



THE BIRD STORE NEWS

JULY, 2009, VOL. 1, ISSUE NO. 4



## The Nyjer Factor

This past spring many folks were wondering what happened to the Nyjer. We did not run out of Nyjer seed at The Bird Store, but our seed company was limiting the amount we could buy for a while. Many other stores that usually carry Nyjer were out of stock and we received many phone calls from other stores and customers asking if we had any Nyjer available.

Nyjer is an imported seed and two factors tightened the supply of Nyjer seed and drove up prices, according to a senior trader who specializes in birdseed imports for North Pacific Ag Products in Portland, Ore.



Some 30 percent to 50 percent of the Indian Nyjer crop was wiped out by rainstorms in January. In turn, Ethiopian contractors,

seizing an opportunity to capitalize, withheld shipments of their Nyjer in hope of securing higher prices. A shipment of imported Nyjer seed was to arrive from Ethiopia in April. The price of Nyjer, known as "black gold" in the feed industry, skyrocketed after a major exporter didn't honor a shipping contract. India has begun shipping some of its surviving crop, and that helped to moderate the prices a bit.

About 50,000 tons of Nyjer, valued at \$64 million, were imported from India and Ethiopia in 2008, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Nyjer is used as cooking oil overseas, but almost all of it is used as bird feed in the United States.

So for now all is well with the Nyjer imports, and our Goldfinch will be grateful!

## Butterfly Myths

Are you fascinated with butterflies? Did you know that the first recorded butterfly in the United States was the Tiger Swallowtail?



Tiger Swallowtail

Over the years there have been many myths and folklores about our beautiful butterflies. Some of the most interesting folklore has to do with predicting the weather.

Zuni tribes believed that white butterflies meant the beginning of summer. The color of butterflies was also important in determining the type of season that was to occur. A white butterfly flying from the southwest meant a rainy summer; a dark colored butterfly meant the summer would be full of stormy weather. A yellow butterfly indicated a sunny season.

And we all know that woolly bear caterpillars are a predictor of a winter's severity. This is all determined by the size of the brown and black bands. Less black means a milder winter, more black a colder winter. If the black band in front is narrow, but wide at the rear, the winter will start off mild and end cold or vice versa.



Another common myth is that a chrysalis that is suspended from a thicker branch indicates wet weather, and one that is suspended from a thinner branch indicates fair weather.



No matter what you believe our native butterflies are our very own garden jewels!



*Kids*  
**SUMMER PROGRAMS**  
 Make your own suet and suet feeder  
 Thursday, July 9, 2009  
 4:00 – 5:30pm  
 Cost: \$10  
 Age: 8 - 11

Make a plant hammered T shirt  
 Thursday, July 23, 2009  
 4:00 – 5:30pm  
 Cost: \$10  
 Age: 8 - 11

Make a Dream Catcher  
 Thursday, August 7, 2009  
 4:00 – 5:30pm  
 Cost: \$10  
 Age: 8 - 11





# Eyes on Nature

## Walks and Workshops

- ▶ **QUABBIN HIKE TO GATE 37**  
Saturday, July 18, 2009  
7:00am -1:00pm  
COST: \$12/\$10 Opacum Land  
Trust Members  
AGE: Adults and older children

Quabbin gate 37 is off Route 122 in Petersham. We will be walking approximately 3 to 5 miles on mostly well groomed trails, although they are not all flat. The habitat consists of forests, streams, and ponds with the reservoir being our final destination. Once we reach the reservoir we will sit, relax, eat lunch and watch for Eagles.

BRING A LUNCH, BINOCULARS, AND BUG SPRAY. WEAR COMFORTABLE SHOES. WE WILL BE MEETING AT JANINES FROSTEE IN WARE AT 7:00AM.

- ▶ **BATS AT MOORE STATE PARK**  
Friday, August 7, 2009  
7:00pm - Dusk  
COST: \$6/\$4 Opacum Land  
Trust Members  
AGE: Families

Moore State Park is located on Route 31 in Paxton. It is a beautiful forested property with a pond, streams, and a grist mill. There is also a shed where hundreds of bats emerge from each night. It is quite a sight to see and after browsing the lovely park we will wait for their show. The hike is easy and leisurely.

Don't forget to check our web site at [www.thebirdstoreandmore.com](http://www.thebirdstoreandmore.com)

**Check back often!**



## Why Coveside?

**Coveside Conservation  
Products, Portland ME**

swept up and bagged for use in local stables. Scrap wood is carted to a pile outside and is free for firewood to the locals. Now, that's what we call real Yankee Ingenuity!



