



ALBERTA

The Showroom is OPEN

A friendly reminder that face masks are mandatory for all indoor spaces. We request that you maintain social distancing whenever possible while shopping. Our staff will be sanitizing prior to the store opening and throughout the day.

Visa, Mastercard, Debit and cash will be accepted for in-store purchases

Return of containers and seed bags will now be accepted for recycle/reuse discount

CURB SIDE PICK UP: call, place and pay for your order at least 15 minutes prior to your arrival. Please pull in to the curbside parking stall, pop your trunk/hatch, phone (403) 640-2632 to advise of your arrival and a team member will come out and load your vehicle with your receipts attached. Payment can be made by Visa, Mastercard or E-transfer (NO CASH)

DELIVERY: Deliveries will still be made on Thursdays ONLY. Please phone the store at (403) 640-2632 any day prior to 12:00 noon on the Wednesday before your delivery; place and pay for your delivery. Please phone with your order as early as possible to avoid disappointment. If you have any special instructions please do not forget to inform us when you place your order.



Daylight Savings Begins

Sunday, March 14, 2021



In the February edition of the newsletter I mistakenly made the following statement: Black-billed magpies are now protected under the Canada Fish and Wildlife Act. Black-billed magpies still pose a threat especially on acreages and farms throughout Alberta where it is legal to trap, shot or poison them. Of course city dwellers do not have the option of shooting or poisoning within the city limits, but trapping and removing them is still permitted. I sincerely apologize and thank you to the reader

who brought this error to my attention and I sincerely apologize for this error. Please see article by Chris Fisher (author of Birds of Alberta) on next page with his professional input on this subject.

Birds and Alberta Bird Laws

Chris Fisher • Feb 2021

More than ever, people are finding that birds bring awe, joy and meaning into their lives. The positive consequences of this relationship are endless, but bringing birds into our lives does sometimes come at an emotional cost. While out birding, we sometimes come across situations where birds appear to be in distress or in danger. It is natural for many of us instinctively wish to step in to make sure that no harm is done for the things we care about. For this reason, it is helpful to those that care about wildlife to have an understanding of the laws and regulations that are in place to protect birds in Alberta.

Acts and the species they protect

There are two main regulatory Acts that are in place to govern how birds are protected in Alberta.

The **Migratory Bird Convention Act** is a Federal law that was last updated in 1994, but has origins dating to 1917. Early in the 20th century, it had become obvious that overhunting and other issues were having a devastating impact on the population of birds. At this point in history however, the reasons for passing such a law was to protect the birds that were being hunted for food and fun. The **Migratory Bird Convention Act** was the Canadian product of an international agreement with the US to better protect waterfowl and shorebirds. The MBCA complimented the American 'Migratory Bird Treaty Act' to protect the birds that migrated between jurisdictions. Over the decades the Act was updated and more species were added to the MBCA so that it now includes most songbirds, shorebirds, waterfowl, waterbirds, seabirds (gulls, terns), and many non-passerines. But even today, the MBCA however does not cover all birds, or even all migratory birds.

While federal governments in the early half of the 20th century were best positioned to protect migratory birds (that were being hunted) the provincial jurisdictions were better positioned to protect grouse and other non-migratory game birds (that were being hunted). The legacy of these different origins can still be seen today in the purchasing of hunting licenses, which essentially allow for the harvest of birds otherwise protected from non-regulated hunting. To hunt waterfowl, a federal permit is required and to hunt game birds a provincial permit is required. The **Alberta Wildlife Act** arose out of this need and now protects many of the birds that are not protected by the federal MBCA, such as raptors (hawks, owls, falcons), upland game birds (grouse, ptarmigan), pelicans, cormorants and kingfishers.

There are several bird species that have **no federal or provincial protections** under either Act. These birds were formerly considered pests and still include most corvids (crows, magpies, ravens), icterids (blackbirds, grackles) and introduced species (rock pigeon, house sparrow, European starling). Some municipalities may have laws that protect these birds or restrict the ways in which they can be killed.

