



THE BIRD STORE NEWS

JANUARY, 2009, VOL. 1, ISSUE NO. 2

Mark your calendars!

● → The 12th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count is February 13-16, 2009. Visit www.birdcount.org to learn more.



● → **Our annual Mid Winter Blahs sale is Saturday February 28, 2009.**
One day only everything in the store (excluding binoculars) is 25% off. **See inside for details.**

The New Sanctuary Seed



Many of you have been disappointed that we have not been able to get Sanctuary seed for a while now. Our other seed company did not have anything that was really close to the seed but they offered to custom blend a seed for us. So we now have our own Bird Store Blend! It's available in 10lb, 20lb, and 40lb bags.

A Slice of Suet – A Customer Idea!

One of our customers came up with a clever way to serve different flavors of suet without the squirrels eating it all up. The solution, take a hot pepper suet cake and slice it in half (like slicing bread) and take another suet (peanut treat, woodpecker treat etc) and slice in half. Put the two halves together and put it in the suet basket. According to our customer, the birds are enjoying the suet and the squirrels can't figure out which half is the hot side so they have been leaving it alone. So watch out, your birds may start requesting a PB&H! Peanut butter and hot pepper suet.



Going Green! Get your Bird Store And More Reusable Bag

We now have reusable bags for those of you who don't want to add any more plastic waste to our environment. Our bags cost \$2.00 or 2 Bird Store Bucks! Our bags are made of recycled water bottles and are a nice hunter green with a full color Bird Store And More Logo—

Get yours today!



The Bear Necessities

Every year we hear more and more stories of Black Bear visiting the bird feeders, bending poles and chewing feeders to bits. So here's a few Bear Necessities for you!

Black bear habitat is forestland that contains both deciduous and coniferous trees, as well as streams, swamps, and rock ledges. Sounds like pretty familiar territory in this area! Bears are omnivorous; they eat grasses, fruits, nuts, and berries. They also eat insects, ants and bees are

their favorites. And of course they raid bird feeders and garbage cans, which explains all of those bent feeder poles!

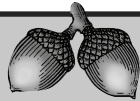
The Black Bear is an intelligent animal with a highly tuned sense of smell and hearing. A bear can smell the slightest aroma of food from a long distance. Black bears travel and feed primarily at night but can be active at any time of

the day. A male bear's home range can vary from 12 to 60 square miles.

Black bears are generally shy and secretive and usually fearful of humans. They are seldom aggressive toward people. They are also good tree climbers and strong swimmers. They can run up to 35 miles per hour. And while they are not a true hibernators, their body temperature is lowered and heart rate slowed during the winter denning. This helps the bears overcome the winter weather and food conditions. When bears are denning they do not eat, drink or go to the bathroom, but they will wake up if they are disturbed. Denning usually occurs between late November and mid March.

Your birdfeeders should be safe for the winter, but after March the best thing to do is to bring the feeders in at night if you have a bear sniffing around. Remember the less food there is on the ground and around the feeding area the less likely the bear will stay in your yard.

Black Bears are beautiful creatures, enjoy them from a distance and never attempt to feed or attract them.

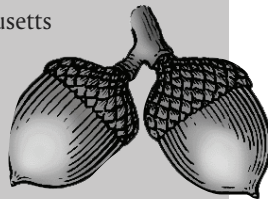


Nuts about Acorns

Have you noticed there are not many acorns in our area this year? The wildlife folks are noticing, the hunters are noticing and our customers are noticing that the birds and squirrels, and the deer are making their presence known at the bird feeders.

I was curious so I started looking around; there are virtually no acorns to be found around my yard. A Google search quickly found an article that says "it's hard to miss the massive number of acorns raining down on the New England landscape. From backyards in Northampton to city streets in Providence, many oak trees appear to be producing a healthy – if not record-breaking – crop of the nut." How can this be I wondered? And then I read the entire article it goes on to say that "several readers and forestry experts say it appears to be a particularly heavy acorn year in swaths North of Boston near the New Hampshire border, parts of Southeastern Massachusetts and Western Massachusetts." The article also had a survey and at the time of this writing there were 60 posts made.

