

Backyard Birding Specialists



SOMETHING exciting - check it out starting on page 5

American kestrel

The American kestrel, also called the sparrow hawk, is the smallest and most common falcon in North America.



male



female

Kestrels, like a few other birds of prey, are very good at hovering. With the help of a good headwind, kestrels can flap their wings vigorously and maneuver their tail to stay in one spot, like a helicopter in mid-air, while searching the ground for prey. Though it is a small bird, the kestrel needs strength, agility, and stamina to maintain this static flight. When you see kestrels in flight, notice how their wings, tail feathers, heads, bodies and even feet all change shape and direction to help this amazing bird achieve such aerial feats.

As you may know, all birds of prey have amazing eyesight. Kestrels, like some other birds, can see ultraviolet light, which is invisible to the human eye. This ability helps them find and catch prey. This does not mean that kestrels see animals that we don't, but they do see rodents' urine trails, which reflect ultraviolet light. To a kestrel, these urine trails are like neon arrows pointing to their favorite restaurant. Kestrels might even set up a territory in an area with lots of urine trails because this means there are lots of tasty meals running around.

Oppositely to other raptors, there is a definite sexual dimorphism with this species, meaning that the coloration of the feathers greatly varies between the sexes.

American Kestrels will use nest boxes, but do not use nesting materials. If the cavity floor is composed of loose material, the female hollows out a shallow depression there.



Kestrel nest boxes should be placed on a tree, post, or the side of a barn or outbuilding with the entrance hole 15 to 20 feet above the ground.

If you install a nest box for American kestrels you should also commit to monitoring it. If left unattended, nest boxes can be taken over by invasive species like Starlings and House sparrows.



Read more on page 2....

Throughout the 1900s, North America's littlest falcon was also described as the continent's most common and widespread. In the Montreal area, they lived in the suburbs drawn by unused fields and abundant food.

Students and professors with McGill's Avian Science and Conservation Centre bred the Kestrels in captivity for nearly four decades starting in 1970s, placing them in small cages in cardboard boxes. They reproduced well, and students and teachers bred between 2500 and 3000 American kestrels over 40 years.

And yet their numbers have plummeted in Montreal and throughout the northeastern region of the continent, mirroring the worrying free fall of multiple avian species. It's estimated the Kestrels' numbers dropped 50 per cent between 1966 and 2015, according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey.

"It's like a big black hole— we have no idea why they're declining," said Dr. David Bird, professor emeritus of wildlife biology at McGill and a former bird columnist for the Montreal Gazette, who created and ran the university's prolific breeding colony. "We saw after a while that they were breeding well, but the youngsters weren't coming back. They weren't surviving. What's particularly interesting is that the story of the Kestrel is happening to other bird species."

Bird populations in North America have been plummeting for the last half-century, experiencing a net loss of nearly three billion birds, or 29 per cent of their total, since 1970, according to a study published in Science magazine in October 2020.

What's peculiar about the American kestrel is it's faring very differently from other birds of prey. Contrary to many species, North America's raptors have experienced remarkable comeback. The numbers for birds like Peregrine falcons, Cooper's hawks, Merlins and Bald eagles are up 110 per cent since 1970 because the pesticide DDT, which had been thinning their egg shells and bringing the birds close to extinction, was banned.

Their gain is likely part of the American kestrel's decline, as larger raptors like Cooper's hawks and Barn owls prey on the smaller falcon, culling their numbers and pushing the Kestrels out of areas where they would normally breed and live.

Despite the success of the McGill Kestrel breeding colony, the project was suspended in 2010 because it was considered a costly band-aid solution that was failing to tackle the roots of the problem. Scientists now are focusing resources on pesticide research and tracking studies, to see where the Kestrels are being lost during their migrations.

McGill's Dr. Bird suggests concerned residents can do their part by putting up nest boxes in their backyards, trying to preserve as much wild habitat around their homes as possible (particularly when building a new home), and making efforts to combat climate change to improve the future prospects of birds—and ourselves.

David Bird, professor emeritus of wildlife biology at McGill University, installs a nesting box for American kestrels in 1999. PHOTO BY DAVE SID-AWAY /Montreal Gazette file photo



You learn
something
new
every day

Eclipse plumage, typical of ducks but found in other birds as well, is dull, female-like plumage worn by the male for a month or more in summer after breeding. It “eclipses” his usual bright plumage. He soon molts and is flightless until he grows new wing feathers.

