

THE WILD BIRD STORE *Birding News*

May 2021

Backyard Birding Specialists



CANADA



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.

Our sincere apologies:

In the April 2021 Birding News we failed to acknowledge the columnist who did the article on Eagle numbers soar in Calgary for the Calgary Herald. Photos and text were the work of Carol Patterson on March 2, 2021. We apologize for overlooking acknowledgement of this informative article by Carol which the Calgary birding community greatly appreciated.

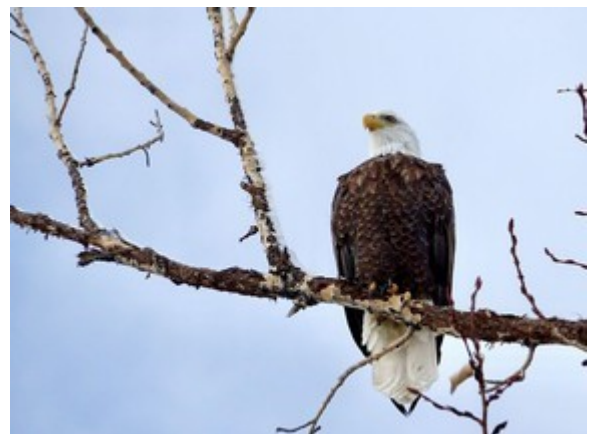


Photo by Carol Patterson

Alberta beekeepers concerned about dangerously low supply of honeybees due to import delays

Stephanie Babych



Alberta beekeepers are sounding the alarm about the dangerously low supply of honeybees due to delayed or cancelled imports of the insects to the province.

With the pandemic making it impossible to import bees last year and significant loss over the cold winter, Alberta hive numbers have plummeted by more than 20,000 and resulted in a 30 per cent reduction in honey production in 2020. Beekeepers were hopeful imported packages of bees from Australia and New Zealand this spring would bolster the population, but ongoing shipping and inspection delays have them worried.

“This year was going to be a rebuilding year because there were such high losses last year,” Connie Phillips, the executive director of the Alberta Beekeepers Commission, said.

“But now they’re either delayed or not coming at all. For example, one of our importers was expected to receive 14 more pallets, with roughly 630 packages of bees on each pallet, from mid-March to early May, and he might only get two.”

Imported packages of honeybees are essential to Alberta’s bee farms because they allow beekeepers to start new hives or rebuild the hives that have experienced loss due to cold winters or overwintering losses. Bringing in new bees is more efficient for growth than splitting hives, and allows farmers to start rebuilding earlier.

There are 169 commercial beekeepers in the province affected by delays this year and who will struggle to rebuild in the future, according to Phillips. Alberta is Canada’s top honey producer, making about 18 million kilograms of honey in a good year.

Honeybees also play a key role in the growth of hybrid canola seed in southern Alberta as pollinators. These canola seeds are used by Canadian farmers for commercial canola crops that make the country’s \$30-billion canola industry possible.

Honeybees are also important to Canada’s \$250-million blueberry crop.



TRUMPETER WATCH—report a banded Trumpeter swan with easy to see neck bands which display large numbers for easier identification. The swans are also banded on the leg, but often these bands are not visible. For more information on how you can help, go to www.trumpeterswansociety.org



Look closer...there are more than just House sparrows

Being a hardy and adaptable little bird, the House Sparrow has spread across the continent to become one of North America's most common birds. However, in many places, the House Sparrow is considered to be an invasive species that competes with, and has contributed to the decline in, certain native bird species.



Courtesy of [Calgary Wildlife Rehabilitation Society](#)

Fun Facts:

- **The House sparrow is part of the weaver finch family of birds which is not related to North America's native sparrows**
- **The males have a grey crown and underparts, white cheeks, a black throat bib and black between the bill and eyes. Females are brown with a streaked back (buff, black and brown)**
- **These little birds have only been in Alberta for about 100 years made themselves at home here by taking advantage of urban human environments, where food and home sites are provided**
- **In Alberta, House sparrows can be found in backyards, parks, suburban and cultivated fields, and urban areas. They are rarely found in far northern areas**
- **House sparrows make untidy nests in boxes (sometimes taking over another bird's nest), under eaves, in crevasses in buildings or masonry or stone structures, in spruce trees, and, in cold climates, even in the heat vent outlets of commercial laundries. These birds may raise up to three broods a season**



Chipping sparrow

During the breeding season, the female develops a bare patch on her abdomen that fills with fluid. This allows more efficient transfer of heat to the eggs.

