

THE **WILD** BIRD STORE *Birding News*

Backyard Birding Specialists

July 2021



ALBERTA



American robin



San Lucas robin

The **American robin** is a migratory songbird of the thrush family, which also includes bluebirds and solitaires. It is the most abundant bird in North America ahead of Red-winged blackbirds, introduced European starlings, Mourning doves and House finches. It has seven subspecies, but only one of them, the San Lucas robin of Baja California is particularly distinctive, with pale gray-brown underparts.

Often considered harbingers of spring, not all American robins are migratory. While many northern robin populations migrate south during the winter in search of food, others remain somewhat local, forming groups that roam the countryside in search of the berries they prefer during the cold winter months. At night, these large and noisy flocks will roost in trees together.

Robin nests are often a target of parasitic Brown-headed Cowbirds, who lay their speckled eggs among the robin's eggs. But a study found that robins are extremely efficient at recognizing and removing these unwanted eggs from their nests before they hatch and become competition for robin chicks.

Robin roosts can be huge, sometimes including a quarter-million birds during winter. In summer, females sleep at their nests and males gather at roosts. As young robins become independent, they join the males. Female adults go to the roosts only after they have finished nesting

Cool Fact

Bright lights are making city robins sing their morning songs much before the crack of dawn, and their songs are becoming more high-pitched to overcome the din of traffic.

Early colonial settlers named the American Robin for its resemblance to the familiar but unrelated European Robin, which is smaller but also sports an orange breast and upright posture.



European robin



The robin is diurnal, although it has been reported to be active hunting insects on moonlit nights or near artificial light at night. Well known to British and Irish gardeners, it is relatively unafraid of people and drawn to human activities involving the digging of soil, in order to look out for earthworms and other food freshly turned up.

Male robins are noted for their highly aggressive territorial behaviour. They will fiercely attack other males and competitors that stray into their territories and have been observed attacking other small birds without apparent provocation. There are instances of robins attacking their own reflection.



On the road again.....

June 2021 was an exceptional month for birding. A trip to

Frank Lake to see baby Pelicans was unsuccessful, but there was still plenty to see. One of our favourites everywhere—Black-necked stilts along with Avocets. We saw the Black tern, and Phalaropes stirring things up as usual. We had arrived on the hottest evening of the year and those of you who venture out to Frank Lake know there is not a tree in sight. So our picnic detoured us to High River to sit in the shade. By the time we drove back to the lake, the sun was setting, it had cooled off and the Pelicans were coming in to roost for the night. Literally hundreds of them, but no babies that we could see. Once again we spotted the Western grebe and lots of White-faced ibis and of course the Ruddy ducks—the boys are back in town!

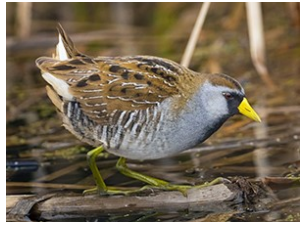


Another trip to Winchell Lake near Water Valley to check out the Common loons—they are nesting but no sign of eggs yet. Another return visit is planned. Great blue heron pair, Osprey and another sighting of the Great grey owl.

Just off of McKnight as the communities come to an end, is a great place to go birding and it never disappoints. While watching the Coots behaving badly, 2 Soras emerged from the reeds—sorry not fast enough to get a photo. Also another Grebe—this time the Pied billed and a massive Bald eagle nest. You don't have to go far for an excellent evening of birding in Calgary.



Pied-billed grebe



Sora



Canvasback with babies



Bald eagle nest

So the month of June proved to be a very exciting birding month. Eventually we started seeing babies and lots of them! Avocets, Black-necked stilts, Canvasbacks, Coots and Horned grebes with the babies riding on the back of Mom while Dad chased after them feeding at a wild pace.

We had gone out one night in search of Bobolinks but they were no where to be found. Lots of American robins and both Yellow head and Red-winged blackbirds, and the beautiful Buffleheads.



Bufflehead



Avocet and babies

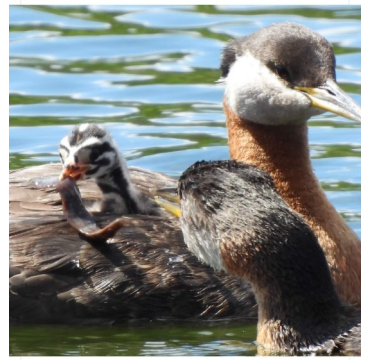


Black-necked stilt and baby

🏠 🔔 📁 👤 🗨️ ☰

Craig Purves asked a question in **Alberta Birds**.
15h • 🌐

Only child , and spoiled ? Leach after leach
june 20/ 20201
Edmonton
Red- necked grebe



1 Share

Thank you Craig Purves for allowing us to include this wonderful photo!