There’s a scientific reason. Most birds lose a few feathers at a time, replacing them piecemeal without seriously disrupting their lifestyle. But ducks shed all of their outer feathers when they molt, including their wing feathers. For a few weeks, they become flightless. Males acquire the same camouflage as the females, a useful protection while they cannot fly. An observer can distinguish a male mallard at this time only by his slightly larger body and large, yellow bill, in contrast to her orange and black bill. Males at this hapless stage tend to gather in small groups and skulk along shores with reeds and grasses, laying low until new flight feathers develop. After those new wing feathers grow back the males enter a second molt into their bright breeding plumage. The second molt is less severe, and the ducks retain their ability to fly and escape from predators. All of this happens in timely fashion—in the fall, just before the duck dating season opens.

Mallard drakes in eclipsed plumage



Calgary named 1 of 4 bird-friendly cities by Nature Canada

Kevin Green
CTV News Calgary Video Journalist
Calgary

The designation came into effect in Calgary on May 7, 2021—along with Toronto, Vancouver and London, Ontario—one day ahead of World Migratory Bird Day.

To be certified, cities must meet targets in three broad categories;

Human-related threats include bird strikes on buildings and pets either preying on birds or destroying their habitat. While people may be aware that bird strikes on high-rise buildings are a serious problem, far fewer realize that windows in our homes pose an equal threat.

The other main human-related threat is from pets. Cats in particular are estimated to kill up to 200 million birds every year in Canada alone according to a study done by the federal government in 2013.

Bird strikes, in comparison, kill an average of 25 million birds per year.

Calgary’s responsible pet ownership bylaw does apply to cats, as well as dogs, and requires owners to license their pets and ensure they stay on their own property.

Unleashed dogs damage nesting sites, often by roaming off leash through tall grass, also poses a problem for birds, though it is not as great an issue as free roaming cats.

Habitat protection includes restoration and climate resiliency. This includes using native plants in public planning and putting protections for the urban forest on both public and private land to ensure birds have sufficient space to nest.

The City of Calgary has a biodiversity strategic plan, which is hoping to naturalize many public spaces around the city planting native grasses and flora in at least 20 per cent of the areas in an attempt to attract and retain birds.

Education which involves individual action. John McFaul, president of Nature Calgary said people can naturalize their backyard, maybe plant some more trees, let the grass grow, let it go kind of wild. You can put up birdhouses and bird feeding is a good idea. We can embrace the beauty of imperfection. Leave dandelions for a little bit. Be very careful with pesticides and insecticides because you might not like creepy crawlies, to somebody else they’re a snack. A pretty important snack when feeding hatchlings in the spring.

Plant more native plants, because they support the kind of food insects, and seeds that native birds require as food.

Calgary is maybe a stop-off point where these birds are migrating through, or it may be their destination. Let’s ask the question: is there more that we can do?

VANCOUVER — A little yellow bird's rescue from the brink of extinction in British Columbia hinges on an oft-overlooked wild flower in the province's Okanagan region, according to one Canadian government researcher.

The importance of local wild roses emerged over a nearly 20-year experiment concentrating on the yellow-breasted chat, a tiny bird whose characteristics and precarious status have preoccupied scientists for decades.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the population at one breeding site on the grounds of the Okanagan Valley's En'owkin Centre stood at just one pair.

Today it's grown to roughly 22 pairs, a phenomenon Environment and Climate Change Canada researcher Christine Bishop largely attributes to the rejuvenation of wild roses in the area.

Bishop said human appetite for shoreline development, combined with livestock grazing, led to the depletion of the prickly wild rose bushes she described as providing the birds' ideal nesting conditions.

"They nest in forests along shorelines. And that's one of the key reasons why population declined," she said. "Everybody wants to develop or live near waterfront. ... It's definitely a habitat that's under threat continually."

Bishop said yellow chat populations exist beyond the borders of the En'owkin centre, but have been all but eradicated in Ontario and go largely unmonitored in the Prairies. Bishop estimated B.C.'s total yellow chat population at about 250 pairs.

Hina Alam, The Canadian Press



On the road again.....