It was interesting to note that some folks in Massachusetts were literally rolling in acorns, while some had no acorns at all. There was a post from someone as close as Charlton MA



who said they were getting "bombarded with acorns" and another from someone in Worcester MA who said they had none.

Oak trees don't produce acorns every year. Trees tend to produce one bumper crop every two to seven years and then a small crop the following year.

I am curious as to the lack of acorns in one town and the bumper crop in another and how it will affect our animals. If you would like to let us know about your acorn crop send us an email at info@thebirdstoreandmore.com

MINNY - MYRH AND LACEY

ANNUAL



Saturday Feb. 28, 2009

25% off
everything in the store

(optics excluded)

It's a great day to get rid of the winter blah's
and pick up something for spring!

Be an early bird like Minny-Myrh and Lacey, and join us for our annual

Mid Winter Blah's 25% off everything in the store Sale.

One day only, Saturday February 28, 2009.

Here's the rules!

- Doors open at exactly 10:00am not earlier
- Save 25% on your purchases (excluding optics)
- No coupons, bucks, or other discounts apply today
- No special orders, rain checks, internet orders, or phone orders
- Sale is on in stock merchandise only; once it's gone it's gone!
 - You have to be here to get the goods!
- Sale is Saturday February 28, 2009 only! Not Friday, Not Sunday...
Just Saturday from 10:00am till 6:00pm.

Get rid of the mid winter blah's and think spring!

Because You Asked

Do Flying Squirrels hibernate during the winter?

The Northern flying squirrel (*Glaucomys sabrinus*) is one of two species of the genus *Glaucomys*; the only flying squirrels found in North America. Flying squirrels are strictly nocturnal. The Northern flying squirrel is found in coniferous and mixed forests from Alaska to Nova Scotia, south to North Carolina and west to California.



The Northern flying squirrel nests in holes in trees, preferring large-diameter trunks and dead trees, and will also build outside leaf nests called dreys. They sometimes use cavities created by woodpeckers. Suitable nest sites tend to be more abundant in old-growth forests. Except when they are rearing young, the squirrels shift from nest to nest frequently. They often share nests. In one instance a nest contained over 50 individuals, although nests usually contain 2-5 individuals. The sharing of nests by flying squirrels is important in maintaining body temperature in the winter, as flying squirrels do not hibernate in the sense that body temperature drops, but survive extreme cold by huddling together in their insulated nests. A winter huddle may include a female and her young, or an unrelated mixture of squirrels.

In the winter, squirrels move from more open forests, into dense stands of conifers, this probably helps with warmth and keeping the elements at bay, while in summer they are found in conifers and deciduous areas. Though they are active year round, in the most severe weather they limit their activity to a certain period at night. This behavior is associated with the belief that the canopy cover is important in protecting the squirrels from predation and colder temperatures.

Sharing of nests by flying squirrels is important in maintaining body temperature in the winter, as flying squirrels do not hibernate.

A major food source for the flying squirrels are mycorrhizal fungi (truffles) of various species, though they also eat lichens, mushrooms, nuts, tree sap, insects, carrion, bird eggs and nestlings, buds and flowers. The northern flying squirrel is also known to cache food for when food supplies are lower. These caches can be in cavities in trees, as well as in the squirrels' nest. Lichens and seeds are commonly cached. When winter comes and truffles become more difficult to find, flying squirrels don't hesitate to raid the food caches of red squirrels. It is doubtful that red squirrels even realize they've been robbed because the flying squirrels pilfer the caches while the red squirrels (and most people) are sleeping.

If you are missing your little flyers this winter it is probably because they have moved farther into the coniferous woods, but not to worry, they'll be back in the spring. The flying squirrels will also use nest boxes. At our house we have two nest boxes that have families of flying squirrels. We have many styles of nest boxes here at the Bird Store And More.

What do Pelicans do with the water they scoop up when eating?

