



LESSONS FROM



Nature

There was a lesson learned from nature this past fall. Nature provided a bountiful harvest. The seed and nut crops from pinecones to hickory nuts and acorns were abundant. The berry bushes were covered. The grasses all went to seed. And the people asked...."Where are my Birds!!" The answer all through New England was the same, nature has provided for her own.

As the weather turned colder in mid October we saw a small trickle of birds returning. Finally the feeders were being used again after a six week lull. Our summer birds had migrated in late August and early September and the resident birds were enjoying the natural feast. Now the birds eating in the wild is not unusual, it's what birds do. But when the birds went missing we received calls, lots of them. Were the feeders dirty, was the seed bad, were the birds dead, did I wait too long to put the feeders up? They were all good questions but Mother Nature had the only answer. There is plenty of natural food on the tree, the bush and the vine. And what does the almanac say about that?

Here are the 20 signs of a hard winter first published in the Old Farmers Almanac in 1978. (We did have a blizzard in 1978, does anyone remember if it was a good acorn year?)

- Thicker than normal corn husks
- Woodpeckers sharing a tree
- Early arrival of the Snowy owl
- Early departure of geese and ducks



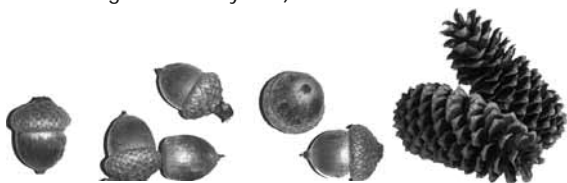
Are You Getting The Latest Updates?

If you haven't signed up for our e-news you are missing out on the specials, trips, sighting and reminders that are sent by email in between our quarterly newsletters. If you want the most up to date information, specials, and reminders join our mailing list at www.thebirdstoreandmore.com

- Early migration of the Monarch butterfly
- Thick hair on the nape (back) of the cow's neck
- Heavy and numerous fogs during August
- Raccoons with thick tails and bright bands
- Mice eating ravenously into the home
- Early arrival of crickets on the hearth
- Spiders spinning larger than usual webs and entering the house in great numbers
- Pigs gathering sticks
- Insects marching a bee line rather than meandering
- Early seclusion of bees within the hive
- Unusual abundance of acorns
- Muskrats burrowing holes high on the river bank
- "See how high the hornet's nest, 'twill tell how high the snow will rest"
- Narrow orange band in the middle of the
- Woolly bear caterpillar warns of heavy snow; fat and fuzzy caterpillars presage bitter cold
- The squirrel gathers nuts early to fortify against a hard winter

- Frequent halos or rings around sun or moon forecast numerous snow falls.

I guess we will see if any of the hard winter predictions come true, or was it just a bumper crop of nature's bounty and our birds and animals had a celebration.





A Rare Bird Sturbridge



Sometimes things that you don't expect just show up, and that is the case of the White winged Dove in Sturbridge. The White winged Dove was first spotted on the Sturbridge Christmas Bird Count held on Monday December 14, 2009. It was sitting in a tree along the Old Sturbridge Village access road. Over the course of a couple of weeks the dove made its way to the Bird Store's bird feeders and for a time was a regular visitor to our yard.

At first glance you may think it's a Mourning Dove, but then the bird turns and its white wing patches are easily visible. A closer look through binoculars or spotting scope reveals its orange eye and the beautiful blue surrounding the eye.

So why is this bird rare? It's not rare in its normal location, but it is rare for Massachusetts. The White winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) is a dove whose native range extends from the south-western US through Mexico and the Caribbean. It has also been introduced to Florida.

Most of the White winged Doves in the south migrate to further southern climates for the winter. In Florida they seem to be resident birds and don't migrate. But in Massachusetts in December they are definitely not in the right place.

