



ALBERTA

THE JUNCO



Juncos are called “snowbirds” because they appear with the arrival of the snow. When it’s cold outside, Juncos grow “down jackets.” Their coat of feathers is 30% heavier in winter than in summer.

They mainly eat insects and seeds, but sometimes eat their own droppings.

- Medium-sized sparrow with considerable geographic color variation, although all exhibit a pink bill, dark eyes, white belly, and dark-centered tail with white outer feathers. Gray-headed form

- The subspecies of dark-eyed juncos fall into five major groups: gray-headed, Oregon, pink-sided, slate-colored and white-winged
- Subspecies include: Slate-colored (widespread), Oregon (west), Pink-sided (rockies), Gray-headed (rockies and SW to U.S. to Mexico), Red-backed (central Arizona and New Mexico) and White-winged (breeds in Black Hills, winters mainly in Colorado)



Pink-sided junco



Oregon junco



Red-backed junco



Grey-headed junco



White-winged junco

The Dark-eyed or Slate-coloured Junco is one of the most common birds in North America and can be found across the continent, from Alaska to Mexico, from California to New York. A recent estimate set the junco’s total population at approximately 630 million individuals.



Attract juncos to your backyard ground feeders with millet.



White Millet



The Mobile Bird Seed Truck



Crowfoot YMCA/Arena

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

Every Wednesday 2:00pm to 5:30pm

Come check out our new Bird Seed Truck at our anniversary celebration Saturday, October 2, 2021

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

To the general public with a maximum of 10 people in the showroom at a time.

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.

October Big Day!

Saturday October 9th will be the biggest day for birders this fall, so wherever you are, plan to join the world of birders as we enjoy birding on October Big Day. You can report birds from anywhere in the world, for as long as you wish, within the 24-hour period from midnight to midnight – even 20 minutes or more in your own yard will help. Simply identify and count all the birds you see in a location of your choice, and report your list on eBird. You can visit a number of your favorite birding locations if you wish to. It's fun, it's an opportunity to join the worldwide birding community, and you will help add to our knowledge about what birds can be found where on a single day during fall migration.



On September 9, 2021, footage was released of hundreds of sparrows falling from the sky and dying in Bali's Gianyar regency, with authorities initially dumbfounded by the whole situation.

The incident occurred in a cemetery, and was recorded by a local who could be heard being extremely puzzled at the sight of hundreds of dead (or nearly dead) avians on the ground.

Reports coming from the area indicated that the mass die-off happened immediately after a period of rainfall and heavy wind, and some social portals even guessed that it was the weather conditions that had caused the phenomenon.

WHAT CAUSED IT? At first authorities in the area tried to attribute the mass deaths to the prevalence of acid in the rain. “If we’re talking about the condition and natural events, it can be said that there was a lot of acid during the rain,” said a spokesperson from Bali’s Natural Resources Conservation Centre (BKSDA). “it’s possible that it caused the birds to fall from the sky.”

However, following field visits by the authorities, it was eventually revealed that the cause of the deaths were due to the use of pesticides in a nearby village, which had caused the birds to fall prey to heavy poisoning.

“Our suspicion is that the community nearby used non-natural pesticides, which poisoned them,” said the BKSDA’s chief in a later update.

He said that the birds must have been looking for food in large groups—possibly in the thousands—around the vicinity and had begun to forage on newly grown rice crops which had been sprayed with the pesticides.

“That’s our current guess, and we’ve asked our partners in the field to educate the people on the use of pesticides in an effort to be mindful of other wild creatures around the area—not only the birds, but other animals as well,” he added.



Science

Dale Wong, September 13, 2021

Photo by Kamera One

To see video type into google:

Hundreds of birds drop from the sky

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

Guadalupe Junco



Named for its natural habitat of Guadalupe Island, the Guadalupe junco is now endangered. Unique to Mexico, there may now be only 50-100 birds left on the Guadalupe Island.

Goats introduced to provide food for fishermen and to start a meat canning plant in the early to mid-19th century became feral and overran the island by the late 19th century, with nearly 2 goats per acre being present around the 1870s. Feral cats also multiplied, and as the habitat was destroyed by the goats, the cats wreaked havoc on the endemic fauna. |

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, Springbank Garden Club and Millarville Horticultural Society. Must present valid membership card at time of purchase.



On the road again.....

