



BACKYARD BIRD CENTER NEWS

THE NORTHLAND'S LARGEST SELECTION OF FEEDERS, SEED MIXES & BINOCULARS

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Aspect's Quick-Clean Bases make feeder cleaning so easy.

Fall Feeder Cleaning Saturday, Oct. 18th 9:00a.m. to 4:00p.m.

It's hard to believe this is our 10th Bird Feeder Cleaning! Clean feeders mean healthier birds. Once again, we will have a power washer on hand and as many spare parts as we can gather. You can drop off your feeders in the morning and pick up later in the day.

Please make sure you dump all old seed out before bringing in your feeders.

The cost will be \$3.00 per feeder for cleaning and \$5.00 for repairs with this fall's proceeds going to the Parkville Nature Sanctuary.

Once again, Wild Delight will be supporting our efforts by giving customers a \$3 OFF Wild Delight coupon for every feeder they bring in for cleaning.



Time To Go

by Mark McKellar

One of the oldest "tales" about birds that I have been addressing is the belief that you have to take your hummingbird feeders down to force the birds to leave so they will not stay here and starve to death.

The trigger mechanism in birds for most natural occurrences is day length. The internal "clock" if you will, lets wild animals in general know that it is time to start one of their many cycles. Migration is a classic example. Remember the old Wild Kingdom videos of geese getting back to their nesting grounds only to find the water still frozen? I loved watching the geese sliding across the ice as they tried to land.

The message was that the geese that wintered in Missouri never know what the weather is like in the artic. The change in day length tells their bodies they have to get moving if they are going to have enough time to successfully nest in the very short nesting window at the top of the world.

Hummingbirds are much the same. The shortening days tug at their bodies to head south. Adult birds have done this a time or two, but the

youngsters have not. The birds that hatched this summer don't know why they have to leave so they tend to stay longer than their parents but their bodies, not your hummingbird feeder will win that tug of war.

There are always stragglers and early arrivals each year so we encourage quite the opposite in thinking when it comes to your feeder management.

Those stragglers I mentioned that do pass through late will need a food source worse than those that are on time. Some who maintain their feeders up later into the season are rewarded with a rarer species of hummingbird. A friend of mine while living in Columbia, Missouri had an Anna's Hummingbird visiting a feeder in December several years ago. They actually put a heat lamp on it to keep the water from freezing.

Migration is a dangerous endeavor for birds and all wildlife. We help many more birds than we realize by maintaining a clean and healthy source of food, water and shelter for them in our yards.



*Anna's Hummingbirds are native to the western United States and have only been documented in Missouri in Winter
photo by Mary Nemecek*

Our Truckload Sale will be in Late November. Watch For A Post Card!!



When Green Energy Isn't

Photos and article by Mary Nemecek

In the quest to find alternative energy sources we have come to understand that green energy is what we should want. Harvesting the sun of the south and winds of the great plains promises to reduce our reliance on carbon fuels and slow down global warming. But does it? Recently, a wind farm proposed in NW Missouri has brought home the reality that all green energy is not equal and may not be what we desire.

The Mill Creek Wind Farm is proposed to go in adjacent to Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge and 2 other conservation areas that are designated as IBAs- Important Bird Areas. Millions of birds migrate through this area each year and stopover to rest and refuel at the refuge and surrounding conservation areas.

Many species also go out into the surrounding farm fields to feed. Endangered bat species have also been documented in the area.

The American Bird Conservancy, the national leader in bird smart wind energy, has designated this as the only critical IBA in the state of Missouri and not suitable for adjacent wind energy. Yet, since it is wind energy, it has been heralded as the future as recently as Governor Jay Nixon's address on energy in June of this year. The fact that it puts millions of birds at risk of collision with the approximately 100 wind turbines due to be built in the area is often overlooked.

Altamont Pass Wind Farm in California is estimated to have killed approximately 1,245 annually of just 4 species combined- Burrowing Owls, American Kestrels, Golden Eagles and Red-tail Hawks, as recently as 2005. Changes in operation of the wind farm has been estimated to reduce the annual mortality of those 4 species combined to approximately 625 birds annually. A price many consider still far too high.