Chipping sparrows **get their common name from the sharp "chip"** call that they make frequently as they forage and interact with others. Variations on this **"chip"** call are used for contact calls, threats, or begging.



White-crowned sparrow

Because males learn the songs they grew up with and do not travel far from where they were raised, song dialects frequently form. Males on the edge of two dialects may be bilingual and able to sing both dialects.



White-throated sparrow

Individuals almost always mate with a bird of the opposite morph. Males of both color types prefer females with white stripes, and both kinds of females prefer tan-striped males.



Savannah sparrow

Savannah Sparrows are able runners; once discovered, they drop into the grass and dart away. It is named after Savannah, Georgia, where one of the first specimens of this bird was collected.



Dos and Don'ts of Nest Photography

You should always photograph birds responsibly. But you have to be extra responsible during nesting season.



Do your research

Spend some time learning about your subject before you head out. What are the threats to the young? What do the birds eat? What eats them? Is the species a skittish, furtive nester? What is its conservation status? If your subject is threatened or endangered, minimizing your disturbance is even more critical.

Photos and text: Melissa Groo

Learn to read the signs

Ethical bird photography requires being constantly aware of the behavior of our subjects, and on the lookout for signs of stress or fear. These may vary across species, but common distress behavior may include a stiff upright posture and a widening of the eyes (particularly with owls); attempts to look as big as possible, sometimes with wings flared out; and warning vocalizations. Do the parents fly away and not return? If they're avoiding the nest because you're close, the unprotected nestlings or eggs could be threatened by the hot sun or chilly temperatures. A photographer once set up a blind near an American White Pelican rookery, unintentionally flushing the parents, which stayed away all day. Hundreds of chicks perished in the direct sun.

I've heard photographers in Florida complain about waiting at an owl nest for hours, frustrated that they're unable to get the "food delivery" shot. What people may not realize is that parents could either be afraid of them or instinctively reluctant to draw attention to the nest by returning to it. If an hour or two has passed with no sign of the parent, retreat a good distance to see if you're what's keeping the parents away.

Keep your distance

Telephoto lenses are a good choice, since you can shoot from a distance. But how far away do you need to be? There's really no hard-and-fast rule. Some backyard nests, for example, can be approached much less intrusively than, say, a woodland warbler's nest in the forest. The sensitivity of individual birds can also vary within the same species, depending on location. Many of Florida's Great Horned Owls appear quite comfortable near humans, while in other parts of the country they can be very sensitive to disturbance. A robin's nest or a Mourning Dove's nest in your front yard can bear close scrutiny. A kingfisher's nest on a riverbank, or a kestrel's wood box, cannot.

Some photographers may be tempted to turn to drones for close-up nest shots, but these devices can pose risks, creating alarm and stress in nestlings or their parents, or causing injury to the birds in the case of operator or technical error or if the birds attack the drone. In fact, largely to protect wildlife, drones are banned in all national parks and refuges, and in many state and local parks.

Dos and Don'ts of Nest Photography

For birds that are skittish at the nest, blinds are advised. Pop-up hunting blinds are one option; higher-end blinds made expressly for photographers are another. Set the blind up as far in advance as possible—days or even weeks—so the birds get used to it. Some photographers say that having two people enter the blind and then having one leave can sometimes fool the bird into thinking the blind is empty. There are also body blinds that are a lot more portable and yield a smaller profile. Last, cars can make a great “movable blind.” Many times birds are more comfortable when you're in your car than on foot.

Protect nests from predators

The biggest threat to eggs and chicks, even when the parents are present, is predators. For nests hidden from plain view, visits should be kept to a minimum to avoid damage to vegetation and the creation of pathways that predators can follow. Never move or remove anything around the nest. All too often, photographers take shears and cut away vegetation from around a nest in order to get a clear line of sight and a “cleaner” image. Those very branches or leaves are likely providing essential camouflage from predators, or protection from wind, rain and sun. The bird chose that site precisely for its particular cover.

Never remove nestlings or eggs from a nest

This goes without saying—but it still needs to be said! Handling the young or the eggs to better arrange your photo is just plain wrong.

Consider the cumulative impact of photographers

Repeated visits by multiple photographers have a cumulative impact. If a nesting bird is disturbed often enough, it may abandon its nest (and eggs). Sometimes it's clear that lots of birders or other photographers have visited a nest. In that case, you should be ready to simply forego this photographic opportunity.