Since 1990 Coveside Conservation products has manufactured a nest box for every species of cavity nesting bird in North America as well as an assortment of feeders, bat houses and other wildlife products.

The boxes for each species are designed by experts and provide correct dimensions, materials, ventilation and drainage.

All of Coveside's products are handcrafted in Maine from Eastern White Pine and include a brochure that describes the placement and maintenance of the product.

We were curious about how it's made, so while on a business trip in Maine this past spring we stopped by for a tour.



Current owner Jim Turpin took us around the manufacturing facility. Everything from the cutting of the wood to the finished product is done in their Portland ME facility. According to Jim, the staff has had a hand in streamlining their product and efficiently producing, warehousing and shipping to the customer. There is a continual buzz in the shop and a number of new templates and prototypes that have been created by the staff, and new products are being tested around the yard. Nothing is wasted in this shop. The wood shavings are



is a proud supporter of the 3/50 project.  
**Help us save our local economy!**



- SAVING THE BRICK AND MORTARS OUR NATION IS BUILT ON
3. Think about which independently owned business you'd miss most if they were gone. Stop in and say hello. Pick up a little something that will make someone smile. Your contribution is what keeps those business around.
  50. If just half the employed U.S. population spent \$50 each month in independently owned businesses, their purchases would generate more then \$42.6 billion in revenue. Imagine the positive impact if 3/4 of the employed population did that.
  68. For every \$100 spent in independently owned stores, \$68 returns to the community through taxes, payroll, and other expenditures. If you spend that in a national chain only \$43 stays here. Spend it online and nothing comes home.
  1. The number of people it takes to start the trend...you.
- Pick 3. Spend 50. Save your local economy.**



## Nancy's Notes



Its summer, its' hot, and you know what that means – stagnant water in the birdbaths, mold on the hummingbird and oriole feeders, runny suet. Yuk, what a mess! Well it doesn't have to be. It just takes a bit more diligence to enjoy

your birds during the summer season.

Birdbaths just need a hosing and a brush with a stiff bird bath brush. Things like pollen, bugs, and bathing birds tend to dirty up the water pretty quickly. A daily hosing helps everything stay clean and clear. And what the heck, the bath will evaporate pretty quickly so you have to fill it anyway, just bring the bird bath brush along and give it a quick scrub. Occasionally it needs more, and you can give it a spray with bird bath and statuary cleaner. And remember still water is a mosquito breeding ground. Get the water moving or treat it with mosquito free water, a product that breaks the tension on the water so the mosquitoes won't lay their eggs in your bird bath.



There is a new product available to ecologically clean your hummingbird feeders, try a dash of Care Free Enzymes Hummingbird Feeder Cleaner every so often when you clean your feeders. It dissolves the mold and gets rid of any lurking bacteria.

And don't forget to clean off that suet feeder too! Greasy feeders can harbor bacteria, give it a good cleaning and use Suet Dough's instead of the greasier suet. No drips and no runny mess for your summer birds.

**Enjoy! Nancy**



## The State of the Birds 2009 Report

Washington, D.C. – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar released the first ever comprehensive report on bird populations in the United States, showing that nearly a third of the nation's 800 bird species are endangered, threatened or in significant decline due to habitat loss, invasive species, and other threats.

Birds are bellwethers of our natural and cultural health as a nation—they are indicators of the integrity of the environments that provide us with clean air and water, fertile soils, abundant wildlife, and the natural resources on which our economic development depends. In the past 40 years, major public, private, and government initiatives have made strides for conservation. Has it been enough? How are birds faring?



In an unprecedented partnership, government wildlife agencies and conservation groups have come together to produce

this first comprehensive analysis of the state of our nation's birds. The results are sobering: bird populations in many habitats are declining.

Birds are a priceless part of America's heritage. They are beautiful, they are economically important—and they reflect the health of our environment. This State of the Birds report reveals troubling declines of bird populations during the past 40 years—a warning signal of the failing health of our ecosystems. At the same time, we see heartening evidence that strategic land management and conservation action can reverse declines of birds. This report calls attention to



the collective efforts needed to protect nature's resources for the benefit of people and wildlife.

The U.S. State of the Birds report is the result of a partnership among the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), state wildlife agencies, American



Bird Conservancy, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, National Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, and other conservation organizations. Using new statistical techniques developed by U.S. Geological Survey and Audubon scientists, the report integrates long-term trend data from three bird population

**This State of the Birds report reveals troubling declines of bird populations during the past 40 years**

surveys: the North American Breeding Bird Survey administered by the USGS and the Canadian Wildlife Service, National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count, and the USFWS and Canadian Wildlife Service Spring Waterfowl Survey.



