



Please be sure to check out The Wild Bird Store's

HOLIDAY HOURS

Listed on the last page of this Christmas newsletter



The Doves of Peace — How One Bird Became a Global Icon

Throughout human history, certain symbols have transcended cultural boundaries to become universally recognized emblems of our deepest aspirations. Among these, perhaps none is more widespread or immediately understood than the dove of peace. This simple white bird, wings outstretched against blue skies, has come to represent humanity's perpetual hope for harmony in a world often defined by conflict. From ancient olive branches to modern political campaigns, the dove has fluttered across millennia, carrying with it a consistent message of reconciliation, hope and tranquility. But how did this particular bird—rather than countless other species—come to embody one of humanity's most cherished ideals? The story behind the dove's transformation into a global icon of peace reveals fascinating intersections of biology, mythology, religion, art and politics that continue to shape our visual language today.

The Biblical Narrative: Noah's Ark and the Olive Branch

The most influential early story cementing the dove's status as a peace symbol comes from the Biblical account of Noah's Ark. According to the Book of Genesis, after the great flood, Noah released a dove that returned with a freshly plucked olive branch in its beak, signaling the receding of floodwaters and God's reconciliation with humanity. This powerful narrative explicitly connected doves with the end of destruction and the promise of a new beginning. The olive branch in the dove's beak became a visual shorthand for the announcement of peace after conflict, a motif that would be repeated countless times throughout Western art and literature. The Biblical story provided the fundamental visual vocabulary—dove plus olive branch—that continues to define peace symbolism in many parts of the world today. The emotional power of this narrative, teaching that even after catastrophic destruction there could be divine forgiveness and a fresh start, helped ensure the dove's symbolic longevity.



Continued on page 2.....

The Cold War Era: Doves Versus Hawks

During the Cold War, the dove symbol gained additional political significance through its contrast with the “hawk” in political discourse. Political figures and policies became categorized as either “doves” favouring diplomatic solutions and nuclear disarmament, or “hawks” advocating military strength and interventionism. This linguistic framing reinforced the dove’s association with peace while embedding it deeper in everyday political vocabulary. Peace movements of the 1960s and 1970s embraced the dove symbol in protests against the Vietnam War and nuclear proliferation, often combining it with other emerging symbols like the peace sign. The dove appeared on countless protest banners, buttons and posters during this period, becoming a visual shorthand for opposition to military conflict. Cold War tensions made the dove symbol particularly potent, as it represented not just an abstract ideal but an urgent alternative to policies that many feared could lead to nuclear annihilation.

Ceremonial Releases: Doves in Public Rituals

The practice of releasing white doves at significant public events has further reinforced the bird’s symbolic power through dramatic visual spectacle. Olympic opening ceremonies often include dove releases (or symbolic representations of them after an unfortunate incident at the 1988 Seoul Olympics when released doves were harmed during the lighting of the Olympic flame). Similarly, white doves are released at weddings, funerals, memorials, and peace celebrations worldwide, creating powerful emotional moments that reinforce the bird’s associations with hope and transcendence. The Vatican has established a tradition of releasing doves after the Pope’s “Urbi et Orbi” messages, connecting religious authority with peace advocacy. These ceremonial practices transform the abstract symbol into a living, flying embodiment of peace aspirations, creating memorable experiences that participants and witnesses carry with them. The photogenic nature of these releases ensures they are frequently covered in media, further cementing the dove’s place in public consciousness through repeated visual exposure.

In the Bible, there are many references to the dove. When the Three Wise Men carried gold, myrrh and frankincense as gifts to Christ, the shepherds following them carried fruits, honey and doves. In the 55th Psalm, King David said, “Oh that I had wings like a dove! For then I would flee away and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off and remain in the wilderness. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and the tempest.”

These references give the dove special significance in the Christian religion and in the celebration of Christmas. Doves are symbolic of peace, purity, love and the Holy Spirit, all important concepts celebrated during the Christmas season. Because of this, doves became popular as Christmas tree décor.



