



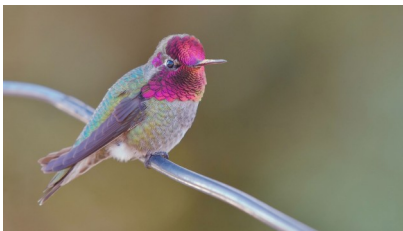
## GARDEN JEWELS—Hummingbirds

With some measuring as small as a human thumb, these lightning fast birds are named after the “humming” sound their wings make as they beat at over 3,000 times a minute. Hummingbirds can fly forwards and backwards, and even hover in mid-air like tiny helicopters. These miniscule birds have such high metabolisms that to survive they must consume a colossal volume of nectar, equivalent in human terms to around 300 pounds in weight of hamburgers a day.

The greatest diversity of hummingbird species is found in Central America, South America and the Caribbean. The smallest, the Bee hummingbird of Cuba, weighs as little as 1.6grams, little more than a standard paperclip. The biggest, meanwhile, is the Northern giant hummingbird, which is native to the Andean highlands in South America. It measures around 23cm long and weighs roughly 20 grams more than 10 times as much as the Bee hummingbird. The Sword-billed hummingbird, found in countries including Bolivia and Venezuela is notable because its beak is longer than its body.

Perhaps one of the most colourful species common to North America is the Anna's

hummingbird, named after Anna de Belle ,Masséna the Duchess of Rivoli—a 19th century noblewoman. Anna's husband, Prince François Victor Masséna was an amateur ornithologist who collected bird specimens. This hummingbird's iridescent emerald and rose-pink plumage was described by naturalist René Primevère Leson as “the bright sparkle of a red cap of the richest amethyst.”



## WHY ARE HUMMINGBIRDS SO COLOURFUL?

Shimmering purples, iridescent greens, sapphire blue and splashes of dark violet—hummingbirds come in a dazzling array of colours. In fact, according to a 2002 study, hummingbirds are more colourful than all other bird species put together. The plumage of these fascinating birds even incorporates ultraviolet colours invisible to the human eye. The dazzling spectrum of colour is not created by pigments, but rather by the precisely arranged nanostructure of the hummingbird's feathers. If you place a feather under the microscope and zoom in far enough you will see layers of tiny structures known as melanosomes. These contain melanin, a brown pigment. In between the melanosomes are tiny air pockets which scatter light. When light hits the feather, the melanosomes absorb a specific range of frequencies and reflect the rest of the light. That light is then scattered by the air pockets, creating an iridescent effect where intense bursts of colour appear only when the light hits the feather at certain angles.

It's thought that hummingbirds use their bright colourful plumage to communicate with one another, attract mates, and mark their territories.

# 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.

Upcoming for the month of April 2026, once again Jim will be leading Saturday morning birdwalks as Spring migration will be well underway.

As per usual, Jim reminds you to dress for Spring weather and carry water for rehydration.

**CARBURN PARK Saturday April 4, 2026 PLEASE NOTE: This is an actual walk, kindly note meeting place.**

**Meet at the park at 9:00am**

**Ticket price \$7.00 (includes GST +fees)**

**INGLEWOOD BIRD SANCTUARY Saturday April 18, 2026**

**PLEASE NOTE: This is an actual walk, kindly note meeting place**

**Meet in parking lot at rear of visitor center**

**Ticket price \$7.00 (includes GST +fees)**

## 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](http://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, April 7, 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](mailto: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 YOUR ORDER IN AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE AS SPACE IS LIMITED!

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](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. (Sorry! - excludes “sales” items, books, optics and consignment items.)



**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: What is the latest news on the quest to make the Canada jay or Whiskeyjack our national bird?

