

## PLEASE NOTE

**NO MOBILE SEED TRUCK at Wildwood Tuesday  
February 6th and Tuesday February 13th**

**NO MOBILE SEED TRUCK at Crowfoot Wednesday  
February 7 and Wednesday February 14th**

**NO DELIVERIES Thursday February 8th and Thursday  
February 15th**

### **Fun Facts about White-breasted nuthatches:**

- The name nuthatch probably results from the corruption of the word “nuthack” which refers to its’ habit of hacking away at a seed with its beak until it opens
- In Central Alberta, the nuthatches we see are Red-breasted and White-breasted nuthatches. Red-breasted are more common in the city, and White-breasted are seen in rural areas and Edmonton’s River Valley
- A nuthatch’s foot has one big toe (the hallux) that faces backward, while its other three toes face forward. This enables them to walk head first down the trunks of trees by moving only one foot at a time while the hallux toe on the other foot holds firmly to the bark. For this reason nuthatches are often called the “upside down” bird
- Male White-breasted nuthatches are less wary of danger when foraging with their mates than when they are alone. The female mate plays the dominant role as “watchdog” when they are together, leaving the male more time to concentrate on hunting for food
- During the winter, White-breasted nuthatches will often forage together with other birds such as Chickadees and Downy woodpeckers in a group known as a foraging guild. Nuthatches are able to recognize the alarm calls of these species and can thus reduce their own level of alertness by relying on vigilance of these other species. This leaves them with more time to concentrate on finding food
- A breeding pair may smear insects around their nesting cavity to deter squirrels

In a study of the White-breasted nuthatch’s seed caching behavior, it was found that they selected unshelled sunflower seeds approximately 25% more often than seeds still in the shell. It appears that this preference is driven by the fact that it takes the Nuthatch about half the time to transport and cache an unshelled seed than it does a shelled one.



## Fun Facts about Red-breasted nuthatches:

- Like the White-breasted nuthatch, the Red-breasted is monogamous and will defend its territory throughout the year. The female rarely strays far from her mate and stays in constant vocal contact while foraging for food
- The Red-breasted nuthatch is an aggressive defender of its nesting cavity, especially during building. It chases away much larger birds, such as the Downy woodpecker, and has been observed bullying the very aggressive House wren
- Red-breasted nuthatches were known by the common names Canada nuthatch and Red-bellied nuthatch in the past. The reference to Canada is still reflected in its Latin name *Sitta Canadensis*
- Males and females are similar in appearance. However, the top of the head of the female Red-breasted is a dark gray-blue, not black; the eye-stripe is less wide or black than the males
- The red-breasted nuthatch excavates its own nest cavities while the White-breasted generally nests in natural cavities or old Woodpecker holes
- Nesting success depends on the availability of their invertebrate food, so don't spray for bugs, let Nuthatches be your natural pest control

**Ecosystem Role:** Important insect eater, particularly of spruce budworm. Nuthatches (both White and Red-breasted) can stick their beaks under bark to get at insects and in years when spruce budworms are high, nuthatches can be seen picking them off in large numbers, preventing trees from getting too damaged.

## How are Red-breasted nuthatches faring in Calgary?

Every May citizen scientists led by Nature Calgary perform a spring bird count. Not only do these counts help estimate the presence of birds now but over time these numbers can help identify trends in bird populations as the city continues to grow and change. The count covers an 80km radius from the center of the city.

The Christmas bird count is another way that citizen scientists are helping keep track of birds across the world. Every year people are invited to document birds both in their yards and while they are out over a specific 24 hour period in December. This past December, 200 Red-breasted nuthatches were recorded, a 48% decrease over the 10 year average.



# Help Your Garden Grow with Mason Bees

The Wild Bird Store is now offering Mason bee cocoons for sale. We suggest you order your cocoons now to avoid disappointment.

Please visit the link below to purchase your cocoons. Mason bees will be available for sale until February 29, 2024 or until supply is gone.

Price for a box of 10 is \$21.99. This includes GST and fees.

If this is your first time ordering, we recommend you order 3 to 5 boxes.