-The Brown Pelican, *Pelecanus Occidentalis*, is a large stocky bird that has a seven foot wingspan. It is the only dark pelican and the only one that plunges into the water to catch its food.



The Brown Pelican will fly in single file low over the water in search of food. When they spot prey they plunge into the water with half folded wings from as high as 50 feet. When they surface they drain the water from their bills before

swallowing the fish. It seems to be an efficient way to catch and eat the fish in one swoop!

Is it ok to feed the bird's stale bread?



If you do not regularly feed the birds, but during the winter you throw out stale doughnuts/bread and think you are doing good, think otherwise. Junk food and bread may fill up the bird's belly but it won't provide the protein and fats necessary to keep their little body warm. They'll fill up on the bread and not have room for the high energy foods (seeds, suet) needed to keep them warm during the cold winter nights. So even if you see the birds devouring the bread, remember that it may cause them to not have enough energy to keep them warm during the night. Save the stale bread for croutons!

Will birds use a nest box in the winter?

Most definitely, birds often look for a place to roost in the winter. A nest box or roosting box will help them stay out of the winter storms and winds. Birds often will roost together in



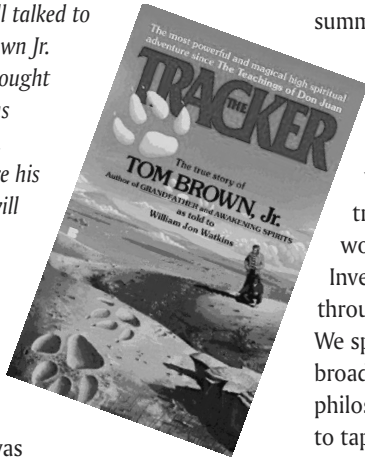
a nest or roosting box to keep warm. You may also find mice or squirrels sharing the box on a cold night. Keeping your boxes out and open for use in winter is a big help to the birds. We saw birds emerging from one of our nest boxes after the ice storm in December and our squirrel house with the camera in it that you can view at the bird store has been very active this season during the snowy weather.



Lessons Of The Tracker

By Kevin Chalifoux

You never know when you will touch someone's life, and that is what happened 9 years ago when then 8 year old Kevin came to the bird store with his mom. Bill talked to him about the Tom Brown Jr. tracker books and he bought the first book. Kevin has been hooked ever since. We asked Kevin to share his story in hopes that it will inspire others to take a look at what's around them, because Kevin is an inspiration to us. So here is Kevin's Story.



This past summer I was blessed with the opportunity to spend 10 weeks in what some people would call wilderness; the heart of the Pine Barrens of New Jersey. However, after this period of time to let my roots sink back to the earth and spend time slowing down, this place became much more like a home, as "normal" civilization came to resemble just the opposite: the wilderness. This was my 5th year spending my summer at the camp, although I must say it was the most influential time of my life.

The camp I attended is known as the Children of the Earth's Coyote Tracks Summer Camp, well known for its association with Tom Brown Jr.'s Tracker School, an adult version of Coyote Tracks. Tom Brown Jr., nationally renowned as "The Tracker," was trained in the art and philosophy of primitive survival by and Apache Native American, known affectionately as Grandfather. He now runs the Tracker School all year long, only an hour ride from the camp I was located at this summer. Being an "instructor- in- training" this year, I was part of a teaching team in which groups of our highly trained staff helped pass on these ancient and sacred skills.

Beginning with the 1st primary class, we covered the basics of survival: shelter, fire, water, and food. This included giving children as young as 4 years old the opportunity to come back to the earth, and experience being part of the natural world, a birthright to all of us. This experience included sleeping in a shelter they built from natural materials, falling asleep to the natural

orchestra of cicadas and owls, making fire by friction in the manner that kept ancient people alive for hundreds of years, learning about the abundance of edible wild plants, and learning the art of stalking silently through the woods, undetected through the use of natural camouflage.

As the classes progressed throughout the summer, so did the intensity of the skills learned.

