



ALBERTA



The recent rain and snow has definitely helped the ponds and sloughs around Calgary, so a day of birding was a go! Decided to head east from Calgary towards Strathmore and then north in the hope of seeing lots of our migrating birds. We were not disappointed. Lots of waterfowl in just about every pond with a definite emphasis on Northern shovellers. Surprise was the Ruddy ducks—the males already fighting over the females, but we also saw lots of Red heads, Pintails, Cinammon, Blue and Green Teals, Scaups, Canvas backs, Widgeons, Golden eyes, Buffleheads, Hooded merganser and a single Eared grebe. And that was just the waterfowl. The shorebirds included Avocets, Black-necked stilts, Dowitchers, Yellowlegs (greater and lesser), Marbled godwit.

While it was exciting to see so many waterfowl and shorebirds, the songbirds had also returned including Western meadowlarks (oh how I have missed their joyous songs), Savannah sparrows, Wilson’s snipes and of course Great blue Herons and American white pelicans. But here is the sighting of the day—while stopped by the side of the road near a lake searching for Great blue herons and the rookery, we spotted a flock of Yellow rumped warblers foraging in a bush. Here in Alberta we are so fortunate to have many Warblers some who are just passing through on their way to their breeding grounds further north and those who stay, breed and raise their young right here.

It was an absolutely glorious day of birding as we said goodbye to the Alberta winter. We are so looking forward to sharing our future birding adventures with you all and hope you all get out and enjoy the true gifts of Spring/Summer in Alberta.

Hooded merganser male & female



Yellow-rumped warbler



American white pelican



Eared grebe



Wilson's snipe



Western Meadowlark

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH

THE LATE BREEDER

The American goldfinch breeds late in the year, from July to September, a fact that has puzzled many scientists. Some have suggested that the timing of breeding is linked to the bird's unusual habit of molting or shedding feathers. The American goldfinch is the only cardueline (relates to the passerine subfamily) finch to acquire its breeding plumage by molt in most finches, the feathers gradually worn down through use, resulting in a changed appearance by the time the breeding season arrives. Scientists suggest that the prolonged molt, which is unusual in a bird of the temperate zone, may be the only way a bird on a protein-poor seed diet can fulfill the energy demands of breeding. Thus, while the greater abundance of seeds in late summer compared to May or June, may be important in ensuring larger supplies of food for the young, completion of molt rather than food availability may determine the timing of the American goldfinch's breeding.

Two or three pairs group their territories together in a loose colony. This may aid in the sharing of information about food and in defense against predators. Where food and water are plentiful there are more nests.

Before a storm the birds will feed in a frenzied manner at feeders and show a significant gain in weight before and during the storm. This behaviour may increase the American goldfinch's chance of survival under adverse conditions.

Although some finches use their feet sparingly or not at all to help in feeding, the American goldfinch uses its feet extensively. For example: it will fly to a cluster of seed capsules at the top of an evening primrose and cling to the stalks in such a way that it can delicately extract the seeds. In the spring the American goldfinch on the catkins hanging from birches and alders by pulling them up with its beak and using the toes to clamp them down on the branch. Such dexterity with the foot and bill, combined with low body weight, enables the American goldfinch to take advantage of food sources relatively inaccessible to some potential competitors. The birds will also eat insects, including plant lice and caterpillars, and will root out larvae from galls and fruits.

Initially the adults remove fecal sacs or bodily waste, deposited by the young, but later the young defecate over the rim of the nest, leaving a coating on the outer layer. The young birds grow rapidly, by the time they fledge, or leave the nest, 11 to 15 days after hatching, they are covered with the beginning of the olive-yellow juvenile plumage.

Shortly before leaving the nest they develop a fledging call that sounds like *chick-kee* or *chick-wee*. The first bird clambers out of the nest to a nearby branch and tentatively tests its wings on short flight. The others soon follow. The female may begin construction of a new nest for a second brood. The male is responsible for feeding the young birds and finds his charges by listening for the fledging call. Within a month's time, the young are totally independent and no longer give the call.

What is a gall in plants?

