

SUMMER



2010

BACKYARD BIRD CENTER NEWS

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

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Fall Feeder Cleaning
Saturday, Oct. 16th
9:00a.m. to 4:00p.m.

It's that time again! Fall feeder cleaning day is just in time to get ready for the fall feeding season. 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 and we will give you an estimated pick up time.

The cost will be \$3.00 per feeder for cleaning and \$5.00 for repairs with this fall's proceeds going to the Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary in Liberty. Wild Delight will help offset the cost of the cleaning with a \$3.00 OFF Coupon.



Blue Jay's love inshell peanuts. The XMPF feeder from BirdsChoice is great for attracting these beautiful birds.

Name That Bird

by Mark McKellar

When I first got into birding, one of the things that fascinated me was the diversity of names. I had no idea what a warbler was, who the heck was Bewick and the only cuckoo I knew of popped its head out of a clock every hour. The more I learned, the more bird names intrigued me.

I learned that many of these names are quite old, while others are not. Where do these names come from? Most of the older names originate from the early naturalist that explored this continent and "discovered" them. The name John James Audubon should be familiar to everyone and it is no surprise that he named a great number of our birds. Names like woodpecker, nutcracker, sparrow and finch were used because they reminded him of those birds he was familiar with in England. The first names can be based on a physical feature (White-throated Sparrow), a geographic location where it was first discovered (Tennessee Warbler) or a person of honor (the person who discovered it or even a friend of the person who discovered it).



White-throated Sparrows actually have white throats. photo courtesy of Jena Garr

To make things even more confusing for birders, names can and do change. A group known as the American Ornithological Union makes naming decisions based on proposals sent into them by scientists. Many name changes have to do with resolving a name conflict with another bird somewhere else on the planet (American Kestrel). Other possible reasons for a name change include removing a potentially offensive name (Long-tailed Ducks use to be called Oldsquaws) and species splits (Solitary Vireos were split into three different species and had to have three new names). Among the most confusing of name changes for me are the ones that occurred long ago to align the bird with its song (Bobolinks and Dickcissels).



The Green Heron was formerly known as the Green-backed Heron. Photo by Paul Ruehle

In an effort to entertain, not to confuse, you should look up some of the "local" names that birds have. A couple of my personal favorites have always been the Fly Up The Creek Bird (Green Heron) and Stump Knocker (Pileated Woodpecker) but there are many more.

Names can be confusing, but they are fun. The next time you are flipping through your field guide, pick out a bird with a name that you don't recognize and put your reasoning skills to the test. What would you have named it?



Adding Water For The Birds

by Ruth Simmons, photos by Morgan McKellar

Do you have a section of the yard that is hard to mow or would you like to accent your garden? Why not think larger than a birdbath and go with a recirculating creek? The wonderful concept of the Avian Aquatics Bird Creek is that it can be adapted to your landscape, whether large or small, steep or flat.



First survey your area and get the general outline for the water's course and gather supplies: pond liner, creek gravel, landscape rock, level, shovel, hose, work gloves, plants, and kit. Depending on the location, you may need to have an electrician run a line to your site.

Then create level areas for each dish and dig out the area for the pond and pump.

I highly recommend that you line the entire length of your creek with pond liner to prevent leakage.



After digging and leveling; put the liner, dishes, and pump in place and do a practice run to see how the water flows. As you add the gravel the flow will change, so you can adjust as you need to.



Now you are ready to landscape with the rocks. The rock that Mark used came from Cripple Creek, they have a good selection of size and color and their prices were very reasonable. During this time check to see that the water does not escape by traveling across the rocks. Keep it in the creek! Wet dirt off to the side of the creek is a good indicator of escaping water. Add plants around and in the water and you are finished!

Relax and enjoy the sound of the water and watch the birds enjoy it too.



Since installing her water feature in 1999, this is the list of birds Ruth (photos) has documented using it. Keep in mind that her home is in downtown Lee's Summit. Impressive!

