Omaha

Harrison Village Mall
168th & Harrison
Omaha, NE 68136
(402) 504-4450

www.wildbirdhabitatstore.com



For our customer and staff safety, Wild Bird Habitat will comply with CDC and local HHS on Covid protocol

COMING SOON: The Wild Bird Habitat Store is updating our website to provide more information to enhance your life long experience of feeding and watching birds.

November Bird Notes:

- Winter birds will make themselves plentiful around the bird feeders.
- Watch the skies as ducks and geese, the last to migrate, begin to move south.
- Now is time to check the bird bath heater to provide fresh water during the winter
- Continue to watch your feeders for new birds either showing up or passing through.
- Goldfinches and Juncos from the north are arriving. Will the Pine Siskins?
- Consider relocating your bird feeders for easy filling and viewing from indoors.
- It's a great time to expand your bird feeding program with a different kind of bird feeder that will attract new birds to your backyard during winter.
- Get a friend or relative started feeding birds. Buy them a bird feeder for Christmas.

Tufted Titmouse

The Tufted Titmouse is one of the most delightful birds that visits our feeders. It is the largest North American member of the Titmouse family but is greatly outnumbered by the much smaller Black-capped Chickadee. This little gray bird with a white belly has large black eyes, a rounded bill with a small black patch above it, and a tufted crest giving them the name Tufted Titmouse. As with Chickadees, a member of the Titmouse family, they flit and flutter from branch to branch, hanging upside down, and then diving to the feeder to collect a seed. These two birds act nearly alike in their eating habits. They will take a seed at the feeder then usually retreat to a small branch to remove the hull from the seed then tear off small pieces and swallow them. Titmice seem to prefer peanuts over black oil sunflower seed and safflower seed, but any of the nut type seeds will keep them coming.



Tufted Titmice can be found throughout most of the Eastern US woodlands from deciduous to pine forests and they often visit backyard bird feeders. They prefer wooded areas and neighborhoods with mature habitat much as the Chickadees do. Many years ago the Tufted Titmouse was primarily a bird occurring in southern states. But over the past century they expanded their range becoming a permanent resident bird into Southern Minnesota, Central Wisconsin and the eastern regions of the Central Plains. Eastern Nebraska has been on the very western edge of their range but they continue to expand west from the Missouri and Eastern Platte River valleys where they have become quite common.

In the winter a small family flock of Titmice will defend a feeding territory of up to 15 acres. They will fend off another winter feeding bands of Titmice, but none-the-less are usually accompanied by Downy Woodpeckers, Chickadees, nuthatches in the same feeding area. All these birds are cavity nesters and considered to be birds of the tree trunk zone.

In the spring these winter feeding groups of Titmice breakup establishing small territories of up to 5 acres per pair. It is then you will hear the familiar Peter, Peter, Peter song. It rings loud and clear as the male begins to stakeout his territory and renews his bond with his mate.

The female Tufted Titmouse will build a nest in an old woodpecker cavity, a rotted out knot hole, even using man made nest boxes. She will take several days to fashion her nest out of moss, fine bark, leaves, hair, and occasionally snake shedding's. Over the years reports have surfaced of the female Titmouse plucking hair directly from woodchucks, squirrels, raccoons, even a human who may be resting close to her nest site. When the nest is completed she will lay an average clutch of 5 to 6 white to creamy white eggs spotted with chestnut-red, brown, purple, or lilac. When the clutch is complete she will incubate the eggs for about 12 to 14 days until they hatch. After a few days of brooding the young chicks both parents will take on the duty to feed them as they remain in the nest for another 14 to 16 days before fledging. They will continue to rely on their parents to feed them for another week or two.



Tufted Titmice primarily feed on insects in the summer, caterpillars, beetles, ants and wasps, as well as spiders and snails, but will readily visit backyard bird feeders year round. Other natural foods include seeds, nuts, and berries. They appear to always take the largest seed or nut they can find when foraging. In the fall and winter they often hoard shelled seeds in the cracks and crevices of bark.

Tufted Titmice are acrobatic fliers foraging among mature trees, hanging upside down as they investigate the bottom of branches, pinecones, and clusters of leaves. As with Chickadees, Tufted Titmice are very vocal around their territories and are quick to react to the warning calls of other birds. The continued range expansion of these very active little birds may be related to various reasons; a warming climate, the succession of trees along river channels, and the growing number of people that maintain bird feeders providing a supplemental food resource throughout the year. So keep your eyes open for a small tufted little gray bird full of energy flittering around in your backyard snatching seeds from your feeders. You just may be lucky enough to see a Tufted Titmouse or two.