A gall is an abnormal development or outgrowth of plant tissue resulting from an irritation caused by bacteria, fungi or insects. Bacteria may cause tumors on the stems and crowns of such plants as blackberry or roses.



Eriophyid mites



guest speaker



The American kestrel: common to scarce

Monday, June 10, 2024

5:30pm to 7:00pm

Tickets \$25.00 + GST can be purchased through our website:

www.wildbirdstore.ca

This presentation by Dr. David Bird will provide the latest figures on population trends, assess the various hypotheses, and conclude with a discussion of what can be done and what is being done to stem the decline.

As an Emeritus Professor of Wildlife Biology of McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, Dr. Bird has published close to 200 peer-reviewed scientific papers and supervised 50 graduate students on a wide range of wildlife themes, mostly on birds of prey and in more recent years, the application of UAV's (drones) to wildlife research and conservation.

Until his retirement to Vancouver Island in 2013, he taught several university—level courses, including ornithology, wildlife conservation, animal behavior, and scientific/public communication. He has written and/or edited more than a dozen books, the most recent ones being the third edition of *Birds of Canada*, the second edition of *Pocket Birds of Canada*, and *The Canada Jay—A National Bird for Canada?*

Besides his innumerable public lectures and radio, television and newspaper appearances, Dr. Bird is a regular columnist/contributor on birds for two magazines, *Canadian Wildlife* and *BWD* (formerly know as *Bird Watcher's Digest*). He is currently heading a national team to establish the Canada Jay as Canada's national bird.

Tickets have been selling rapidly; don't be disappointed! Get your tickets while there is still a limited number available.

Great Horned Owl

Found almost throughout North America and much of South America is this big owl. Aggressive and powerful in its hunting (sometimes known by nicknames such as “tiger owl”), it takes prey as varied as rabbits, hawks, snakes, and even skunks, and will even attack a porcupine, often with fatal results for both prey and predator. Great horned owls begin nesting very early in the north, and their deep hoots may be heard rolling across the forest on mid-winter nights.

Great horned owls are solitary except during nesting and do not migrate. They maintain territories with an average home range of approximately 1.5 square miles. Great horned owls communicate by hooting which is primarily used to establish territory limits. The owls will respond to intruders and threats with bill-clapping, hisses, screams and guttural noises. If the threat escalates they will spread their wings and strike with their feet. Great horned owls are primarily nocturnal, hunting at night but they have been known to hunt during the day especially in the winter months.

For a story and photos of a local Great horned owl family in Calgary, check this out: *Postmedia visual journalist Brent Calver has been following the progress of four fledgling Great horned owls at a Calgary park. These images were taken at a respectful distance to avoid disturbing the birds. Their exact location isn't being disclosed to allow the owl chicks to develop with minimal disruption from curious humans.*

<https://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/great-horned-owl-chicks-learn-to-fly>



We offer a discount if you return your seed bags (sorry—not the Mother Nature bags which we cannot re-use), suet ball containers, if you bring your own container to fill or use a bag from our re-cycle bin. This discount is in addition to any other discount offered.

Saturday Morning Bird Walks With

Jim St. Laurent

Jim will be taking the month of July off—please watch for the July 2024 newsletter for future Saturday morning bird walks with Jim.



Jim's years of guiding bird walks has been instrumental in teaching "birders" how to get the most out of their birding excursions. Children 12 and older are most welcome as long as accompanied by an adult and have purchased a ticket through our website: www.wildbirdstore.ca

All participants on any bird walk must have purchased a ticket through our website: www.wildbirdstore.ca and present the ticket to Jim prior to the bird walk.

The weather plays a big part in bird walks and Jim reminds participants to dress anticipating weather changes and to carry water to keep hydrated.

Saturday, June 8, 2024 Weed Lake area (near Langdon)

This will be a day trip—bring your lunch

(9:00am meet in the rear parking lot of The Wild Bird Store and we will carpool as there isn't much parking at Weed Lake)

Ticket price: \$6.00 + GST

Saturday, June 22, 2024 Lafarge Meadows—Bow Bottom Trail

(9:00am meet at South Boat Launch parking lot)

Ticket price: \$6.00 + GST

Tickets for any of Jim St. Laurent's Saturday morning bird walks can be purchased on the Wild Bird Store website: www.wildbirdstore.ca

"If you want to hear the sound of birds, don't buy a cage, plant a tree"



QUESTION: When I watch videos of thousands of penguins huddled together in a flock, I cannot help wondering whether penguins are able to identify one another as individuals. Can they do so?