Nesting Protections

While many sections of both Acts deal with hunting regulations, the greatest interest to the birding community would be the sections of the MBCA and AWA that pertain to the protection of nesting birds. The MBCA prohibits;

"the killing, capturing, injuring, taking or disturbing of migratory birds or the damaging, destroying, removing or disturbing of nests"

and the AWA states;

"a person shall not wilfully molest, disturb or destroy a house, nest or den of prescribed wildlife in prescribed areas and at prescribed times."

As stated in these sections, most birds and their nests in Alberta are protected from deliberate killing (without permits) and from destruction and disturbance while they are occupying their nests. As an example, the occupied nests of northern flickers, chickadees, osprey and owls are all protected by one Act or another. But even occupied nests of magpies, crows and house sparrows have no protections under either the MBCA or AWA.

Many birds that are not nesting also inadvertently die as the result of human activities. On industrial projects, this is widely known as 'incidental take' and examples include spills, collisions and strikes with windows, powerlines and renewables. 'Incidental take' is not addressed in either legislation. The MBCA does however contain a single specific section concerning birds dying due to the release of harmful substances.

"No person or vessel shall deposit a substance that is harmful to migratory birds, or permit such a substance to be deposited, in waters or an area frequented by migratory birds or in a place from which the substance may enter such waters or such an area."

The Alberta Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act also contains similar language and both of these Acts have been enforced when issuing penalties for birds that have died in contaminated waterbodies or where harmful substances have been released into the atmosphere.

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Enforcement

Environment and Climate Change Canada (Federal) has very little enforcement capacity for the MBCA as there are few federal enforcement officers in the province. The provincial Fish & Wildlife Conservation Officers have a much larger presence in Alberta and jurisdiction for the AWA. Together F&W and the RCMP can serve as ex-officio officers under the MBCA. The reality is that most cases that proceed to investigations and ultimately to fines involve self-reporting. In Alberta, there have been very few fines have been issued for destroying occupied nests and most seem to involve the destruction of active cliff or bank swallow colonies. In contrast, significant and high-profile penalties have been issued under the MBCA and AEPEA to industry (\$500,000+) for killing birds resulting from the release of harmful substances into waterbodies or into the atmosphere.

While the birdwatching community should be comforted by both federal and provincial regulations to protect birds and their nests from harm, it must also acknowledge a frustration to the legal and practical limits of these Acts. Not all birds - and not all harmful actions are covered by these laws and the enforcement is not comprehensive. There are also inconsistencies in their application. While most industrial projects that are dependent on environmental approvals make effort to ensure compliance - agriculture, forestry and others conduct activities that could be interpreted as contravening sections of these Acts without repercussion.

As our birding community grows and more people gain an appreciation for birds, so too have our concerns grown for their well-being. Our existing laws are important, yet imperfect tools that complement our passion for Alberta wildlife. A greater understanding and execution of these regulations will no doubt lead to upholding higher standards that will ultimately benefit birds and the people who care for their well-being.



Chris Fisher (M.Sc., P.Biol.) is perhaps best-known in Alberta as a prominent voice for nature and conservation and as the author of a series of best-selling books, including "Birds of Alberta." Through his business "Wings Environmental Solutions" Chris consults with industry and government to interpret the provincial and federal regulatory requirements in order to minimize harm to our wildlife and our wild areas.

What Is It?

An ant's face as seen through an electron microscope.



This one is so interesting and strange—keep guessing—answer in April newsletter



Snowy owl update

- One week after being spotted for the first time in more than 100 years, a rare snowy owl was seen once again in Central Park -- delighting New Yorkers and avid bird watchers.
- Prior to last week's sighting, the last time a snowy owl was seen in Central Park was in 1890.

The baseball fields are fenced off in winter to let the grass regrow, so the [crush of onlookers](#) was kept a couple of hundred feet away from the owl, but that did not stop at least one person from cheating.

“We had to correct one drone condition,” said Dan Tainow, a Parks Department ranger.

“Someone was trying to get that overhead photo,” from about 50 feet in the air, he said. “The owl was aware of it. It was stressing it out.”

Some enthusiasts took Manhattan Bird Alert to task for revealing the bird's exact whereabouts to 38,000 followers. “Tweeting the locations of a snowy owl to a follower base with a long history of harassing owls is a great look, man,” a user named Aidan Place wrote.