- American Crow
- American Goldfinch
- American Robin
- American Tree Sparrow
- Baltimore Oriole
- Black-and-white Warbler
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Blue Jay
- Brown Creeper
- Brown Thrasher
- Brown-headed Cowbird
- Canada Warbler
- Carolina Wren
- Cedar Waxwing
- Chestnut-sided Warbler
- Chipping Sparrow
- Clay-colored Sparrow
- Common Grackle
- Common Redpoll
- Common Yellowthroat**
- Dark-eyed Junco
- Downy Woodpecker
- Eastern Bluebird
- Eastern Towhee
- Field Sparrow
- Golden-crowned Kinglet
- Gray Catbird
- Great Blue Heron
- Harris's Sparrow
- Hermit Thrush
- House Finch
- House Wren
- Indigo Bunting
- Lincoln's Sparrow**
- Marsh Wren
- Mourning Dove
- Nashville Warbler
- Northern Cardinal
- Northern Flicker (Yellow-shafted)
- Northern Mockingbird
- Northern Waterthrush
- Orange-crowned Warbler
- Pine Siskin
- Purple Finch
- Red-bellied Woodpecker
- Red-breasted Nuthatch
- Red-headed Woodpecker
- Red-winged Blackbird
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird
- Song Sparrow
- Spotted Towhee
- Swainson's Thrush
- Tennessee Warbler
- Tufted Titmouse
- White-crowned Sparrow
- White-throated Sparrow
- Wilson's Warbler
- Winter Wren
- Yellow Warbler (Northern)
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle)



ALL POND KITS ON SALE



Take 15% OFF All Pond Kits
Prices Range From \$129 to \$450.
(We do not keep these kits in the store. They take about a week to arrive)

This is the same kit as above on a gentle slope with mature landscaping in Ruth's yard and a recent visitor!



Have Binos, Will Travel!

The wonderful spring migration season we experienced quickly gave way to an extremely hot and humid summer. We do very few bird hikes during summer and there is no secret as to why. For thirteen of us, June held a wonderful birding experience. We ventured to, what I consider, the birding Mecca of North America. Southeast Arizona hosts some of the most unique birds that can be found within our country's borders. We tallied a total of 150 species including such beauties as Elegant Trogon, Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Red-faced Warbler, Mexican Spotted Owl and 11 different species of hummingbirds. If you haven't been bitten by the birding bug yet, you should give it a try sometime.



A true jewel of Southeastern Arizona, Berylline Hummingbirds like this male photographed in Miller Canyon near Sierra Vista can be extremely difficult to find. Our groups saw at least 4. photo courtesy of Mary Nemecek

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 and see birds. (Most) Thursday mornings during September and October, Ruth, John or myself 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 9th</i>	<i>Parkville Nature Sanc.</i>	<i>8:00 - 9:30</i>
<i>Sept 16th</i>	<i>Little Bean Marsh</i>	<i>8:00 - 10:30</i>
<i>Sept 23th</i>	<i>Weston Bend S. P.</i>	<i>8:00 - 10:30</i>
<i>Sept 30th</i>	<i>Smithville Lake</i>	<i>8:00 - 10:30</i>
<i>Oct 7th</i>	<i>None This Date Sorry</i>	
<i>Oct 14th</i>	<i>Amity Woods Park</i>	<i>8:00 - 9:30</i>
<i>Oct 21st</i>	<i>Maplewoods C. A.</i>	<i>8:00 - 9:30</i>
<i>Oct 28th</i>	<i>Wyandotte Co. Lake</i>	<i>8:00 - 9:30</i>

In Store Classes

Gearing Up For Winter Bird Feeding

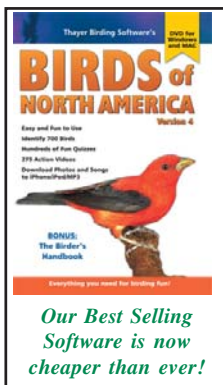
Wednesday, Sept. 29th 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Whether you're new to bird feeding or just want to brush up on the birds of our backyards, this class is for you. We learn to identify the birds we hope to attract to our yards by providing the right food, water and shelter for them.

