



PINE SISKIN

You might think they are just sparrows at your feeder, but you could be wrong. Here are two dead giveaways that you have Pine siskins. If you can approach the feeder and they don't fly away—sure sign they are indeed Pine siskins. House sparrows think of us humans as the enemy and upon seeing us immediately head for cover. Now that you are close to them you will notice some distinguishing things. First notice the delicate stripes on their breasts—like an artist took a paintbrush and painted them on. Second, notice how tiny they are compared to sparrows and how tiny the beak is—this is because the Pine siskin is part of the finch family, Now for the final clue—one some people never see—the Pine siskin has a yellow wing patch—quite brilliant during the breeding season—not so obvious the rest of the year. So confirmed sightings of Pine siskins at your feeder. You are so fortunate—they are one of my most favourite birds!



FUN FACTS

- Pine siskins become considerably plumper through accumulation of fat with the onset of winter. Each bird can pack enough seeds into its expandable esophagus to support itself through five hours of rest at minus 15 degrees C temperatures
- Pine siskins have difficulty opening the large seeds of striped sunflower but enjoy black oil sunflower seed, chips and nyjer
- A Pine siskin may take up a position near an Evening grosbeak that is eating larger seeds like striped sunflower to pick up dropped particles and will even defend the position against other siskins
- Pine siskins may nest in loose colonies and will tolerate the occasional visit to one another's nests after their young are hatched
- The Pine siskin is the most common of the "winter finches" to be found at your feeders...but not every year. An "irruption" migration usually takes place every two or three years that can bring large numbers of siskins to your backyard
- The Pine siskin irruption migrations mainly occur when the seed crop has failed in the boreal forests. In some years large flocks may appear as far south as Florida
- Some "irruptive" siskins may stay near a dependable food source and nest far south of the normal breeding range
- The primary natural food of Pine siskins are the seeds of hemlocks, alders, birches and cedars
- Pine siskins, like most northern finches, are fond of salt. They seed out natural salt licks and in the winter they can be found along highways eating the salt used to melt ice and snow
- Siskins, crossbills and other finches have been observed eating flaking mortar as a source of sodium and calcium.



Many of our most familiar birds are named after people or places, sometimes after their sound or appearance, or perhaps after their quirky little habits. But sometimes a little more detective work is required to find the deeper meanings and stories behind the names.

THE PENGUIN was originally a name for the Great Auk (*Pinguinus impennis*), it's the genus name, a flightless diving seabird native to the north Atlantic with a black back, flipper-like wings, and a white belly.

When Europeans started exploring the southern hemisphere, they used the same name for the unrelated black and white, flightless, diving birds that lived there.

Meanwhile, the Great Auk, the original bearer of the name penguin, was hunted to extinction in the 18th century and largely forgotten.

Great auk



King penguin

SO WHERE DOES THE SAYING “BUSY AS A BEE” COME FROM?

The next time you open a jar of honey, consider the grueling days of our honeybees, and how much work has gone into making the delicious Honey. In the average worker bee's brief lifetime of four to five weeks, she will make just one-twelfth of a teaspoon of honey. It takes about 60,000 bees, collectively travelling up to 88,000 kilometers and visiting more than 2 million flowers, to gather enough nectar to make just 0.5 kilograms (one pound) of honey. Very busy bees indeed!



We offer a discount if you bring your own container or bag to refill (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 recycle bin. This discount is in addition to any other discount offered.

If you missed the guest speaker, Dr. David Bird speaking about “American kestrel—common or scarce” you missed a great presentation and some very interesting thoughts on why the American kestrel is becoming more scarce. So the following information supports and offers some interesting opinions: and it is not all dismal. So the Wild Bird Store Birding News will present this editorial over the next four months. Below is part 1:

Students and faculty walking near University Hospital in London, Ontario in December 2023 were treated to an unusual sight—five out-of-season baby geese and their parents. Apparently confused by unseasonably warm weather, the adult geese had nested and bred months before the onset of spring.

It was a cute story, but with a bittersweet end. Three of the goslings quickly disappeared, apparently eaten by predators. The other two were taken into care by an animal sanctuary when it seemed likely they wouldn’t survive the winter. The story of the winter goslings is just one small example of the effects climate change is having on birds around the world. Even as they suffer from habitat destruction, pollution and other threats, they face increasing danger from changes caused by the climate crisis. At Western University researchers are tackling questions vital to the survival of birds, Their work ranges from the basics of bird physiology to creating global radio networks to track birds as they migrate around the world. “You have to understand the fundamental biology, the physiology, the mechanisms. And then you can figure out when the environment changes, why the bird responds the way it does,” says Christopher Guglielmo, biology professor at Western and director of Western’s Centre for Animals on the Move. “We’re interested in the fundamentals. But we’re doing this because we care about birds,” he says.