White winged Doves are a large chunky dove, brownish-gray above and gray below, with a bold white wing patch that appears as a brilliant white crescent in flight and is also visible at rest. Adults have a patch of blue, featherless skin around each eye and a long, dark mark on the lower face. Their eyes, legs, and feet are red. Most populations of White-winged Doves are migratory,

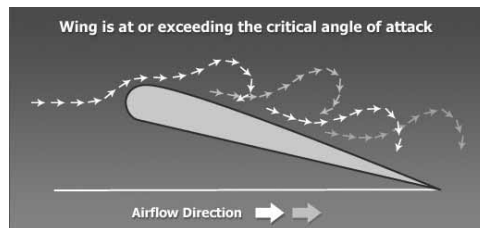
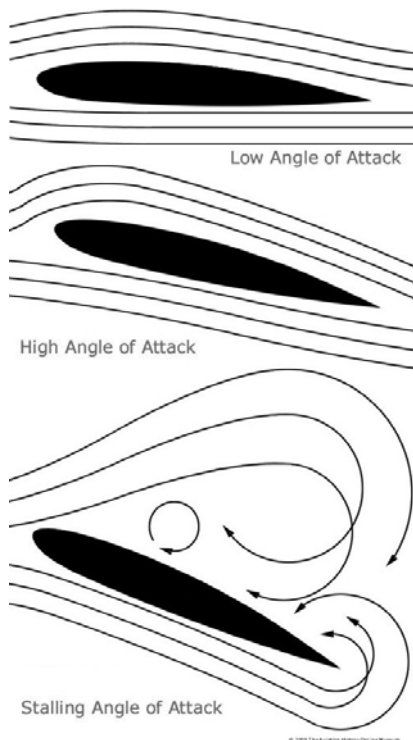
wintering in Mexico and Central America. The White-winged Dove inhabits scrub, woodlands, desert, and cultivated areas. It builds a flimsy stick nest in a tree and lays two cream-colored to white, un-marked eggs. Its flight is fast and direct, with the regular beats and occasional sharp flick of the wings that are characteristic of pigeons in general.



We hope you were able to see the White winged Dove when you stopped by the Bird Store.

If you would like to see a color photo of the dove or the Sturbridge Christmas Count compilation list, both can be found at www.thebirdstoreandmore.com Click on the sightings button.

Aerodynamics of Bird Flight



I was reading the question and answer section of one of my flying magazines the other day and someone asked the question, can a bird stall. I thought, of course a bird can stall. People might think a bird won't stall unless he runs out of gas. But to a pilot this is not the case. In the aviation world a stall is the point that a wing loses its ability to produce lift. In other words when an airplane stalls it has nothing to do what so ever with engine failure. A bird's wing may stall and in many cases does in the same manner that an airplane wing stalls. The difference being is the bird can feel the stall coming on and can change the shape of his wing in order to prevent it. In many

cases he will deliberately cause his wing to stall such as when landing. A stall is not necessarily a bad thing unless it happens at the wrong time, then it could be deadly for the pilot or the bird.

The dominant aerodynamic forces that affect flight are lift and drag. The difference in the pressure of air above and below a wing produces lift. When a bird holds its wing at a slight angle to an air current or (angle of attack) the air flows faster over the upper surface of the wing than it does over the lower surface. This creates a lower pressure above the wing than below it and causes lift. At the same time, drag, or resistance to the moving air, drags the wing backward. The combined effect of these two forces lifts the wing and drags it backward.

Most of the lift on a bird's wing comes from the increase of the air's velocity over the wing lowering the air pressure on its top, (Bernoulli principal). A certain amount of



lift is generated from beneath the wing by air striking the undersurface of the wing (Newton's 3rd law). The air moving over the top of the wing moves faster than the air flowing under the wing. The air flows smoothly and sticks close to the wing. This is called laminar flow. The angle between the relative wind and the chord line of the wing is called the angle of attack. (For those of you who might be more interested in this can ask me at the bird store because it can get rather confusing. For now just take my word for it) If you increase the angle of attack beyond the point called the critical angle of attack you will lose the laminar flow over the wing and the wing will stall, or stop producing lift. Have you ever watched a duck landing on a lake and gliding very low over the water; this maneuver is called flying in ground effect. By flying very close to the ground or water the air gets compressed between the wing and the ground making a cushion of air allowing the bird or plane to stay aloft at a slightly slower speed. Then the bird pulls up at the last minute increasing his angle of attack past the (critical angle of attack) and stalls his wing losing lift he drops onto the water. Unlike a plane he will sometimes flap his wing slightly to slow him down even more and to cushion the landing.

In a nut shell, or should I say egg shell that is a basic introduction to aero dynamics and may answer some of the questions about bird flight. Wing flapping is a whole other ball game and if people are interested we can take it up at a later date.



Bill



Because You Asked

Q: Where do birds go at night?