What's In a Name?

**Wednesday, Oct. 20th
7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**

Inspired by the cover article, this class will take a more in depth look at bird names and their origins. We should have some fun learning about the origin of bird changes and how some have changed over the years. Come with some of your favorite "local" bird names to share.



Our Best Selling Software is now cheaper than ever!

Fall Feeder Cleaning

Saturday, Oct. 16th 9:00a.m. to 4:00p.m.

Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge

Sunday, Sept. 19th 8:00 a.m. to 2 p.m.

This time of the year, we will be primarily looking for migrating shorebirds and songbirds. Depending on water levels, this could be a great time for shorebirds, waterfowl and songbirds. Bring a sack lunch and snacks. **Meet at the store at 7:30 or the refuge at 9:00. Cost \$5 per person.**

Four River Conservation Area/Taberville Prairie

**Saturday, October 9th
7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

Fall waterfowl migration should be in full swing and we will search for ducks & geese as well as grassland species. This is also a great time to look for migrating hawks and sparrows. Bring a sack lunch and snacks.

Meet at the store at 6:45. Cost \$5 per person.



Double-crested Cormorant photo courtesy of Mary Nemecek

Smithville Lake

**Sunday, October 24th
1:00 p.m. to 6:00 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.



Species Profile: Yellow-billed Cuckoo

by Mark McKellar

One of the early birds to catch my attention when I first started birding was the Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*). One of the first bird songs I learned to recognize, it is strangely unique and nothing like any sound I had ever heard coming from a clock.

Locals in North Carolina called them Rain Crows. “If you hear one calling it means we are going to get rain soon”. If only that were true. To me they sound like something you would expect to hear in a jungle.

Cuckoos are an incredibly unique group of birds that can be found across the planet. Some are quite large and fill many niches in nature. Most find it interesting that roadrunners are ground cuckoos.

Yellow-billed Cuckoos are well known for their ability to eat the Tent Caterpillars (web worms) that are

seen in the late summer. These birds have learned to roll these hair covered caterpillar so that they can swallow them. They also love the loud Cicadas that are droaning away right now.



Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Photo by Rick Jordahl

One of the most fascinating things about yellow-billeds is how fast their young develop. While most of our songbirds are able to leave the nest 12 to 16 days after hatching, young cuckoos may be wandering out on limbs just in 7 days. It is about that time that their flight feathers burst from their “pins” and grow incredibly fast. Studies show that feather growth only takes about two hours once they start to grow. Wow! From laying eggs to fledging can be as short as 17 days.

Look for these long-tailed, long-billed birds running along tree limbs or dashing between trees along forest edges from early May through September. The thinning leaves in late summer make spotting their white belly easier. Look for the rufous in their wings when they fly.

CONSERVATION CORNER: Missouri Master Naturalists

In 2004 the Missouri Department of Conservation and the University of Missouri Extension joined together to create the Missouri Master Naturalist (MMN) program. MMN is a group of ordinary citizens that dedicate their time to protecting, restoring and promoting education around Missouri’s natural resources.

Missouri Master Naturalist volunteers partner with other local organizations such as the Department of Conservation, Kansas City Wildlands, Missouri River Relief, Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary, Platte County Parks and Recreation and many other groups on a variety of initiatives. Some of these projects include water quality monitoring, river clean-up, surveying for endangered plants and wildlife, restoration and preservation of natural areas and honeysuckle removal.

Each volunteer goes thru 40 hours of initial classroom training, field trips and a capstone project. Then each volunteer commits to a minimum of 40 hours in volunteer service and 8 hours in additional training annually. Add it up and that is thousands of hours across the state dedicated towards ensuring the future of natural areas and resources for enjoyment by generations to come.

The Kansas City Missouri Master Naturalist group is known as the Osage Trails Chapter. If you would like more information on the MMN program in Kansas City please go to www.gkcmn.com.



Members of the Ozark Trails Chapter of the Missouri Master Naturalist removing Amur Honeysuckle from Rocky Point Glade in Swope Park. Photo and article courtesy of MMN member Mary Nemecek



Time To Ask Mark...