Aren't cell phones great? Revisiting one of our greatest birding days of August with the help of notes on our cell phones, this proved to be a Labour Day birding trip to remember. East towards Strathmore where we didn't see much, even our lovely Trumpeter swan had moved on, we didn't hold out much hope for the rest of the day. Luckily we were so wrong! Heading north towards Irricana and searching out our Township and Range roads, we found so many birds we had not ever seen before. We may have to invest in a 4x4 Suv as some of the best places to see numerous birds are along what we lovingly refer to as "goat trails." And they never disappoint as this is where the birds feel safe to go about their summer chores of raising young and preparing to migrate back south for the winter. Greater yellowlegs (had only seen Lesser prior to this trip), Pelicans and Cormorants a plenty, Bald eagle, Common yellow throat, lots of Yellow rumped warblers, Lesser flycatcher, Slate coloured junco, Western meadowlark Mom and baby, Swamp and Laconte sparrows, Marsh wrens, Ring-necked pheasants both male and female, Wilson's snipe, Great horned owl juvenile, Red-tailed hawks (19 in one just harvested field all at once), a coyote and a beautiful Red fox. And one crazy hawk (Swainson's hawk juvenile—confirmed sighting—many thanks Mike Borlé) doing the most bizarre thing—hopping from a fence post to the side of the road and gobbling up grasshoppers which were in abundance. Unfortunately the Loggerhead shrike family we had seen in August had moved on, but that was our only disappointment of the day.



Juvenile Great-horned owl flying—photo by Marilyn Wilson



A Bird's Beak is Shaped By More Than What it Eats

By Kathi Borgmann 18 Dec 2019

Darwin's finches taught us that over time, what a bird eats can shape the size of the bird's beak. A seminal study conducted by Peter and Rosemary Grant on Daphne in the Galapagos Islands showed that as small and soft seeds were replaced by tougher and larger seeds on Daphne, the average beak size of a Medium ground-finch became larger. Over time, bill size evolved to better suit the suite of food items consumed by each species. After all, you need the right tool to do the job.



White-streaked
friarbird

Nicholas Friedman, lead author of the study from the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology in Japan along with his colleagues discovered that while the thickness of a bird's beak was related to how they foraged and what they ate, climate also played a role in shaping Honeyeater beaks. Australian honeyeaters are an incredibly diverse group of birds, from the stubby-billed

Bell miner to the large-billed White-streaked friarbird to the delicately curved-billed Red-headed myzomela, making them the perfect group of birds to study.



Bell miner

Honeyeaters such as the Black-headed honeyeater that inhabit colder regions of Australia had shorter beaks than their relatives. Factors that shaped the size and structure of a bird's beak also affected how it sang. For example, species with longer beaks such as Noisy friarbird sang slower, and species with longer and narrower breaks sang at lower frequencies.

In summary, Friedman and colleagues showed that it's not just what a bird eats, but how they eat it and where they live that affect both the size and shape of a Honeyeater's beak. And these characteristics, in turn, affect bird song.



What is the difference between a beak and a bill?

Not a thing—the words are synonymous. Ornithologists tend to use the word "bill" more often than "beak." Some people use "beak" when referring to songbirds with pointed bills, and "bill" when discussi

allaboutbirds.org



Red-headed myzomela



Noisy friarbird



Baby Birds' Bizarre Beaks

 Written by Richa Malhotra for Birdnote

Most baby birds are adorable little floofs (abundantly fluffy creatures) — but not all of them. Baby Gouldian finches look downright creepy.

About 140 species of estrildid finches, including waxbills, parrot finches and fire finches, are spread across Africa, Asia and Australia.

Newborn finches beg their parents for food, mouths wide open. The tongue and palate are strangely spotted and ringed. Most species' chicks have mouth markings in colors ranging from black or white to bright yellow, orange, red or blue.



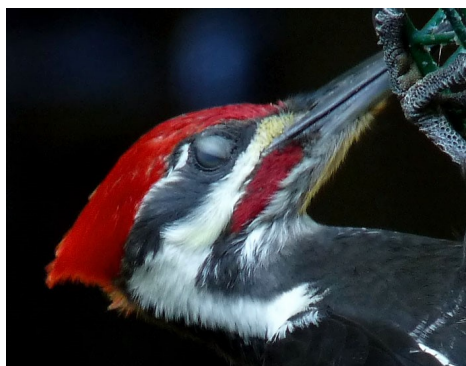
The function of these markings has long puzzled scientists. Some say that they make baby beaks visible to parents delivering food to poorly lit nests. Others think the markings signal the health of the chicks.