**PLEASE TAKE NOTE OF THESE CHANGES IN
2025**

**THE WILD BIRD STORE IS HAPPY TO
ANNOUNCE THAT AS OF MONDAY
NOVEMBER 17, 2025 THE STORE WILL BE
OPEN ON MONDAYS FROM 10:00AM TO
5:00PM**

PLEASE NOTE

**There will be NO DELIVERIES on
Thursday December 25th
Or
Thursday January 1, 2025**



Hints & Tips

Fresh, top quality food is the foundation for successful backyard bird feeding. Follow these tips to ensure you're storing bird food correctly:

1. Always store your bird seed in a cool and dry location outside your home. **If possible, ALWAYS store seed outside your home (PLEASE SEE NOTE BELOW)**
2. Store bird seed in rodent and insect-proof containers
3. Never mix old seed with new seed

4. During periods of warm weather, store only the amount of seed your birds can consume over a two-week period
5. During the colder winter weather, store only the amount of seed your birds can consume over a four-week period
6. Keep your bird feeders filled with a one-or-two day supply of seed to ensure it is eaten quickly and stays fresh
7. Discard moldy, rancid or foul-smelling seed, because it can be a health hazard to birds

Galvanized steel seed cans with tight lids for larger quantities of bird seed



Seed Scoops



All these products are available at
The Wild Bird Store

For those of you who may live in apartments or have other reasons for having to store your bird seed in your home, we have the following information.

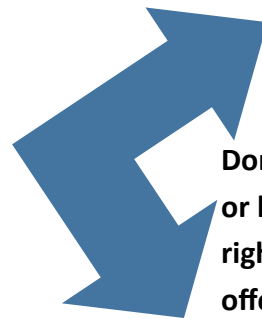
All bird seed has the potential to contain Indian meal moth larvae which are harmless, but believe me you do not want them in your house.

So when you bring your bird seed home whether you leave it in the bag you purchased it in or transfer it to a secure container, do so outside and when ever you need to open the container always do so outside to prevent the larvae from escaping into your living space.

The birds will love the extra protein the larvae (if there should be any) provide, but you will have avoided the invasion in your home.

For more information, please google:

<https://www.orkinCanada.ca/pests/moths/indian-meal-moths/>



Don't forget suet and peanuts (in-shell or kernels) and grubs that can be mixed right into you bird seed– all of which offer high-energy foods which are vital for wild birds during extreme winter weather



Skinless peanuts



Peanuts-in-shell



SPECIAL



Birds Choice Heated Bird Bath

Available in Green or White

Comes with stand and a 4 year in store warranty

Regular price: \$278.54 (+GST)

Less 30% = \$194.98 (+GST)

While quantities last!



HOLIDAY GIFTS



Hanging Seed Wreaths, Christmas Tree & Pinecones

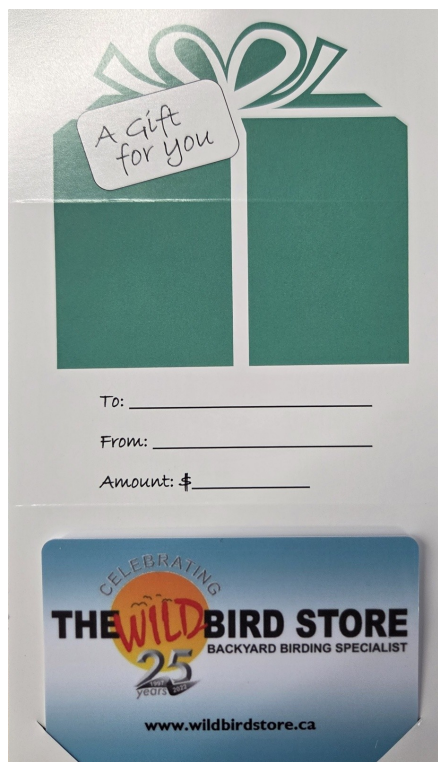
Wreaths available in small or large size

Packaged for Christmas giving

All are "no mess"

Available while quantities last! These are a HOT item, so don't wait and be disappointed.