### What can you do - Get Involved in Citizen Science

The State of the Birds report was made possible by the efforts of thousands of citizen-science participants. Scientific studies of bird population and distribution on a continent wide scale require long-term observational data gathered by legions of citizen scientists. Projects can be as simple as taking note of birds at backyard feeders, or may require stricter protocols in specified areas.



This important information was excerpted from the 2009 State of the Birds Report. To download the entire report and view the video and web site go to [www.stateofthebirds.org](http://www.stateofthebirds.org)





## New Products for You!



Care Free Enzymes has some new products available to easily clean your feeders and birdbaths. Seed and Hull Digester is another great product to clean around your feeding stations. These products work great around your house as well and they are made from natural enzymes that are 100% biodegradable.

Droll Yankee is also introducing a new feeder this summer which is the second in their line of easy to clean feeders.

**Hummingbird Feeder Cleaner** - Hummingbird Feeder Cleaner is an all-purpose, all surface cleaner. It contains a unique blend of natural enzymes that is 100% biodegradable. A natural formula that works indoors or outdoors. This product will begin to safely break down organic contaminants and loosen sugar deposits on your feeder.

**Seed & Hull Digester** - A product for the true birding enthusiast. Seed and Hull Digester protects birds from unwanted parasites and e-coli bacteria. The grounds beneath your bird feeders are highly contaminated from bird droppings, organic contaminants, parasites and e-coli bacteria from molded birdseed. A simple spray will remove these harmful contaminants. Birdseed, hulls and other organic materials are quickly decomposed, digesting them down into basic components that are



easily absorbed into the environment. Treatment provides a clean environment for birds to scavenge freely.

**Statuary & Patio Furniture Cleaner** - Spray directly onto surfaces, let stand to loosen and lift dirt/residue/debris. Rinse with damp cloth. Scrub lightly for stubborn stains. Safe for all surfaces; plastic, concrete, rubber, vinyl, glass, ceramic and marble.

**Droll Yankee Ring Pull Bird Feeders** - Coming in July, Droll Yankee is launching their newest design in "the revolution of clean". The new ring pull bird feeders can be completely disassembled without tools in just seconds for a thorough cleaning.

A bit more economical in price compared to the Onyx line, this line is a sturdy tube feeder that comes apart. The center of the tube is held together with a long rod. You unscrew the rod and all the ports come apart for super easy cleaning. The focus on cleaning bird feeders was initiated by Droll Yankee in 1995 when they were the first to introduce a bird feeder cleaning brush to fit into the tubular feeders. The new ring pull feeder will be available in 2 sizes of seed feeder, and the thistle feeder will be introduced later this year.

## Bats and White Nose Syndrome

Many of you may not realize that our local bats hibernate in the caves in western Massachusetts and New York.

The bat population currently has a serious problem and researchers are hard at work trying to discover the cause. The bat colonies are dying, and the bats are found with white fungus on them.

White Nose Syndrome was first identified in caves near Albany, New York, in 2006. Since then it has spread across the northeast, and has been confirmed in colonies in Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey and has recently been identified in six more caves in Virginia.

The white marking fungus on the muzzles and ears of the bats may not even be the cause of the bat mortality—although 99% of affected bats die, and are found to have the fungal infestation—it still isn't clear if the fungus causes the deaths or is simply an opportunist infestation of already ill animals.



Little Brown Bat populations, the bats most commonly seen here in Massachusetts, have had the highest mortality rate, but Eastern Pipistrelles and Northern Long-Eared Bats have also been affected and it's not simply a question of bats dying. The

effects on the ecosystem as a whole may be profound because less bats means more insects, as bats consume huge quantities of nocturnal insects and without them preying on local insect populations pest species, mosquitoes, beetles, etc. become rampant.

This is likely to mean increased use of insecticides on crops and that economic and environmental cost will be carried by the consumer in the end. Two species of endangered bats live in the region where the WNS has been discovered in the past month. These are Indiana Bats and Virginia Big Eared Bats. The latter has a densely populated cave system less than five miles from one of the caves where WNS has just been found.

It's still not clear what is killing the bat populations, but what is known is that bats with WNS wake up more frequently from their winter hibernation which means they use up their fat stores, forcing them to leave the caves to seek food before the insect populations are around so that they simply starve to death. It's also unclear how WNS spreads: some experts think it travels from bat to bat, while others suggest that disoriented and weakened bats may simply seek out the nearest cave after leaving their home community, thereby transmitting the disease or condition to a new bat colony, but others believe that humans who move from cave to cave may be transmitting the infection on their clothing and equipment. As a result, caves where WNS has been confirmed are ruled off limits to recreational cavers although there are no systems in place to police the warning signs placed outside caves.

