



The Sharp-shinned hawk or Northern sharp-shinned hawk, colloquially often nicknamed Sharpie, is a small hawk (or accipiter), with males being the smallest hawks (about the size of a Blue jay) in the United States and Canada. They often frequent backyard bird feeders bursting from nearby bushes to snatch a small bird off a branch. Although some homeowners vilify them, Sharpies serve a needed function of keeping wild bird populations healthy and wary.

Sharp-shinned hawk

Unlike other predatory birds, hawks kill their prey with their talons and not their beak.

When migrating, they travel in groups to increase the chances of survival.

This behavior is known as “flocking”, and a group of hawks doing so is referred to as a “kettle.”

Their large, broad, sturdy wings help them in a swift and easy flight. The birds initially flap their wings rapidly before letting their momentum carry them forward. This also allows them to dive at speeds of 150 mph.

They have excellent senses—including acute hearing and vision that allows them to see eight times better than humans. These birds of prey even have the ability to perceive different colours more accurately due to the four colour receptors present in their eyes.

A young hawk is called an eyas or eyass.

Sharp-shinned hawks dive-bombing humans

While Sharp-shinned hawks are generally not a threat to humans, there are instances where they may attack. One reason is territorial defense. Hawks in general fiercely protect their nesting sites and will aggressively defend their territory from any perceived threats. Humans may unknowingly approach a nesting site, causing the hawk to feel threatened and attack. Individuals must know their surroundings and avoid getting too close to potential nesting sites.

Another reason is provocation. If a hawk feels threatened or provoked, it may attack in self-defense. This can occur if someone gets too close to a hawk and its prey. Individuals must give hawks their space and avoid disturbing them in their natural habitat.

To avoid conflicts with hawks, be aware of your surroundings, especially during nesting season. If a hawk nest is identified, maintaining a respectful distance and avoiding the area prevents triggering defensive behaviours. Supervising small pets outdoors and keeping them on a leash is recommended, as hawks might perceive them as prey, although attacks on pets are not common. In areas with known hawk activity, wearing a hat or carrying an open umbrella can offer protection and deter a hawk from swooping.

If an encounter with an aggressive hawk occurs, remain calm and avoid sudden movements. Do not run, as this can trigger a hawk’s pursuit instinct. Instead, maintain eye contact with the bird, as hawks prefer to strike from behind. Making yourself appear larger by raising your arms can help deter the hawk.

Slowly and deliberately move away from the area until the hawk ceases its aggressive behavior.



**PLEASE TAKE NOTE OF THE FOLLOWING
CHANGE IN DELIVERY SCHEDULE**

**Commencing June 1, 2026 deliveries
Will be EVERY SECOND week**

**Delivery dates will be as follows for the month of
June 2026**

Thursday June 4 and Thursday June 18

We apologize for any inconvenience!

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.

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

FRANK LAKE Saturday June 6, 2026

9:00am meet at rear of the Wild Bird Store and carpool from there. Please bring a lunch.

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

Ticket price \$7.00 (includes GST +fees)

IRRICANA SLOUGHS Saturday June 20, 2026

9:00am meet at rear of the Wild Bird Store and carpool from there. Please bring a lunch.

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

Ticket price \$7.00 (includes GST +fees)

PLEASE BE ADVISED: Jim will be away for a period of time starting in July. Please consult future newsletters or the Wild Bird Store online calendar at www.wildbirdstore.ca for future dates.



ON LOCATION

Wildwood Community Centre (4411 Spruce Drive SW)

Tuesdays from 3:00pm to 6:00pm

The Seed Truck is happy to join Broxburn Farms with there mobile store back at this location for the summer.



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 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 order of \$25.00 (before GST) is required on ALL delivery orders
Delivery charge of \$10.00 (before GST) is applicable to every order

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. (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: I am absolutely amazed at how much effort songbirds like robins, chickadees, finches and hundreds of other species spend singing in the spring. Why do it? What are the risks and benefits?