And there's a third school of thought. Other birds target the nests of some African finches for egg-dumping, sneaking their eggs into the finches' nest, and those foster chicks have similar colorful markings. So perhaps mouth markings evolved due to competition for food between finch babies and those other bird babies.

It's not yet settled whether foster babies mimic the mouths of finch babies or vice-versa. Either way, they look equally bizarre.

Want more information on this subject?

[What's Up With the Weird Mouths of These Finch Chicks? | Audubon](#)



If you didn't buy tickets to Myrna Pearman's speaker series on Thursday September 9th entitled "Beauty Everywhere: Finding Nature in our own backyards," you missed a very informative seminar with Myrna's wonderful images. This is one of the many new things I learned.

The nictitating membrane is a "third eyelid" that extends from the inner corner of the eye to the outer corner. You may see it when a bird blinks. Thinner and clear or translucent which closes horizontally, than the fleshier upper and lower eyelids we're all familiar with, the nictitating membrane allows some degree of visibility while simultaneously protecting the eye. The bills (and therefore the heads) of birds are vulnerable during foraging, flight, excavating, and diving, while feeding young, and gathering material for nests, etc., so extra eye protection is quite valuable.

Woodpeckers, such as the Pileated, have this nictitating membrane. It lubricates the eyeball without blocking the bird's vision (especially important during flight) and helps hold the eyeball in place when the Woodpecker pummels a tree. "Nictitating" comes from the Latin word meaning "blink."

Jack-hammering a tree 20 times a second, the Pileated's bill pounding the wood at a head-rattling 15mph, his eyeball closes sideways.

Always learning about birds. Thank you Myrna!



Question: Why am I seeing a brownish spotted Woodpecker-like bird feeding on the ground?

Answer: : Whenever I get a phone call or email describing a brownish bird with black spots feeding on the ground, I know right away that the bird is a Northern flicker, the most widespread Woodpecker species in North America. Another telltale marker is an obvious white rump patch when they launch into the air. They are one of the very few Woodpecker species that frequently feed on the ground, often seeking out ants, one of their favourite foods. In fact, about half of their summer diet is ants. Joining them at the top of the menu are predaceous ground beetles. With a long tongue that can extend up to two inches beyond the tip of its bill along with large glands that produce sticky saliva to recoat the tongue each time it is extended, these veritable feathered anteaters have no trouble catching ants in their hills. Unfortunately, that predilection for ground-dwelling insects can also get them in trouble. Where pesticides are heavily used on lawns to kill insects, including the Flicker's favourite foods, Flickers feeding at ground level are highly susceptible to poisoning and often show up with nervous system tremors in wildlife rehabilitation centers. As for feeders, Northern flickers will dine on your sunflower seed and cracked corn, but they are not likely to become regular guests, mainly because they really do prefer to eat on the ground. Peanuts and dog kibble are also favourite Flicker foods. Consider yourself lucky if you get to see one in a bird bath.

--- 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 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.



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Ellis Bird Farm will be Open in the Fall

After Labour day we will be
staying open until December

16th

Fall Hours:
Tuesday - Thursday
10am - 3pm



Migration Monitoring

Established in 1984, the Beaverhill Bird Observatory (BBO) is the second oldest migration monitoring observatory in Canada.

The field season is from May to early November. During this time, staff and occasional volunteers live on-site as they perform research and monitoring. We collaborate and share data with a number of organizations, and are part of the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network. During the winter, we operate our educational BirdSmart program, which reaches thousands of students each year. For more information: beaverhillbirds.com

Canadian Migration
Monitoring Network



Réseau canadien
de surveillance
des migrations



Since 1992, **Rocky Mountain Eagle Research Foundation (RMERF)** volunteers have performed annual raptor migration counts at the same site location in the Kananaskis Country, Alberta, spring and fall; significantly providing data to the understanding of and amazement in watching Golden Eagles.

Fall Migration Count
At Mt. Lorette, Steeples, Vicki Ridge
Sep 20 – Nov 15

In the fall some Golden eagles are seen to return south in late August. The peak migration lasts from mid September until the beginning of November. Dwindling numbers are seen until early December.

Migrating Golden eagles roost on the ridges during the nights and some start moving soon after dawn. We have found over the years that, in good migrating weather, the movement tends to build up during the morning and reach a maximum in mid afternoon. Movement stops as it is getting dark and we often see the birds settling on the peaks.

We cannot predict when a big movement will take place. Very often, perfect migrating conditions at our observation sites produce few sightings because the flow may be blocked by poor conditions elsewhere. At other times our own bad weather is the cause.