Another California facility, the worlds largest solar facility located in the Mojave desert, opened in February 2014. It has recently been in the news for incinerating birds as they fly over. According to one recent article on weather.com, it may be responsible for killing up to 28,000 birds annually.

As the green energy debate and the toll it takes on nature has now entered NW Missouri, the reality that not all green energy is as 'green' as it may be if located elsewhere or designed differently. This is bound to be a topic that continues to arise as we explore alternative ways to meet our energy needs.

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backyardbirdcenter.com and/or on:**

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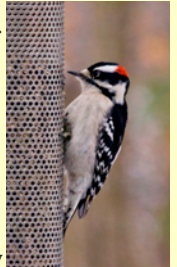


*More than 100 Trumpeter Swans spend part of the year at Squaw Creek NWR
photo by Mary Nemecek*

SORTING OUT OUR WOODPECKERS

We have several species of woodpeckers that call our backyards their home at least part of the year. Lets sort them out.

Downy Woodpecker is easily the most common woodpecker in our area. It also happens to be the smallest. Its small size, black and white plumage and small stubby bill are diagnostic features.



Hairy Woodpecker is the larger cousin to the Downy. Its colors and pattern are pretty much the same but it larger size and much larger bill should help separate them out.

Red-bellied Woodpecker is the most common of our medium-sized woodpeckers. Often called ladder-backs or red-headed, which are names for other woodpeckers in North America. The red on the head is limited to the crown and nape and if you get a good look at the belly, you will see the red.

Red-headed Woodpeckers are not nearly as common as Red-bellieds and their heads are truly red all over. the black and white plumage is striking.

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers are more common here in fall and spring but a few do over-winter. They are the most confusing. Look for the large white vertical slash on their wings.



Northern Flickers are truly striking and quite large. Often seen on the ground feeding on ants, the yellow underwing and tail feathers are beautiful and their white rump patch is hard to miss.

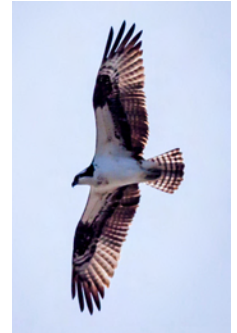
Pileated Woodpeckers are our largest and most elusive woodpecker. A truly unmistakable bird with its large size and impressive crest.



Have Binos, Will Travel!

I know it may get old hearing about it, but this was an amazing summer for birds and wildlife in general. Spring migration wasn't a record setter but we had some good days in the field. The resident birds are the ones who really benefited from the extraordinarily wet and cool summer. An abundant supply of water, insects and flowering plants had to lead to ultra high fledgling survival. Almost to a person, our customers were reporting amazing numbers of young birds at their feeders all summer long. Early fall migration has started already and good numbers of Osprey, gulls and terns are being reported at area lakes. Time to get out and bird!!

Osprey photo by Paul Ruehle



The hikes and programs listed below are available to our store customers
(not organized groups, they can be arranged separately)
space is limited and fill on a first come first serve basis.
PLEASE call the store to register (816) 746-1113

Thursday Morning Bird Hikes

While Fall migration is less dependable than Spring, it is still a great time to get out and see birds. (Most) Thursday mornings during September and October, Ruth, John or I will lead a morning bird hike at one of our favorite spots. Hopefully, one or all will fit in with your busy schedule. Call for meeting spot.

<i>Sept 25th</i>	<i>Weston Bend S.P.</i>	<i>8:00 - 10:30</i>
<i>Oct 2nd</i>	<i>Sorry No Hike</i>	
<i>Oct 9th</i>	<i>Amity Woods Sanc.</i>	<i>8:00 - 10:30</i>
<i>Oct 16st</i>	<i>Cooley Lake Con. Area</i>	<i>8:00 - 10:30</i>
<i>Oct 23th</i>	<i>Wyandotte Co. Lake</i>	<i>8:00 - 9:30</i>
<i>Oct 30st</i>	<i>Smithville Lake</i>	<i>8:00 - 10:30</i>

Fall Feeder Cleaning

Saturday, Oct. 18th 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Weston Bend State Park

Sunday, Sept. 21st 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Fall migration timing is often very tricky. We will take a hike and enjoy the beautiful day. With any luck we will see a good variety of fall warblers, vireos and tanagers. Cuckoos are usually prevalent during this period as well.
Meet at the front gate at 8.

