



ALBERTA



Dark Eyed Junco

Did you know: Some ground birds are considered hoppers, while others are walkers. What about Juncos? They're hoppers!

Juncos are part of the sparrow family and as such they too prefer to feed on the ground, whether it be in the forest or your backyard.

Dark-eyed juncos are the quintessential snowbird. Like retirees who flock south to Florida and Arizona for the winter, so, too, do Dark-eyed juncos flock south. For them, south is the entire contiguous United States as well as parts of northern Mexico. That's because these tiny birds spend the warmer parts of the year on their breeding grounds in the boreal forests of Canada and Alaska.

Juncos can be identified by their dark hoods, white bellies, and white outer tail feathers that flash when they fly. There are two common subspecies in Calgary: "Slate-coloured" which are all grey and can look almost black and "Oregon" which have rusty back and sides. In the spring, males have a very distinct black hood.

What is leucism (pronounced LUKE-ism) is a genetic condition. Leucism is caused by a reduction in pigments that prevents pigments from reaching some or nearly all of a bird's feathers. It is very pale or washed out in comparison to a normal Dark-eyed junco. Leucism is frequently mistaken as albinism, but albinism only affects melanin production. Actual albino birds completely lack pigment.



Leucistic Dark-Eyed Junco

Dark-eyed juncos practice an interesting foraging method called "riding." They fly up to a seed cluster on the top of a grass stem and "ride" it to the ground where they pick off the seeds.

Juncos are ground feeding granivorous birds—which means they primarily eat seeds and grain. Favourites are hulled sunflower seed, white proso millet, and cracked corn. Because they eat near the ground, a low platform feeder or open tray is an excellent choice. Choosing a feeder with a large oversized roof, or adding overhead protection, is helpful during winter months, since it keeps snow off the seed.



Recycled Flythru



Locally hand-crafted cedar ground feeder



The number of bird species you live near could dramatically change your mental health.

By: Mark Colley—staff reporter TORONTO STAR

Don't just stop to smell the roses—make sure you listen to the birds and look at the trees, too.

A new study out of Carleton University has shown that living in neighbourhoods with higher variety of bird and tree species is associated with positive mental health.

It builds on a wave of research that shows how significantly exposure to nature can benefit your mental and physical health—decreasing stress, depression and anxiety along with rates of diabetes, strokes and heart disease.

But the Carleton study—which analyzed data across 36 Canadian cities to show bird diversity increased the probability of good mental health by nearly seven per cent, and tree diversity increased it by more than five per cent—helps demonstrate a tie between mental health and biodiversity too.

“We were surprised that (bird and tree diversity were) significant at all, because there's so many factors that go into influencing people's mental health in a city,” said Rachel Buxton, a professor at Carleton and lead author of the study. “When we compared it to things like employment or education or marital status or drinking, we thought that it just wouldn't come out as important. We were surprised it came out significant at all.”

The study used data from eBird, a crowdsourced app managed by Birds Canada, and a national forestry inventory to measure species diversity across cities including Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary. Researchers then compared that data with self-reported mental health.

Even when controlling for other variables like socioeconomic status, Buxton and the other researchers still found a strong association between bird and tree diversity and mental health. As the number of bird and tree species increased in a postal code, so too did the probability of good mental health.

In fact, bird and tree diversity has a similarly-sized effect on mental health as your daily intake of fruits and veggies.

THE BENEFITS OF NATURE

The study did not establish that biodiversity causes good mental health and requires more digging to test the findings, Buxton said. But her findings are in line with a vast ocean of research spanning years and countries that confirm a link between green space and health.

One study from the 1980's showed hospital patients recovered faster after surgery if they had a view of nature from their window. Research by Marc Berman, now chair of the University of Chicago's department of psychology, found Toronto neighbourhoods with more trees had lower rates of health issues like heart attacks, strokes, diabetes and kidney and liver disease.

In 2012, Berman and others sent study participants on two walks—one in nature and one in the city—while asking them to perform attention and memory tasks. Performance improved 20 per cent in nature and tests have demonstrated that simply showing people pictures or playing sounds of nature and cities can reproduce some of the same benefits.