Western grebes



Western meadowlark



Black-necked stilt

We had been hearing that many bird species had been returning early this year, so we decided to check it out. Rain, snow, cloudy and cold does not stop a "birder" and we were treated to some wonderful sightings. We headed first of all south near the Leighton Centre, to check out one of favourite ponds where we were told the Red-necked grebes were already nesting, but they were no where to be found. Lots of Shovellers, Greater scaups and Wigeons which always delight and Mountain bluebirds—not the happiest of birds what with the cold weather. So we headed down towards Millarville, as once again we had been told the Ruddy ducks were back. Disappointed—no Ruddy ducks. Decided to head down to the hamlet of Hartell just north of Longview and then headed west and took some very strange roads that intertwined with lots of pump jacks. Always on the lookout for the Great blue heron, we were finally rewarded, although he was a fair distance away, standing like a centurion waiting for his next meal. Decided to head further south and cut across to High River to enjoy dinner at the Hitchin Post—they never disappoint either and if you have never been, you are in for a treat, but it has been around for years and years, so prepare to wait as everything is cooked to order.

So being close to Frank Lake we can never drive by without a visit. This was pure birding heaven. The American white pelicans and Double-crested cormorants were in abundance and although it was overcast, cold and drizzling, the birds were there in all their glory. Meadowlarks, Canada geese with goslings, Pintails, Shovellers, Sandpipers and Godwits, Black-necked stilts, Avocets, American coots chasing everyone around like a big bully, White-faced ibis, finally Ruddy ducks and something we had never seen: the Western grebe.

We are trying to learn to identify the hawks and raptors that call Alberta home during the summer and made a good start with a sighting of an American kestrel and a pair of Swainson's hawks.

This was a Mother's Day to remember—and it didn't cost a thing except a 1/4 tank of gas, dinner at the Hitchin Post and a few bucks to get the car washed because where we went it was very muddy. Best Mother's Day gift I could ever have received.

SPEAKER SERIES

The Wild Bird Store has once again gathered together a group of birding/nature professionals who will treat you to a series of presentations that will be both inspiring and educating to the Calgary Birding community. Please go to [Eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca) where you can register for individual or all of the presentations.

Due to Covid19 restrictions still in place, these presentations will be through “Zoom” but we suggest you sign up early as there are a limited number of spots available for each



www.myrnapearman.com

Myrna Pearman recently retired as the Biologist and Site Services Manager at Ellis Bird Farm Ltd. (1987 to 2020) where she spearheaded many conservation, education and research initiatives. A keen photographer and writer, she has authored/ co-authored numerous books, writes nature photo essays for several magazines, and is actively involved with the Red Deer River Naturalists. She was recently named a Fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society.

Beauty Everywhere:

Finding Nature in Our Own Backyards.

Thursday, September 9, 2021 6:00pm

\$15.00 + fees and GST

With travel restrictions being imposed over the past year, nature seekers and photographers have been spending more time in their own backyards and gardens, and have been exploring and appreciating local parks and natural areas. Myrna will talk about nature and the remarkable biodiversity that can be found in both the urban and rural areas of Alberta.

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JAY INGRAM Canadian science author, broadcaster and public speaker

The Future of Urban Wildlife

Thursday, September 16, 2021 6:00pm

\$15.00 + fees and GST

Two out of every three people will be city dwellers by the middle of this century. That's about 6.5 billion people worldwide. Over the same period of time existing urban wildlife will continue to share this space, and new contenders will undoubtedly arrive. Of those, some will be accidentally brought by humans, some will be introduced deliberately and some might even make their way on their own.

The question is, how will the humans handle it. There's good evidence that a city with plenty of parkland and diverse environments can support biodiversity - but will the cities of the future take that into account? And what about the wildlife, plants and even microbes that become urbanites - will they start to evolve into specialized urban versions of their wild cousins?

Urban wildlife, from the madness of introducing all the birds of Shakespeare to North America to that provider of ecosystem services, the coyote.

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Gavin McKinnon With a passion for birding, Gavin brings a young and enthusiastic perspective to Alberta’s birding community.

BIRDING ALBERTA

Thursday, September 23, 2021 6:00pm

\$15.00 + fees and GST

“Alberta has a diverse array of habitat, from the Rocky Mountains in the west to the Shortgrass Prairie in the east. Due to this wide range of habitats, hundreds of bird species can be found within the province. In this presentation Gavin McKinnon will provide an overview of his favorite birding hotspots as well as some tips on how to find a few of the most elusive species. Gavin will also share some of his favorite birding experiences from these regions.”

