



NORTHERN HOUSE WREN

Tiny bird; big voice

Northern house wrens are feisty and pugnacious animals considering their tiny size. They are known to occasionally destroy the eggs (and even the hatchlings) of other birds nesting in their territory. Females that sang more songs to conspecifics that were simulated by playback lost fewer eggs to ovicide by other wrens. Female bird song in this species is, therefore, thought to have a function in competition and is not only displayed by males. They are also known to fill up other birds' nests within its territory with sticks to make them unusable.

Even though Northern house wrens don't stop at feeders (they are strictly insect eaters), they are still a common backyard bird because they are cavity nesters. They use natural cavities, but they also like manmade nest boxes. Create a brush pile and grow plenty of trees and shrubs for them to use for nesting. They are also fond of using uncommon nesting sites such as mail boxes, drain pipes etc.

FACTS* Males sing 9-11 times per minute during their breeding season

- * House wrens have been seen eating snail shells, probably as a way to get calcium and grit that aids in digestion
- * Males will start construction on several nests at once, hoping the female will like one of them and decide to pair up with him. They only stay together one season, choosing new mates the next year
- * These tiny birds weigh about as much as 2 quarters
- * With their range extending from the very bottom of South America up into Canada, they have one of the largest ranges of any songbird in the eastern hemisphere
- * Single males sometimes compete for females even after nesting has begun. In roughly half of these instances, the outsider manages to oust his rival. When this occurs, he typically removes any existing eggs or nestlings and starts a new family with the female
- * If you watch a House wren birdhouse, you will likely see the adults leaving the house with a white ball in their mouth. This is a fecal sac, waste produced by the nestlings that is enclosed in a membranous sac. Adults perform good housekeeping by removing these sacs keeping the nest clean



©Jana Miller



This is a typical stance for a House wren

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.



BIRD TOUR NORTHEAST OF CALGARY SNOWY OWLS

Saturday March 7, 2026

Ticket price \$7.00 (includes GST +fees)

EAST OF CARESLAND -To Be Determined?? Saturday March 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.

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 March, April and May 2026 will be Alberta Wildlife Institute for Conservation (AWIC)



Thank you for your support

awic.ca



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, February 3, 2026

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 or texting to

(403) 701-4571

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.

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

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)





QUESTION: One often hears that some birds like geese and swans mate for life. Is this true?

RESPONSE: While many folks would like to think that our birds stay with the same mate for life, it is not true. While 90 percent of bird species generally have a single mate for at least one breeding season, if not longer, some of these so-called monogamous species switch to a different partner the following breeding season even when their original mate is still alive. Ornithologist studying this phenomenon use a term very familiar to humans to describe this behavior—divorce. Some ten percent of geese pairs end up with a different mate the following year, sometimes nesting only a few yards away from the old mate! Besides geese, the divorce had also been recorded in Black-throated blue warblers, song sparrows, and even swans but now many species have been added to the growing list. Albatrosses though are known to have the longest and strongest pair bonds. According to recent research, the very same key factors that lead to divorce in humans also affect birds—male promiscuity and lengthy spells apart. For the birds, long-distance migration comprises the latter. To examine the roles of these two factors, a combined research team of scientists from Germany and China examined divorce rates in 232 bird species that had accompanying mortality data and engaged in long-distance migration. They assigned a promiscuity score to the males and females. In addition, they carried out any analysis based on the evolutionary relationships between species to take into account the effect of common ancestry. They found that species with either notably high or low divorce rates tended to be closely related to each other. A similar pattern was seen for male promiscuity. For instance, plovers, swallows, martins, orioles and blackbirds had both high divorce rates and male promiscuity, whereas petrels, albatrosses, geese and swans had low divorce rates and male promiscuity. Interestingly, female promiscuity was not associated with higher divorce rates. The team also found species with longer migration distances had a higher divorce rate. They explain their overall results like this. If a male is regarded as being overly promiscuous, he becomes regarded as a partner with reduced commitment and thus, less attractive. In short, he ends up getting divorced a lot. As for long-distance migrations, this can mean that the pair from last year might arrive on the breeding grounds at different times and end up with another partner. Or they might even end up landing at different sites and acquiring a new partner. All this to say, humans can still learn a thing or two from our feathered friends.



Common ring-necked plover

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

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.

Creating A Mason Bee Habit Seminars



CREATING A MASON BEE HABIT

Wednesday April 29, 2026 at 6:00pm

Ticket price: \$15.00 (plus GST)

CREATING A MASON BEE HABIT

Wednesday May 6, 2026 at 6:00pm

Ticket price: \$15.00 (plus GST)



Tickets must be purchased through the Wild Bird Store website www.wildbirdstore.ca and are non-refundable.

Please purchase your tickets early as these seminars fill up very quickly and space is limited.

The Wild Bird Store carries a complete line of Mason bee supplies and which be available for sale after the seminar.