There is also evidence showing how beneficial bird noises are. Two years ago, German researchers found listening to recordings of a high diversity of birdsongs decreases depression, anxiety and paranoia. After all, biodiversity applies to the ears as well as the eyes, according to Holli-Anne Passmore, a professor and chair of the psychology department at Concordia University in Edmonton. She studies nature and well-being and was not involved in the Carleton paper.

She is currently researching whether listening to bird sounds while studying reduces exam stress.

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“We are bombarded with noise,” Passmore said, “but sounds of nature tend to be something we can hear without using a lot of cognitive resources.”

WHY DOES NATURE MATTER?

Why nature is so beneficial is more of an open question. One hypothesis is that because our brains evolved in nature, we can process natural stimulation more easily, with less work for the brain.

“We’re kind of living in kind of a very small window of time of the human brain,” said Berman. “A lot of our cognitive processing was evolved in a very different kind of environment and maybe sort of tuned to that.”

It’s a possible explanation for why biodiversity is associated with good mental health, too. Buxton said.

“If you have more different types of trees, more different types of birds, likely your needs are going to be met in that sort of environment—you have more things to eat, you have more shelter,” she explained. “We’ve evolved to be attracted to environments that have a higher number of species in them.”

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WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

For individuals, the lesson of this research is to soak in all the nature you can. But it’s not just about time spent — it’s also about paying attention to the nature around you, Passmore said.

That could mean noticing trees, birds, bees or flowers when you walk from your house to the car or bus stop — or it could be as simple as taking your earbuds out and listening to the birds chirping, Berman said.

On a larger scale, the importance of nature for health should change the way we design cities, Berman said. Instead of building cities only to efficiently move and house people, nature should also be a consideration.

The bottom line: nature matters.

“Everybody kind of likes nature, but I think it tends to be viewed as an amenity and not a necessity,” Berman said. “What this research and other research is showing is that it’s a necessity. It’s not an amenity. It’s something we need.”





Colombia

Western Andes Birding Tour
January 8-14, 2025 | \$4,195

Last Minute
Availability!



© Juan Jose Arango

Upcoming Departures

Morocco: Desert, Mountains and Coast
April 3-12, 2025 | \$3,890

Point Pelee Migration
April 30-May 4, 2025 | \$590

Okanagan Valley Birding
May 22-26, 2025 | \$590

Cold Lake Warblers
May 29 - June 1, 2025 | \$455

Canadian Prairies
June 2-8, 2025 | \$3,145

Churchill: Spring in the Subarctic
June 9-14, 2025 | \$4,395

Cambridge Bay: Nunavut in Summer
June 30-July 6, 2025 | \$6,185

Bay of Fundy & Grand Manan
August 10-16, 2025 | \$3,145

Saskatchewan Whooping Cranes
September 27-30, 2025 | \$490

Visit www.meadowlarkbirding.com for more information.

Contact: gavin@meadowlarkbirding.com



Saturday Morning Bird Walks With Jim St. Laurent

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.



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 re-cycle bin. This discount is in addition to any other discount offered.

NORTH GLENMORE PARK Saturday November 9, 2024

9:00am meet in parking lot "C" overlooking the reservoir

Ticket price: \$6.00 +GST +fees

INGLEWOOD BIRD SANCTUARY Saturday November 23, 2024

9:00am meet in parking lot "C" at Nature Center

Ticket price: \$6.00 +GST +fees

CARBURN PARK Saturday, December 7, 2024

9:00am meet in parking lot

Ticket price: \$6.00 +GST +fees

Future Saturday Morning Bird Walks

SNOWY OWL PROWL—1st DAY TRIP Saturday January 11, 2025

BEBO GROVE Fish Creek Park Saturday January 25, 2025

SNOWY OWL PROWL—2nd DAY TRIP February 8, 2025

2025



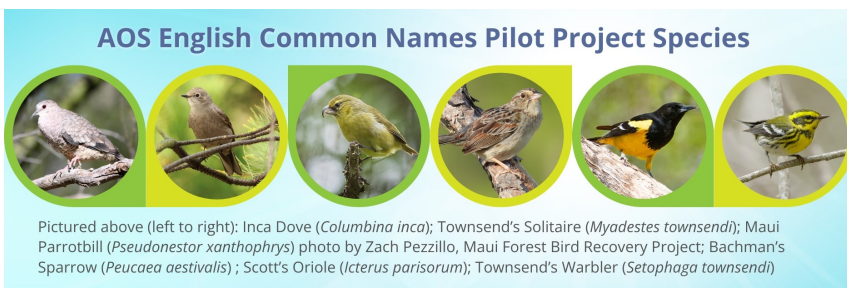
QUESTION: Have I changed my mind about the American Ornithological Society planning to change the current common names of more than 150 bird species in North America to make ornithology and birdwatching more inclusive?