BIRD BAND RECOVERY

A Red-tailed Hawk found on March 6th, 2020 in Omaha, NE at 264th & Blondo, was brought to the Raptor Conservation Alliance facility due to the birds injuries. The injuries healed with proper care and the Hawk was banded and released back in Omaha where it was originally found with hopes it will relocate it's mate. On October 8, 2021a deceased Red-tailed hawk was found in Saskatchewan, Canada. When the band was checked it turned out to be the same hawk cared for then banded at the RCA's raptor hospital. The dedicated raptor rehabilitators at the Raptor Conservation Alliance helped that hawk fly free for almost two years after being seriously injured.



Wingtip: *Biologists have been banding birds in North America since 1923 Bird banding data is useful in both research and management projects. Individual identification of birds makes possible studies of dispersal and migration, behavior and social structure, life-span and survival rate, reproductive success and population growth. What to do if a banded bird is found alive or dead. Locate the number on the band. Report bird bands at www.reportband.gov or call toll free 1-800-327-2263.*

American Goldfinch

We receive numerous questions from customers about the goldfinch, one of the most desirable birds attracted to backyard bird feeders. Often times people wonder if they migrate south for the winter, or they are concerned about the lack of goldfinch at the bird feeders in late summer through early fall. Goldfinch, as with many birds, follow an annual cycle.



Male's
Winter
Plumage

Lets begin in the fall at a time when many plants, such as tall thistle and coneflowers, have gone to seed. As with most birds that eat seeds and fruits, the autumn ripening of natural foods is hard to ignore. These food resources are short lived and birds will take advantage of their availability. That will slow down the visit of birds to the bird feeders, especially in rural areas where natural foods are more abundant. Our summer resident goldfinch are attracted to these natural offerings, but they also begin to drift to the south by October. At the same time the Arctic cold fronts from Canada begin to escort goldfinch from the north into the Central Great Plains and Midwest. This northern population of goldfinch are those that will delight us at the bird feeders during the winter months.

By the second week of March, as winter begins to release it's grip on the Central Great Plains, our resident goldfinch begin to move back into the area from southern states where they wintered over. They join up with the northern population of goldfinch that remain with us until mid-spring as it is still pretty wintry to the north during March and April. This is when it can become a daily task to keep the thistle feeders filled. Its not unusual for some people to have 40 to 50 goldfinch or more at this time. It is also the time when the males will begin to dawn their bright canary yellow mating plumage.

As the dandelions begin to bloom, generally by the first week in May, the northern population of goldfinch will start to follow that bloom north, slowly returning to their nesting territory. The numbers of goldfinch at our feeders is significantly reduced as they depart. Our resident goldfinch will remain at the thistle feeders until late June at which time they will drift out into the country where they nest in plum thickets, small trees, and other shrubs. Since goldfinch feed their nestlings strictly seed, they wait until mid-summer to nest when such food is abundant. Those who live in rural areas will have goldfinch visit their feeders throughout the summer months. But in urban areas their numbers will have been reduced to a few un-mated pairs. The molt will begin in September, and by October the cycle will start over once again.



Wingtip: *Fresh Nyjer thistle seed is key to attracting goldfinch, Pine Siskin, and other finch. Many outlets, such as grocery, big box, and discount stores, warehouse thistle seed for extended periods of time and it becomes stale and undesirable to these birds. Purchase your thistle seed from reputable dealers. At Wild Bird Habitat our Nyjer thistle is triple cleaned and delivered fresh on a weekly basis.*

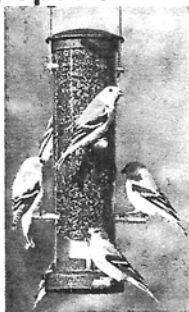
Pre-Christmas Shopping Special

ALL NYJER THISTLE
SEED BIRD FEEDERS

10% OFF

PLUS GET 2 LBS. NYJER
THISTLE SEED

Through November 20th



Wild Bird Habitat Store's Nyjer Thistle Seed

Our Nyjer thistle seed
is triple cleaned to
remove dust, dirt,
foreign objects, and
immature seeds that
birds reject.



See for your self how black and shiny our Nyjer
seed is. It's full of the fatty-oils goldfinch want

Winter Backyard Sparrows

Song Sparrow – A rich, russet-and-gray bird with bold streaks down its white chest, the Song Sparrow is one of the most familiar North American sparrows. Don't let the bewildering variety of regional differences this bird shows across North America deter you: it's one of the first species you should suspect if you see a streaky sparrow in an open, shrubby, or wet area.