We have found early October to be the best time of the year—beautiful, warm days and beautiful fall colours. However, come prepared for sudden changes.

For more information, please visit <http://eaglewatch.ca>





Saturday Morning Birdwalks with Jim St. Laurent



Jim's years of guiding bird walks has been instrumental in teaching "birders" how to get the most out of their birding excursions. Children and most welcome as long as accompanied by an adult.

The weather plays a big part in bird walks and Jim reminds participants to dress anticipating weather changes and to carry water to keep hydrated.

Saturday, October 2, 2021 CARBURN PARK

(9:00am meet at Carburn Park Riverview Drive S.E.)

Ticket price: \$6.00 +GST + fees

Tickets must be purchased through [Eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca)—2020/2021 WBS bird walks

Saturday, October 16, 2021 VOTIERS FLATS—FISH CREEK PARK

(9:00am meet at Votiers Flats (South end of Elbow Drive S.W.)

Ticket price: \$6.00 +GST + fees

Tickets must be purchased through [Eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca)—2020/2021 WBS bird walks

Saturday, October 30, 2021 GRIFFITHS WOODS

(9:00am meet at Griffiths Woods—Discovery Ridge Blvd. S.W.)

Ticket price: \$6.00 +GST + fees

Tickets must be purchased through [Eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca)—2020/2021 WBS bird walks

Saturday, November 13, 2021 WEASELHEAD NATURAL AREA

(9:00am meet at Weaselhead Natural Area—37th Street S.W.)

Ticket price: \$6.00 +GST + fees

Tickets must be purchased through [Eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca)—2020/2021 WBS bird walks

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



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

\$15.00 + 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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PLEASE NOTE: Ticket sales for the speaker series are going fast. There are a limited number of participants for each speaker. To avoid disappointment please register as soon as possible.



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 influencers 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)

SPEAKER SERIES

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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)



There's a certain satisfaction in autumn chores. When the weather's right, cleaning gutters, touching up paint or splitting some firewood can feel less like manual labour and more like a rite of the season.

But if you want to make your backyard a welcoming winter haven for birds, some fall tasks call for a laissez-faire approach. "Messy is definitely good to provide food and shelter for birds during the cold winter months," says Tod Winston, Audubon's plants for Birds program manager.

SAVE THE SEEDS: When fall arrives, some tidy-minded gardeners might be inclined to snip the stems of perennials in flower garden. But the seed heads of coneflowers, black-eyed susans, and other native wildflowers provide a helpful food cache for birds. "They're almost invisible, those seeds, but birds eat them all winter long," Winston says. Letting other dead plants stick around can fill your property with protein-packed bird snacks in the form of insect larvae, such as fly and wasp larvae that inhabit goldenrod galls.

LEAVE THE LEAVES: The leaves are important because they rot and enrich the soil, and also provide places for bugs and birds to forage for food. You could also rake them from the lawn to your garden beds, or mulch them with a mower to nourish your lawn. Leaf litter is a great habitat for a variety of critters such as salamanders, snails, worms and toads. A healthy layer of undisturbed soil and leaf litter means more moths, which in their caterpillar phase are a crucial food source for birds.

BUILD A BRUSH PILE: You can use fallen branches to build a brush pile that will shelter birds from lousy weather and predators. This is also a great place to dispose of your Christmas tree.

SKIP THE CHEMICALS: Grass clippings and mulched leaf litter provide plenty of plant nutrition, and using store-bought fertilizers only encourages more non-native plants to grow. Generally speaking, native grasses, shrubs, trees and flowering plants don't need chemical inputs.

HIT THE NURSERY: Cooler temperatures make fall a more comfortable time to tear out some turf grass and expand your native plant garden. Native dogwoods, hawthorns, sumacs and other flowering shrubs produce small fruits that not only feed birds during the colder months, but can also provide a welcome pop of colour when winter gets drab. Planted in the right place, evergreens like cedars and firs give birds something to eat and a cozy shelter. Fall is also a great time to liven up your property with late-blooming perennials such as asters or sages—and to buy spring and summer blooming wildflowers.



Downy woodpecker on a pine. Photo: Nick Shearman



Black-capped chickadee on staghorn sumac. Photo: Missy Mandel



American robin and crab apples



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CLOSED

Monday, October 11, 2021

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Squirrel Buster® Bird Feeders

Aspects® Feeders

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And the warranty depot for:

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HAPPY BIRDING!