Tickets must be purchased in advance through [Eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca)

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TOM HINCE—is a former birding segment host on the Daily Planet with the Discovery Channel in Canada, and communications specialist with Parks Canada (at four different national parks). For the last two decades, he has organized and guided birding tours and safaris around the world (with his company [BirdwithTom.com](https://www.birdwithtom.com)). Tom has guided ten trips to the Yukon and the Dempster Highway and he will return there again in June 2022 for another adventure.

North to the Dempster Highway

Thursday, September 30, 2021 6:00pm

\$15.00 + fees and GST

The Dempster highway is the greatest wilderness drive on the continent. Where else can you drive for hours and not see or hear ANY signs of humans except the road you travel on? No buildings. No people except the odd passing car every hour or two. No noisy chainsaws or jet skis. Just breathtaking scenery, solitude, and the luring possibility of epic encounters with mammals and birds. Just getting to the start of the “highway” is a challenge. Our journey will take us on the Alaska highway in northern BC through the southern Yukon and onward to the Dempster. It will end (as the newly opened extension does) at Tuktoyaktuk on the Arctic Ocean. And yes, there will be a few surprises like flat tires along the way.

Tickets must be purchased in advance through [Eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca)

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BRIAN KEATING —Calgary Zoo’s Honorary Conservation Advisor to their outreach projects

Former Adjunct Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the U of C

Owner of www.goingwild.org & co-produce of www.greatBIGnature.com

INSPIRED BY NATURE

Thursday, October 7, 2021 6:00pm

\$20.00 + fees and GST

Feeling overwhelmed? Feeling uptight? Feeling like the world is coming apart?

Get out. That’s right. Get out and go for a walk in nature. It’s time for a good hit of vitamin “N”.

This past year and a half has been difficult for all of us but one constant that we could all depend on was the restorative powers of nature. Birds continue to migrate, sing and reproduce. Mammals continued to walk our forests, valleys and grasslands.

Brian will take you to some local and international wild landscapes, and introduce you to some of the creatures who inhabit them. You’ll venture into places that he’s explored and learned from during the past two years.

He’ll first spend some detailed time our Western Canadian landscapes, taking a surprisingly intimate look at some of the wildlife in our backyard, before venturing overseas to explore some biologically rich places in Asia, Africa and South America.

This is a celebration of the wild places that still exist on our beautiful planet, and is designed to inspire and enthuse, offering hope for a better tomorrow.

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CHRIS FISCHER (MSc, PBIOL) is perhaps best known as the author of a series of books including "Birds of Alberta" - one of the most successful made-in-Alberta books in publishing history. He is regarded as one of our leading influencer for all things nature and is a frequent voice in Alberta media on wildlife and conservation stories. He has written and hosted documentary and TV series and travelled to all seven continents guiding adventure seekers to explore wildlife and natural environments,

Birds: Our Poets of Nature

Thursday, October 14, 2021 6:00pm

\$15.00 + fees and GST

Go looking for our Alberta birds and quite often you end up finding yourself.

Join "Birds of Alberta" author Chris Fisher as he celebrates our province's most loved birds. Their diverse beauty and ecological persistence has provided Albertans a vital, extra sense of wonder and meaning during these recent challenging times. Birds are our most accessible and authentic ties to the Natural world - and Alberta's birds have never before been as meaningful and valued part of our lives.

Tickets must be purchased in advance through [Eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca)

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Kirsten Pearson, BSc., P. Biol., RPBio

Josh Sullivan Wildlife Biologist/Field Coordinator

Fundamentals of Migration: The Five Ws.

Thursday, October 21, 2021 6:00pm

Tickets \$15.00 + fees and GST

Let's dive into the who, what, when, where, and whys of avian migration! We'll cover form, function, migration routes, adaptations to long haul flights, some of our most interesting migrants, and more!

Tickets must be purchased in advance through [Eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca)

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



Titicaca flightless grebe

Found on the altiplano of Peru and Bolivia. As its name implies, its main population occurs on Lake Titicaca (a high-altitude

lake, which straddles the border between Peru and Bolivia).

It is entirely flightless, but will use wing-assisted running over considerable distances. It is an excellent diver.

The greatest threat to the species is the use of gill-nets in the lake. They frequently get caught in these nets and drown. Reed harvesting, tourist boats and contamination from urban waste and local mines are also adversely affecting the species.

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.





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.