## Creating A Mason Bee Habit Seminars

**Kris will be presenting in store seminars on Mason bees coming up in the month of April. Watch for the announcement in the March 2024 newsletter. Space will be limited.**

## Flocks vs. Loners: Who Rules the Feeder?



When the weather turns cold, bird feeders can transform into stages for dramatic conflicts between birds. Feeder birds might squabble over preferred spots or choice foods. Previous research examined these exciting struggles to learn more about how specific bird species might act more or less dominant towards other birds, but how flocks factor in.

Birds at feeders are like members of a not-so-secret fight club, and the rulebook is in the dominance hierarchy for a chance to eat in the safety of a flock, they must constantly appease, avoid, or subsequently get walloped by more dominant birds.

Cornell Lab of Ornithology postdoctoral associate Eliot Miller spearheaded the analysis and now holds the results. Miller found his volunteers through Project FeederWatch, a joint Cornell Lab and Bird Studies Canada project that recruits more than 20,000 backyard bird watchers from coast to coast. Miller asked feeder watchers who were already counting birds to record any “interspecific interactions” (or interactions among species) that could define the hierarchy. For example, if a White-breasted nuthatch flared its wings at a Black-capped chickadee, and the Chickadee flew off from the feeder in response, that classified as a “successful displacement.” Feeder watchers recorded 7,653 such observations between November 2016 and April 2017.

Using a computer program, Miller collapsed that data set into “ability scores” for each species: a single number that describes each species’ ability to compete with others. It ranged from an alpha bird (the Wild turkey at 66.93) to the meekest of the bunch (Eurasian tree sparrow at -24.46). In the same way college basketball teams can be ranked even though they don’t play each other, this metric allowed scientists to generate scores for comparing birds that don’t normally interact. From there, constructing the dominance hierarchy was easy: “We just ranked species based on their scores,” said Miller.

If you want to read more on this subject or wish to view the diagram to see how North America’s top 13 feeder species fared, go to: [allaboutbirds.org](http://allaboutbirds.org) and click on “when 136 bird species show up at a feeder which one wins? An article by Alison Haigh an Environmental Biology and Applied Ecology major at Cornell University (class of 2019).

# Saturday Morning Bird Walks 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 12 and older are most welcome as long as accompanied by an adult and have purchased a ticket.

All participants on any bird walk must have purchased a ticket through our website, [www.wildbirdstore.ca](http://www.wildbirdstore.ca) and present the ticket to Jim prior to the bird walk.

As Jim is still recovering from surgery, the following bird walk will be a car trip. The other will be walking.

**Saturday February 3, 2024** a car trip south to Frank Lake area for owls and other winter birds

Meet at The Wild Bird Store rear parking lot at 9:00am as I will not be going direct to Frank Lake but will stop at areas along the way including Policeman's Flats and be taking back roads

Please bring lunch and dress for wintery weather

**SORRY THIS EVENT IS  
SOLD OUT**

**Saturday February 17, 2024** Carburn Park

This will be a walking trip—meet at Carburn Park at 9:00am

Please dress for wintery weather

## BIRDING & WILDLIFE EXPEDITION TO KENYA

WITH DR. DAVID BIRD & DR. RODGER TITMAN

**APRIL 4 - 18  
2024**

**SEE** secretary birds and a variety of raptors, bee-eaters, hornbills, eagles, ostriches, weavers, the Big Five Mammals and a good sample of East Africa's bird species from dry savannah in the Rift Valley through tropical rainforest to mountain cloud forest and wetlands.



**VISIT** Lakes Naivasha, Baringo and Elmentaita in the rich Rift Valley, Mpala Research Station, Kakamega Forest and the famous Maasai Mara with its herds of wild mammals.

### FULL DETAILS, PRICING & ITINERARY:

CONTACT: DR. RODGER TITMAN  
[rodger.titman@mcgill.ca](mailto:rodger.titman@mcgill.ca)

OR VISIT: [www.askprofessorbird.com](http://www.askprofessorbird.com)



DR. DAVID M. BIRD

DR. RODGER TITMAN



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 recycle bin. This discount is in addition to any other discount offered.



