



THE BIRD STORE NEWS

APRIL, 2009, VOL. 1, ISSUE NO. 3

Mark your calendars!

- → **Easter - April 12, 2009**—The Bird Store And More has lots of goodies for your Easter Basket! The Bird Store And More will be closed today. **Happy Easter!**
- → **Hummingbirds will be arriving mid April.** Put your feeders out April 15th.
- → **Earth Day - April 22, 2009**—Save a Tree; stop by to receive your **FREE Bird Store and More Recycled Shopping bag.**
- → **Arbor Day April 24, 2009**—Go Plant a Tree for the future!
- → **Orioles are set to return during the first week of May.** Put out your Oriole feeders on the last few days of April to be ready for their return.
- → **Early May is peak bird migration time.** Get outside and you will be amazed at what you can see and hear!
- → **Mothers Day - May 10, 2009 - Don't forget about Mom,** We have lots of Wind chimes and Garden Ornaments to dress up her garden!
- → **If you are using raw suet** (from the butcher or the supermarket) change to prepackaged suet that can take the warmer temperatures. Raw suet is great in the winter but can become rancid and make the birds sick in higher temperatures.
- → **Memorial Day - May 25, 2009**
- → **Father's Day - June 21, 2009**—Bird Houses, Books, and Binoculars make great gifts for dad. **What else is today?** The **LONGEST** Day of the Year! Summer begins today.

What the Heck is Warbler Neck?

It's one of the birders springtime ailments. It's a stiff neck from you guessed it, looking straight up to the tops of the trees.

Now why would anyone want to get a stiff neck? Well to see the warblers of course. The warblers are a group of neo tropical migrants that make their way back to the northeast every spring. If you're lucky you will get to glimpse some warblers before the trees are in full leaf. Warblers, you see are the birds that arrive here in the spring that don't come to the bird feeders. Ok, so never say never, but in general they are insect eating birds that generally can be found high in the tree canopy, and you must look up to see them. Hence the name "warbler neck"

Once the trees leaf out, warbler neck can become more of a pain in the neck. The solution to this pain is to learn bird song. Many of the warblers can be found by song. Depending on where you are you may hear a number of warblers singing. And while you may not locate them by sight, you know their song.

One of the earlier spring warblers is the Pine Warbler which will show up in the pine groves. This warbler sounds very similar to a chipping sparrow, so knowing that you are in the correct area, (a pine grove) you start to look up to see if it really is the early spring pine warbler. Check - Warbler Neck, ouch!



The best way to learn the warbler songs is to listen to a birding by ear cd, download birdsong to your iPod, or log on to Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Birds of North America site. Once you have a description of the songs many are easy to pick out. Here are a few of my favorite Warblers and their calls:

Common Yellowthroat -

"Whichity Whichity Whichity"

Black throated Green - "Zee Zee Zo Zee"

Ovenbird - "TEACHER TEACHER TEACHER!"

Black throated Blue - "Beer Beer Beer Bee"

Chestnut sided - "Please Please Please to Meet Ya"

Prairie Warbler - De De De De De (ascending scale)

Blue winged Warbler - "Bzzz Buzz" (sounds like snoring)

That's just a few to get you started. There are many other warblers here in the spring and summer, from American Redstarts to Worm eating Warblers. Stop and listen this spring and you will hear all those birds that don't come to the feeders. And of course, pack the aspirin in case you get warbler neck!

Have You Seen Snow Fleas?

Most of us have never noticed snow fleas, unique little creatures that are really very common, and right under our noses. We saw them on our late winter walk to Opacum Woods. If you want to find them here's where to look. And yes you can find them in the warmer weather also. We have seen them along the trails at Wells State Park.

On a warm, sunny winter day, (not that we will have any more of that till next season – I hope!) take a look at the base of a tree where the snow may have melted down to expose some leaves, or where the snow is shallow or hollowed out just a bit. There you'll find a sprinkling of what looks like "pepper" or "ashes" on the surface of the snow. Each speck you see is a snow flea.