A: Birds tend to sleep in the same areas they inhabit during the day. To protect against predation, many birds will sleep in a way that enhances their security within this habitat. Water birds will sleep sitting or standing in the water or on predator-free islands. Many other birds, such as horned larks, quail and sparrows, sleep on the ground in dense vegetation. Birds which nest in cavities tend to sleep in their trees, chimneys, or in nest boxes far away from many predators. It is no accident that the majority of bird species, including those that are not regular tree-dwellers, prefer to sleep in trees or dense shrubs. There they are out of reach of predators which cannot climb and are warned by vibrations of other carnivores long before they are a danger. Sleeping habits can also change with the seasons. For instance, territorial birds often sleep in their territory (including on the nest) during the breeding season but thereafter may sleep communally in large roosts. Woodpeckers often will excavate sleeping cavities in the fall rather than sleep in the older breeding cavity. Ruffed grouse, which usually prefer dense conifer cover in the warmer seasons, will often burrow into snow in the winter to avoid predators such as the northern goshawk.

Song birds such as cardinals, blue jays and finches retire to dense thickets of vegetation. Take a walk at dusk through such habitat and you'll be amazed at the commotion as birds settle in for the night.

Tangles of briars, grape vines and brambles protect birds from all but the hardest driving rains. Even greater protection is found in evergreen refuges such as conifers and ivy-covered walls. This is a good ecological reason for every bird friendly backyard to include some evergreens. Woodpeckers, wrens, titmice and nuthatches sleep in cavities much like the ones in which they nest. In the Rocky Mountains, pygmy nuthatches sometimes roost by the dozens in large tree cavities. Roosting cavities cannot guarantee survival, however. Sometimes it just gets too cold, and birds freeze. And sometimes birds at the bottom of the heap suffocate. Other avian sleeping arrangements are a bit more unusual. Bobwhites sleep in a tight circle on the ground, all heads facing outward. The contact enables them to conserve precious body heat, and the outward orientation allows wary eyes to detect danger in all directions. And when there's lots of snow cover, ruffed grouse sometimes bury themselves in snowdrifts, where the snow itself insulates them from plummeting outside air temperatures.

Thanks to John Tufarolo for the question.

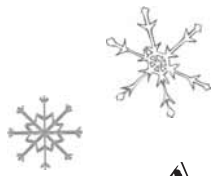
Receive upcoming trip info by checking the events tab on our website www.thebirdstoreandmore.com or receive emails by joining our mailing list.

Q: How much do the shells of seed weigh?

A: Now this question required a little work on our part. So the best way to do it was to jump right in! We took .5 ounce of Black Oil Sunflower seed, weighed it, and then took the shells off. The result was the shells of the Black Oil Seed weighed .2 ounce and the Black Oil Sunflower weighed .3 ounce.

So for every pound of Black Oil Sunflower seed there is 9.6 ounces of seed and 6.4 ounces of shells give or take a bit. And let me tell you, it is not easy to manually shell all of those seeds so your birds really have to work hard at eating. That's why they like the peanuts, sunflower hearts, and smart parts so much; it takes less effort to get fueled up on a winter's day.

MINNY-MYRH AND LACEY
ANNUAL



Mid Winter Blah's Sale



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

Saturday Feb. 27, 2010

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 27, 2010.

25% off

everything in the store

(optics excluded)

Here's the rules!

- Doors open at exactly 10:00am not earlier
- Save 25% on your purchases (excluding optics)
- No coupons, 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 27, 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!



Whitney Valle from The Stone Fish will be joining us with a great selection of her handcrafted jewelry all at 25% off

A Year in Review and A Big... *Thank You!*



Well, we are into a new decade and looking forward. 2009 brought with it a new store name, which some didn't even notice the change, some said "what was the name before? We always called it The Bird Store" and some of you lost us and found us again.

The winter of 2009 brought higher seed prices and no natural food so the birds and squirrels were very busy. Our annual Mid Winter Blah's sale was the busiest and most fun ever, and everyone looked forward to spring and the Orioles and Hummingbirds returning.

Summer brought rain, rain, and more rain which made the weeds grow great in

the gardens and made folks really want to see the sun.

The economy really put crunch on us in the fall at the same time as all of that rain turned the natural food crop into the most abundant crop in 18 years according to our seed distributor. The nuts, acorns, hickory, black walnut and the like were everywhere. The pines were loaded with pinecone, and the berries were weighing down the bushes.