American Tree Sparrow – A plump and long-tailed sparrow that winters in backyards and weedy, snow-covered fields across southern Canada and the northern United States. Hopping up at bent weeds or even beating their wings to dislodge seeds from grass heads, they scratch and peck the ground in small flocks, trading soft, musical twitters. Come snowmelt, these small rusty-capped and smooth-breasted sparrows begin their long migrations to breeding grounds in the tundra of the far North.



Harris' Sparrow – A large sparrow with a white breast and striking along the sides. A brown back has heavy black streaking, white bars on the wings, and a long tail. The head has a black bib, forehead, crown and nape with a pink bill. Rarely found far east or west of the middle of North America, spending the winter in the very central region of the United States. Found in hedgerows, shelter belts, fields, pastures, and weedy patches. Often seen feeding in gardens and backyards.



Dark-eyed Juncos – One of the most common winter members of the sparrow family, has a slate gray body and hood with a pure white belly. White outer tail feathers are most visible in flight. Found in undergrowth of open woodlands, roadsides, and shrubs. Often seen in backyards and around bird feeders. Many call this bird the "snow bird" as it precedes the first snows of the season.



Wingtips: Ground feeders with safflower seed and Proso millet are excellent for attracting native sparrows and other ground foraging birds. You may add a little cracked corn to the mix unless squirrels are a big problem.

Pre Christmas Special Offer

BROME
BIRD CARE

Wild Bird Habitat's

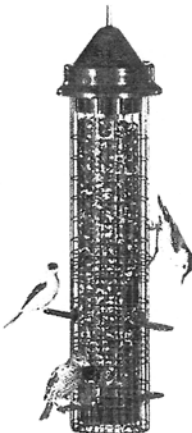
Top Selling

Squirrel Proof Bird Feeder
the

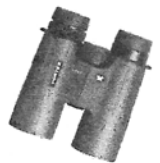
"Squirrel Buster Classic"

Save \$4.00

Through November 20th



Vortex Binoculars & Spotting Scopes



10% OFF

High Quality Optics
At An Affordable Price

Great Holiday gift
for the birder in your life



Unlimited
Lifetime
Warranty

Dave's November Bird Chatter

This is a wonderful time of year to get outdoors before more frigid weather arrives. Take a field guide and a pair of binoculars and enjoy the birds you see. Watch for hawks sitting along the roadway. Its great fun just to keep track of the number of birds you can observe taking a short walk or drive. Take a longer walk down a trail or longer drive to a wildlife refuge. You may be surprised at what you discover during the fall bird migration.

The ducks and geese are really getting restless this month, and soon they will be heading toward their winter territories in the Southern States. Some will remain if they locate open water. The last to fly over heading south are the long lines of very vocal Snow Geese. When we see them it's a sign the fall bird migration is coming to an end for 2021. Winter cold and snow is usually on the heels of these high flying birds.



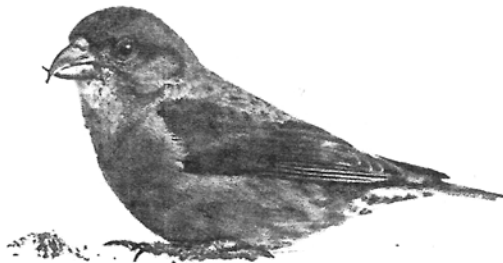
Here in Lancaster County, and southern Saunders County, numerous area creeks rarely freeze up solid. Salt Creek, Haines Branch, Oak Creek and Little Salt Creek in Lancaster County remain open in places during the winter due to the high salinity of the water. Several small tributaries into Salt Creek remain open as they pass through the salt marshes. These saline waters only occur on the west side of Salt Creek. On the east side plenty of fresh water streams flow into Salt Creek. These riparian areas harbor an abundance of birds as well. Steven's Creek, Antelope Creek, Dead Man's Run, and Beale's Slough are the major tributaries to Salt Creek. Several of these creeks have trails that run adjacent to them or cross them several times. This makes short bird walks possible. The Salt Creek watershed lakes, Wagon Train, Stagecoach, Blue Stem, and several others, also support many birds until the water freezes over for the winter.

Seasonal changes usher many birds into and through Nebraska. With 450 bird species on Nebraska's bird checklist it makes the state one of the best birding regions on the North American Continent. Each season brings a different variety of birds including vagrants and rare species.

We are waiting to start receiving reports of winter birds from the north at the bird feeders. Several reports of Junco's have come in and I'm sure many more will follow. Native sparrows will soon be appearing scratching the ground in the leaves and under the feeders to turn up seeds. Keep your eyes open for these exciting little birds. Remember, if you see a small brown bird scotching the ground with their feet these are native sparrows and worth the effort to identify.