We continued with skills that make survival easier and more comfortable with the use of advanced shelters, pottery, baskets, and hunting tools. We spent much time learning from highly trained trackers, some of whom now work on the Tracker Search and Forensic Investigation Team, how to track animals through different terrain and conditions. We spent an entire week dedicated to broadening our understanding of native philosophy, as taught by Grandfather, learning to tap into the "spirit-that-moves-through-all-things" and deepen our close encounter with the natural world. We even spent a week teaching what it was like to live as an Apache Scout, the eyes and ears of his people, as we taught more high-speed and invisible survival, learning more advanced skills to help care for the tribe and increase our awareness skills.



Speech around fire after quest.

The philosophy week was something very special for me, as I took the week off from teaching to embark on my first Vision Quest, an ancient tradition and rite of passage meant to help determine one's path in life. This involved fasting from food and human contact for four days, as I spent my time alone, deep in the woods, meeting myself face to face. What began as a nightmare turned into by far the most meaningful four days of my life, as I was forced to clear my mind and allow the natural world to speak to me, letting a little part of me to die in my quest area, a 10 foot circle, and enabling me to walk away with a deeper understanding of myself and my purpose.

The summer was jam packed with excitement and adventure around every corner, for students and teachers alike. The friendships and bonds made there are unlike any I have ever seen, whether between complete strangers from all across the world (we had students and staff from all over North America, England and Taiwan!), or between parents and their children. Each lesson was taught with passion and love for the skill and each student dove right into it, as most realized that these were things they had wanted to learn for so long! I was always astounded by the amount of kids jumping at the chance to sleep in the shelters they built without blankets or eat from their wooden bowls. Who wouldn't love learning how to play in the woods forever!

Through all the skills learned at the camp this summer, however, I think the most important thing I saw students and their parents get out of it was the chance to break routine, and learn that the "rules" society has placed in our brain can be broken. Whether it was seeing someone work hard to make fire over the course of the whole week, or seeing the most cautious mother cover herself in mud, I know for a fact that everyone who attended left with some new change of mind and heart. Given the time and place to let go, turn the cell phones off, and fall back into the natural rhythm is the most important thing someone can do, even if just for a week. Such an opportunity is of the utmost importance in our present times, as we find ourselves moving farther and farther from the earth granted to us. Studying these skills for the past 8 years has taught me more things than I ever could have imagined, and it all began when I bought my first book by Tom Brown Jr. from The Bird Store when I was eight years old. I cannot express how much the whole experience has meant to me and how many changes it has brought about. I can only imagine where they will continue to lead me.

For more information, please visit:

www.trackerschool.com

www.cotef.org

Check our web site at

www.thebirdstoreandmore.com

as Kevin is planning on doing some tracking programs with us this winter.



Nancy's Notes

Here are some safety tips for your bird feeding station. Place your feeders in an area that has easy access from your house. You don't want to be slipping and sliding through the yard to fill the feeder. If you find the path to your feeding station is slippery, use what you have in hand to "sand the path" with seed.

Seed that lands on the ground will give you traction and the birds and squirrels will clean up the mess.



Make the birds lives a bit easier by offering a heated birdbath. Bird bath heaters and heated baths keep the water just above freezing so the bath stays open. All of these heaters are thermostatically controlled and will shut off if the outside temperature is warm enough. They also will shut off if the bath runs out of water. Electrically speaking the heaters and heated baths use very little electricity and they are grounded so you don't have to worry about the parts sitting in water. If you don't have access to an outdoor electrical outlet you can use a Solar Sipper. This little bowl needs to be filled in the morning. The bowl has a black cover that absorbs the sun's heat and keeps the bowl from freezing.

If you are going to be away or can't fill your feeder try adding a wildlife block to your yard. Wildlife blocks can be set out on the ground or on a stump or stone. All the wildlife will eat from the block.

Another good food source that will last is a Mr. Bird seed block, hang them up and they will give an extra feeder with out the feeder.

I read somewhere that Nature is God's stress reliever. Enjoy!