Protect nest sites *after* you have taken the photo

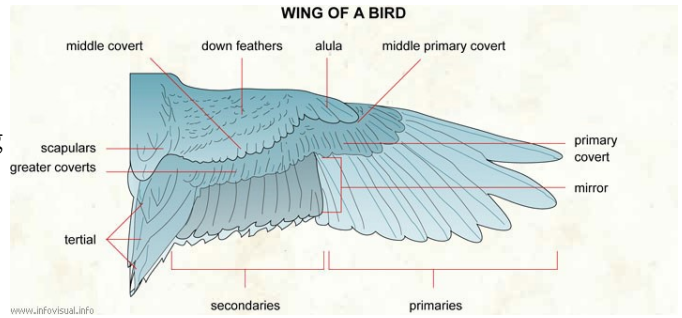
Before publishing or sharing images of nesting birds, especially if they're threatened or endangered, remove all GPS-embedded data from the image. Thinking of sharing your photo on social media? Keep in mind it is our responsibility to protect sensitive areas and species by refraining from indiscriminately disclosing their location, as the general public may not understand the potentially mortal implications of approaching a nest site.



BIRD ANATOMY



The alula is the bird's "thumb" positioned on the top edge of the wing and covered with three to five small feathers depending on the species. Normally it lays flat on the wind and is hard to see, but birds raise their alulas to prevent a stall during slow flight (see photo). In this position the air can flow faster over the top of the wing, creating lift when the wing is perpendicular to the ground.



Big airplanes solve the same problem of creating lift with movable parts called "slats" that act like alulas. Look out the window of a jet before take-off and you'll see the slats have been moved away from the leading edge of the wing. Lift!

So when you see a bird landing or attacking, look for its alulas.

A few photos of "Sir Jade 1 of Garrison"

Hummingbird peeing (pooping was different; like a spurt shooting out backwards)



He liked things to perch on, small things - his feet were quite silly and small



Feeder just hovering over the bird bath, skimming it, but not resting on it

Second best option - chick heating pad (rated for outdoor use- thermostatically heated)

Feeder was just hovering over the pad - skimming it



Sadly when the bitter cold of winter hit Calgary on January 24, 2021 Sir Jade 1 of Garrison was never seen again

Covid-19 PPE litter is killing wildlife



An American robin entangled in a face mask in British Columbia by Sandra Denisuk



Animals are fatally ingesting or becoming entangled in discarded latex gloves and disposable face masks, while others have started building their homes using the same material, researchers said.

"As always with these single-use items, you're not really looking after them and they end up in the environment really soon. They start becoming a real problem," Auke-Florian Hiemstra, a biologist at the Naturalis Biodiversity Center in Leiden and co-author of the report, told CNN Tuesday.

"I think it's ironic that the materials that protect us are so harmful to the animals around us," Hiemstra added.

Scientists found a fish trapped in a medical latex glove in a canal cleanup in the Dutch city of Leiden in August, which prompted researchers to explore whether there was a larger problem.

The biologists found hundreds of discarded face masks in Leiden's historical canals over the course of a few months and soon realized a worrying picture was emerging.

The researchers have so far recorded more than 50 incidences globally where wildlife was harmed, but Hiemstra warned the actual number is likely to be far larger. Those affected are not confined to small fish and birds, Hiemstra said, rather the entire animal kingdom will suffer from Covid-19 litter.

Using social media, local newspapers and international news sites, researchers gathered examples of how animals were interacting with coronavirus waste.

Veterinarians, birdwatchers, and animal rescue centers from across the world reported dogs, monkeys, hedgehogs and even penguins had ingested or entangled themselves in PPE, while birds have been building their nests using face masks, gloves and tissue paper, said the report.



A perch that became trapped in a discarded glove was found during a canal cleanup in the Netherlands. Photograph: Auke-Florian Hiemstra



Crescent Point Energy is teaming up with the Calgary Zoo by donating \$150,000 to the Calgary Zoo's conservation work in preserving the endangered Burrowing owl. Of that, \$100,000 will go towards the construction of a new research and breeding facility at the zoo's Wildlife Conservation Centre located south of Calgary whose focus will be on conserving Burrowing owls.

The remaining \$50,000 will support the research and re-introduction work carried out through the Saskatchewan Species at Risk program.

Five years ago, the zoo launched a program known as head-starting in which young owls are taken into captivity where they're nurtured and given a better chance of survival before being released into the wild.

Burrowing owls are considered an indicator species whose population health can reflect the condition of their surrounding habitat.

Bill Kaufmann, March 30, 2021

Spotting 3 species of chickadee marks rare 'triple crown'

Naturalist Brian Keating experienced something rare earlier this month—the sighting of three species of chickadees in one day.

Keating spotted the first two species while out for the day cross-country skiing in Kananaskis, and spotted the third one after getting back to Calgary.