The birds and squirrels stopped coming to the feeders, and folks were calling daily wanting to know what was wrong, and where their birds were. They were there, eating the natural food. The Sturbridge Christmas Count numbers proved it; the birds were there, they were just not at the feeders.

Then it snowed twice in October – a sign of things to come? Well maybe not, as we had a 70 degree day at the beginning of December. It seems nature was as mixed up as the economy!

All things have a way of righting themselves after a while. It started to snow and look like winter. The bird seed crops came in well and some of the birdseed prices dropped. The birds came back in droves to the feeders, and we were blessed with the appearance of a rare White winged Dove, a south western US native out of place here in New England. The Dove was spotted on the Sturbridge Christmas Bird count and over the next few days made its way to the Bird Store feeders. And the birders came to see. We had visitors from across the state and from as far away as New York, and New Jersey who took a trip up just to see this southwestern bird in the north.

Now if you get philosophical, the dove is a sign of peace, so maybe this dove has brought peace for us all in the New Year. We wish to thank you so much for your support of our store in this tough economy and we wish you peace and prosperity in 2010.

Bill & Nancy

Look What's New

There is a new section on our web site called product review. This section was created because of great input from Brian, one of our customers. It was Brian's suggestion that we review some of the products we carry here at the Bird Store. We are always looking for ways to make our store better for you and we thought this was a great suggestion!

Our goal when we created the product review area was to review products based on what we like and dislike about them, and also what you, our customers have to say about them.

If there is a product you would like to see or would like to comment on please let us know. We hope that this new area will give you more information on the many products that we carry.

Information Worth Repeating:

The Blue Jays are eating the paint off my house! We haven't had any one with this issue in a while, but it just occurred again the other day. So here is some information worth repeating.

Most songbirds need calcium during the breeding season. However Blue Jays consume more than twice as much calcium as other bird

species and unlike other birds continue to consume calcium throughout the summer and into fall. In the northeast soils are naturally poor in calcium and this becomes even more evident do to the effects of acid rain.

For many years paint manufacturers have used calcium carbonate or limestone in paint as an extender pigment making light colored paints a good source of calcium. So if the Blue Jays are eating the paint off of your house you need to provide them some eggshells because it's not the paint they want it's the calcium in the paint that they need. Providing eggshells in a tray feeder for the Blue Jays seemed to satisfy their need for calcium and deters them from eating your paint. Depending on the number of Jays you have, you may need to provide as much as 2 to 3 cups of crushed egg shells per day.

Steps to providing safe eggshells. Wash the eggshells and then heat them in the oven for 20 minutes at 250 degrees. Unsterilized eggshells may contain salmonella bacteria. Once they cool crush them into small pieces and serve them on a platform feeder. Make sure to keep the eggshells on an open tray, if they become buried in snow the Blue Jays will start to nibble on your house again.



Our Snow Birds

The Dark eyed Junco



One of the most abundant forest birds of North America, you'll see juncos on woodland walks as well as in flocks at your feeders or on the ground beneath them. They are easily recognized by their pink bill, gray or brown feathers and bright white outer tail feathers in flight. There are two forms of the Dark Eyed Junco "slate-colored" junco of the eastern United States and most of Canada, which is smooth gray above; and "Oregon" junco, found across much of the western U.S., with a dark hood, warm brown back and rufus flanks.

Dark-eyed Juncos are birds of the ground. They hop around the base of trees and shrubs in forests or venture out onto lawns looking for fallen seeds. You'll often hear their high chip notes as they take short, low flights.

Dark-eyed Juncos breed in coniferous or mixed-coniferous forests across Canada, the western U.S., and in the Appalachians. During the breeding season we will regularly see them at Wachusett Mountain and Skinner Mountain. During winter you'll find them in open woodlands, fields, parks, roadsides, and backyards.

Dark-eyed Juncos are flocking birds with a distinct social hierarchy. They forage on the ground in these groups, scratching with their

feet to find food. The flash of white tail feathers serve as a signal that alerts members of the flock when one is alarmed.

During the summer, about half of the Dark-eyed Junco's diet is made up of insects and other arthropods, the other half consists of seeds. The young eat mostly arthropods. In winter, the diet shifts more to seeds and berries.

One of the seeds the Juncos love to eat in the winter is Finch Mix. Put a handful out for them and enjoy!



Oregon Junco



FREE DELIVERY within 10 miles!



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

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