Smithville Lake

Sunday, Nov. 2nd 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Weather depending, this can be a great time at the lake. We will search the lake for loons, grebes and other waterfowl. The surrounding woods and fields can be great for early winter arrivals. This time of year has yielded Jaegers, Kittiwakes, Snow Buntings and other great birds.
Meet at the Litton Center at 1:00. Cost \$3 per person.

Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge

Sunday, Nov. 30th

7:00 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Join us on our annual trip to see the eagles! We should see many species of waterfowl, hawk and of course, eagles.

Last year we saw Sandhill Cranes and over 100 swans. Pack plenty of snacks and your favorite warm beverage. We will take a lunch/restroom break at McDonalds around 11 a.m.

Meet at the store at 7:00 or the refuge at 9:00. Cost \$5 per person.



Alice's Cottage is one of our most popular gift lines. Hot mug mats, wine caddies, gift bags, kitchen towels with beautiful nature designs on them make great gifts.

Through October 15th, take 15% OFF Alice's Cottage.



Species Profile: Fox Squirrel (*Sciurus niger*)

Article by Mark McKellar/photo by Mary Nemecek

So am I crazy for writing my focus article on a squirrel? Given the number of folks who ask about them and even buy food specifically to feed them every day, I would think not. That being said, notice that I am writing about the Fox Squirrel and not the Gray Squirrel.

Fox Squirrels are named for their fox-like bushy tail and are commonly known as red squirrels in this area. This is a perfect example why common names can be so confusing. True Red Squirrels are very small and live typically in high elevations. While the Fox Squirrels in our area are predominantly orange or red in color, they can vary greatly. In eastern North Carolina where I am from, the primary color is gray with black "trim" but we also see pure black ones, white ones and various combinations.

If you are a lifetime resident of the Kansas City

area, you probably remember a time when we had a lot more of the Fox Squirrels and Gray Squirrels were somewhat harder to find. This is because we were historically a prairie region with only scattered



trees which favor Fox Squirrels. As Kansas City grew and more and more trees were planted, the conditions changed to favor the smaller, more aggressive Gray Squirrel. We see it all the time, Gray Squirrels harass the Fox Squirrels until they finally give up and move out.

Like all Tree Squirrels, they will eat a free meal of sunflower, corn and peanuts if you provide it for them. They just are not as big an issue for most of our customers. Quite often I hear the comment: "I don't mind the red squirrels, but those dang Gray Squirrels drive me crazy".

CONSERVATION CORNER: *Rebuilding Nature's Relationship*

In 2009 a Professor of Entomology from the University of Delaware published a book and started a revolution of yards all around the country. In 'Bringing Nature Home', Doug Tallamy stresses the need for biodiversity in the home yard.

The perfectly manicured yard with plants and hedge rows filled with plants from continents afar is missing something- wildlife. The wildlife that developed and thrived on the native plants that once covered the very yard you mow cannot use the imported plants that now fill American yards. By eliminating native plants from the landscape we have created a barren and sterile environment void of a living ecosystem.

On October Monday, October 6 at 7pm Powell Gardens will host Doug Tallamy at the Kauffman Foundation Conference Center for his talk titled, "Rebuilding Nature's Relationship." Tallamy will discuss why restoring biodiversity to our yards will bring animal diversity and suggest a few simple things everyone can do that will add up to a big impact.



Giant Swallowtail or Bird Poop Caterpillar by Mary Nemecek



Red Dragonfly by Paul Ruehle

Many will remember Doug Tallamy from an article in Audubon magazine last fall where he stated it takes 390 to 570 caterpillars a day to feed a clutch of chickadees. That can add up 9,000 caterpillars over 16 days to raise 4 to 6 Chickadees. Which means the more caterpillars your yard supports, the more nesting birds it can support.