It's a common sight: pelicans gliding along the waves, right by the shore. These birds make this kind of surfing look effortless, but actually the physics involved that give them a big boost are not simple.

Researchers at the University of California, San Diego have recently developed a theoretical model that describes how the ocean, the wind and the birds in flight interact in a recent paper in *Movement Ecology*.

The researchers found that Pelicans can completely offset the energy they expend in flight by exploiting wind updrafts generated by waves through what is known as wave-slope soaring. In short, by practicing this behavior, sea-birds take advantage of winds generated by breaking waves to stay aloft.

The model could be used to develop better algorithms to control drones that need to fly over water for long periods of time.

This can also aid for prediction for the winds generated by passing swell, which is important to physicists that study how the ocean and atmosphere interact in order to improve weather forecasting.

“Please note: our prices on certain bird seed products have increased due to a price increase from our vendor. We apologize for these price increases; however, we want to ensure that we are still able to provide our customers with top-quality products that they have come to expect from our store.”



Question:

Why do American dippers and Black-billed Magpies flash those white eyelids?

Answer:

This is not a straight-forward question. We must exercise caution if only because we are in fact talking about two very different eyelids! All birds have an upper and lower eyelid, but most, if not all birds, also have a third eyelid known as a nictitating membrane ostensibly for protecting the cornea and moistening the eye. According to my very best sources of information on the biology of these two birds, the American dipper has narrow white feathers on both the upper and lower eyelids that produce a white flash seen in field. They particularly like to blink these white eyelids while dipping in the water, and the more agitated they are, the more they do both. As for the black-billed magpie, that somewhat whitish flashing in their eyes is actually the nictitating membrane itself. But that membrane eventually ends up with a bright orange patch in the late fall of the hatch year. In the magpies it is apparently used to signal dominance in males. Two of them will stand lateral or facing one another with bills raised above sixty degrees while flashing those white nictitating membranes with the orange patch at one another. They can actually flash them independent of one another, doing it only on the side facing their opponent. Now back to those dippers. While no one is really sure of the function of the white eyelid flashing in that species, ornithologists speculate that that it is simply used to catch the attention of other dippers in the area as part of courtship, as a threat display, and/or as an alert-signal to warn of predators in the area. Who knows – it might even serve to show dominance, as seen in the magpies. Sounds like a great study for a graduate degree thesis!



American dipper



Black-billed magpie

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

ABOUT DR. DAVID BIRD

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



Crowfoot YMCA/Arena

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

Every Wednesday 2:00pm to 5:30pm

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



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

The Showroom is OPEN

A friendly reminder that face masks are mandatory for all indoor spaces and that restrictions as to customer capacity in store are in place as per AHS. 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.

We also offer these alternatives

CURB SIDE PICK UP: call, place and pay for your order at least 15 minutes prior to your arrival at The Wild Bird Store. 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.

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



Calgarians in city's SE concerned about osprey nest being moved by construction crews

UPDATE



Calvin Stuka

2h • 🌐



So a quick update about the Osprey nest in the construction site along the 22X because I know some people were concerned about the crew being too close to the nest. The nest was moved (presumably with permission from F&W) to a separate post just off the south side of the bridge. The pair seems to have found the new nest location and I saw them hanging out on it just yesterday. Hopefully that means they've accepted the new nest location and will be happy to live there instead.

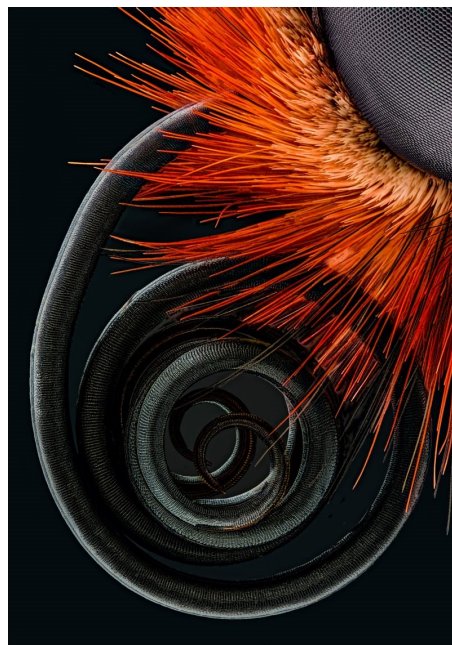
[Osprey nest relocation has Calgary birdwatchers concerned about hawk's survival | Watch News Videos Online \(globalnews.ca\)](https://www.globalnews.ca)

Click on above and open hyperlink to view video from Global news with Jill Croteau reporting

What Is It?