But the birder behind Manhattan Bird Alert, David Barrett, a retired hedge-fund manager who started the account in 2013, said he was performing a public service and building support for conservation efforts.

“If you want people to care about nature,” he said, “you should show them that it's there and let them appreciate it for themselves.”



A red-tailed hawk tried to scare off the intruder in its hunting territory.

Birds Steal the Show in the New Netflix Film 'Penguin Bloom'

The [Netflix film](#), released on January 27, tells [the real-life story of the Bloom family](#). After Sam Bloom, played by Naomi Watts, suffered a life-changing injury, she and her family found support and inspiration through a rescued Australian Magpie chick her kids dubbed “Penguin” for her black and white plumage.

Mander, who also directs the Broadwings Raptor Training Centre in Brisbane, Australia, has trained and worked with a huge range of species throughout his career but says magpies are especially playful, curious birds. “It makes them great fun to work with,” he says. “They make very good students.”

Because the Blooms raised Penguin from when they found her as a fledgling until she was an adult, Mander says a total of eight magpies of varying ages were cast for the role. To prepare, he read through the script before filming, noting scenes where the birds would need to perform certain behaviors. Mander says he was able to train the magpies to do almost everything the script called for, including stealing a tea bag out of a mug, perching on a shoulder, and lying on her back while cuddling with the family in bed. Mander taught the magpies using positive reinforcement, which usually came in the form of a tasty mealworm. For the scenes that weren't possible to film with real birds, the team relied on computer-generated imagery.



This Winter Marks an Incredible 'Superflight' of Hungry Winter Finches

The year 2020 will be remembered for a lot of reasons, but for birders across the country, one of them will actually be good: the biggest irruption of northern finches in recent history. This year has seen huge movements of these birds southward, and many have reached astonishing places far from where you'd expect to find them.

Finch researchers are calling this year a “superflight,” where every species of boreal finch is irrupting, or moving southward in search of food. A perfect storm of feast and famine appear to be driving this banner finch year, affecting Common and Hoary Redpolls, Evening Grosbeaks, Pine Grosbeaks, Pine Siskins, Red and White-winged Crossbills, and Purple Finches. Other irruptive passerines, like Blue Jays, Bohemian Waxwings, and Red-breasted Nuthatches, are also on the move. There's not enough food to support them, so they're just spilling out of the boreal forest.



Evening grosbeak



Pine siskin



Red crossbill

Many of North America's finches live in the forests of Canada (and in northern parts and higher elevations of the United States), where they rely on a selection of conifer or other boreal trees for food—especially their fruits and seeds in the winter. However, many of these trees produce food in cycles, supplying an abundance of seeds in “mast years” and very little to no sustenance in other years. Birds dependent on these trees undergo movements in response to these cycles, staying and breeding in areas where seeds and fruits are plentiful and heading elsewhere when crops fail. In a meager year for seed stocks, birds will dip southward in search of food, and during a widespread crop failure, they venture far into the United States to find sustenance. This is one of those years.

Scientists think the trees evolved these synchronous mast-crop cycles in order to limit the food supply for seed-eating squirrels, preventing their populations from growing too large and eating all of the seeds. But unlike the squirrels, birds are mobile, and can find cone crops somewhere else. In some cases, these birds have evolved strategies to cope with the occasional crop failures; crossbills molt slowly, for example, so they can be ready to fly at any moment should food run out.

This year's incredible show isn't just a product of crop failures, but also the result of a hugely successful breeding year driven by spring food surpluses. Eastern boreal forests are experiencing their largest spruce budworm crop in decades, for example. A bane to loggers, spruce budworm larvae hatch in late spring and feast on the needles of balsam firs and spruces, which can ultimately kill the trees. The outbreak led to booms in eastern Evening grosbeak and Purple finch populations, who feed on the budworm. Further fueling their numbers, researchers hypothesize, was the fact that Quebec wasn't able to fully treat its forests for budworms due to COVID-19 restrictions. Meanwhile, large spruce-cone crops led to population surges of Red and White-winged crossbills. And Pine siskins, which are generalists, benefitted from both the budworms and spruce-cone crops. These populations are growing to a high level that we haven't seen in a long time across all of these finch species.