Have someone on your Christmas gift list who loves wild birds?



We have gift cards available in any denomination. Please ask one of our “Bird Nerds” - they will be happy to assist you.

FRUIT/NUT BELLS —ready to hang with net bag included, sold individually or case of 12 (mix & match if wanted)



DO BIRDS GET COLD IN THE WINTER?

Short answer: Yes, birds get cold, but they stay warm with thick feathers, stored fat and smart habits. They puff up like tiny balls to trap heat.

Birds may feel the cold, but they face it with a brave kind of calm. Perhaps that is the reason the Black-capped chickadee is such a favourite winter bird in Calgary: they can make you day just by their cheery attitude.





JIM ST. LAURENT

Jim's years of guiding bird walks for the Wild Bird Store has been instrumental in teaching "birders" how to get the most out of their birding excursions.

Unfortunately, Jim has decided he can no longer continue to spend many hours walking while guiding his walks. An option for Jim is to continue his lifelong passion, not only for birding, but for sharing his knowledge and passion in a different way. Birding by car has become an alternative but might surprise you with the multitude of species you have the opportunity, especially when your guide is so proficient at finding wild birds.

IRRICANA STRATHMORE Saturday December 13, 2025

Ticket price \$7.00 (includes GST +fees)

POLICEMAN'S FLATS, BLACKIE & FRANK LAKE AREA Saturday January 10, 2026

Ticket price \$7.00 (includes GST +fees)

WATER VALLEY, GRAND VALLEY ROAD AREA Saturday January 24, 2026

Ticket price \$7.00 (includes GST +fees)

NORTHEAST IRRICANA AREA Saturday February 7, 2026

Ticket price \$7.00 (includes GST +fees)

PRIDDIS TO LONGVIEW AREA Saturday February 21, 2026



PLEASE NOTE: All trips are by car. Bring lunch. Will usually be 5-6 hours. We will be searching for winter visitors such as Snowy owls, Snow buntings, Red-tail hawks, Gyrfalcons, Redpolls and others. As well as foothill birds like Great gray owls, crossbills & others.

All trips start by meeting at 9:00am at the rear parking of the Wild Bird Store. Carpooling is encouraged.

Any trips postponed due to weather may be held the following Saturday.



We offer a discount if you bring your own container or bag to refill (sorry—not the Mother Nature bags which we cannot re-use), suet ball containers, or use a bag from our re-cycle bin. This discount is in addition to any other discount offered.



QUESTION: I seem to be hearing more and more reports of sightings of Eurasian collared-doves in Alberta. Is this something we should be worried about?

RESPONSE: If you saw one Eurasian collared-dove in Alberta, that's bad enough, but if you've seen a pair, that's even worse. I don't say that because I dislike Eurasian collared-doves. In fact, I make a point of appreciating all birds. But regrettably, these particular doves are an invasive species and one never knows what impact they might have on our native birds.

They were first released in the New World on New Providence, Bahamas in the mid-1970s and now they have spread northward all across our continent. Apparently, they were first sighted in Alberta in 2003 and specifically in Calgary a year later. There are now a handful of breeding pairs on the outskirts of the city. While we don't know how these doves ended up being found in all parts of North America, it is safe to say that the great availability of seed from backyard feeders is a big reason for their success. But planting trees in urban and suburban habitats has also helped by providing nesting and roosting sites. They prefer to nest in mid-level mature trees such as spruce. And in prairie provinces like Alberta, I imagine that the widespread availability of stored or waste grain has not hurt. So, as long as there is plenty of food and cover available, Eurasian collared-doves will be able to withstand the cold weather of our Canadian winters when they gather in larger flocks for food and protection.

In short, this species is likely to become a widespread permanent fixture in North America birdlife, including Canada from east to west. But what impact that might have on our native doves like the Mourning dove is not yet known.