Bird's Nest Soup

Birds nest soup is, as the name suggests, made from birds nests, but not from the regular twigs and leaves type birds nest. It is made from a very particular nest made by a very particular and small swift. The so called Glossy Swiftlet makes its nest entirely from its own saliva, which when excreted from the swiftlet's mouth becomes sticky and the swift is able to build its tiny nest with it. It is hard to imagine how much spit a swift would have to produce, but produce it, it does. The Chinese see the swift as a remarkably clean bird because it never sits on the ground, and they believe this is born out by the fact that the nests they build are white. (Some of them are black but they are not as desirable.)



The nests are not, as most Americans assume, a thatch of twigs and grass such as a robin might manufacture. Rather, they are made of the birds' saliva, which hardens into cement-like threads. When collected, the nests contain liberal amounts of feathers and even droppings, but are carefully washed and cleaned until they are white strips that look more like sponges than nests.

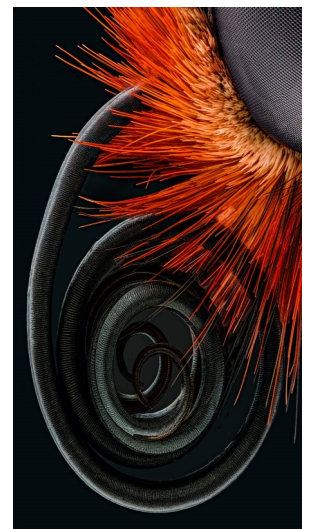
The nests were formerly harvested from caves, principally the enormous limestone caves at Borneo. With the escalation in demand these sources have been supplanted since the late-1990s by purpose-built nesting houses, usually reinforced concrete structures following the design of the Southeast Asian shop-house. These nesting houses are normally found in urban areas near the sea, since the birds have a propensity to flock in such places. It has become an expanding industry as is evident in such places as Thailand.

The contents of this cave are so valuable that the government has a guard living inside of it 24 hours a day. His home is a small hut perched on top of a huge mound of guano:



What Is It?

A butterfly proboscis. Jochen Schroeder/Nikon Small World



Beaks for Drilling

Designed to handle repeated hammering, woodpecker beaks can handle intense pressure. Between the bird's beak and a skull shape that perfectly protects its brain, a woodpecker doesn't have to worry about concussions while boring for food or creating a new home.



STEVE AND DAVE MASLOWSKI



STEVE AND DAVE MASLOWSKI

Beaks for Ripping

Certain meat-eating birds, such as [owls](#), hawks and [eagles](#), have hooked beaks, allowing them to tear up their meals. But they aren't the only ones with this special feature—vireos use their hooked beaks to help them hunt for caterpillars.



DANNY BROWN

Beaks for Cracking Seeds

Bird enthusiasts know sunflower seeds are popular with a variety of backyard visitors. Birds that have cone-shaped beaks have the ability to trap a seed, thanks to a special groove in their beaks, and crack it open. Using their tongues, these birds then nimbly separate the seed from the shell.



Beaks for Skimming

Look closely at a black skimmer and you may notice it seems to have an underbite. But that's not a hindrance for these birds—in fact, it helps them catch their food in a very distinct way. They fly while dragging their lower mandibles through water, hoping to scoop up a fish.

VICKI JAURON, BABYLON AND BEYOND/GETTY IMAGES

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



Cape rockjumper

Birders place a high value on spotting Rockjumpers, partly due to the challenge of finding them, but also because of their evident personality and entertaining social interactions.

Exist in an area called Alpine Fynbos, a specialized habitat from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth in South Africa. These birds are alpine habitat specialists and have a very specific range of temperatures. They have a low heat tolerance with juveniles being more sensitive to the heat than adults, and perhaps cannot drink enough water to make up for the water they lose in trying to stay cool when it's hot. Birds also struggle to continue foraging when it is hot, and produce smaller offspring at higher temperatures.

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.



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.



Medicine River WILDLIFE CENTRE

MRWC is a registered charity and your donations are not only greatly needed but tax-deductible as well. The support of our donors is what keeps us working to save Alberta's wildlife.



Caring for injured, orphaned, and compromised wild animals with the goal of returning them to appropriate wild habitats.

Living With Wildlife

In the [Living With Wildlife](#) section you can find information on species you might encounter, some common conflict situations, and their solutions.

We also have a Wildlife Conflict Specialist on staff to help resolve your concerns. If you require further advice or assistance, please complete and submit the following form, and you will receive a response within the next 1-2 days.

Deterrents

Wildlife friendly deterrents are an easy and humane solution. If the first one doesn't work, try another. For advice or assistance, contact our [Wildlife Conflict Specialist](#).



Medicine River Wildlife Centre



Jun 16 • 🌐

We are in awe by the generosity of [FortisAlberta](#) and their amazing team!