RESPONSE: Indeed I have! This past spring I added my signature to a petition from the Fellows of the American Ornithological Society (AOS) which called for a moratorium on the matter until further open and deep discussion. To be fair, from the beginning, I never felt comfortable with the concept of changing all common names at once if only because I deemed it unfair to obliterate the legacy of many legitimate, ethical and honoured scientists who deserve to have a bird or two or

three named after them, e.g. Steller, Cooper, Cassin to list but a few. I also know that 12% of the world's bird species are in serious trouble and need financial help. Allocating precious resources to the renaming of birds while they disappear off the face of the planet simply does not make sense. In any case, I reluctantly went along with it, if only because it seemed inevitable.

Moreover, I preferred doing it on a case-by-case as-needed basis. But since then, I have since acquired new information on the cost-benefits of renaming all of these 150 or more birds in one fell swoop. Even to change one name has serious ramifications. First, it will mean changes to many online databases and websites, e.g. Birds of the World, Avonet, etc. Moreover, there are hundreds of web sites that list birds by their common names. And never mind the plethora of bird books and field guides which will instantly be rendered obsolete! Bird-banding codes are also based on common names, e.g. COHA for Cooper's hawk.

Overall, the decision has caused great divisiveness among members of the society, even leading to some to quit the organization. Equally important, our counterparts in Europe feel that the AOS has lost its way and some international organizations are even threatening to refuse the changes. Sadly, our resolution did not pass. However, it has resulted in the AOS doing a test case with ten selected species to determine the costs and reactions. Stay tuned!



ABOUT DR. DAVID



DAVID M. BIRD, Ph.D Emeritus Professor of Wildlife Biology McGill University david.bird@mcgill.ca www.askprofessorbird.com		CANADA JAY MÉSANGÉAI 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.



ON LOCATION

Wildwood Community Centre (4411 Spruce Drive SW)

Every Tuesday 3:00pm to 5:30pm **PLEASE NOTE NEW HOURS FOR THIS LOCATION**
STARTING NOVEMBER 1, 2024

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

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.

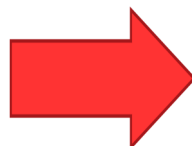


Home Delivery

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:

Deliveries are back to EVERY Thursday



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)



Mountain Plover

American naturalist John Kirk Townsend was the first to bring Mountain plovers to the notice of

science, in 1834, when he found one along the Sweetwater River of Wyoming. His colleague, John James Audubon named it the Rocky Mountain plover, even though the species is a bird not of mountains but of prairie.

Farmers and hunters sometimes refer to the Mountain plover as the “prairie ghost” on account of its ability to (seemingly) vanish into thin air—in fact, the bird usually just faces away from an observer and sits down, its upperparts indistinguishable from the pale tan colour of the grassland around it.

Sadly, intensive conversion of prairies to agriculture and other uses has hit this species hard, with more than 80% of the population gone in the last half-century.



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 Ellis Nature Centre.



Thank you for your support



Ellis Nature Centre (near Lacombe)
<https://ellisnaturecentre.ca>



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

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

Phone: (403)640-2632

The Wild Bird Store will be closed on Monday, November 11, 2024 to celebrate

Web: wildbirdstore.ca

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Go to YouTube, type in the search bar “The Wild Bird Store” to watch our videos and to help us become more visible. Be sure to click on “subscribe” before you leave the page.



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Squirrel Buster® Bird Feeders &
Aspects® Feeders





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for:
Leupold Binoculars & Spotting
Scopes




SENIOR'S DAY
Is EVERY Tuesday.
If you are over 60 you will receive
10% off your order

Sorry! Excludes optics, books, cards & consignment items

HAPPY BIRDING!