Revealing Secrets of Snowy Owls

The continuing satellite telemetry study of Snowy Owls by Project Snowstorm is revealing more exciting information about this enigmatic species – their behaviors, migrations, nesting locations, and wintering areas, including some insights into site fidelity from year to year. Recent winter movements of several of the principal Snowy Owls are especially interesting, and they include insights about Snowys that remain in the Arctic some years, and migrate south other winters. Daily movements are also wide-ranging and revealing across their wintering range.

Start by checking out the recent activities of the male Snowy Owl – Argus – at <https://www.projectsnowstorm.org/posts/the-return-of-argus/>



Honey (derived from honey bees; not mason bees who do not produce honey) shines because of its content of bioactive plant compounds and antioxidants—high-quality honey is rich in antioxidants. Darker types tend to be even higher in these compounds. Plus the antioxidants in honey can help to lower blood pressure as well as lower triglycerides. Burned your finger on a hot pot? Smear a bit of honey on it—honey has been known to soothe and heal minor burn wounds.



Do you have woodworking skills?

The Wild Bird Store is looking for local talent to build wood products, including bird houses, bird feeders, bird baths and accessories to join our team of builders. If you are interested, we would love to hear from you.

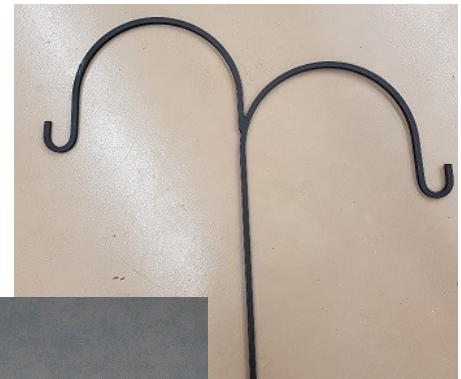
Please email Kris at info@wildbirdstore.ca



We are looking for a welder with wrought iron skills

To create deck mounts, shepherd hooks, bird bath stands and customer orders made of wrought iron. Examples of the wrought iron products we sell are on view in our store and on our website at: www.wildbirdstore.ca

Please email Kris at info@wildbirdstore.ca



Please note: This will be a "virtual seminar". Please visit [Eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca) to purchase tickets for either of these seminars.

NEST BOXES

Thursday, March 11, 2021

@ 6:00pm

Cost: \$10.00 +fees and GST

Selecting a nest box...where to place a nest box...when to set up your nest boxes...

Get the answers to these questions and a whole lot more...Question and answer period will follow the presentation.

Hummingbirds

Thursday, April 8, 2021

@6:00pm

Cost: \$10.00 +fees and GST

Thursday, April 22, 2021

@6:00pm

Cost: \$10.00 +fees and GST

You too can have these "garden jewels" in your backyard. Kris will offer tips on how to attract them to your yard and keep them coming back year after year. The right food, the necessity of water and plenty of tips.

Please note: This will be a "virtual seminar". Please visit [Eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca) to purchase tickets for either of these seminars.

Mason Bees

Thursday, May 6, 2021

@6:00pm

Cost: \$10.00 +fees and GST

Thursday, May 20, 2021

@6:00pm

Cost: \$10.00 +fees and GST

Please note: This will be a "virtual seminar". Please visit [Eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca) to purchase tickets for either of these seminars.

Learn how to have success with your Mason bee cocoons and how to harvest next years cocoons. We will instruct you on how to store your cocoons, when to place them outside and how to insure the hatching bees will lay their cocoons in the proper place.

Don't Delay!

Even though this is a virtual seminar, there will be a limited number of spaces available due to the Q&A portion of the presentation. So don't be disappointed—book your spot now! Go to [eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca) to register for any or all upcoming seminars.

Spring migration begins soon- is your backyard ready to welcome the birds back?

Robin shelf



Gable and shed bark front nest boxes. Also available in kits



Log cabin hanging



Gazebo house with green roof



Bluebird and Swallow houses



Purple martin house



This is just a sample of the variety of nest boxes and specialty houses The Wild Bird Store carries.