This company has not only donated a whopping 60 poles to begin the construction of our new Raptor Flight Compound, but have also dedicated the day to provide a crew of 20 people and the equipment to put the poles in place. We couldn't be more thankful... and excited!

You can give to this project right now at <https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/WebLink.aspx?name=E343083QE&id=15>



Subscribe for animal rescue and rehabilitation news, education updates, fundraiser info, and much more.

Visit www.medicinriverwildlifecentre.ca

www.medicinriverwildlifecentre.ca

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 July, August and September 2021 your donations will go to:

Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation (AIWC)
Madden, Alberta



[Wishlist - Alberta Institute For Wildlife Conservation](#)



**MEGA
CASH RAFFLE
FUNDRAISER**

Support local
wildlife in need



PATIENCE is key

Put up a feeder with quality food and viola—no birds! What is going on? Great question,,but the answer is far from simple.

Birds are naturally suspicious of new things and even if you have a well established backyard or front yard feeding station, even adding a single new item can be of concern for birds.

So first you must understand: birds forage naturally, all day long and have been doing so long before we introduced the joy of backyard bird feeding. They treat our delicious offerings as if it was a fast food restaurant. But remember, seed has little or sometimes no protein; a building block even birds need. So most birds that come to our backyards are insect feeders. This is especially true during the nesting season when nestlings depend on protein in order to thrive and grow.

So how to solve the problem of no birds feeding at your feeder—PATIENCE! The problem will not solve itself overnight. In fact it may take weeks or even months.

So if you are happy with the location of your feeding station—I assume you set it up wanting to be able to view the birds from a window—then rest assured patience and time will be your reward. Remember to change the food regularly—birds know when seed is stale, keep your feeder clean, use good quality food and remember one of the best ways to attract birds to your backyard is with moving water. The sound of water will entice even birds that don't eat at bird feeders into your backyard and any bird in my opinion is a joy to behold.

Another point: most of us would prefer to not feed the Common house sparrow, but the noise they create as they go about their daily lives also entices other birds “to check it out.” You can then use feeders to eliminate the sparrows while dedicating a feeder just for them.

In the August 2021 newsletter we will address some of the issues that may cause an absence of birds feeding in your backyard with an emphasis on PATIENCE!



Cedar waxwings will not come to your backyard for bird seed, but they will come to use your bird bath or if you have fruit bearing trees.

Adding a nest box can also add another opportunity to invite birds into your backyard; but remember nesting is seasonal whereas bird feeding is all year round.



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.

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

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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?

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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

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

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.

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

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CHRIS FISHER (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)



Question: Should we really believe all this hype about climate warming and what it might do to our birds?

Answer: If you don't believe that our climate is warming, then don't bother listening to another word I have to say. But if you trust me, then know that it is true. And that it is also having a huge impact on our birds. According to one large-scale study, birds are laying their eggs almost 7 days earlier every ten years. One seabird species, the Common murre, is to up to three weeks earlier every decade. In another study, conducted over 63 years on 96 bird species, 27 have changed their arrival dates, with most now arriving earlier. And yet another study has shown that birds are also delaying their departure south in the autumn. Six of 13 songbird species studied are leaving later. None of this is good. Climate warming is causing a mismatch between the birds' life cycles and behaviour and the environmental cues they have adapted to over thousands of years. For example, birds arriving earlier on their breeding grounds won't know whether the food resources they depend upon will be available when they need it, for example, to fatten themselves up for egg production or to feed their young in the nest. The reverse is also true. If the birds arrive at their normal time but the spring food resources have shown up earlier due to climate change, they risk missing those critical spring food resources. Some species are also shifting their ranges northward. That creates new competitors for those species already existing there. There is a lot more bad news for the birds caused by climate change, but I think that I have depressed you enough!

--- 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



Dr. Bird Speaker Series ZOOM This is a 6 part speaker series is currently running every Thursday at 6pm and unfortunately ticket sales through Eventbrite care closed. If you missed the opportunity to sign up for this speaker series you have missed a wonderful and interesting series by Dr. David Bird—professor of Ornithology at McGill University who is now retired and continues to share his love of wild birds. . His years of teaching about birds has provided us with a unique opportunity to add to our knowledge from an expert... and he's a Canadian. But not to worry—watch for another speaker series later in 2021 in our monthly newsletter available online through our website wildbirdstore.ca

*Staying
Connected* -----



5901 3rd Street S.E.,

Calgary, AB T2H 1K3

Phone: (403)640-2632

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

FOLLOW US ON:

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Twitter@wildbirdstoreyyyc



CLOSED

Thursday, July 1, 2021

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 ♦



And the warranty depot for:
Leupold Binoculars & Spotting
Scopes

HAPPY BIRDING!