RESPONSE: When we see a bunch of penguins at an aquarium or zoo or even in a film, they generally look a lot alike to us. But we might need to take a closer look, according to some recent research by a team of psychologists and animal behaviourists from two universities and a marine park. They describe a fairly simple experiment in the prestigious scientific journal, *Animal Behaviour*, wherein they have concluded that African penguins, at least, use the unique assortment of

black dots that adorn their chests as a means of telling one another apart. African penguins live on the shores of southern Africa and are apparently very social with one another, making them ideal specimens to study. A marine park in Italy has a captive population of the birds, and the workers there claim to recognize individual birds by those spot patterns on the birds' chests. That team of scientists devised a simple experiment to determine whether the penguins used the same technique to identify one another. They built a small enclosure with plywood walls, just tall enough to prevent a penguin from seeing over. They installed cameras on either end of the enclosure along with life-size pictures of two penguins pinned up on one far wall. They then enticed a single penguin to enter the compound with one of the two pictures featuring their own mate and another of a stranger. They next repeated the exercise putting up two pictures of its mate but one with the chest dots removed. Finally, they put up two pictures, one of its mate and the other of a stranger but both with their dots removed. In the first two cases, the test penguin stared significantly more at the pictures of birds bearing its mate's chest pattern but could not decide anything when the chest dots were removed from both pictures. However, I cannot wonder what features are used by penguin species without any dot patterns on their chests.



DAVID M. BIRD, Ph.D Emeritus Professor of Wildlife Biology McGill University david.bird@mcgill.ca www.askprofessorbird.com		CANADA JAY MÉSANGEAI DU CANADA FRIENDLY, SMART, LOYAL AND TOUGH. TRULY THE MOST CANADIAN BIRD! AMICAL, INTELLIGENT, FIDÈLE ET ROBUSTE. UN OISEAU VRAIMENT CANADIEN! WWW.CANADAJAY.ORG
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ABOUT DR. DAVID



David M. Bird is Emeritus Professor of Wildlife Biology and the former Director of the Avian Science and Conservation Centre at McGill University. As a past-president of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists, a former board member with Birds Canada, a Fellow of both the American Ornithological Society and the International Ornithological Union, he has received several awards for his conservation and public education efforts. Dr. Bird is a regular columnist on birds for *Bird Watcher's Digest* and *Canadian Wildlife* magazines and is the author of several books and over 200 peer-reviewed scientific publications. He is the consultant editor for multiple editions of DK Canada's *Birds of Canada*, *Birds of Eastern Canada*, *Birds of Western Canada*, and *Pocket Birds of Canada*. To know more about him, visit www.askprofessorbird.com or email david.bird@mcgill.ca.



ON LOCATION

Wildwood Community Centre (4411 Spruce Drive SW)

Every Tuesday 3:00pm to 6:00pm

Crowfoot Arena (corner of John Laurie & Nosehill Drive NW)

Every Wednesday 2:00pm to 5:30pm

The Mobile Seed Truck is a mini version of The Wild Bird Store, and as such, we are limited to what we can carry. It is therefore, highly recommended that you place an order the day before the truck is to be at your desired location. This will ensure that when you come to the Mobile Seed Truck you get the items you need. You can place orders by emailing orders@wildbirdstore.ca or texting to

(403) 701-4571

DONATIONS

Located at The Wild Bird Store (near the seed bins). We collect your cash as well as “wishlist” donations and arrange to deliver them to local wildlife organizations including Calgary Wildlife Rehabilitation, Alberta Institute of Conservation and Ellis Nature Centre.

We ask for your support quarterly for each of these organizations.