Space is limited and pre-registration is required by contacting Powell Gardens at lburtan@powell-gardens.org or 816-697-2600 ext 209 by Oct. 3.



Time To Ask Mark...

Q. How do you think the wet summer has affected bird populations?

A. Judging from the number of baby birds seen at bird feeder stations all summer, I suspect that most species of birds have done really well this summer. I think this is really important for birds and wildlife in general. This is following a run of a few hot dry summers where mortality of young birds had to be fairly high. The birds that we worry most about in wet summers are the ground nesters. Bobwhites, Prairie Chickens, Killdeer, etc. Their young are vulnerable to extended cool wet conditions if they occur at critical times in their development. As for songbirds, the wet conditions have led to lush vegetation growth and bountiful insects.



*Baby Western Kingbird
photo by Mary Nemecek*

Q. Are there fewer hummingbirds than normal this year?

A. It is amazing how this question gets asked each year. Two customers will come in bragging about how many hummingbirds they have and the next will want to know if the population has crashed because they are not seeing any. It is hard to know and the people who are not seeing them are rarely comforted by any answer I give them. As with the question above, I really think that hummingbirds have done quite well this summer but I think that the conditions have led to bountiful wildflowers and landscaping. Hummingbirds just don't need the humminbird feeders as much in years such as this so numbers may appear to be down when they are actually higher than normal.

Q. I found an odd egg in a cardinal nest. I suspect it is a Brown-headed Cowbird. Can I destroy the egg?

A. I understand the frustration and dislike of cowbird's egg dumping technique, but the answer is still "NO". Brown-headed Cowbirds are a federally protected species like all native songbirds. The only three species you can "kill" without fear of prosecution are the House Sparrow, European Starling and the Rock Pigeon. Destroying an egg is the same as killing a bird in the eyes of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.



*Ruby-throated Hummingbird
tangled in a spider web. photo
courtesy of David Dellay*

Q. Do spiderwebs really pose a threat to hummingbirds?

A. This picture should answer that question quite well. Last summer, my nephew in North Carolina found this female Ruby-throated Hummingbird that had gotten tangled up in a web quite severely. Luckily he was able to get her cleaned up and on her way again.

WILD DELIGHT SPECIAL #1

**Take \$5 OFF a 15lb
Wild Delight Cardinal Food®**



*Cardinal Food is a premium mix of
Cardinal favorites: Black Oil Sun-
flower, Safflower, Striped Sunflower,
Peanuts, Dried Cherries & Dried
Raisins - No Fillers
It really appeals to a wide variety of
birds, not just cardinals*

Offers Expire October 31, 2014



WILD DELIGHT SPECIAL #2

**Pails will be back in October.
Normally \$24.99, while supplies**

last: \$19.99

*Quantities are limited so
offer expires when pails are
gone or October 31, 2014*



BACKYARD BIRD CENTER
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Did you know? Woodpeckers store their “very long” tongues on the top of their head. They have a muscle that pulls the tongue up onto the top of their skulls. The Northern Flicker with its extra long tongue actually reaches almost to its beak. I’m sorry I don’t have the photographer’s name who captured this Red-bellied Woodpecker with his tongue out.



NEED A NEW WORK HORSE FOR YOUR FEEDER STATION?



At the center of most backyard feeder stations is a “work horse” or anchor feeder. Typically those are a larger capacity hopper feeder that hold multiple cups of seed and it is well protected from weather. One of the major attractions is that they have large landing/feeding surfaces that accommodate all birds so they get a variety of use by lots of species. Some can be hung but most are post mounted either on 4X4s or our 1” diameter poles. We have adapters for both. This is great time to be thinking about freshening up the feeder station for the fall/winter season. ***Mention you saw this and take 10% off any hopper feeder/ Erva pole & ground anchor setup through the end of October. You build it!***

REMEMBER, WE CAN KEEP SQUIRRELS OUT OF YOUR FEEDERS

Baffles, Squirrel-proof Feeders, Unfavored Seed and Hot Stuff Mixers OH MY!