RESPONSE: We are actually very close to making this a reality. Here is how things unfolded in the last two years. In 2022, I and six colleagues wrote a book entitled “The Canada jay as Canada’s National Bird?” It is a colourful wee book with plenty of photos of the Canadian iconic birds but most featuring the Canada jay, several thousand copies were published by the Hancock Publishing House located in

Surrey, B.C. The book is available on Amazon Prime for the mere price of \$9.95 CDN and no one, including the publisher is making a dime off the sales. Regrettably, due to marketing constraints, it was not an immediate best-seller, but to be truthful, the real target for the book was our federal politicians. And how to get the books into the hands of our 338 federal Members of Parliament? No easy task, for sure. Elizabeth May, my federal MP for Saanich Peninsula/Gulf Islands, supported our quest and told me that Debra Eindiguer, her right-hand aide in Ottawa, might be able to help us. It turns out that Debra was a former student of mine in McGill University! She was able to put a copy of the book accompanied by a bilingual letter signed by me into the mailboxes of each and every one of those 338 federal MPs. I thought for sure that at least one, hopefully a Liberal, would take notice. I was wrong. But in the late fall of 2024, Brenda Shanahan, Liberal MP for the riding of Chateaugual/Locolle in Quebec, reached out to me and said that she was a bird-lover who had actually read the book and agreed with our quest. We decided to go through the Senate first as opposed to trying a risky one-shot Private Member’s Bill through Parliament. Brenda, soon retiring from public service, put me into contact with Conservative Senator Salma Ataullahjan who was also a bird-lover and believed in our quest. Salma and I drafted a Private Member’s Bill numbered S-221, entitled “An Act to provide for the recognition of the Canada jay as the national bird of Canada” and abbreviated as “National Bird of Canada Act.” Salma read the Bill on the floor twice, which was critiqued positively by Liberal Senator Pat Duncan, former Premier of the Yukon. However, before being put to a vote requiring 50 plus 1, such Bills are usually vetted by the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology (known by parliament as SOCI). Currently though, SOCI is overwhelmed with vetting and passing important Government Bills which take precedent over Private Member’s Bills. Our Bill is scheduled to be placed on the agenda sometime in early summer. Salma and I will be invited to speak to the Bill for about 10 minutes. Observers can attend but not speak. But then things got interesting. In early 2026, SOCI gave me the green light to encourage bird and nature organizations to submit emails and letters to their committee for translation and posting on the SOCI web site. Team Canada jay immediately sprang into action and approached both national and provincial bird/nature organizations and influential Canadians, urging them to support the Bill.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE.....

## ABOUT DR. DAVID

<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>		



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).

## QUESTION AND ANSWER FROM DR. BIRD CONTINUED.....

As of writing these words today, we are now up to 30 organizations, five of them national, two of them international, and the rest representing every province and the Yukon (there are no such organizations in Nunavut or NWT). We also have letters submitted from 10 iconic and prominent Canadians with more to come. You can read all in both languages on the SOCI web site. Absolutely amazing support for this wonderful little bird! Just so you know, we are not encouraging everyday Canadian birders to send in emails, mainly because we do not want to overwhelm and possibly irritate the Senate committee. To be crystal clear, the homework has been done, the support from bird/nature organizations from across the country is there, and this is really our one chance for Canada to have a national bird. If and when the Senate passes the Bill, it will then go to the House of Commons for ratification. And yes, we are working on Prime Minister Carney. The time has never been more ripe for Canadians to adopt another national symbol.

--- David M. Bird, Ph.D., Emeritus Professor of Wildlife Biology, McGill University

Emeritus Professor of Wildlife Biology

McGill University, Montreal (currently residing in North Saanich, BC)

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

[www.canadajay.org](http://www.canadajay.org) --- please sign the petition to make the Canada Jay the National bird of Canada.

<p><b>DAVID M. BIRD, Ph.D</b> Emeritus Professor of Wildlife Biology McGill University</p>			<p><b>CANADA JAY</b> <b>MÉSANGEAI DU CANADA</b></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><b>WWW.CANADAJAY.ORG</b></p>
<p><a href="mailto:david.bird@mcgill.ca">david.bird@mcgill.ca</a> <a href="http://www.askprofessorbird.com">www.askprofessorbird.com</a></p>			

# 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](http://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.

# CRESTON VALLEY BIRD FEST 2026



Where the birds are...

**MAY 8-11**



wildsight

## GUEST SPEAKER

Dr. Julia Zarankin from Toronto  
Award-winning writer, birder, and  
Canadian Ambassador for Zeiss

## GUIDED BIRDING TOURS

Explore our valley birds by  
kayak, foot, or car

## GUIDED CANOE TRIPS

At the Discovery Centre

## PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

## VALLEY EVENTS

Discover our local wildflowers,  
bats, beer, dairy, honey,  
and walk in our woods



Photo credit: Betty Martin

For more information or to purchase tickets, please visit:

<https://wildsight.ca/branches/creston-valley/birdfest/>



# 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/>

# Bird Migration Explorer

community have compiled the guide to the heroic annual journeys made by over 450 bird species, and the challenges they face along the way.