As the cold fronts begin pushing south out of Canada it will drive many more northern birds into our area where they will spend the winter. Red Polls, Evening Grosbeaks, Crossbills, and Purple to name a few. No one knows what bird may drop by their backyard. It could be a Snow Bunting or a Brown Creeper so be observant.

It often seems as though it is the casual person feeding birds who notices an unusual bird that appears in their yard. The main thing is if you do see a bird show up that is not one of the common birds that visit your bird feeders, try to identify it. If you can't, contact the Wild Bird Habitat Store or someone who can help. Most of the really rare birds are found in this manner.



Red Crossbill - Notice the specialized beak for extracting seeds from pinecones

Keep the water in the bird bath open and fresh. Remember birds have numerous food sources staked out during the winter as to not rely on any one food stock. But water can be a resource which is difficult to locate outdoors in freezing temperatures. If you do not have water available for birds in the winter, maybe this would be a good year to add it to your bird feeding program.

Wingtip: *If you use a heater in your bird bath during the winter now is the time to clean it up and make certain it is in working order. Do the freezer test. Place your heater in the freezer for twenty minutes. This will activate the thermostat. Remove it from the freezer and plug it in. It should begin to warm up. Bird bath de-icers either work or not, there is no "kinda works". If they only warm up slightly then they may need scale and other deposits cleaned off. This can be accomplished by mixing vinegar with water then soaking the de-icer and scrubbing with a stiff brush to remove deposits.*

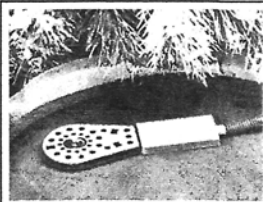


Although many people reported a lack of birds over the past few weeks, they are now beginning to return to the feeders, and many more will join them. In September an abundance of natural foods become available and the birds will take advantage of those foods knowing it won't last. Although they have been busy staking out numerous natural food plots for winter, they know where the bird feeders are and will use them as a supplemental food source. This is why we recommend keeping your feeders filled during periods where you may not see many birds. Birds are in transition preparing to move into the winter season. And as more northern birds return for the winter, and the temperatures continue to slide toward zero, I guarantee the activity at the bird feeders will pickup dramatically. But keep in mind, backyard bird feeders only account for about 30% of a birds overall diet.

Wingtip: *Birds can burn up 50% of their energy in a day foraging for food. So every seed they eat must meet their nutritional requirements. They are selective feeders and know which seeds are good and which are not. All black oil sunflower seed is not the same. The quality of the black oil sunflower seed sold at the Wild Bird Habitat Stores is preferred by more birds providing the right amount of protein, fat, and fiber. Black oil sunflower might all look the same, but the birds know the difference.*

Will we have snow before Wild Bird Habitat's December newsletter is on the shelf? Hard to say, but winter is fast approaching. Keep the suet out as it provides a good source of protein and fat for woodpeckers and nuthatches. More Carolina Wrens are reported every year opting to spend the winter in more northern states as previous years. Carolina Wrens are one of only a few birds that will sing during the winter while most birds are silent. This bird has the typical turned up tail as do all wrens. Along with the distinctive tail, look for the white eyebrow which makes identification fairly easy. They too find the suet feeder and shelled peanuts an attractive source of high energy protein during the cold winter months.

Keep the feeders filled. Maybe add a new style of bird feeder this year to attract a larger variety of birds. Keep the binoculars handy and a good field guide close by. If you want to move your bird feeders so they are more visible from inside the house, now is a good time to do so. If you need any hardware, Wild Bird Habitat has a variety of hooks, poles, and hangers and plenty of good information on installation. We hope everyone has an exciting experience during the last month of bird migration.



Nebraska's largest selection of

- bird bath de-icers,
- heated bird baths

**UL approved & guaranteed
at the Wild Bird Habitat Stores**



Dave's Bird Feeder Pick for Winter - Post mounted platform bird feeder

Elevated platform bird feeders are a non-exclusive bird feeder meaning it does not exclude any bird. Large and small birds alike can access it very easily. It is a very versatile feeder when it comes to the food you can offer your birds. Along with about any mix of quality wild bird feed you can add mealworms, fruit, and grit. Best yet it is easy to clean and maintain.



I have several platform feeders in my yard and I find them to be one of the most active and exciting bird feeders in my bird feeding program. On one open platform bird feeder mounted on a steel pole with a squirrel baffle I feed both shelled and in-shell peanuts for Blue Jays, woodpeckers, nuthatches, and an occasional Cardinal.