Annual Seasonal Counts

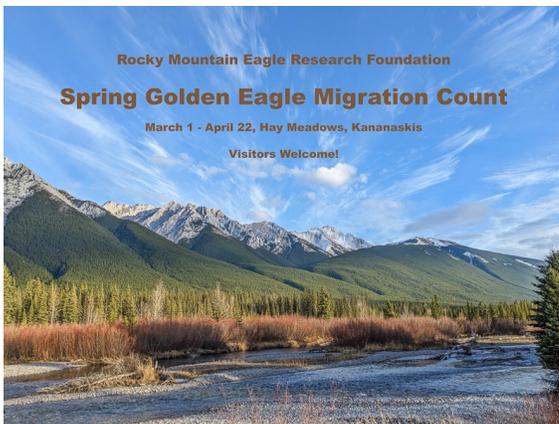
2026 Spring Migration Count runs from March 1—April 22

2026 Fall Migration Count runs from Sept 20—Nov 15

We welcome visitors, and suggest that if you are interested in visiting the site then come in the mid-afternoon, which is when we typically see the highest number of eagles.

For more information, please visit;

<https://eaglewatch.ca/2026-spring count>



The main observation site is the [Hay Meadow, Mt. Lorette Site](#). The site is located in [Kananaskis](#) on the bank of the Kananaskis River. It has a view of the open valley. which allows excellent (though rather distant) viewing of the Fisher Range to the east. The bulk of the Golden Eagles and other raptors use this ridge as part of their preferred migration route.

ANN & SANDY CROSS

Ann & Sandy Cross Conservation Area receives funding for 1.1 hectare wetland construction



Exciting news! The Ann & Sandy Cross Conservation Area has received funding under the Government of Alberta's Wetland Replacement Program to construct a 1.1 hectare wetland on the conservation area, supporting their goal to preserve and enhance vital wildlife habitat. This investment supports their long-standing commitment to land stewardship and watershed health. By restoring wetlands at the Ann & Sandy Cross Conservation Area, they are strengthening biodiversity, improving water quality, and creating healthy landscapes that support local communities, landowners and shared environmental outcomes across the region—ASCCA CEO Ryan Caswell.



If you have never visited the Ann & Sandy Cross Conservation Area just south of Calgary on the south side of the 22x highway, you have missed out on one of the most beautiful areas in our own backyard.



Snow Goose FESTIVAL

Tofield, Alberta, Canada

April 25 & 26 2026

The Snow Goose Festival is a celebration of spring migration through the Beaverhill Lake area. Everyone is welcome — from first-time to experienced birders — children and adults. You'll experience a grand wonder of nature as thousands of migrating Snow geese, Canada geese, various shorebirds, cranes, and swans return to Beaverhill Lake and area. Learn from biologists and naturalists about the significance of the wetland areas. On-site guided bus and/or walking tours, trade show, evening banquet, and more!

For more information or to purchase tickets, please visit:

<https://www.snowgoosefestival.ca/>

Early Season Preparation

- * Clean existing birdhouses thoroughly
- * Check for damage or wear
- * Remove old nesting materials
- * Ensure proper drainage and ventilation

- * **Early Spring (March—April) : Migratory birds return**
- * **Mid-Spring (May): Nest construction starts**
- * **Late Spring (June): Egg-laying and incubation**
- * **Early Summer (July): Chick rearing**

Signs of Nesting Activity

Knowing how to spot bird nesting behavior helps support local wildlife. Look for these signs:

- * Repeated trips to specific locations
- * Carrying nesting materials
- * Increased territorial behavior
- * Consistent chirping patterns



When choosing a birdhouse, think about these important points:

- * Size and dimensions specific to target (or eliminate) bird species
- * Material durability and weather resistance (cedar wood construction is always a great choice)
- * Entrance hole diameter (The Wild Bird Store can educate you on this subject)
- * Ventilation and drainage features



In reference to our “bird of the month” - Northern house wren. Such a lovely tiny bird with a wonderful melody, but it comes with a warning. Because they are very territorial they will completely dominate your backyard and prevent other species from nesting or even visiting feeders. Be careful what you wish for!

Another warning: Although one of the most interesting birds with beautiful plumage, Magpies can turn the love of backyard birding into a nightmare. They have no problem killing other baby birds to feed their own nestlings, but when the nestlings fledge the constant raucous of “feed me, feed me” starts at dawn and goes until dusk for weeks on end. So our tip is this: if you see Magpies carrying twigs or other nesting material (they love anything plastic to build into their nests) watch to see where they go (usually high up in a fir tree). If it is in your yard and you have a pressure sprayer, use it to knock down the nest they are building. It may take a couple of “knock-downs” but being such intelligent birds they will get the message and move on to another yard.

*Staying
Connected*



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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



SUNDAY MARCH 8, 2026

Follow us on:

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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.



October 22, 2024:

The House wren you see and hear in Alberta is now the Northern house wren—still the same indefatigable singer, still the same tiny ball of energy, but a different name. The change was necessary because ornithologists agreed that the bird that has been called House wren throughout the western hemisphere is actually seven distinct species.

Northern house wren and Southern house wren (five additional species are endemic to individual Caribbean Islands)

Cozumel wren, Kalinago wren, St. Lucia wren, St. Vincent wren and Grenada wren



Sorry! Excludes optics, books, cards & consignment items

HAPPY BIRDING!