Using this unique digital platform, visitors to the Bird Migration Explorer can learn about the full annual cycle for 458 species of migratory birds that regularly breed in the United States and Canada and use areas in Latin America and the Caribbean during other times of the year.

You can take a closer look at your favourite bird as it completes its annual migration using the Species Migration maps, discover which migratory birds use a given location and how they connect it to other places across the Western Hemisphere on the Locations maps, and learn about many of the challenges migratory birds face during the year with the Conservation Challenges maps.

Check it out at: <https://explorer.audubon.org>

The Wild Bird Store recently had a question from one of our readers regarding the tracking of Spring migration.

The following represents the experts who through the support and data of the birding



## Welcome to Frank Lake web page

The Frank Lake Stewardship Committee would like to announce their Frank Lake web page. This page is everything having to do with Frank Lake, from conservation projects to volunteer opportunities. This page will be the most current and up-to-date with events happening at Frank Lake and special highlights. They hope “birders” will find this page informative and educational.

Visit: <https://naturecalgary.com/frank-lake/>



# Bird watching may build better brains, study says

[Bob McDonald](#) · CBC Radio · Posted: Feb 27, 2026

Expert birdwatchers have some fascinating brain changes that may help protect against aging and cognitive decline later in life, a new study by Canadian researchers have found.

This study published in the *Journal of Neuroscience*, used MRI scans to compare the brains of 29 expert birders with 29 beginner birdwatchers.. They found in the senior group, the parts of the brain related to perception, attention and memory were denser and better able to process information.

What this means is the brains of the experts were structurally more efficient, allowing them to retain details and absorb new information better than the non-experts. And the researchers found that this change stayed persistent as the birdwatchers grew older.

The sample size is fairly small but the results track with what we know about how to keep our brains sharp as we age. Studies have shown that remaining mentally active by learning a new skill, musical instrument, language or having a complicated hobby causes our brains to grow new neural connections and avoid mental decline.

And there is a growing body of research demonstrating that time spent in nature is good for the brain. In 2022, a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* looked at data from 62 million Medicare recipients in the U. S. and found that those who lived among more green spaces were much less likely to be hospitalized for Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

Another study out this week co-led by researchers at McGill University and published in the *Journal Neuroscience & Behavioral Reviews* found that it takes just three minutes in nature to trigger measurable changes in the brain.

The brain is definitely a use it or lose it organ. Research shows that staying mentally active later in life delays the onset of dementia. Earlier research concluded that having expertise in anything, such as motorcycles or rare coins, creates a sort of scaffolding in the brain that helps retain new information.

So birdwatching itself isn't a cure, but it helps to build a well-connected brain, because the same skills developed to recognize bird species by the smallest details can be used to better recognize faces and names in senior years.

You can listen to this entire CBC broadcast by clicking on the link at the top of the page. Go to:

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/quirks/bird-watching-brain-9.7108469>





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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

**Good Friday April 3, 2026**  
The Wild Bird Store will be **CLOSED** for this holiday



Follow us on:

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Twitter@wildbirdstoreyyc

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.

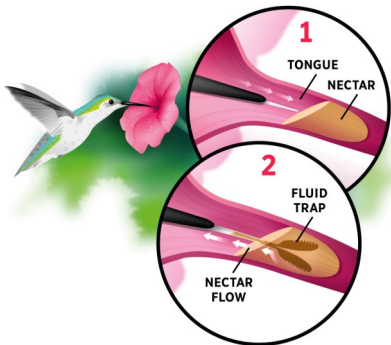


## DID YOU KNOW?

A casual observer might suggest that hummingbirds use their long, thin, dainty beaks like straws. Their tongues function as a tiny pump to suck the sought-after sweet liquid from feeders and flowers. Each bird has a thin tongue that forks at the tip, springing open to gather fluid: then the tongue retracts as the bill squeezes shut, compressing the tongue and allowing the bird to lap up the nectar. Hummers repeat this 15 to 20 times per second.

### Hummingbird nectar recipe

Combine 1:4 ratio of plain white table sugar with warm water to help dissolve the sugar, allow to cool and fill feeder. Extra nectar can be stored for up to 2 weeks in the fridge



**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!**