Snow fleas are actually tiny insects which come out on warm, sunny days to eat decayed plant material or sap oozing from the tree. They hop around acting like fleas and that's where they get their name, snow "fleas." They're not fleas though, but actually an arthropod called Collembola or commonly called springtails which measure about 1/8 inch (2mm) long. They have a very unique catapult system to get around. Two "tails" on their back end are tucked up underneath their belly, held in place by tiny "hooks." When the springtail wants to move, they just release the spring-loaded "tails," called furcula, which hit the snow and send them flying into the air. Since snow fleas can't control their flight or direction, they frequently land in the same spot or only a few inches away. You can find them any time of year in the forest living in the leaf litter stuck to the underside of leaves or on the surface of the soil, chomping on bits of rotting vegetation. They also live on the surface of ponds. You'd have to look very closely to see them here because they blend in well and are so tiny.

Next time you're playing in the snow outside, or just going for a stroll, take a look and see if you can spy these incredible spring-loaded springtails, commonly called "snow fleas." Isn't nature amazing!



Nancy's Notes

Spring tips for your bird sanctuary.



To bring the best of nature into your backyard you can create a habitat with native plants to offer shelter from the weather, protection from predators and provide nesting sites for the birds.

Offer the right foods for the time of the year and the type of birds in your yard. Offer fruit and nectar for the Orioles, Hummingbirds and other fruit eaters such as Catbirds. A mealworm feeder is a great addition if you have Bluebirds in your yard. The most important factor is to keep the feeders full. You'll miss out on all those

colorful harbingers of spring if there is nothing there for them to eat.

Keep your feeders and baths clean, and the seed dry. Disease can spread quickly with dirty feeders and baths. Throw out seed that has become musty or shows signs of mildew.

Be diligent about keeping your Oriole and Hummingbird feeders clean and the nectar changed. Think of the nectar as "Kool-Aid" for the birds, you wouldn't want to drink Kool-Aid that had been left out on the picnic table for 3 days now would you!

Keep chemicals, pesticides and herbicides away from areas where the birds are eating, nesting or bathing. These chemicals can be toxic to birds.

Reduce bird strikes on your windows by adding decals or decorations. Newer glass has highly reflective coating and the birds try to fly through as they see the reflections of the sky and trees.

Open and check all nest boxes for signs of winter use. Mice sometimes will use a nest box during the winter months. Clean out any old nests and webs to get the boxes ready for this years nesting season.

Lastly, make yourself a picnic and go out doors to relax in your own nature sanctuary!

Enjoy! **Nancy**



A Matter of Perspective

A wealthy man once said to his son, I want you to see how other people live, so I am bringing you to a farm to stay with the family for a couple of days.

When the man returned to pick up his son, he said to him "what did you think?"
The son replied, it was great! A bit startled the wealthy man asked why.

The son replied, we have a pool, but they have a whole pond behind their house that they can swim in.

We go to the grocery store, and they just go out to the garden to get anything they want.

We have gates to keep us safe and keep people away; they have all the neighbors who watch out for each others houses.

We have street lights, and they have the moon and the stars to light their yard.

We have pets, and they have all the birds and the animals of the forest right in their back yard.

Which is wealthier? ...It's all a matter of perspective.
We all need to appreciate the nature that surrounds us.

Because You Asked

Q: What is the difference between a beak and a bill?



A: There is little difference between the two terms when applied to birds, however the term "bill" is normally only applied to the beak of a bird or platypus while the term "beak" can be used for other species including turtles, some insects and even dinosaurs.

Here are some interesting Bird Bill facts:

- The top and bottom parts of a bird's bill are called mandibles.
- The upper bill or mandible is also called the maxilla.
- All birds have their nostrils at the basal end of the top mandible, except for the New Zealand Kiwi where they are at the tip.
- The edges of the bill are especially hard and sharp and are called 'tomia', singular 'tomium'
- The part where the two mandibles meet at the hinge of the bill is called the 'Commissure'
- No birds chew their food though they will use their bill to tear chunks off or to crush lumpy items before swallowing them.
- Birds' bills continue to grow throughout the birds lives, this is necessary to replace the wearing that inevitably occurs at the tips.
- Puffins have an extra bone in their jaws which allows them to open their bill and to keep both mandibles parallel. This allows them to hold a whole row of fish without the ones near the tip falling out.
- The large bills of birds like Toucans are hollow and much lighter than they look.
- Birds' bills are very sensitive, especially at the tips. Birds like Curlews can open the tips of their bills deep in the mud without getting a mouthful of mud.
- The bills of some fish-eating birds have serrations along the edge to help them hold slippery fish. These are not real teeth.
- The Sword-billed Hummingbird (*Ensifera ensifera*) has a bill longer than the rest of its body.
- The bill of the Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) hits the bark of a tree at about 13 mph. The birds' brain experiences a deceleration of about 10G every time this happens.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