A second covered platform bird feeder is mounted on a 4 X 4 post with a squirrel baffle. In this feeder I use Nutra safflower seed when the blackbirds are here. This really cuts down on them over-powering the feeder and running off the other birds. In late autumn to spring, when the blackbirds are gone, I switch to using sunflower hearts. You could also use black oil sunflower seed or one of the nut based specialty mixes as well. On a daily basis there is always activity at this feeder.

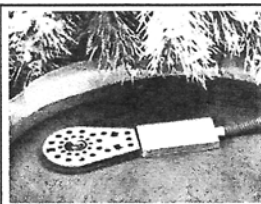


I also have a hanging platform bird feeder suspended in a tree that I only use one of the safflower seeds in (traditional white safflower or Nutra-safflower). Again this feeder is very attractive to a variety of the birds especially Cardinals. And using the safflower I don't have to worry about squirrels raiding it even though it is very accessible to them hanging in a tree..

The squirrel baffles I use are 100% effective from allowing squirrels to climb the pole. However you must keep in mind the feeder MUST NOT be located within 7 to 8 feet of a fence, tree branch, or deck railing. Given the opportunity if a squirrel cannot climb the pole to get to the feast they will make an attempt to lunge to the feeder from a nearby object.

All of the platform bird feeders in my yard have removable screens or can be removed from the mount so they are easy to keep clean. I recommend you have at least one of the six basic bird feeders in your yard to attract the largest variety of birds to your offerings. But I find the post mounted platform bird feeder to be the most exciting, easiest to maintain, and the best at keeping problem animals at bay.

If you are interested in a post mounted platform bird feeder look for the special offer in this months



Nebraska's largest selection of

- bird bath de-icers,
- heated bird baths

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newsletter. I

guarantee you that you will not be

disappointed with the addition it makes in

KEEP WILDERNESS PARK WILD - Autumn newsletter edition by Friends of Wilderness Park

In 2021, The Lincoln Parks Foundation is partnering with the City of Lincoln and Friends of Wilderness Park to lead a \$2.1 million campaign to enhance public access, usage, enjoyment, and appreciation of Wilderness Park, now and in the future.

Wilderness Park is Lincoln's largest public park, a seven mile linear, 1472-acre woodland nestled just west of the Jamaican North trail along Salt Creek from Van Dorn to Satillo road. The park features 31 miles of hiking, cycling, and horse trails within it's naturally wooded area. Learn more and go birding at Wilderness Park ➡



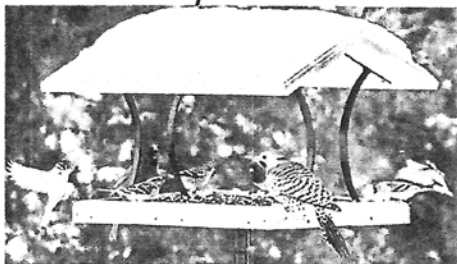
www.itsyourwilderness.com

Fun Wild Turkey Facts

- Mature turkeys have 3,500 or so feathers. The Apache Indians considered the turkey timid and wouldn't eat it or use its feathers on their arrows.
- Turkeys originated in North and Central America, and evidence indicates that they have been around for over 10 million years.
- In Mexico, the turkey was considered a sacrificial bird.
- Only male turkeys (toms) gobble. Females (hens) make a clicking noise. The gobble is a seasonal call during the spring and fall. Hens are attracted for mating when a tom gobbles. Wild toms love to gobble when they hear loud sounds or settle in for the night.
- During the day turkeys forage for acorns, seeds, insects and berries.
- Wild turkeys have excellent vision during the day but not at night.
- Juvenile turkeys are called "jakes".
- Wild turkeys roost in high trees at night to avoid predation
- Wild turkeys make short flights. Domestic turkeys cannot fly.



Post mounted platform bird feeder



SAVE 10% on a complete post mounted platform bird feeder

And get 2 LBS. in-shell peanuts or
3 LBS. sunflower hearts **FREE**

(Includes any platform bird feeder, 1" steel pole, flange, and ground sleeve or a 4 X 4 wooden post adapter and a 4 X 4 post mount squirrel baffle.)

*Professional installation available.
Ask our staff for details.*

Offer good through November 25th

**From the owners and staff at the
Wild Bird Habitat Stores
HAPPY THANKSGIVING**

Wild Bird Habitat Stores

For 28 years the Lincoln's backyard bird feeding experts providing
Sales, Service, & Information
to make your backyard bird feeding experience a success. Guaranteed!

When you shop at Wild Bird Habitat you are supporting the conservation of birds and wildlife, environmental education, and outdoor recreation

**We thank you
for your
support**