Nancy



Into The Wild

At the bird store we are frequently presented with questions unrelated to birds. Not because we are experts of our natural world, but rather that we are able to portray our passion for the flora and fauna of this great earth. This brings me to a recent question that had Nancy, Bill and I stumped for days.



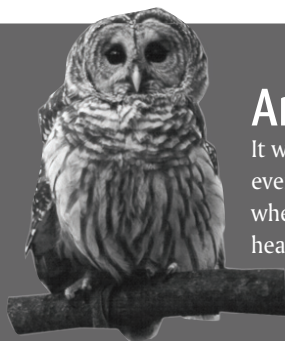
A loyal customer wanted us to identify an abundance of "caterpillars" that she had on a plant at home. Her description (although accurate) did not help in the identification process. The next day, she was gracious enough to provide us with an aquarium full of the plant and caterpillars. Our customers are so generous!

The search continued. I was totally "googled" out. I googled "smooth white caterpillars", "white larvae with yellow underbellies", "pests of dogwood"...you name it, I googled it! Finally Bill called me and left the message "The caterpillar is the larvae of the Dogwood Sawfly". It seems that he got lucky. So, what is a Dogwood Sawfly? I know that you're dying to know, so read on.

It seems that sawflies are in a group of insects related to wasps and bees. The adult sawfly has an appearance that is wasp-like, although they are non stinging. Their name is derived from the saw-like ovipositor that the adult uses to lay her eggs. The female sawfly lays up to one hundred eggs within the leaf tissue of the dogwood tree. When the eggs hatch, the larvae begin feeding on the leaves. Identification can be rather difficult (I'll say) because the larvae undergo many changes. They begin as a tiny translucent yellow worm, and after its second molt becomes a white chalky looking caterpillar, like we saw. The last molt changes it into a caterpillar that is yellow with black spots and a shiny black head. These larvae will overwinter in logs, landscape timbers and wooden structures. In the spring they emerge as adults and the cycle continues.

So the next time that someone asks you "what are those caterpillars?" And yes, they will ask...you can tell them, why they are the caterpillar larvae of the Dogwood Sawfly of course!

Brenda



An Odd Place For A Barred Owl

It was an interesting sight to say the least. Coming home one evening after dark we were about to pull into our driveway when we noticed a lump just at the edge of the beam of the headlights. Pulling up a bit closer the lump turned into a Barred Owl, just sitting in the middle of our driveway! We stopped and watched, and the owl watched back.

It didn't make any attempt to move and we thought it may be injured. Bill started to get out of the car and the owl decided that a tree branch would be a better spot to watch us from. We were glad to see it wasn't injured. Apparently we must have interrupted this owl's nightly hunt!

We couldn't see if it had anything in its talons but we speculate that it may have been going after a mouse along the driveway.

I guess you just never know when you will see something spectacular!

Bill & Nancy



Eyes on Nature

Walks and Workshops

▶ Don't forget to check our web site at www.thebirdstoreandmore.com for upcoming events. Click on "events" to view the latest updates. To sign up for news updates you can join our mailing list; just add your email address to the icon at the top left hand side of the web page. Any upcoming trip will be posted and updated on the website.

Check back often!



Join The Great Backyard Bird Count

The 12th annual Great Backyard Bird Count is coming soon.

The count will be held from **February 13-16, 2009**. The Bird Count is a joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, and is an opportunity for families, students, and people of all ages to discover the wonders of nature and at the same time make an important contribution to conservation.

The Great Backyard Bird Count benefits both birds and people. Anyone who can identify even a few species can contribute to the body of knowledge that is used to inform conservation efforts to protect birds. This information helps researchers understand bird population trends, which is critical for effective conservation.



Anyone can take part, from counting for as little as 15 minutes on one or more days of the event and reporting their sightings online

at www.birdcount.org. Last year participants submitted more than 85,000 checklists.

Teachers, this is a great tool for you to get the kids looking at something more than a computer!



Check out the educators materials online.



FREE DELIVERY within 10 miles!



Bird Store Hours:
10:00-6:00 Monday - Saturday
11:00-5:00 Sunday

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