No one knows what he can do till he tries.
— Publius Syrus

Into The Wild

Tale of Two Species

This winter I have spent a considerable amount of time in the woods, due largely to the fact that I have an energetic 6 month old golden /x, named Willow. This gave me the opportunity to brush up on some tracking skills that had been lost over the last twenty or so years. Back then, Bill (yes Bird Store Bill), Mike (who has since relocated to Alaska) and I, had a yearning to learn all that we could about our native flora and fauna. We took classes, purchased field guides, read all of Tom Brown's books, and of course spent a lot of time in the woods. It was during this time that a love of tracking was instilled in me.

When my love of tracking was rekindled this winter, I decided that I would like to share that excitement with others, and so I scheduled some tracking classes through the Bird Store. We went to different locations in Sturbridge and Brookfield, and found that the most prevalent track at all locations was that of the Fisher. That came as a surprise to me, as in my past tracking days, the fisher were few and far between. It was the exception rather than the norm to see their tracks. Also notable, has been the lack of porcupine in the forests. We used to see porcupine in dens, and sleeping in tree tops. We found their tracks, droppings, and quills. I've not seen a porcupine all winter, and it's not for lack of looking. So, what's going on? Perhaps it's the relationship between the fisher and the porcupine....predator and prey.

Fisher were virtually extirpated from Massachusetts in the late 1800's to early 1900's, due to the clearing of forest for agriculture, and the trapping of the animal for its pelt. In 1934 it gained protection, and once again became abundant, hence in 1962 trapping was once again implemented. The pelt price soared and the fisher suffered a huge population crash. In 1976 trapping once again closed, re-opening in 1979 with a shortened season and a restricted limit. The trapping of fisher are now limited to box or cage type traps, as the steel leg hold trap was banned in 1975. The decrease in trapping, coupled with reforestation, has resulted in a great increase in the fisher population. It seems to me it has also resulted in a decrease in the porcupine population.

The fisher is member of the weasel family, and is a fierce predator, feeding on squirrel, mice, raccoons, birds, and yes, porcupine. A porcupine, as you know, has quills...over 30,000 of them, each with a barb at the end. The quills contain an enzyme that prevents infection, perhaps as protection to the porcupine, which often falls from trees and impales himself on his own quills. The quills are a defense mechanism. They extend dorsally from the base of the head to the tail. They can not shoot their quills, but must come in contact with the animal of threat. The head and belly of the porcupine are vulnerable, so turning away from its enemy is a survival tactic. A fisher has the speed, fierceness, and agility to combat this defense. A fisher will attack the head of the porcupine and when the porcupine turns, the fisher jumps over the porcupine and lunges for the head once again. After about a dozen times, the porcupine is exhausted and the fisher scratches and bites at its head until the porcupine bleeds to death. The fisher then begins feeding from its unprotected underside.

The fisher is a solitary animal and in Massachusetts is said to have a range of three to five miles. A male and female may overlap their ranges, however same sex animals will not. Is it possible that an animal with such a large territory could wreak havoc on the porcupine, or is something else at work here? I tried to find the answer, however I couldn't find anything concrete. I will keep observing in the hopes of gaining more insight into the decline of the porcupine. What do you think? Your thoughts and observations are always welcome!

Brenda

Hummingbird Update!

The Hummingbirds are on the move! To see their latest location click on the Hummingbird Migration Map link on our Links page. www.thebirdstoreandmore.com Links (the link is on the lower section of the center column). You can also post your own sighting to this web site. Be part of the fun this spring!