This quarter for the months of June, July and August 2024 your donations will go to:



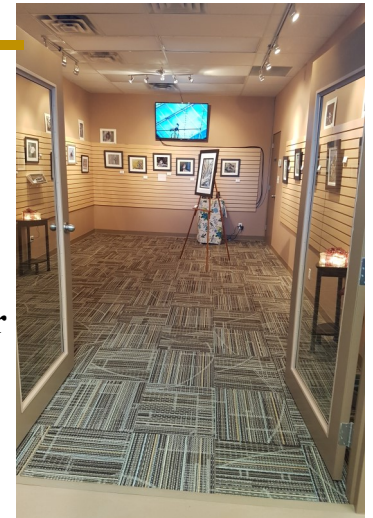
Thank you for your support

aiwc.ca (Alberta Institute of Wildlife Conservation)



Space
For
Rent

The Wild Bird Store offers the “Book Nook” as a gathering place for your next meeting. The room is for rent for \$50.00 +GST fee which includes the set-up of the chairs, video equipment, coffee, tea and water are available.



Please contact info@wildbirdstore.ca for more information
or to reserve your spot

SENIOR'S DAY

Is EVERY Tuesday.

If you are over 60 you will receive
10% off your order



PLEASE NOTE: delivery
charge within Calgary City
limits is \$10.00

OPTIONS FOR SHOPPING AT THE WILD BIRD STORE

In Store or on the Seed Truck



Shop in Store



Curbside Pick up

Phone your order in and pay for it at least 30 minutes prior to arriving at The Wild Bird Store for pick up. Park in the curbside parking stall, call the store (403) 640-2632, pop your trunk or hatch and leave the rest to us.

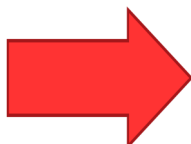


Home Delivery

Please phone the store at (403)640-2632 any day prior to 12:00noon on the Wednesday before your delivery with your order, place and pay for your delivery. Please phone with your order as early as possible to avoid disappointment. If you have any specials instructions, please do not forget to inform us when you place your order.

PLEASE NOTE: For the summer months The Wild Bird Store will be doing deliveries EVERY second week—for the month of June that will be Thursday June 13th and Thursday June 27th.

PLEASE NOTE: delivery charge within Calgary City limits is \$10.00



We offer a discount if you return your seed bags (sorry—not the Mother Nature bags which we cannot re-use), suet ball containers, if you bring your own container to fill or use a bag from our re-cycle bin. This discount is in addition to any other discount offered.



Write a Google review on your experience at The Wild Bird Store, and as a thank-you, we will give you 100 customer loyalty points (\$5.00 value). To get a promo code, kindly email info@wildbirdstore.ca
(Please one Google review per customer)



Earn 200 customer loyalty points (\$10.00 value) by referring a friend, acquaintance or fellow birder. Please visit the store to get a promo code



No need for a card just give your phone number. You earn \$1.00 for every \$20.00 spent (sorry, excludes “sales” items, books, optics and consignment items) and can be used in-store and on Mobile Seed Truck. As a loyalty member, our monthly promotional and in-store “specials” are automatically given at the cash register.



Combining our Seniors 10% discount with the loyalty program (sorry—excludes “sales” items, books, optics and consignment items.)



Discount for membership 10% discount for members of Fish Creek Park, AIWC, Priddis Golf Club, Nature Calgary, Sandy Cross Conservation, Springbank Garden Club and Calgary Horticultural Society. Must present valid membership card at time of purchase.



Discount for Military Members & Veterans 10% discount on purchases in-store or on Mobile Seed Truck (sorry—excludes “sales” items, books, optics and consignment items)





5901 3rd Street S.E.,
Calgary, AB T2H 1K3

Monday through Saturday 10:00am to 5:00pm

CLOSED Sundays and ALL Statutory holidays for Faith, Family & Friends

Phone: (403)640-2632

Marsh wren nest



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when you forget to bring your camera



SENIOR'S DAY

Is EVERY Tuesday.

If you are over 60 you will receive
10% off your order

The Wild Bird Store
Is the warranty & repair depot for:
Squirrel Buster® Bird Feeders
Aspects® Feeders
Droll Yankee® Bird Feeders



And the warranty depot
for:

Leupold Binoculars & Spotting
Scopes

Sorry! Excludes optics, books,
cards & consignment items

HAPPY BIRDING!