Mourning dove



Eurasian collared-dove



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.

2025 Calgary Christmas Bird Count

Register now to take part on Sunday December 14th!



One of the Field Teams at the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary during the 2024 CBC. Photo by Paul Dang.



The 74th annual **Calgary Christmas Bird Count (CBC YYC) will take place on Sunday, December 14, 2025.**

To register or for more information, please visit: [Nature Calgary Christmas Bird Count Calgary 2025](#)

DONATIONS

Located at The Wild Bird Store (near the seed bins). We collect your cash as well as “wishlist” donations and arrange for delivery of the donations to these organizations that we support.

For the months of December 2025, January and February 2026 will be Ellis Nature Centre in Lacombe.



Thank you for your support

ellisnaturecentre.ca

SWEDEN Finds a Better Way.....

In Sweden, winter roads now come with a surprising twist of compassion—edible salt strips designed with wildlife in mind. Traditionally, rock salt is used to melt snow and ice, but it poses a hidden danger to birds who instinctively lick the salty paths. The excessive sodium leads to dehydration, disorientation, and in many cases, death. To counter this, Swedish engineers and ecologists collaborated on a more harmonious alternative.

These new salt strips are formulated with reduced-sodium content, blended with natural beet extract and maize starch. The beet juice not only gives the mixture a deep reddish hue, making it visible even against snow, but also adds essential nutrients that prevent avian dehydration. Maize starch acts as a slow-release agent, allowing the salt to function longer while remaining safe for small animals.

The strips are spread behind snowplows in neat, consistent lines across icy roads and sidewalks. Birds that land on these surfaces to feed during harsh winters now consume a safer substance—one that hydrates instead of harms. The approach has been especially welcomed in forest-adjacent towns and migration corridors, where bird fatalities once spiked after each snowstorm.

Beyond animal welfare, the eco-salt leaves fewer chemical residues in runoff water, benefitting nearby soil and streams. Sweden's snowplow reform shows that even routine maintenance can become an act of ecological stewardship. A simple change in salt chemistry is saving countless lives, feathered and otherwise.



In Sweden, snowplows leave behind **edible salt strips** — mixed with beet extract and maize starch so birds won't suffer dehydration after **licking roads**.



ON LOCATION

Wildwood Community Centre (4411 Spruce Drive SW)

1st Tuesday of each month 3:00pm to 5:30pm

Seed Truck will be at this location Tuesday, December 2, 2025 and January 6, 2026

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

Every Wednesday 2:00pm to 5:30pm

PLEASE NOTE:

Will not be at this location on Wednesday, December 24, 2025

However, will be on location Wednesday, December 31, 2025

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 or texting to

(403) 701-4571

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 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
To inform us when you place your order.

A minimum of \$25.00 (before GST) is required on ALL delivery orders

PLEASE NOTE:

We are now back to deliveries EVERY Thursday.

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
(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)





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

MERRY CHRISTMAS

The Wild Bird Store's hours to celebrate Christmas 2025 and the New Year 2026 will be:

Christmas Eve: CLOSED

Christmas Day, Thursday December 25th CLOSED

Boxing Day, Friday December 26th CLOSED

Saturday December 27th OPEN

New Years Eve Wednesday, December 31, 2025: OPEN!

New Years Day Thursday January 1, 2026 CLOSED

Creating an outdoor Christmas tree for the birds

Is a great way to spend quality time with family with the added benefit of knowing you're helping wildlife in some small way.

Garlands made of popcorn (no salt or butter please), peanuts in the shell and cranberries prove to be especially alluring to birds during this time of year. Also rolling pine cones or bagels in peanut butter and then coating with seeds and hanging on the tree will attract a multitude of birds.



Follow us on:

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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**

**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



SquirrelBuster®

• WILD BIRD FEEDERS •



LEUPOLD
AMERICA'S OPTICS AUTHORITY™

And the warranty depot
for:

Leupold Binoculars & Spotting
Scopes