



*American Robin*



Most people think of the American robin as the first harbinger of Spring, but in truth more and more Robins are wintering over in Alberta each year.

Researchers don't fully understand why some Robins choose to migrate while others do not. Females are more likely to journey south in winter than males, so it is possible more males opt to stay to give them an advantage when establishing a breeding ground in Spring. The early bird gets the worm, so to speak, although in this case the metaphorical worm is first pick of the best breeding grounds.

When Robins migrate, it's access to food that drives their journey, not temperature. They can withstand cold winter temperatures, but in the winter, they mainly eat fruit. If fruit isn't readily available, they will move around in search of a good food supply. In cold winter weather, they

need more food, and food becomes increasingly scarce as Robins and other birds eat the remaining fruit supply, so they tend to congregate in areas where a lot of fruit is present.

These winter flocks of birds can include hundreds or even thousands of Robins, but they may remain mostly out of sight, unless you happen to be close to a steady supply of fruit like crabapples and berries from hawthorn, holly and juniper. Robins are also much quieter in winter, making very little noise at all, which helps explain how even large flocks of Robins can go largely unnoticed.

We often think Robins have returned to the area in the Spring because the large flocks of Robins disperse and start appearing where we are used to seeing them: feasting on earthworms in our yards. And while some of these Robins may have just returned from points south, others were here all along, just not where we are used to seeing them.

And there's one more reason we often think of Robins as a first sign of Spring. It's not just that they suddenly seem to pop up around our homes at this time of year, but we also hear them more in early Spring. The song of a male Robin is identifiable to many people, and early Spring is when they start to sing their familiar song. Among Robins that do migrate, males arrive back on their breeding grounds a week or two before the females, but they will start singing as soon as they arrive as a means of defending their chosen territory.



## **Varied thrush**

The male Varied thrush sings an ethereal and scratchy whistled note of around two seconds in duration, waits for several seconds, and then sings another similar whistled note on another pitch.

For unknown reasons, populations of the Varied thrush increase and then decrease every two years.

The Varied thrush is not closely related to other Thrush species in North America. It looks more like some Thrush species in Asia and even sounds somewhat like the White's thrush of northeastern Asia.

The wings of the Varied thrush are fairly long and suited to flying long distances in search of fruiting trees.

Varied thrushes eat a variety of insects and other small creatures during the summer months, and then switch to eating berries like salmonberries, snowberries, apples and other fruits which they quietly pick with their bill while perched in shrubs and trees, or during brief hovering in flight. They also eat acorns and forage on the ground for bugs, worms and other arthropods by carefully lifting and moving leaves with its bill and then snatching the bugs and worms it finds.

# Peregrine Falcon



The Peregrine falcon is one of the most widespread birds in the world. It is found on all continents except Antarctica, and on many oceanic islands.

People have trained falcons for hunting for over a thousand years, and the Peregrine falcon was always one of the most prized birds. Efforts to breed Peregrine in captivity and reestablish populations depleted during the DDT years were greatly assisted by the existence of methods of handling captive falcons developed by falconers.

After World War II the Peregrine falcon suffered a precipitous population decline throughout most of its global range. In most regions, including North America, the chief cause of the decline was traced to the pesticide DDT, which the birds had obtained from their avian prey. The chemical had become concentrated in the Peregrine's tissues and interfered with the deposition of calcium in the eggshells, causing them to be abnormally thin and prone to breakage.

The Peregrine falcon is a very fast flier, averaging 40-55 km/h in travelling flight, and reaching speeds up to 112 km/h in direct pursuit of prey. During its spectacular hunting stoop from heights of over 1km, the Peregrine may reach speeds of 320 km/h as it drops toward its prey.

Since at least 1995, Peregrine falcons have nested on Craigie Hall at the University of Calgary. For the past few years, there has been a live nest cam so that we can watch the falcons at the nest, and see the young falcons hatch and fledge.



guest  
speaker

## The American kestrel: common to scarce

Monday, June 10, 2024

5:30pm to 7:00pm

Tickets \$25.00 + GST can be purchased through our website:

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



This presentation by Dr. David Bird will provide the latest figures on population trends, assess the various hypotheses, and conclude with a discussion of what can be done and what is being done to stem the decline.

As an Emeritus Professor of Wildlife Biology of McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, Dr. Bird has published close to 200 peer-reviewed scientific papers and supervised 50 graduate students on a wide range of wildlife themes, mostly on birds of prey and in more recent years, the application of UAV's (drones) to wildlife research and conservation. Until his retirement to Vancouver Island in 2013, he taught several university—level courses, including ornithology, wildlife conservation, animal behavior, and scientific/public communication. He has written and/or edited more than a dozen books, the most recent ones being the third edition of *Birds of Canada*, the second edition of *Pocket Birds of Canada*, and *The Canada Jay—A National Bird for Canada?*

Besides his innumerable public lectures and radio, television and newspaper appearances, Dr. Bird is a regular columnist/contributor on birds for two magazines, *Canadian Wildlife* and *BWD* (formerly known as *Bird Watcher's Digest*). He is currently heading a national team to establish the Canada Jay as Canada's national bird.

# Saturday Morning Bird Walks With Jim St. Laurent

Jim has been working very hard to resume his regular bird walks and appreciates your encouragement and support after his recent surgery.