RESPONSE: I have to admit to being a bit puzzled as to why songbirds spend so much time belting out their songs on a daily basis, especially knowing that there is a risk to letting every predator in the area know of their existence. Even though most bird songs last a few seconds or so, a typical songbird puts out between 1,000 to 2,500 singing bouts a day. One European species called the Yellowhammer sings over 3,000 times a day. So, why do it, one might ask. Well, a recent study may shed

some light on this question. Now, it is well-established that songbirds mainly sing to attract mates, particularly the males, but that they also use song to ward off intruding competitors. But is there a need to do it incessantly? It turns out that birds need to regularly exercise the muscles that they use to produce song. Iris Adam, a behavioural neuroscientist at the University of Denmark, designed some experiments with tiny male Zebra finches in captivity. First, she severed the connection between the singing muscles and the brain. After two days, they lost some of their singing strength. But after three weeks, they regained their ability. Adam then took some other intact finches and prevented them from singing by keeping them in the dark around the clock. After a week, their singing muscles lost half their strength. Next, she gave females a choice of listening to those males versus ones with a full singing ability. Naturally, the girls preferred the males with the full Sinatra capability! The bottom line is that male songbirds need to exercise those vocal cords and practice their singing on a daily basis to keep them in top shape. Or they lose the ladies to the crooner next door! Adam says that we humans can learn from birds. If one refrains from speaking or singing for that matter, for too long, it is possible to lose some vocal performance. Perhaps that is why we men love to sing in the shower so much!



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.

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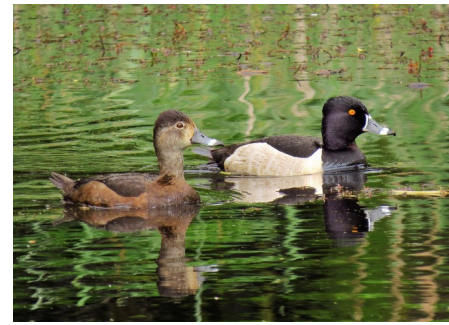
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The Most Important Things To Know About Bird Song

1. For a bird, singing can be draining. It is both energetically expensive and alerts predators. So then why do birds sing? Evidence suggests that in part, it is to proclaim and defend their territories. Studies have also shown that songs play a crucial role in attracting and impressing potential mates and may signal the overall health of the singer.
2. Why are some bird sounds referred to as songs and others as calls? Typically a song is defined as a relatively structured vocalization produced while attracting a mate or defending a territory. Calls tend to be shorter, less rhythmic sounds used to communicate a nearby threat or an individual's location. Each species and individual has a variety of songs and calls used in different contexts that together make up its repertoire.
3. Chances are when you hear a bird singing, it's a male. The majority of female songbirds in temperate zones use shorter, simpler calls while the males produce the longer and more complex vocalizations we think of as song. The story is different in the tropics where females commonly sing, and many species engage in "duetting" (a coordinated set of vocalizations most often made by male/female pairs to maintain and strengthen their pair bond).
4. The songbird syrinx makes vocal gymnastics possible—for example the Northern cardinal is able to sweep through more notes than are on a piano keyboard in just a tenth of a second. Because each branch of the songbird syrinx is individually controlled, the cardinal can start its sweeping notes with one side of the syrinx and seamlessly switch to the other side without stopping for a breath, making them the envy of human vocalist everywhere.
5. Unlike humans, birds produce vocal sounds using an syrinx, an organ located where the trachea splits into two branchial tubes. In songbirds, each side of the syrinx is independently controlled, allowing birds to produce two unrelated pitches at once. Some birds even have the ability to sing rising and falling notes simultaneously, like the Wood thrush in its final trill.
6. While some birds hatch knowing the songs they will sing as adults, the true songbirds have to learn how to communicate effectively. Songbirds begin learning their songs while still in the nest, a phase known as the critical period, when nestlings listen to the adults singing around them. Following fledging, young birds attempt to replicate these songs, practicing until they have matched their tutor's songs. Some songbirds, such as catbirds, thrashers and mockingbirds, learn to mimic other species—frogs, cats and even car alarms.
7. Just as humans have regional accents, some bird species develop distinct, area-specific dialects. Such variation in song often arises when populations of the same species are isolated by geographic features such as mountains, bodies of water, or stretches of unsuitable habitat. These local dialects are then passed on to the next generation of young birds, which hear the songs being performed by their father and other local males. After many generations, the birds from one area can sound quite different from those the next mountain over.
8. Birds are often up before dawn singing their hearts out and adding their voices to the dawn chorus. But why do many species sing more intensely at dawn than they do at any other time of day? Many of the songs heard at dawn are thought to function as warnings given by male birds in defense of their territory and mate. While the dawn chorus is a common phenomenon wherever birds live, little is known about why birds concentrate their efforts during these early hours.