Keating and his wife had spotted the Boreal and Mountain chickadees when they were cross country skiing along the Smith-Dorrien Highway up to the Great Divide (Trail). Then when they got home, they spotted the Black-capped chickadee.

The fourth species, the one they did not spot, is the rare, Chestnut-backed chickadee. There have been only 17 recorded sightings so far in Alberta.

The last one was by Myrna Pearman who actually photographed all four species of Chickadees in Water Valley at a feeder there, and that was in 2018.



Photos by Dr. Brian Keating

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



Bahama nuthatch

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.



The Bahama Nuthatch is currently the rarest bird in the world as none have been seen since 2018. That year, after an exhaustive search, researchers were delighted to find a pair of Bahama Nuthatches together and a few more individuals. Prior to this, no Bahama Nuthatch had been seen since 2016 because the frequent hurricanes in the Bahamas – as well as invasive species and tourist developments – have caused extreme habitat loss. Unfortunately, after Hurricane Dorian hit in 2019, much of the ornithology community believe that the Bahama Nuthatch is now extinct. A viable captive breeding program for the Bahama Nuthatch was never established and there are only fewer than two dozen specimens in museum collections around the world.



Dr. David Bird and Dr. Rodger Titman's

The Bird Course—a virtual 2 day course

Saturday June 5 & Saturday June 12

Sign up at www.tws-west.org



Join David Bird and Rodger Titman for a one-of-a-kind opportunity to acquire a great deal of knowledge about birds with no pressure. Two jam-packed Saturdays, a week apart, will delve into everything ornithological, from how feathers work to how birds do it.

The course will be held virtually over Zoom, on two Saturdays (June 5 and 12), starting at 8AM and lasting until 4:15PM Pacific Time. Participants will watch presentations, and have access to interact with two world-renown ornithologists.



www.ellisbirdfarm.ca

Hours of operation

WE ARE OPEN MONDAY OF THE MAY LONG WEEKEND TO MONDAY OF THE SEPTEMBER LONG WEEKEND

Tuesday through Sunday 11:00 am to 5:00 pm

Holiday Mondays 11:00 am to 5:00 pm

Please note that Ellis Bird Farm is closed on Mondays



2021 Nature Festival - May 10-16

Registration Opens April 16

PRESENTERS & TRIP LEADERS

INCLUDING DR. BRIAN KEATING

2021 WEEK AT A GLANCE

Check out Wings online auction

Calendar of Events

CHECK OUT

wingsovertherockies.org

Frank Lake



Directions

From the High River overpass on Highway 2, proceed east on Highway 23 for 5.1 km. There is a turnoff on the south side of the road that will take you to the main access gate and parking lot. During open hours, vehicles can proceed through this gate and continue for 1.6 km to the viewing blind.

The gates to Frank Lake are now officially open! As you visit Frank Lake, please be mindful of following directives included on posted signage that will help keep every one safe. These include:

- Keeping a safe social distancing of 2 metres
- Avoid congested areas. The boardwalk and viewing blind at Frank Lake are closed
- Visitors must take all garbage home with them. Nothing is to be left behind
- Day use and foot access only

Clifford E. Lee Nature Sanctuary



Located 33 km southwest of Edmonton's city centre, the Clifford E. Lee Nature Sanctuary protects 348 acres of marshland, open meadow, aspen parkland and pine forest. The varied habitats of the Sanctuary attract a diversity of animals, including more than one hundred bird species, and provide excellent opportunities for wildlife viewing.

The boardwalk and connected upland trails are easily navigated in summer by all skill levels, but they are not considered wheelchair accessible.

The Sanctuary is open to the public, but due to the Covid19 situation, visitors are asked to:

- Hike to the right when the boardwalk divides: i.e. walk the boardwalk in a counter-clockwise direction
- Maintain 2 metres physical distancing on trails and at viewing platforms
- Take home any of your litter or trash—if you pack it in, please pack it home too
- Washroom facilities will no longer be available on site—please plan ahead
- Carry and use your own hand sanitizer
- If you are feeling unwell, please stay home

Note to visitors: please do not leave bird seed on the picnic tables and viewing platforms of the Sanctuary. The site is a natural habitat for wild animals and it is best that wildlife not be fed. The picnic tables are for guests to sit, relax and have lunch.