Eyes on Nature



2009 EVENTS & THINGS

Saturday Bird Walks

Saturday April 18, 2009

Cost: \$5.00
Opacum Land Trust Members \$4.00
Morse Road, Holland MA
meet at The Bird Store at 7:00am

Saturday, April 25, 2009

Cost: \$5.00
Opacum Land Trust Members \$4.00
Westville Dam, Southbridge MA
meet at The Bird Store at 7:00am

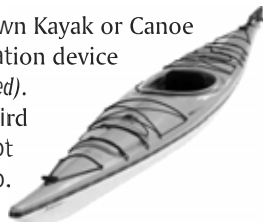
Saturday, May 9, 2009

Cost: \$8.00
Opacum Land Trust Members \$6.00
Skinner Mountain, Hadley MA
meet at The Bird Store at 7:00am or
at the lower parking area at Skinner
Mountain at 8:00am



Kayak Trips

You must have your own Kayak or Canoe
and appropriate floatation device
(*binoculars recommended*).
We will meet at The Bird
Store at 6:00pm except
for the Swift River trip.
Cost: \$5.00
Opacum Land Trust Members \$4.00



Friday April 24, 2009

3 Mile River, East Brookfield

Friday, May 29, 2009

Quaboag River, Brookfield

Friday, June 26, 2009

Swift River, Ware/Belchertown
Meet at the Fish Hatchery parking lot
in Belchertown at 6:00pm

About our Programs

We would love to see you at one of our
events, all skill levels are welcome

Registration:

Pre registration required. Programs that
include a fee must be paid in full at the
time of registration. The fee is non
refundable. You may register by email
at info@TheBirdStoreAndMore.com
or by calling The Bird Store and More
at (508) 347-BIRD.

Cancellation Policy:

Please check our website by 3:00pm on
the program day for cancellation. If the
program is an early morning program we
will update any cancellation information
by 7:00pm on the night before. In the
event that a program with a fee is
cancelled, it will be rescheduled.
All cancellations will be posted on the
top left hand corner of the Home Page.

Adult Beginner Birding Class

4 Week Course
Thursday, April 16, 23, 30, May 7, 2009
7:00 - 8:30pm
At the Bird Store And More
Cost: \$30.00
Non refundable - register by April 10.

This 4 week course will focus on the
identification, habitats, and behaviors of
birds common to our area. Although this
is a classroom program, we encourage
you to join us on our birdwalks to further
your knowledge.

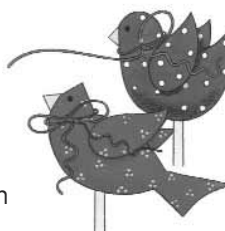
Kid Stuff!

Story Hour

(May story hour will be on May 9th)
Cost \$3.00
Ages 2 - 5 Accompanied by an adult.
1st Saturday of the month
3-4pm

Nature Crafts

Cost: \$5.00
(May 16, 2009)
Ages 5 - 8
3rd Saturday of the month
3-4pm



Children's Policy:

Children are welcome on most of our
trips, although sometimes the program
may be too long or strenuous for
younger children. Please call if
you have questions regarding a
particular program.

Happy Birding!



ACTIVITY LIABILITY RELEASE FORM

The Bird Store And More, 4 Cedar Street, Sturbridge MA 01566

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY, BY SIGNING THIS FORM YOUR ARE WAIVING ALL RIGHTS TO COMPENSATION IN CASE OF INJURY.

I understand that my (or my minor child's) participation in all programs,
trips or classes provided by The Bird Store And More is completely
voluntary and at my own risk. I also understand that no assurance
guaranteeing my (or my minor child's) safety is being made and I agree
to hold The Bird Store And More, Travelers Insurance, the sponsors,
facilitators, organizers, and property owners completely harmless of
all liability if I (or my minor child) sustain any injuries. By signing this
waiver, I attest that I am older than eighteen years of age and I agree
to assume full responsibility for any injury or injuries, physical, mental

or otherwise that I may sustain by participating in this event. I also
agree to assume full responsibility for any injury or injuries, physical,
mental or otherwise that the minor child that I am signing for may
sustain by participating in this event. I agree not to bring any suit for
damages, regardless of whether or not negligence can be demonstrated,
and I release all parties associated with The Bird Store And More
from responsibility for any damages suffered by me, (or my minor
child) physical or financial. My signature below indicates that
I have read and that I understand everything contained in this waiver.