It's Time to Rename the Ring-necked Duck

The term
“ring-
necked”



suggests, obviously, that you see a ring around the bird's neck, such as the white ring on a Mallard drake or a male Ring-necked pheasant. But most observers will see no such thing on a Ring-necked duck. As with many birds, the duck's name was first made at a time when birds were described up close in the hand. Yet for someone making an ID from across the pond, all they'll observe is the female's grey-brown plumage and dark back, or the male's glossy black head, black chest, black back, and pale sides.

What they won't see is a neck ring—unless they peer intently, in just the right light, at the drake, which will reveal in such circumstances that it has a narrow band of cinnamon-brown feathers between its head and chest. As field marks go, it's atrocious—almost never applicable in the field.

Why then is this all-but-invisible mark—one present only on the male bird—still the distinction that earns the bird its name? A name is a tool, and when it becomes difficult to use that tool, some kind of adjustment is in order.

Luckily, there is a clear and obvious field mark on both the drake and the hen: a white band circling the blue-gray bill, one so easily discerned that hunters have already adopted the nickname “ringbill” for the bird.

In short, authorities of the AOU (American Ornithologist's Union) has a reasonable solution to the problem: officially redubbing *Aythya collaris* (latin name for the bird) the Ring-billed duck thus keeping frustrated birders from spending countless hours searching for the invisible. They can give us the tool we need!

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 June, July and August 2026 will be Calgary Wildlife Rehabilitation



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Thank you for your support
www.calgarywildlife.org



Did you know?

- ◆ A single ladybug can consume 5,000 aphids in its lifetime, acting as a biological pesticide
- ◆ When threatened, they exhibit “reflex bleeding,” oozing a foul-smelling, toxic yellow fluid

from their leg joints

- ◆ Their bright red colour is aposematic signaling, a visual warning to birds that they taste like bitter chemicals
- ◆ They can fly at speeds up to 37mph, making them surprisingly fast long-distance commuters



Get Rid of Aphids Naturally

Aphids are not only a nuisance, but they damage and slow the growth of common plants like hydrangea,

birch and viburnum. With so many options to get rid of aphids naturally, there is no need to resort to harmful chemical pesticides.

Aphids suck up plant sap. They excrete a sticky sap, called honeydew, back on the plant’s leaves and stems. Honeydew also encourages the growth of black sooty mold, a fungus that darkens the plant and hampers the plant’s ability to receive sunlight.

Apply a homemade spray for fighting aphids. Garlic has long been used to get rid of aphids. Garlic has an added benefit: sulfur slows the growth of bacteria and fungi.

Grate or chop four garlic cloves, add two teaspoons of mineral oil, and let it rest for a full day. Add two cups of water. Strain out the solid pieces, leaving only the garlic solution.

Dilute the garlic solution even more when you add it to a garden sprayer. Test the solution in one section of the plant before spraying the entire plant.

Another option is to plant marigolds which are known to deter aphids, whiteflies, and some beetles. The best varieties for insect repellent purposes are African and French marigolds. Both varieties contain natural compounds that repel insects.



INTERESTING FACT!

Hérons and Egrets have a “Pectinate Claw” on their middle toe. The claw has a comb-like edge designed for grooming and maintenance. It is used to brush off the “fish slime” and debris after a successful hunt. They use it to distribute “powder down” - a biological talc they produce. This talc chemically waterproofs their feathers better than any spray. Without this toe-comb, the bird would suffocate and lose flight due to gunk.



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

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

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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.



DID YOU KNOW?

How Birds Sing: the Amazing Syrinx

Songbirds have a specialized two-sided vocal organ called the [syrinx](#) that allows them to perform impressive feats of vocal gymnastics—including the unique ability to create two unrelated pitches at once.



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!