**QUESTION: A few weeks ago, a friend and I observed an amazing spectacle. It involved a flock of thousands of European starlings wheeling about in an undulating dark mass. What keeps them from colliding into one another and how do they determine to turn in the same direction at the same time?**

**RESPONSE: I have seen these huge wheeling masses of starlings ranging from 500 to 100,000 birds on a number of occasions myself and they are beyond a doubt one of the most spectacular ornithological events one can witness. Among other names. They are generally referred to as murmurations. Apparently, the starlings are moving at speeds in excess of 90 miles an hour, which begs the question—what keeps them from colliding—and your specific question—which bird decides the given direction of the flock.**

Years ago, I met a wildlife photographer who specialized in taking photos of these eye-catching ornithological spectacles. And upon examining the photos quite closely, one could invariably see a raptor like a falcon or hawk constantly worrying the flock trying to pick off one of the outside birds. That is what drives the starlings to bunch together and then spread apart. No bird wants to be on the outside! The current thought to date on how the starlings maneuver through the air in such a mass is as follows. It is a nearest-neighbor phenomenon—each starling only communicates with about a half-dozen or so birds closest to itself. They basically follow their cues and copy their movements in a process known as “scale-free correlation.” So, when one bird moves, its nearest neighbours respond in the same fashion and this propagates aware=like movement pulsing throughout the entire flock. However, while I agree with this notion, I have my own personal hypothesis about how each bird detects the movements of its neighbor. It is widely known among ornithologists that all birds, including starlings, have many sensory receptors embedded in their skins, which can detect air pressure. I think that the birds use these receptors to feel pressure waves emanating from the flapping wings of their neighbours and instinctively respond by flying in the same direction but keeping enough distance to avoid collision. It is not easy for me to prove this, of course, but if I could, it would make the news all over the world.



European starling

<b>DAVID M. BIRD, Ph.D</b> Emeritus Professor of Wildlife Biology McGill University  david.bird@mcgill.ca www.askprofessorbird.com		 <b>CANADA JAY</b> MÉSANGEAI DU CANADA  FRIENDLY, SMART, LOYAL AND TOUGH. TRULY THE MOST CANADIAN BIRD! AMICAL, INTELLIGENT, FIDÈLE ET ROBUSTE. UN OISEAU VRAIMENT CANADIEN!  WWW.CANADAJAY.ORG
--	--	--

# 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](http://www.askprofessorbird.com) or email [david.bird@mcgill.ca](mailto:david.bird@mcgill.ca).*



## City Nature Challenge

Cities around the world collaborate to share observations of nature in the

### 2024 City Nature Challenge

Started in 2016 as a competition between Los Angeles and San Francisco, the City Nature Challenge (CNC) has grown into an international event, motivating people around the world to find and document wildlife in their own cities. Run by Community Science teams at the California Academy of Sciences and the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County (NHM), is an annual four-day global bioblitz at the end of April, where cities are in a collaboration-meets-friendly-competition to see what can be accomplished when we all work toward a common goal.

For more information or to participate, please visit [www.citynaturechallenge.org](http://www.citynaturechallenge.org)



*Event ticket sales start 10:00am MDT, April 9, 2024*

[info@wingsovertherockies.org](mailto:info@wingsovertherockies.org)

2024 Wings Over the Rockies Nature Festival May 6—12, 2024

Wings “Way Over” the Rockies—The BIG Picture

Our 27th annual festival is located in the beautiful upper Columbia River Valley centered around the mountain town of Invermere, British Columbia. Our Events Calendar will be viewable online starting Thursday, March 28, 2024. Buy your tickets online starting Tuesday, April 9 at 10:00am MDT. Please plan to be an “early bird” to get your event choices. Usually, 70% of our festival tickets are purchased on the first day.

We plan to have over 100 events during the 7 festival days, many new ones too!

We are excited to have as keynote speaker, Bob McDonald, host of CBC radio’s Quirks and Quarks program. Please plan to come and join us in 2024 as Bob and all of us explore “The BIG Picture”!



## ON LOCATION

Wildwood Community Centre (4411 Spruce Drive SW) **NO Mobile Seed Truck Tuesday February 6th and Tuesday February 13th**

Every Tuesday 3:00pm to 6:00pm

Crowfoot Arena (corner of John Laurie & Nosehill Drive NW) **NO Mobile Seed Truck Wednesday February 7th and Wednesday February 14th**

Every Wednesday 2:00pm to 5:30pm

The Mobile Seed Truck is a mini version of The Wild Bird Store, and as such, we are limited to what we can carry. It is therefore, highly recommended that you place an order the day before the truck is to be at your desired location. This will ensure that when you come to the Mobile Seed Truck you get the items you need. You can place orders by emailing [orders@wildbirdstore.ca](mailto:orders@wildbirdstore.ca) or texting to

(403) 701-4571



**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](mailto:info@wildbirdstore.ca)  
(Please 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 (sorry, excludes “sales” items, books, optics and consignment items) and can be used in-store and on Mobile Seed Truck. As a loyalty member, our monthly promotional and in-store “specials” are automatically given at the cash register.