Spring Programs for Children Schools, Scouts, Homeschoolers

Our programs are designed for children grades K thru 6. Each of them is offered to all age groups. They are altered accordingly. Our programs are ideal for schools, scout groups, and home schoolers.

For more information, please contact Brenda at The Bird Store: 508-347-2473 or email: info@thebirdstoreandmore.com

- Cost: 1 hour programs
 \$5.00 per child/\$75.00 minimum
- 1.5 hour program
 \$7.50 per child/\$100.00 minimum
- 2 hour program
 \$10.00 per child/\$125.00 minimum

Vernal Pools

Discover what makes a vernal pool so special, while exploring its diverse inhabitants, such as fairy shrimp, spotted salamanders, and fingernail clams. This is a 1.5 hour program which can be done at your location (if you're fortunate enough to have a vernal pool nearby) or at an alternative location.

Our Forest in Spring

The winter is finally over and the woods are teeming with life. Our senses come alive with the smells, sights, and sounds of rebirth. Join me in exploring this exciting time of growth and change. This is 1.5 hour outdoor program conducted at a location of your choice, or mine, if you desire.

Mammals of Massachusetts

Get to know the mammals that live in and around our neighborhoods. We will learn how to identify them, and about the habitats in which they live. We will also touch upon topics such as conservation, living with wildlife, and some interesting folk-lore. This is a 1 hour, indoor program, that can be done at your location or at the bird store.

Birding our back yard

Come with me and discover the vast array of birds in our own back-yard. We will learn about identification, vocalizations, habitats and food preferences. A slide presentation will be preceded by outdoor exploration. This is a 2 hour program that can be done at your location or at the bird store.



Breakfast with the Birds!

Cost: Coffee and Breakfast!

Having trouble trying to figure out what all those species of birds are under your feeders or around your yard?

We're glad to help! All that is required is an invitation and a cup of early morning coffee.

Give us a call or stop by the bird store to schedule a time for bird watching and morning coffee. We will come to your house and take a walk around your yard with you to help you to identify all those confusing little birds. You provide the coffee and we will bring our field guides, binoculars and knowledge to help you enjoy your backyard nature even more.

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 and trip 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 emailed to you! Our trips will be posted and updated on the web site.

ACTIVITY LIABILITY RELEASE FORM

NAME (Please print clearly) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____

MINOR CHILDS NAME _____

Has my permission to participate in programs, trips or classed provided by The Bird Store And More.

RECEIVED
BY _____
DATE _____



Updates to our website TheBirdStoreAndMore.com



We have added some new things to our website. One is a specials category on the Web Store. Each month we will be showcasing some specials that will be available to you at the store and through the web store.

[View Cart](#) [Account Info](#) [Login](#)

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Monthly Specials

- [Bat Houses](#)
- [Bird Baths](#)
- [Bird Seed](#)
- [Bird Store Gear](#)
- [Books & Audio](#)
- [Feeders](#)
- [Gift Certificates](#)
- [Hardware](#)
- [Home & Garden](#)
- [Houses](#)

We are working to add more items to the web store. We have found that many of you like to get ideas and browse the web store during the late night hours. While we have many items in the store we don't have them all out on the web store. If you don't see what you are looking for give us a call or send us an email. We monitor our emails regularly and can get back to you with options or answers.

You can order on the web store and we can ship the item to you. Or you can find out if

we have an item in stock before you drive out, and of course we can always order or hold an item for you.

We have also created a new Customer Photo Gallery. If you have a bird or animal photo that you would like to share you can email it to us and we will post it to the gallery.

To see the Customer Photo Gallery click on the Photo Gallery tab at the top of our web site and then click on Customer Photos. You can also see photos from some of our walks and hikes.

Check back often as we have posted new trips for spring including an Adult Beginner Birding 4 week class, Saturday Bird Walk Schedule, Kayak trips, and children's story hour and nature crafts.

FREE DELIVERY within 10 miles!



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

4 Cedar Street, (Route 20, Cedar Street Intersection)
Sturbridge, MA 01566
www.thebirdstoreandmore.com
Phone: (508)-347-BIRD • FAX: (508)-347-5601
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 736, Fiskdale, MA 01518



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