

Wild Bird Habitat Store

July Newsletter - 2022



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

North Lincoln
4900 Dudley St
2 BLKS S of
48th & Holdrege
Lincoln, NE 68504
(402) 464-4055

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

www.wildbirdhabitatstore.com

New Handout
4 free bird ID apps for
tablets and smartphones
that will help you identify
birds by sight & sound.
Pick one up today!

July Bird Notes:

- This has been a great early summer for backyard bird feeding.
- If the weather heats up, it may slow down birds coming to the bird feeder.
- Fresh water in your backyard will mean more birds, especially moving water.
- Suet and shelled peanuts will continue to be in high demand by woodpeckers.
- Goldfinches and Cedar Waxwings will be nesting this month.
- Get a bird identification guide, it will make watching birds more enjoyable.
- Take binoculars and a field guide on your day trips and vacations.
- This year's hatch of black birds will begin flocking up by month's end.
- Be thinking of hummingbirds by the end of the month.
- Caged bird feeders are great for attracting woodpeckers & smaller birds, not grackles.

Beyond The Bird Feeders

By the end of July we'll be looking at the "dog days of summer". But for many songbirds, by month's end the thought of seasonal changes is stirring and there is a restlessness about them. For birds the August sun will be setting earlier and by then the days will have become noticeably shorter, especially to our north. But it is still July in the Central Plains and Midwest, and there is plenty of time to enjoy our summer resident birds before they begin their trek south, many leaving the continent for the Tropics.

Once again we encourage you to look beyond the bird feeders and enjoy the many birds that call North America home, if only for the summer. We are featuring three birds in this newsletter that can be observed in parks, around lakes, along golf courses, or any open green spaces. In Lincoln, these three birds and many others can be enjoyed while taking an easy stroll around Holmes Lake, or on the trails at the Pioneer Park Nature Center or any of the city's hiker biker trails. I like the MoPac Trail between 84th street east to 148th Street. So go out and enjoy our summer birds.



Eastern Kingbird



Western Kingbird



Dickcissel

The Eastern Kingbird is a large flycatcher found in fields and other open areas. They are common across the Central Great Plains, in fact, despite the eastern name, they occur from the Atlantic to the Pacific. In their summer range they eat primarily flying insects and aggressively defend their nesting territory against other kingbirds. But where they winter in South America along the Amazon River they travel in flocks feeding mostly on fruits.



Adult Eastern Kingbirds are a medium size songbird between 7 and 9 inches in length with a 15 inch wingspan and weigh approximately 1.5 ounces. Both the male and female have a black head and back and a dark tail with a white band on the tip. Their throat, chest, and belly are white.

They are not only aggressive toward other kingbirds in their territory, but can be equally aggressive toward predators and birds larger than themselves, often attacking crows and hawks.

These Kingbirds construct an open cup nest of twigs, roots, and weed stems in trees located in fields, or at the edge of orchards and shelterbelts. Urban parks and golf courses are commonly used. The nest is generally located on a horizontal branch or fork of a tree limb about halfway up in the canopy. The female will lay 2 to 5 creamy white eggs that have heavy dark splotches on the larger end.

Once the young kingbirds have fledged the nest the adults will continue to feed them for up to seven weeks. Since the young depend on the parents to feed them for such a long period there is usually only one brood per season.

Eastern Kingbirds are the equivalent of a stunt pilot when feeding on insects. They capture most of the prey in an accurate aerial pursuit of dodging, hovering, swooping, and sharp turns. It is enjoyable just to sit and watch these birds pluck pesky insects out of the air from a perch.

Wingtip: An Eastern Kingbird, banded at the Pioneers Park Nature Center by Irene Alexander, was later found dead on the banks of the Amazon River in South America.

The Western Kingbird is a conspicuous and aggressive bird of the open country. It is common throughout the western United States and southern Canada. However the breeding range of this kingbird has expanded over the past century expanding into the Central Great Plains States, possibly due to the encroachment of trees into this vast prairie region. The introduction of trees in the Great Plains may have bridged an ecological barrier that helped the Western Kingbird to further expand its range. They have become occasional visitors along the East Coast during the fall months, and have been seen during the early winter months in Florida.



The male and female Western Kingbirds are a medium sized songbird about 9 inches long. Their head, throat and upper breast are a light gray, while the belly is a bright yellow. The wings are dark and the tail is square tipped with white outer edges. This kingbird prefers open spaces with scattered trees, shrubs, or tall man-made structures from fence posts to telephone poles. Common habitats of the Western Kingbird include grasslands, desert shrub, pasture, open savannas, and urban areas.