Q. Why do birds gather in flocks?

A. In short, there is safety in numbers. Many of the flocks we see this time of year are gathering to “fatten” up before their journey south for the winter. If one of the group finds food, they all find food. If one of them spots a hawk, the rest of them benefit from the early detection. If a predator tries to catch a member of the flock, the greater the number of individuals in the flock the more options for evasion there are.

Q. When will my hummingbirds be leaving? Should I take my feeders down to make them leave?

A. Hummingbirds like other birds are triggered by day length to start their migrations. Because flying is so costly on a bird’s body, they have to fatten up to survive their nightly flights (one reason they defend feeders so vigorously this time of year). By keeping your feeders out and filled late into the fall, you may help a late migrating bird that is coming through when natural food is truly scarce. In the past few years, we have consistently gotten reports of hummingbirds at feeders through the first week of October.



Flocks of Killdeer can be seen gathering this time of year. photo courtesy of Mary Nemecek

Q. Where do our orioles go in the winter?

A. While I have seen Baltimore Oriole in coastal North Carolina in winter, I believe most of our birds spend the bulk of their winters in various habitats in Central America. I have read that they take advantage of the trees left in shade coffee plantations.

Q. I keep seeing commercials for a bird seed that is supposed to attract pretty birds. Is their’s any different than your blend?

A. Other than being twice as expensive as our house blend, there is very little difference. I always say that a sunflower is a sunflower no matter what color the bag is. A customer brought in one of these expensive bags of seed recently and here is what I found. They include four seeds that I would never use in my premium general seeds (white millet, red millet and canary seed and nyjer). I do use millet in my ground mixes to take care of the sparrows, dove and blackbirds. Canary seed, I do not use at all and nyjer is a finch seed that should be limited to use in finch feeders. Trying to put too many kinds of seed in the same bag, more often than not, leads to problems with less desirable birds.



To attract a good variety of pretty birds, you need to use clean quality seed.

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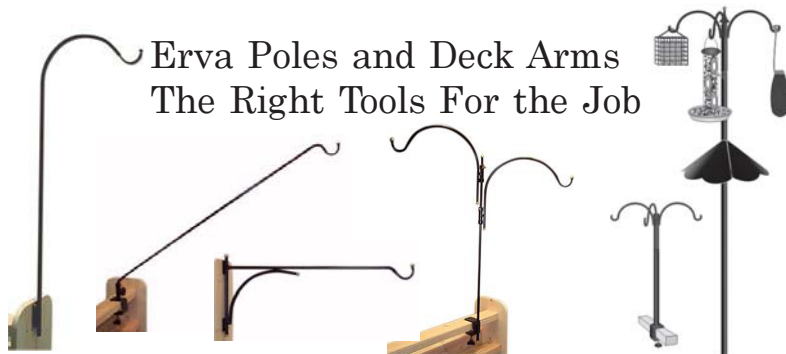
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Carolina Wrens love roosting pockets for getting out of the elements Photo courtesys of Kathy Lewis

REASONS TO FIND BACKYARD BIRD CENTER ON FACEBOOK

I must admit, several people got me to join **Facebook** with a little kicking and screaming. Now, almost a year into it, I wouldn't give it up. If you haven't found us, here are some of the benefits of our page; instant reporting from all over the city about what is going on at the feeders; great pictures sent in from backyard feeders and rare finds; instant updates and in store happenings; contests for seed, feeders and other fun prizes; and reports of rare bird sightings and other fun facts. If you haven't found us yet, please take the time to do so - we'd love to hear what's going on in your yard and we know you would enjoy hearing what's going on at everyone else's feeders around the area. If you want to submit photos for our Facebook page, please send them to backyardbirdcenter@att.net.



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Important Dates

Late August - Hummingbird Numbers Peak
Late August/Early September - watch for large flocks of migrating martins and swallows.
Early October - last of migrating hummingbirds generally have passed through.
Early to Mid-October - Watch for early winter arrivals such as juncos and kinglets.