WINGED WONDERS

Birds are some of the most successful animals on Earth. They evolved from small, meat eating dinosaurs that existed more than 150 million years ago, gradually sprouting feathers, growing wings from forelegs, and developing a number of other adaptations that helped them to thrive as flying animals. Today there are 10,000 species of birds, ranging from the tiny two gram Bee hummingbird to the 140 kilogram Ostrich.

Birds have exquisitely tuned physiologies—from feathers to hollow bones, from powerful hearts to extra efficient lungs—that they need to let them perform the implausible trick of heavier than air flight. Even today’s flightless birds are descended from birds that once flew.

Birds range from seed eating vegetarians to meat-eating predators; from forest dwellers who live in the same small range their entire lives to birds that fly between continents. The Arctic tern, for instance, travels 90,000 kilometres every year as it chases summer from the Antarctic to the Arctic and back. The tiny Black-capped chickadee, on the other hand, stays put through the Alaskan winter, putting on fat every day and burning it to stay alive during the frigid 18-hour night.

But despite their success, today one in eight bird species is threatened with extinction, and most others are seeing their populations decline, according to the international conservation organization BirdLife . In North America alone, the total number of individual birds has declined by almost three billion since 1970—a 30 per cent drop!



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WINGS OF CHANGE

Amidst these alarming statistics, Western stands as a beacon of hope and innovation in bird research, thanks in part to the Advanced Facility for Avian Research (AFAR). Opened in 2009, the facility houses labs, environmental chambers where light and temperature can be controlled, and sophisticated equipment such as a wind tunnel that researchers use to study birds in flight.

The facility helps attract researchers and students to Western, and also helps keep them there. “It’s like once you have a facility like this, where else are you going to go?” Guiglielmo asks.

For instance, the wind tunnel is one of few in the world that lets researchers control not only wind speed, but temperature, humidity and air pressure. It is a massive piece of machinery that takes up a good chunk of the building, can generate winds up to 65 kilometres per hour and simulate air pressure of up to seven kilometres altitude.

The working section is a small chamber about two metres long and a metre tall. Once the wind gets going, researchers release the birds, who will happily fly in place against the wind for hours at a time, like a swimmer in a stationary pool.

The chamber is equipped with windows, cameras and measurement devices that allow researchers to study the mechanics of bird flight.

The wind tunnel also lets them study the effects of flight on the bird’s body, and the impact of different foods and environmental conditions.

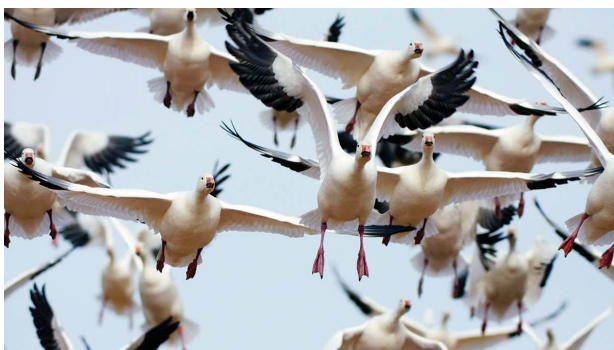
For instance, Guiglielmo wondered what would happen to birds on long migrations as temperatures rise and the air becomes drier. “one of the big thing birds face if they’re flying overnight for 12 hours is, unlike a marathon runner, they don’t stop to drink. So they generate all of their water internally from their metabolism.”

They do that using the water that is produced as they burn fat, organs and muscle for energy. Even under normal conditions, birds’ internal organs will shrink dramatically as they are burned for energy and water; the heart can shrink by 25 per cent, livers and intestines by half. Even flight muscles get smaller.

When the humidity goes down, the researchers found the birds burn even more organs and muscles than they would otherwise. It turns out that burning these non-fat body components generates five times more water than burning fat does.

It’s a useful adaptation, and better than dying of thirst. But as the world becomes hotter and drier, it could mean migrating birds show up at their destination even weaker and more exhausted than they normally would, making them less likely to survive and reproduce.