Seminars

Mason Bees



Kris Brown-Schoepp

Thursday, May 6, 2021

@6:00pm

Cost: \$10.00 +fees and GST

Thursday, May 20, 2021

@6:00pm

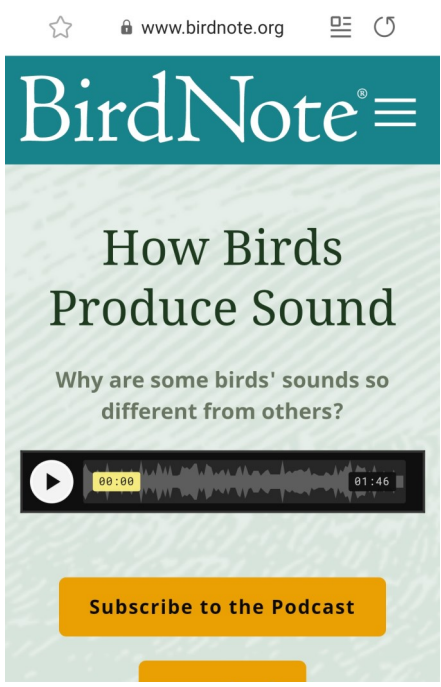
Cost: \$10.00 +fees and GST

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.



Go onto birdnote.org and listen to daily bird sounds with commentary or sign up for podcasts or the newsletter



A free educational mobile game about birds & conservation.

Award-winning teen birdwatcher launches mobile game in which players explore birding hotspots

CBC News · Posted: Apr 17, 2021

Find the Birds, co-created by Coquitlam birder Adam Dhalla, 15, was released Monday, with the first territory available for players to virtually explore being Sagua-ro National Park in Arizona.

As your avatar checks out the terrain, your mission is to notice birds along the way. When a player spots a feathered friend, the game rewards them with an interactive collector card that tells them all about the species they have spotted.



Question: Due to travel restrictions in most places, some of us have had to resort to enjoying life in and around the home and our local neighbourhood. Bird watching and feeding the birds are certainly one way to do this, but I have heard recently that these activities hold even greater benefits for us. Could you please elaborate on this.

Answer: I have always felt like a pretty lucky guy to have studied birds all of my professional life. But if you have discovered the magic of bird watching and/or bird feeding in your lifetime, you too are a fortunate person! A new study that just came out in March from Germany has found that having a wide variety of birds to enjoy in one's surroundings actually increases one's happiness or well-being! A team of scientists from several institutions used data from a survey of no less than 26,000 people from 26 European countries to study the connection between avian diversity and satisfaction with one's life. "Life satisfaction" in essence, the happiest Europeans are those who get to enjoy numerous kinds of birds in their daily lives or at least live in fairly natural environments that are home to a wide variety of bird species. If you are still not convinced that having lots of different kinds of birds in your immediate surroundings can increase your life satisfaction, how about the fact that it might help you to live longer! According to another study this past March, the ambience of bird song in nature can actually improve one's health! A team of scientists in Canada and the U.S. found a 184 percent improvement in overall health outcomes by lowering blood pressure, augmenting cognitive performance and even reducing pain. And another recent study from the California Polytechnic University found that placing speakers playing a variety of pre-recorded bird songs and calls on hiking trails improved the outdoor experience in general. In other words, hearing birdsong while hiking outdoors improved people's overall well-being more than if they hiked without hearing birds chirping. Of course, the biggest challenge in all of this is to halt the serious decline in many of our bird species all over the world. Without them, what will happen to the well-being of the planet?

--- David M. Bird, Ph.D., Emeritus Professor of Wildlife Biology, McGill University www.askprofessorbird.com

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



Bird Seed Truck



Crowfoot YMCA/Arena

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

Every Wednesday 2:00pm to 5:30pm

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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 April, May and June 2021 your donations will go to:

Ellis Bird Farm in Lacombe

Wishlist - ellisbirdfarm.ca



What Is It?



These eerily intimate shots, largely of the arachnid's psychedelic eyes in a Spanish town, make the jumping spiders look more like an alien species than a creature here on earth



Looks can be deceiving—answer in June 2021 newsletter



© Provided by Daily Mail In the Asia-Pacific section, scales collected from the wings of over 40 species of butterflies were photographed individually and thoughtfully assembled into the winning image from XinPei Zhang, China . Each butterfly shows complex details, coloring and contrast, and have all been intricately placed to create the mesmerizing image

Mason Bee Supplies



THE WILD BIRD STORE

We carry all the supplies you will need to produce your own mason bees

*Staying
Connected* -----



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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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Monday, May 24, 2021

CLOSED

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.



NESTFLIX

The Wild Bird Store

Is the warranty & repair depot for:

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Aspects® Feeders

Droll Yankee® Bird Feeders

DROLL YANKEES
The World's Best Bird Feeders®



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And the warranty depot for:

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Scopes

HAPPY BIRDING!