



2017

BACKYARD BIRD CENTER News

15 Years!

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www.backyardbirdcenter.com

Avian Frustrations?

While our customers obviously love their birds, this is the time of year that love is tested by certain bird rituals.

In particular, nesting season will often conflict with human pleasures. Males attract mates via early morning singing (and drumming in the case of woodpeckers) which some find disturbing.

Males and females of certain species like cardinals and robins get really aggressive with their own reflections in windows, patio doors and even side mirrors on cars.

And then there are birds who choose to build their nest in just the wrong places, like in a favorite potted plant or a door wreath or on a light just outside the front door.

We have several tips on the website to help you discourage these behaviors but the best advice is patience. It is the nesting season and it doesn't last that long. Start to finish, a songbird nest takes about a month

The Workhorse Group

by Mark McKellar

Most feeder stations have at least one “workhorse” feeder. Quite often that feeder is a hopper feeder. This type of feeder can vary widely in design. From a simple open tray, to a covered tray, to a hopper feeder with some degree of seed storage. Aside from their high capacity, perhaps their greatest attribute is that they do not exclude any birds. Larger birds like Blue Jays, Mourning Doves and Northern Cardinals can feed from them with relative ease. I think birds feel safer at these feeders because of the open viewing of their surroundings. Most hoppers and trays can be hung from a tree limb or shepherd's hook, attached to deck railings, put atop a pole or post, or even used as a ground tray by attaching four legs.

Open Trays

They are as simple as they sound. Open trays are a surface with some degree of drainage that you can spread a good amount of seed onto. The negative is that they provide no protection from the elements and they have to be refilled quite often.

Flythrough Feeders

These are basically a tray with a roof. Depending on the size of the roof, these feeders provide some protection from the elements but hold a limited amount of seed. They have the same flexibility as an Open Tray when it comes to presentation.

Hopper Feeders

When you mention the words “Bird Feeder” to someone, I would think the image of a hopper feeder is what they envision. Hopper feeders are basically a tray feeder with some type of seed storage capability. Hopper feeders, like most feeders, can vary greatly in size and design. They provide an easy-to-fill, self-dispensing reserve of seed so you do not have to refill it as often and the seed is kept reasonably well protected from snow and rain. A good design has a larger feeding surface area for more birds and it should be easy to clean. Removable screen floors are the best for this.

While smaller members of this group can easily be hung from deck arms, branch hooks or shepherd hooks, the larger feeders work great with a 60” ERVA pole with a flat plate adapter. Birds love them and so will you.



MAY FEEDER FEATURE SPECIAL
ALL WORKHORSE FEEDERS 10% OFF



A Year With My Kowa Scope

Article and photos by Mary Nemecek

It was a cold January morning when I stood on the icy banks of the Mississippi River looking for a small, all white gull. An Ivory Gull. By early afternoon we found the gull sitting on the ice. Lined up along the shore of the Mississippi River was a showcase of birders and optics. Any scope or binoculars you've been wondering about was probably there focused on an Ivory Gull.

Not far from me was Greg Neise of the American Birding Association. I asked if I could look through his Kowa scope. Great reviews placed it rivaling top of the line scopes that were far more expensive. My first look was not a disappointment. There was the gull, in brilliant and glowing HD. My decision to upgrade was made right there. Soon after The Backyard Bird Center started carrying Kowa products. I was proud to buy the first Kowa scope that came into stock.

Good binoculars are a must for birding large bodies of water, but if you want to ID ducks, loons, grebes and gulls on the lake it demands the power of a scope. More than that, peering through my scope is an experience that always makes for a good day. Every time I lean forward to look through its brilliant glass my heart skips a little faster. I am transported into a world farther than the naked eye can see and where nature showcases some of its finest species.

My scope has allowed me to soar along with Bald Eagles, show my son owls and hawks and watch them raise their young. Most of all it has allowed me to grow in my birding by observing and learning about species that otherwise would have been out of my reach. Just



Male
Hooded Merganser

this fall my scope rewarded me with a Parasitic Jaeger, which may be only the 5th time this species was confirmed in the state.