Western Kingbirds are monogamous, returning each year to defend their rather loosely defined territory against other kingbirds. The nest is constructed primarily in trees, but they will also use utility poles, fence posts, and other man-made structures. A cupped nest is built of grass stems, roots, small twigs and bark comprise the outer structure, which is then lined with hair and feathers. Wool, cotton, and cloth have also been found in their nests. Up to 7 creamy white eggs are laid with heavy dark spots at the larger end. The female will incubate the eggs for 18 to 19 days. As the nesting season progresses, the territory of the Western Kingbird grows smaller until, by the time incubation of the eggs begin, is limited to the tree or structure the nest is located in. The young birds will fledge on another 16 to 17 days and will continue to rely on their parents for food.

Western Kingbirds, as with other flycatchers, will launch themselves off tall structures, fence posts, and tree limbs to feed on the wing catching most of their prey in the air. They will grab insects off the ground or from vegetation as well.

This Neo-tropical migrant winters in Central America, with a small population finding refuge on the southern tip of Florida.

Wingtip: Kingbirds are from the family of Tyrant Flycatchers. A group of kingbirds are collectively known as a "coronation", "court", and "tyranny" of kingbirds. When they become aggressive or irritated you may see a crop of red feathers rise from the top of their head as if it is a king's crown.

The Dickcissel is a sparrow-like bird of prairie grasslands, primarily in the Central Great Plains and Midwestern states. Their habitat consists of tall-grass to mixed-grass prairie, hayfields, pastures, and roadside ditches. They can often be seen perched atop a stalk of grass that is waving in the wind, and reciting their pleasant call. In early Autumn Dickcissels will congregate in large flocks in preparation to migrate to their tropical grasslands in Central and South America during the winter months.



The male Dickcissel has a yellowish breast with a black triangle bib. This black "V" on its yellow breasts resembles the Meadowlark, only much smaller. He has a yellow eyebrow and reddish brown shoulders. The female is very similar to the male except she lacks the black V shaped bib.

As with most prairie birds, Dickcissels forage for weed seeds and grain products. They will feed on the seed heads of stalks of grasses, or seeds which have fallen to the ground. They also eat a variety of insects.

Dickcissels nest in shrubs or small saplings. The male does little more than to feed himself and attract a mate. The female will construct a cup nest slightly above the ground made of weed and grass stems lined with fine roots, grasses, and hair. Up to 6 light blue eggs make up the clutch. The female will incubate the eggs for 10- 13 days. She will be the sole provider of food for the young until they in another 7 to 10 days. She will continue to care for them for a short time before possibly have a second brood.

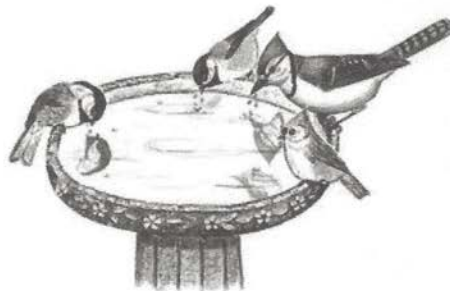
One thing is for certain. Summer on the Great Plains would not be complete without the song of the Dickcissel. You can witness this at Holmes Lake, the Pioneers Park Nature Center or the Audubon Spring Creek Prairie south of Denton.

Dave's July Bird Chatter

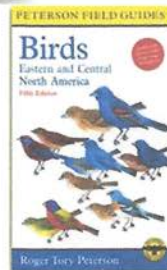
After the cool spring weather relented and it finally warmed up our migrating birds finally made it to their nesting grounds. Wrens seem to be successfully nesting. Purple Martins are fledging their young, and Bluebirds appear to be having a good season with many folks enjoying them for the first time after installing nest boxes. Many people have Orioles, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and ICat Birds gracing their yards. The length of time they visit the bird feeders depends on where you live and how vigilant you are to keep their food available. Summer bird feeding has been most enjoyable with a good variety of birds visiting well stocked feeders. With a variety of seeds, jellies, and nectars. Even a helping of live mealworms on mealworm feeder.

As normally happens when the weather turns hot and humid the amount of food and frequencies of birds visiting your feeders may subside a bit. Hot weather saps the appetite of birds reducing the amount of food they need. This type of weather also makes many animals including humans lethargic. On these hot days the birds will feed early in the day and again late in the afternoon to early evening avoiding the midday heat. You may witness some birds on the ground in shady areas with wings spread and beaks wide open. This is one way, other than bathing, to cool down a little. Birds lack sweat glands and will pant much like a dog to relieve heat build up.