## Saturday, May 4, 2024 Frank Lake Day Trip

**9:00 am meet at** Wild Bird Store rear parking lot. Stopping at Policeman's Flats on way south—this a day trip so please dress for weather changes, bring water and lunch

## Saturday, May 18, 2024 North Glenmore Park—Weaselhead

**9:00 am meet in** North Glenmore Park parking lot

## Future Saturday Morning Bird walks with Jim

## Saturday, June 8, 2024 Weed Lake area (near Langdon)

**Tickets for any of Jim St. Laurent's Saturday morning bird walks can be purchased on the Wild Bird Store website: [www.wildbirdstore.ca](http://www.wildbirdstore.ca)**



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 through our website: [www.wildbirdstore.ca](http://www.wildbirdstore.ca)

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.

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.

**"If you want to hear the sound of birds, don't buy a cage, plant a tree"**



**QUESTION:** We got a surprise last spring when we discovered a pair of house wrens nesting inside an old metal watering can in our backyard. Is this unusual?

**RESPONSE:** I am not surprised to learn of this nesting behaviour. Other interesting nest sites in the scientific literature include glove compartments of abandoned cars, old shoes, pockets of old coats, and under the covers of propane tanks. Some species of songbirds build multiple nests and wrens are particularly prone to this practice. For instance, male Carolina Wrens begin several so-called dummy nests in their territories after which the female chooses one and completes its construction and decoration. But as for the function of that multi-nest building behavior, things are far from clear. There has been a lot of guesswork out there to date. Here are some leading hypotheses. First, these nests may signal to other cavity-nesting species that this is a wren's territory and they risk getting their eggs punctured by the aggressively territorial birds should they use that particularly cavity. It is a way of reducing competition for resources. Second, having a partially built nest, as a staged home so to speak, might be more appealing to would-be female partners. Third, the male's partial efforts at supplying some of the nest materials might expedite the building of the final nest and allow the pair to quickly get on with the business of raising young. Fourth, it could simply demonstrate the male's fitness to the female. The more industrious he is with this task, the better parent to the nestlings he might be. Fifth, having so many dummy nests could make finding the real nests just a wee bit harder and force predators to look for easier prey. Finally, I will add a sixth possibility and certainly not a mutually exclusive one. Perhaps the whole process merely strengthens the pair bond between the two partners. Someday, scientists will test all of these hypotheses one by one and only then will we finally know why they do it!



<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!  <b>WWW.CANADAJAY.ORG</b>
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## 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).*



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”!



For more information,  
please visit:

[https://naturealberta.ca/  
snow-geese-festival](https://naturealberta.ca/snow-geese-festival)

The festival includes several guided hiking and bus tours scheduled for each day, a free Trade Show in the Tofield Arena with kids crafts and activities, concessions, speakers, a Saturday Banquet & Silent Auction, and more!

We are excited to announce the 2024 Snow Goose Festival is on **Saturday, April 27, and Sunday, April 28**, to celebrate the spring migration of snow geese through Beaverhill Lake near Tofield Alberta.

# CRESTON VALLEY BIRD FEST 2024



Where the Birds Are ...  
**MAY 10-12**



**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

**For more information,  
please visit their website**



**27th Annual Songbird Festival – May 25 & 26, 2024**

**(Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory)**

This local birding festival is an annual celebration of Spring Migration in the boreal forest including tours of the LSLBO, nature workshops, birding hikes, children's activities, and of course, everyone favorite, the early bird Pancake Breakfast. For more information, please visit LSLBO's website:



## ON LOCATION

Wildwood Community Centre (4411 Spruce Drive SW)

Every Tuesday 3:00pm to 6:00pm

Crowfoot Arena (corner of John Laurie & Nosehill Drive NW)

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

# 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 Nature Centre.

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

This quarter for the months of March, April and May 2024 your donations will go to:



## Thank you for your support

[wwwcalgarywildlife.org](http://wwwcalgarywildlife.org)

**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

## SENIOR'S DAY

Is EVERY Tuesday.

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



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

# OPTIONS FOR SHOPPING AT THE WILD BIRD STORE



**Shop in Store**

In Store or on the Seed Truck



**Curbside Pick up**

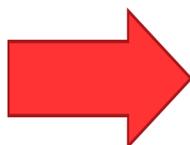
Phone your order in and pay for it at least 30 minutes prior to arriving at Wild Bird Store for pick up. Park in the curbside parking stall, call the store at (403) 640-2632, pop your trunk or hatch and leave the rest to us.



**Home Delivery**

Please phone the store at (403)640-2632 any day prior to 12:00noon on 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.

Starting May 2 we will be going to every 2 weeks for Deliveries. May 2, 16, 30



**PLEASE NOTE: delivery charge within Calgary City limits is \$10.00  
Minimum Order Amount is \$25.00**

**We offer a discount** if you return your 20lb and 40lb seed bags (sorry—not the Mother Nature bags which we cannot re-use), suet ball containers, or if you bring your own container or bag to fill. 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)



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

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Web: [wildbirdstore.ca](http://wildbirdstore.ca)

email: [info@wildbirdstore.ca](mailto:info@wildbirdstore.ca)

## Victoria Day

Monday, May 20, 2024



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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

Sorry! Excludes optics, books,  
cards & consignment items

**HAPPY BIRDING!**

The Wild Bird Store

Is the warranty & repair depot for:

Squirrel Buster® Bird Feeders

Aspects® Feeders

Droll Yankee® Bird Feeders

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The World's Best Bird Feeders®



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