It gets better! Kowa has come out with a 1.6x extender which turns my 25x60 Prominar eyepiece into a 40x96 magnifying splendor. Add a phone adaptor and not only can I see better, farther, but I can also document all the magic that lives between my eye and wherever my scope leads me.

When my 6 year old goes birding with me now, he enjoys using his binoculars but he loves snuggling up to my scope and looking at what he otherwise can't see. Every trip out with my scope is a little vacation into nature and all the rejuvenation that goes with marvels of the natural world. I can't wait to see what views it brings me in 2017.



Birding Supplies For All Levels of Birding

Binoculars

You will never regret buying a good set of binoculars. Usable in many hobbies and everyday activities.



Spotting Scopes

You will use a spotting scope a fraction of the time you will your binoculars, but when you need a spotting scope, you can't do without it.



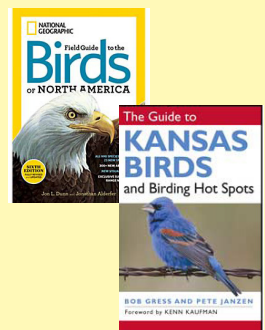
Digiscoping Adapter

Makes using your smart phone as a high powered camera a snap. It is usable on most binoculars and spotting scopes.



Field Guides

Birders are constantly in search of the perfect field guide. In truth I don't think that such a book exists. Each individual has their own preferences, so we carry a variety of guides to try and find the one that fits your taste.



Tilley Hats

Birding is an outdoor hobby. We all need to practice Safe Sun! Tilley Hats are the best hats available. They look great and have lifetime warranties. What's not to like?



Spring Kowa Optics Sale

All Kowa Binocular, Spotting Scopes and Accessories
will be 10 OFF Until June 21st!





Have Binos, Will Travel!

Birding this winter season was truly sub-par. The mild conditions kept many birds from “invading” from the north. Those who like getting out at the start of the new year to get a jump on their annual year birding list had some slow days. Things picked up the closer we got to spring and a few wanderers started to show up. One pleasant surprise has been the “wetland” area created in Platte Landing Park. While it is highly dependant on heavy periods of rain to create conditions favorable for waterfowl and shorebirds, we have found many good birds there in late March and early April including a White-faced Ibis like the one pictured here.



*White-faced Ibis
by Paul Ruehle*

The hikes and programs listed below are available to our store customers
(organized groups, can be arranged separately)
and fill on a first come first served basis.

PLEASE call the store for more information and to register (816) 746-1113

Thursday Morning Bird Hikes

Every spring we suggest that you to get out as much as possible during the migration period. This spring we are going to try to help you out with that charge. Every Thursday morning during April and May, Ruth 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.

May 4 th	Martha Lafite N.S.	8:00 - 10:30
May 11 th	Weston Bend S. P.	8:00 - 11:30
May 18 th	Amity Woods N.P.	8:00 - 9:30
May 25 th	Burr Oak Woods N.C.	8:00 - 10:30

In Store Classes

Identifying Warblers

Wednesday, May 10th
7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Few families of birds capture the attention of bird enthusiast like the warblers. While we do have several species that nest in the Kansas City area, the real intrigue is the migration period of late April through mid to late May when two dozen species migrate through our area on the way to their nesting grounds much farther north. We will explore this great group of birds and learn some tips and tricks on when and where to look for them.



*Male Cape May
Warbler by Brian
Voorhees*

Birding South Florida

Wednesday, May 24th 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

A group of us birded South Florida and had a great time. Join us for a trip down memory lane and learn the best haunts to visit for South Florida specialty birds when you find yourself in the sunshine state.

Weekend Bird Hikes

Mother's Day at Weston Bend

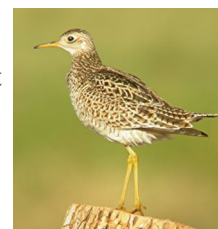
Sunday, May 14th 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Easily one of our most popular hikes each year. The time is perfect to catch migration near its peak and the location is as good as it gets. The trails at Weston are paved but hilly. If you've birded with us before, you know that the birding pace we set is quite slow. Meet at the front gate at 7.