All are locally hand-crafted in Alberta. The Wild Bird Store also carries an extensive inventory of nesting accessories including nesting material and predator guards. Be sure to check out our nest box seminars on the previous page.



Q: Is the colour of a feeder important to our backyard birds?

A: I have been told that a number of folks who have purchased Brome Bird Care feeders are painting the normally green feeders in different colours. While they do it for fun, it is true that some of the larger stores do offer a variety of bright coloured feeders. So, I have been asked....do birds really care about the colour of a given feeder? Well, there was actually a study done on this in 2017, albeit with feeder birds in the UK. Students at the University of Hull offered the same food in eight identical feeders with the same seed but with the metal parts painted in different colours: red, yellow, green, blue, purple, black, silver and white. Over the winter, the students spent 185 hours recording 7,435 visits by 11 different bird species, most of which were various tit species (like our chickadees), house sparrows, and a couple of finch species. Red, yellow and blue were the least favoured followed by white, black and purple...but the birds definitely liked silver and green. I was not surprised that white was not favoured as it is widely believed to act as a warning colour in nature. Even when the students added an ultraviolet reflectance to the blue and red feeders, it did not make them more attractive to birds. Next, the students decided to find out what feeder colours the customers preferred. At a science festival, they presented the same choices to visitors to their booth. While the public did tend to like the brightly coloured feeders, the only colour that was mutually agreed upon between them and the birds was.....green. And that is the original colour of all of Brome Bird Care's feeders! Which means that Brome got it right in the first place!

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.



Bird Seed Truck



On Location

Crowfoot YMCA/Arena

(corner of John Laurie Blvd. & Nosehill Drive NW)

Every Wednesday 2:00pm to 5:00pm

To ensure you get what you want, please have your order in by 5:00pm on Tuesday and we will set it aside for you.

Text us @ (403) 701-4571



email us at orders@wildbirdstore.ca



Can't make it to our location? We also deliver. Send us your order by email to orders@wildbirdstore.ca. We deliver on Thursdays and require your order no later than 12 noon on the previous day.. Delivery charge is applicable unless brought to Crowfoot location on Wednesdays on The Bird Seed Truck.

**Earn and redeem customer loyalty points on
The Bird Seed Truck**

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 Bird Farm.

We ask for your support quarterly for each of these organizations. For January, February and March 2021 your donations will go to:

Calgary Wildlife Rehabilitation

Wishlist - Calgary Wildlife Rehabilitation Society CWRS
treating injured and orphaned wildlife



Bird Book Nook



We have also set up one of many jigsaw puzzles—please feel free to place puzzle pieces while enjoying your visit. Be sure to check out our many jigsaw puzzles for sale all with a wild bird theme and in sizes of 500 or 1000 pieces.

The Galler-oom has been transformed into Bird Book Nook, a library of the birding/nature books that we carry as well as some local artwork and birding/nature videos on the TV screen. We invite you to browse the new set-up and enjoy the many publications we carry.

The Bird Book Nook is also for rent for small groups of 35 people or less that need a meeting or event space. Table and chairs are available as well as refreshments for \$50/hour. For more information or to book the room, please email info@wildbirdstore.ca.

Rare Bird



Belgian wildlife photographer Yves Adams was in the midst of a two-month expedition in the South Atlantic when he encountered something he had never seen before: a yellow-coloured penguin among a colony of 120,000 king penguins.

The strange yellow colour is caused by a pigmentation condition called leucism. Similarly to albino penguins, the condition is a birth defect caused by a lack of pigment in its skin and eyes, which results in a yellow colour.

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



(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 (excludes “sales” items, books & optics) and can be used in-store and on Mobile Seed Truck. As a loyalty member our monthly promotions and in-store “specials” are automatically given at the cash register.



Combining our Seniors 10% discount with the Loyalty Program. (Excludes “sales” items, books & optics).



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





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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
Showroom is open with some restrictions. We still offer curbside pick up
and delivery service on Thursdays

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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.



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



LEUPOLD
AMERICA'S OPTICS AUTHORITY

And the warranty depot for:

Leupold Binoculars & Spotting

Scopes

HAPPY BIRDING!