We hope that this might be the year you add a water source to your backyard bird feeding program if you haven't already. A moving source of water is especially attractive to birds. I know from years of experience how much more of a draw moving water is to birds compared to a bird bath. Many tests have indicated moving water attracts as many as five times the number of birds as does standing water. It also attracts birds to your yard such as warblers that are not particularly interested in the bird feeders you maintain. This attraction is due to the sound moving water makes which birds can hear at a good distance. When they come to investigate it the moving water is such an enticement they cannot turn down the opportunity for a quick dip and a drink. Just remember that an important variable for attracting birds to water, whether in an avian pond or bird bath, is providing shallow areas for smaller birds.



This is vacation time for many families and individuals. Trips are being planned for traveling to other parts of the country and geological locations. You are sure to see a change in the variety of bird species you will encounter, even if you are not out actively bird watching. This includes a simple trip across Nebraska where you'll pass through a variety of different ecological regions. And once you enter into the more than 19,000 square miles of Sandhills on into Western Nebraska you will see a variety of western bird species that do not occur in the eastern part of the state. These, along with the major migratory flyways that pass through the state, make Nebraska one of the top bird watching regions on the northern continent. So at the Wild Bird Habitat Stores we encourage everyone to have a field guide and get familiar with using it. Make certain the guide lists the birds for the regions you plan to travel through. Ask about Bird ID apps which can be set for regional birds.



And if you plan on leaving the country to travel to far off places, we can get a bird identification guide specific to any state or country. Honing your skills for using a field guide now will make it easier to identify birds passing through your yard during fall migration which is not too far off.

During the month of July, and into August, you might be noticing some “bald” birds. This seems most common in Cardinals, Blue Jays, and blackbirds. This baldness is caused by feather mites and does not harm the birds but may cause them some embarrassment. These mites clip off the feathers on the head at the skin line which do not grow back until the fall molt. Again there is no cause for alarm as it is harmless to the birds and does not affect humans.



July is the primary nesting period for the American Goldfinches and Cedar Waxwings. This period coincides with the ripening of certain plants that provides fibrous materials for constructing nests as well as seeds and berries for each of these species. Goldfinch feed their nestlings strictly seed after hatching and mid summer provides a hearty bounty of these food products. Waxwings not only feed their young insects that have become plentiful by now, many of which are considered pests, but the berries and fruits on a variety of shrubs and trees have ripened offering additional food sources.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of summer bird feeding is watching the adult birds bringing their young to the backyard bird feeders. Every year adult downy woodpeckers bring their fledglings to the peanuts and suet feeders for a treat, What a delight to sit outside on the deck or patio and watch these dedicated parents take care of their offspring. It is equally exciting to observe these fledglings go about exploring this mysterious world they have recently be introduced to. Just to watch these youngsters explore water for the first time is a hoot. But they learn quickly. Life in the wild depends on the ability to learn fast and stay alert.



Over the past few weeks the onslaught of young birds my wife and I have enjoyed watching in the backyard is typical if you maintain the bird feeders, have some natural habitat, and a source of water. We have seen Chickadees feeding Nutra-Saff Safflower seed to their newly fledged youngsters. The adult male Cardinal busily feeding his two youngsters while the female is probably starting a second brood. The male Downey Woodpecker is working hard to keep up retrieving suet from the suet feeder for his fledglings and occasionally treating them to bits of shelled peanuts. And one of my favorites is the Red-bellied Woodpecker who takes advantage of exploiting every type of food we provide for the birds. From suet to peanuts in the shell, their young have a very diverse diet. The best all-around woodpecker feeder we have other than the suet feeders are the caged feeders which all woodpeckers can freely feed from, but grackles and squirrels cannot. We've watched baby Blue Jays, Robins, House Finch, and many others visit our yard for food, water, and shelter.



I encourage everyone to set aside a few minutes everyday to watch the birds attracted to your yards whether you feed birds all summer long or not. Even for those that do not feed birds, the phenomenon of bird life around us is ancient. These feathered creatures have evolved over millions of years and continue to this day to adapt to the challenges of living in a human world. Let's hope and pray that those birds who for eons have traveled the continents between summers and winters will continue to grace our yards, gardens, and wild areas for centuries to come. They entertain and amaze us. We marvel at their abilities. Birds are the greatest wildlife resource that connect us with nature on a daily basis.



Thank you for supporting the Wild Bird Habitat Stores for the past 21 years. We hope to continue to serve all your birding needs for the next 20 years. Good birding to you all! *Dave at Wild Bird Habitat*

How's It Growing?

Lincoln's Premier Gardening / Landscaping Radio Show

How's It Growing is a live call in radio show hosted by Bob Henrickson Nebraska Statewide Arboretum Horticulture Program Director every Wednesday from 11:00 am to noon on KZUM, 89.3 FM in Lincoln, Nebraska. You can also live stream How's It Growing on your smart phone, tablet, or computer at www.kzum.org.