Dunn Ranch Birding

Sunday, June 4th 5:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Be ready to step back in time as we explore the largest remaining unplowed, deep soil, tallgrass prairie in Missouri. It may test your ability to get up early but the trip is well worth it. We should see bison, Bobolinks, both species of meadowlarks, Upland Sandpipers and much, much more. Pack a lunch and water bottle or two. We will not walk very much but the sun can be pretty intense. Meet at the Store at 5:30 a.m.



*Upland Sandpiper by
Rick Jordahl*

Always check for more programs on our website:
www.backyardbirdcenter.com/calendar

Mark Your Calendars

4th Annual Native Plant Sale Store Parking Lot
Saturday April 29th 9 am - 2 pm

Hoping to build on last year's success!!

Wings Over Weston Weston Bend State Park
Saturday May 13th 9 am - 4 pm

We will have a booth at this great event that is dedicated entirely to migrating birds and monarchs.



SPECIES PROFILE: *Eastern Phoebe* (*Sayornis phoebe*)

Story by Ruth Simmons

One of the earlier birds to arrive from the south is the Eastern Phoebe. They are small, dark birds, about the size of a Tufted Titmouse. Their back, wings, and tail are medium gray with a light belly and throat with a sooty chest. The Phoebe's head and face are darker than its body. Males and females are identical, younger birds may have a yellow tint to their belly. When an Eastern Phoebe is perched, it will pump its tail up and down. Like all members of the Flycatcher family, they prey on flying insects. They fly out from a perch to catch the insect and frequently return to their starting place. They occasionally eat small fish or frogs. Their call is a not so melodious, buzzy, abrupt Fee Bee.

Nests are often built on bridge support beams, on window ledges, rocky cliffs and outcroppings. The nests are made of mud and plant fibers usually lined with grass, feathers, or fur. The female does all the nest building, taking from three days to two weeks to complete the project. She usually lays four to five eggs that hatch in about 16 days. The young are ready to leave the nest in another 16 days. Joyce has Eastern Phoebes that nest on the back of her farm house. They build under her deck on a small ledge and raise two broods each summer. Mom or one of her daughters has done this every year for the past ten years!



Eastern Phoebe
photo courtesy of Mary Nemecek



**MAY GOLFINCH SPECIAL:
ALL ASPECT FINCH FEEDERS 10% OFF**



CONSERVATION CORNER: *Great Missouri Birding Trail*

by Mark McKellar

The number of people who consider themselves birdwatchers is truly staggering. People from all walks of life enjoy getting out and searching for birds. The primary goal of most birders is to see as many different species of birds as they possibly can. For those who live in Missouri, that means you can find over 200 different kinds each year without leaving your state. If you are really dedicated and want to travel a lot, that number could be closer to 300.

Where and when do I go to see all of these birds? While there are many resources available to a birder who wants to get out and actively search for birds, a new website has been growing in popularity. The site is www.greatmissouribirdingtrail.com and it is filled with information to educate birders about locations that are representative of the many habitats found in our state and the different species of birds that can be found within them.

The major map divides the state into regions. For our area, that is the Kansas City Metro Birding Trail which includes some of our favorite sites like The Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary in Liberty and the Burr Oak Conservation Nature Center in Blue Springs. The areas north and south of Kansas City are classified as the Greater Kansas City Birding Trail and it includes areas from Loess Bluffs NWR (formerly Squaw Creek) and Dunn Ranch Preserve all the way south to the Four Rivers Conservation Area.

By using this site, you can easily plan several day trips throughout the year that should enable you to compile an impressive list of birds. Get out and enjoy nature!



June 1st - 15th Bring a Friend to the Store, And Save!

Joyce suggested that we come up with a way to reward our customers who bring in new people to the store. Here is the plan: For each friend you bring to the store who is not on our customer list, you and your friend receive a \$3 OFF Coupon to use then or on a future visit. If they join our email/newletter club, you both receive a prize.



Time To Ask Mark...

Q. I feed your Black Tie finch mix but I don't think anything likes the Nyjer seed. It looks like it is all on the ground under my feeders.

A. We get this question a lot and I can't believe I haven't answered it here before. As tiny as a Nyjer seed is, half of it is a hull. Birds have to crack it open and the hulls fall to the ground. While sunflower seeds are easy to see a bird cracking it open, Nyjer is so small it is hard to imagine it having a hull. While studies do show that most birds prefer the fine sunflower chips over the Nyjer, they are still eating it.