Watch for part 2 in the August edition of
The Wild Bird Store Birding News



Saturday Morning Bird Walks With

Jim St. Laurent

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



Below are a couple of suggestions as to where to go to see birds on your own while Jim is away—

CARBURN PARK is always a great destination for songbirds as well as waterfowl and shorebirds. But any of the destinations within Fish Creek Park are not only a wonderful way to spend the day, but sure to include lots of bird sightings.

INGLEWOOD BIRD SANCTUARY enjoy not only the history and the trails, but you just never know what birds you will see and be sure to enjoy the Nature Center

FRANK LAKE American white pelicans, Double-breasted cormorants, Grebes—the list goes on and on. Enjoy being up close viewing waterfowl and shorebirds from the boardwalk and blind. You are sure to add a few birds to your life list!

ELLIS BIRD FARM outside of Lacombe. Purple martins, Bluebirds, House wrens, American goldfinch and Hummingbirds just to mention a few. Enjoy the Nature Center and stop by the Tea House (best to make reservations for lunch).

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

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.



QUESTION: I am seeing a lot more Bluebirds at my feeders and I am wondering whether climate change has anything to do with it?

RESPONSE: Bluebirds are one of the most prized species among bird lovers, partly thanks to their gorgeous blue plumages but also to the bird's frequent appearances in Walt Disney animated cartoon films. As to why they are appearing more frequently at your feeders this winter and whether it is a result of climate change is not easy to respond to if only because the impact of climate change on birds in general is very complex to understand. I can tell you that Eastern bluebirds populations were almost down for the count prior to the sixties, thanks to myriad

reasons including the use of DDT insecticides, the loss of wooden fences for nesting holes, severe competition from introduced House sparrows and starlings, and growing number of free-ranging cats. But the birds have rebounded big time thanks to the banning of harmful pesticides, and probably most significant, the creation of humongous trails of bluebird houses specially designed to keep harmful predators and competitors at bay. According to the North American Breeding Bird Survey, Eastern bluebird populations increased between 1966 and 2019 and today there are an estimated 23 million of them in North America. It is now considered a species of low conservation concern. Now for the tricky part—what impact is climate warming have on these birds? A recent study in Arkansas concluded that climate change may benefit adult bluebird survival due to the overall warmer weather, but raised concerns that climatic variability negatively affects their reproductive abilities. In short, hot temperatures are not good for raising baby birds, especially those using nesting holes. There is another concern, one that was discovered in Mountain bluebirds in Alberta. Due to warming trends and decreasing snow cover, that species is now arriving 19 days earlier than historically recorded. This is not a good thing though, mainly because the birds can get trapped in a false spring when sudden April snowstorms can prevent access to insect populations and even kill the birds outright. We can help these bird though.

While bluebirds are mostly insectivorous and not that interested in eating seed in our feeders, they will eat berries and fruits and especially adore mealworms, alive or dried. Most nature stores, including The Wild Bird Store, offer mixes of foods aimed at bluebirds. However, planting crab apple and certain berry-producing trees and shrubs in one's yard is the ultimate solution though.



Mountain bluebird



Eastern bluebird



Western bluebird

ABOUT DR. DAVID

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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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.

WE WILL BE TAKING A BREAK THE WEEK OF JULY 14-20.



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)

<https://www.aiwc.ca/support-us/donate-wish-list/>

Examples of items on their wish list: fresh/frozen blueberries, high efficiency laundry soap (unscented and phosphate free), long-handled butterfly nets x 5



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.

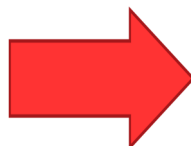


Home Delivery

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 July that will be Thursday July 11th and Thursday July 25th.

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)



*Staying
Connected*



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

Phone: (403)640-2632

Web: wildbirdstore.ca
email: info@wildbirdstore.ca

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

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

The Wild Bird Store will be closed on Monday, July 1st to celebrate Canada Day



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SENIOR'S DAY

Is **EVERY** Tuesday.

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

HAPPY BIRDING!

The Wild Bird Store

Is the warranty & repair depot for:

Squirrel Buster® Bird Feeders

Aspects® Feeders

Droll Yankee® Bird Feeders

DROLL YANKEES
The World's Best Bird Feeders®



SquirrelBuster

WILD BIRD FEEDERS



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AMERICA'S OPTICS AUTHORITY

And the warranty depot
for:

Leupold Binoculars & Spotting
Scopes

**Sorry! Excludes optics, books,
cards & consignment items**