For over 25 years the show has been promoting local garden clubs and events, sustainable agriculture, local food, and a celebrating what we like to call beneficial landscaping and landscaping for wildlife. Tune-in every Wednesday to "How's It Growing" on KZUM, Lincoln's community radio station and get gardening and landscaping advice from the experts. Check-out "How's It Growing" on Facebook.

Be Thinking Hummingbirds by Months End

I believe most people begin to feel summer slowly slipping away shortly after the Fourth of July. There is yet a lot of hot summer days to enjoy with plenty of summer fun left, but by late July we will be witnessing the first arrivals of hummingbirds embarking on their long journey south for the winter. Yes, the earliest arrival dates for migrating hummingbirds in Nebraska is July 18. The majority of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds arrive in mid-August to mid-September with many hummers visiting nectar feeders until early October. I am mentioning this so by months end you can start making plans to attract hummingbirds. Wild Bird Habitat generally recommends for our area that people have their hummingbird feeders filled and ready by the 15th of August. However over the past few years we have started receiving reports as early as the first week of August.





ARNIE'S CORNER

DogGurt

10% OFF IN JULY

The long, hot, dog days of summer are upon us, but you can give your dog an all natural frozen treat to help cool them down.

DogGurt is an all-natural frozen yogurt in a cup with real ingredients. No artificial flavors, additives, or sugar. Refreshing for your pet on a dog gone hot day



DogGurt provides calcium and proteins in seven delicious flavors including **sweet potato, pumpkin, sweet potato and bacon, peanut butter and bacon, peanut butter and apple, peanut butter and banana and apple and bacon**

If you have pets you know that Accidents Happen

But now there's

SKOUT'S HONOR

A surprisingly powerful plant-derived cleaning solutions that you can count on to tackle any odor or pet mess, every single time. Guaranteed!



Over 10 million meals donated

And with every purchase of Skout's Honor® product provides one day's

\$2.00 OFF

On all Skout's Honor Products in July

Enjoy Feeding Woodpeckers More !

10% OFF ALL SUET FEEDERS



July 2 - 14



July 16 - 30

10% OFF ALL PEANUT FEEDERS



Free Bird Seed During July

With the purchase of any caged seed tube bird feeder

Purchase any seed tube caged bird feeder in July, and receive 4 pounds hulled sunflower arts absolutely free.

A \$10.00 Value !

I guarantee this will become a bird feeder you will enjoy all year round - Dave

Microbe-Lift Soy based bird bath, fountain and statuary cleaner***Cleans Birdbaths, Garden Statues, Sculptures, Stone & Brick***

A natural soy-based cleaner that combine the power & versatility of the soybean to create powerful yet safe, renewable alternatives to petroleum-based products.

A special blend of soy-based chemistry that will help correct mineral problems such as scaling, staining & water discolorations

- Powerful and safe removal of organic debris and mineral deposits
- Environmentally friendly
- Biodegradable, skin friendly and nontoxic
- Safe for use around birds, animals and humans
- Safe for use around plants and grass
- Not harmful to fish or other aquatic life
- No air polluting VOC's
- Uses renewable soybean resources

State-of-the-art cleaning product combines biodegradable resources and technology along with micro-emulsion technology

**Microbe-Lift Soy Based Bird House & Bird Feeder Cleaner*****Cleans All Plastic, Vinyl, Wood, Fiberglass, Metal & Resin/Poly Birdfeeder & Birdhouses Surfaces***

A natural soy-based cleaner that combine the power & versatility of the soybean to create powerful yet safe, renewable alternatives to petroleum-based products.

A proprietary formulation of soy-based chemistry that safely cleans surfaces of organic debris, mineral deposits and bird droppings

- Not harmful to birds or other animals
- Safe for use around plants and home
- Powerful and safe removal of organic debris
- Environmentally friendly
- Biodegradable, skin friendly, nontoxic
- No air polluting VOC's
- Uses renewable soybean resources
- State-of-the-art cleaning product combines biodegradable resources and technology along with micro-emulsion technology. Will not scratch plastic or metal surfaces when used according to label directions

**Other wildlife and environmentally friendly products available**

- ◆ **Bird Bath Clear** - Keeps bird baths clean and clear
- ◆ **Algaway 5.4** - Algaecide For Birdbaths & Fountains - Stops Algae Growth
- ◆ **Biological Mosquito Control** - For birdbaths, ponds, all standing water sources.

Plus scrub Brushes - brushes for birdbaths, bird feeders, hummingbird feeders