Q. I have heard a lot about the trouble our pollinators are experiencing, how can I help?

A. Good question. You are so correct about the pollinators. While Monarchs are getting the bulk of the attention, there are many others that are suffering as well. First and foremost do not use insecticide in your yard. You can by native plants for your landscaping and make sure the nursery does not spray them with any pesticides. Just ask, they have to tell you. Finally, you can place an insect roosting structure in your flower bed.



*Insect Hotel by
Best for Birds*

Q. Where have your newsletters been lately?

A. As you may have noticed, I have cut back on the number of "printed" newsletters I do every year. Due to the cost of printing and mailing, my plan is to produce two a year. One in the spring and the other in the fall.

This certainly doesn't mean that I am going to cut back on the information flow. I write a monthly e-mail (which I encourage all to sign up for), keep our facebook page as current as possible and we have made wonderful upgrades to the website. It now contains nearly every article I have written in the past 15 years.

Did you sign up for the email but aren't receiving them? If you signed up at the store, it is possible we couldn't read your handwriting very well and may have made an entry error. You can go to www.backyard-birdcenter.com/signup and type in your information directly which should solve that. If you signed up via the website, it may be getting caught up in your spam filter. I send the monthly emails out around the 5th – 8th of every month. If it is in your spam, right click on my e-mail and tell it to "never block sender" and you should get it each month.

The monthly emails are by far the best way to keep up with the most current happenings around the store; programs, sales and specials and an e-mail only coupon in each issue. I promise, I do not share my e-mail list with anyone.

THE GIFT GIVING SEASON

Do you need a few ideas?



- 1) Great looking, Made in the USA garden signs by Day Dream. They come in either a garden stake or hanging version.
- 2) The very popular "Drunkin Dragonflies" garden balancers (that sell out each summer) are back in stock. The dragonflies have been joined by "Tipsy Toads" and "BrewBirds", all of which are made from old silverware. Very cool gifts.
- 3) We have a great variety of spring and summer nature puzzles and garden flags.
- 4) The always popular Stoneage animals: owls, turtles and hedgehogs.

No Waste, No Mess Blends
from Wild Delight

Because everyone hates a mess growing up under your bird feeders, we are having a special on our best selling no waste/no germination seed blends in May

During the month
of May, Deck, Porch & Patio
and Zero Waste Fruit Blend
will be:
\$3 OFF a 20lb Bag or
\$1 OFF a 5lb Bag.



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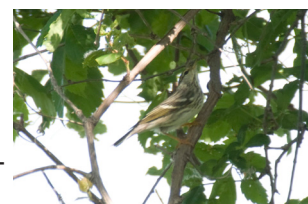
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DID YOU KNOW? by Rick Jordahl

According to the National Audubon Society, some birds like the tiny Blackpoll Warbler, can double their body weight before migration. Their longest stretch of flight can be some 2,300 miles non-stop for 86 hours. We often see them on our Mother's Day Migration Hike (see page 3) each year.



*Female Blackpoll Warbler
by Mary Nemecek*

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE ORIOLE FEEDER?



*Orchard and Baltimore
Orioles by Brian Voorhees*

Oriole season is here and lots of birds are jumping on the jelly and orange feeding spring diet. I know the pictures here in black and white print do not do these beautiful birds justice so visit our website www.backyardbirdcenter.com and explore the many colorful photos our great customers have submitted over the years of the many visitors they have documented at their "oriole feeders".



*Brown Thrasher
by Pat White*



*Beautiful or plain, birds don't
care, they just need clean water.*

KEEP THE WATER SUPPLY CLEAN AND FRESH

A dependable source of clean fresh water is critical to all animals. Birds are no exception. We carry birdbaths for all seasons.

- > If you are going to water your plants consider doing with a mister. The fine spray waters the plants below and the birds will fly through the mist then sit and preen their feathers for you to see and enjoy.
- > When you unplug your de-icer, consider leaving the extension cord there and plug in a bubbler or layered waterfall in your bath. The moving water is like a magnet for birds, especially migrants that do not know the area as well as your resident birds.