**Combining our Seniors** 10% discount with the loyalty program (sorry—excludes “sales” items, books, optics and consignment items.)



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



**Discount for Military Members & Veterans** 10% discount on purchases in-store or on Mobile Seed Truck (sorry—excludes “sales” items, books, optics and consignment items)



# OPTIONS FOR SHOPPING AT THE WILD BIRD STORE

In Store or on the Seed Truck



**Shop in Store**



**Curbside Pick up**

Phone your order in and pay for it at least 30 minutes prior to arriving at The Wild Bird Store for pick up. Park in the curbside parking stall, call the store (403) 640-2632, pop your trunk or hatch and leave the rest to us.

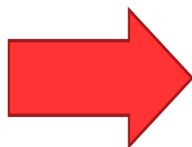


**Home Delivery**

Please phone the store at (403)640-2632 any day prior to 12:00noon on the Wednesday before your delivery with your order, place and pay for your delivery. Please phone with your order as early as possible to avoid disappointment. If you have any specials instructions, please do not forget to inform us when you place your order.

**please note**

**NO DELIVERIES Thursday  
February 8th and Thursday  
February 15th. Deliveries  
will resume every Thursday  
on February 22nd.**



**PLEASE NOTE: delivery  
charge within Calgary City  
limits is \$10.00**

# 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 Conversation and Ellis Bird Farm.

We ask for your support quarterly for each of these organizations.

This quarter for the months of December 2023, January 2024 and February 2024 your donations will go to:



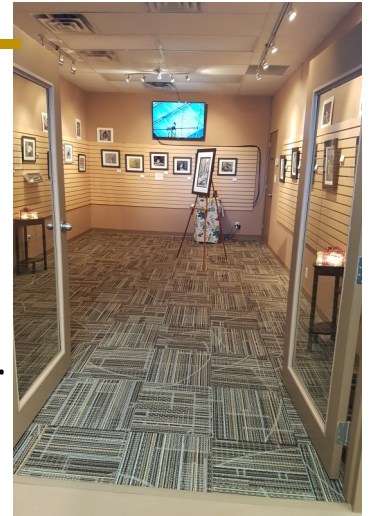
**Thank you for your support**

[www.ellisbirdfarm.ca](http://www.ellisbirdfarm.ca)



**DID YOU KNOW?**

The Wild Bird Store offers the “Book Nook” as a gathering place for your next meeting. The room is for rent for \$50.00 +GST fee which includes the set-up of the chairs, video equipment, coffee, tea and water are available.



Please contact [info@wildbirdstore.ca](mailto:info@wildbirdstore.ca) for more information or to reserve your spot

**please note**

**NO DELIVERIES Thursday February 8th and Thursday February 15th. Deliveries will resume EVERY**

**Thursday on February 22, 2024.**



**PLEASE NOTE: delivery charge within Calgary City limits is \$10.00**

*Staying  
Connected*



5901 3rd Street S.E.,  
Calgary, AB T2H 1K3

Monday through Saturday 10:00am to 5:00pm

**CLOSED** Sundays and ALL Statutory holidays for Faith, Family & Friends

Phone: (403)640-2632

**CLOSED Family Day Monday, February 19, 2024**

Web: wildbirdstore.ca

email: info@wildbirdstore.ca



Follow us on:

Facebook@thewildbirdstoreyyyc

Twitter@wildbirdstoreyyyc

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.



**SENIOR'S DAY**

Is **EVERY** Tuesday.

If you are over 60 you will receive  
10% off your order

The Wild Bird Store  
Is the warranty & repair depot for:  
Squirrel Buster® Bird Feeders  
Aspects® Feeders  
Droll Yankee® Bird Feeders



And the warranty depot  
for:

Leupold Binoculars & Spotting  
Scopes

Sorry! Excludes optics, books,  
cards & consignment items

**HAPPY BIRDING!**