The owl moth (*Tethea ocularis*) is a [butterfly](#)



Answer in July
2021 newsletter

BIRD ANATOMY



The **eye-ring** of a bird is a ring of tiny feathers that surrounds the orbital ring, a ring of bare skin immediately surrounding a bird's eye. The eye-ring is often decorative, and its colour may contrast with adjoining plumage. The ring of feathers is sometimes incomplete, forming an eye arc. In the absence of a conspicuous eye-ring, the orbital ring of a bird is often referred to as the eye-ring. The bare orbital ring may be hardened or fleshy, or may form an eye-wattle. These are useful field marks in many bird species and the Eye-ringed flatbill, Eye-ringed tody-tyrant and Eye-ringed thistletail are examples of species named for either of these.

Photo to the left is a Hairy woodpecker with an obvious eye-ring



Eye-ringed flatbill



Little corella



Brown-throated wattle eye

Trans Mountain pipeline construction ordered paused in B.C. bird nesting area

Environment and Climate Change Canada has ordered a halt to construction of the Trans Mountain pipeline through a forest in Burnaby, B.C., until the end of bird nesting season.

The department said the order was issued following an enforcement officer's visit to the site prompted by complaints that nests of the Anna's hummingbird and other migratory birds were being damaged.

"Given that it is nesting season, migratory birds are particularly vulnerable at this time," it said in an emailed statement.

"Cutting vegetation and trees or carrying out other disruptive activities such as bulldozing or using chainsaws and heavy machinery in the vicinity of active nests will likely result in disturbance or destruction of those nests."

It said construction is paused until Aug. 20.

Sarah Ross of the Community Nest Finding Network said the group began noticing hummingbirds in the Burnaby area in February. Anna's hummingbirds are some of the first birds to nest and arrive as early as January, she noted.

"In the small area that we're monitoring, I'd say there's probably a dozen nests," Ross said in an interview. Her group is watching a third of the area pipeline builders have been told to avoid.

"We've been really surprised at the density of hummingbird nests in this area. It's a really rich habitat for them. It has all the things that they need — close to clean water and has all the blossoms of the salmonberry."

The group reported the presence of nests in the area to Trans Mountain and federal and provincial environmental authorities, she said.



Photo by: (John Antczak/AP)

Eagles have nested in southeast Calgary's Carburn Park for years, and regularly draw local birdwatchers for glimpses of the bird of prey.

However, it appears a prominent eagles' nest in the park was taken over recently by Canada geese.

And in a twist, birdwatcher Diane Stinson told CBC News that the geese were dive-bombed by a couple of eagles that seemed perturbed at their presence last week.

"There were these two mature bald eagles flying, and they charged right at the nest," said Stinson, a member of Nature Calgary and leader with the Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park birding group.

"The geese flew up and took off down this side channel and the bald eagles were chasing them."

'Everybody was pretty riveted'

Stinson has been birdwatching for nine years. She said she has witnessed eagles go after all kinds of birds — from flocks of mallards to gaggles of geese — but never in a nest.

"It was pretty amazing. We had a group of 10 people ... and everybody was pretty riveted, seeing this occur," Stinson said.

The confrontation left her with plenty of questions: Did the geese aggressively force the eagles from the nest? Were there eagle eggs in the nest? If so, are they still there? Still viable?

After all the effort the eagles went through to build the nest, only to apparently lose it to Canada geese, has naturalist Brian Keating asking questions, too.

"I've never seen anything like that before, and I wouldn't have thought it possible," Keating said.

"It just goes to show that geese have very, very strong personalities, and they are very big and very aggressive."

Still, eagles are capable of killing a Canada goose, Keating noted.

Melanie Whalen, the director of animal care at the Calgary Wildlife Rehabilitation Society, did not see what happened. But she said if Canada geese did kick out the eagles, it was a courageous act, and more likely occurred when the nest wasn't in use.

"It's not common that waterfowl would take over an eagle's nest, but geese are opportunistic in finding a nesting site," Whalen said.

For Stinson, at least, incidents and rarities like these keep her birdwatching.

"That's the joy of being out and birding, and just being in nature," Stinson said. "You see exciting things almost every time you're out."

With files from Joel Dryden and Lucie Edwardson





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