There are interesting, and worrying, parallels with the Colony Collapse Disorder being experienced by bees: in that nobody knows the exact cause, the means of transmission or what the effect of this population loss will be on the wider environment.



## Because You Asked!

### Q: When do the Orioles arrive and when do they leave.

The Baltimore Orioles arrive in New England during the first few days of May and will be with us through the summer.

They start their southern migration some time in mid August.

#### Here are some interesting Oriole facts:

- Breeds along woodland edges and open areas with scattered trees, especially deciduous trees.
- Also in parks and wooded urban areas.
  - Winters in humid forests and second growth in Central America.
  - Eats insects, caterpillars, fruits, spiders, and nectar

#### Nesting Facts

- Clutch Size, 3-7 eggs
- Egg Description, pale grayish-white, streaked and blotched with dark lines, heaviest at large end.
- Incubation period 11-14 days.

#### Condition at Hatching

- Helpless, with sparse down - Altricial.
- Chicks fledge in 11-14 days.

#### Nest Description

- Gourd-shaped and woven from hair, plant fibers, and synthetic fibers.
- Hung by the rim from thin branches or a fork in a tall tree.

There are a few reasons for optimism though. First, WNS is not known to directly affect humans and second, researchers have discovered that providing a heat source to bats infected with WNS may help them conserve their body heat better, meaning that although the bats wake, they return to sleep when near the heat, which might be a way of keeping some infected populations alive next winter, while a definitive cure or treatment is still being sought. Recent identification of a cold-loving fungus could also be a step toward an answer.

As of June 3, 2009 The US Fish and Wildlife Service Northeast region has updated the following information on their site.

#### State and Service biologists are:

- Winter monitoring of signs of WNS in caves and mines has been completed;
- Service and state biologists are compiling data from the biennial winter count of Indiana bats;
- Bat field work during early summer 2009 includes mist-netting\* to determine the presence of bats and monitoring of known maternity colonies (groups of females that raise their young together) of little brown, big brown or Indiana bats. Monitoring can vary from counting bats as they emerge at sunset to attaching radio transmitters and following their roosting and feeding behaviors \*(A mist net is a grid of thin nylon strands. Set between two upright poles, it resembles a large volleyball net. Mist-netting poses minimal risk of injury to trapped bats.);
- Service and other federal biologists along with state and academic biologists attended a meeting in May 2009 hosted by Bat Conservation International to discuss potential avenues of research;

- Service, state, U.S. Geological Survey and National Park Service biologists met in May 2009 to develop strategies to control the spread and minimize the impacts of WNS. We have initiated a structured decision-making process to identify potential management options that could be implemented as soon as winter 2009-2010. The initial phase of the SDM process is nearing completion, and efforts are now under way to critically evaluate all

potential management actions based on the most current scientific information;

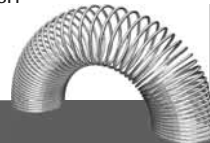
- The Service, in conjunction with many partners, is supporting experimental treatment of WNS-affected captive bats with damaged wings;
- The U.S. Geological Survey has initiated a pilot study to determine if WNS can be identified in affected vs. unaffected bats through genetic analyses;
- Service biologists and managers are working with commercial cave operators, caving groups, outing clubs, karst conservancies and others in several states, including Indiana, Kentucky, North Carolina, Virginia and Tennessee, to slow the potential spread of WNS; and
- Service biologists are assisting in developing and distributing new information about WNS (e.g., WNS video at <http://www.cavebiota.com/>).

We all need to help preserve our bat population. At the Bird Store we have a great selection of Bat Houses available. Here are a few things to consider if you are going to add a bat house to your yard.

The house needs to be at least 15 feet high

The house needs to be in full sun, as the house needs to have an internal temperature of approximately 104 degrees, roosting bats like it warm.

For more information on the bats, check our web site [www.thebirdstoreandmore.com](http://www.thebirdstoreandmore.com) to download a pdf from the fish and wildlife.



## Customer Tips and Funny Stories

Here's a feeder pole tip from one of our customers. Are the squirrels climbing your pole? Add a metal slinky (yep, you know the ones we all used to play with as kids) on to the pole.

The bottom of the slinky must be at least 2 feet above the ground. Attach the top of the slinky onto the top of the pole. Our customer says the squirrels jump up on to the slinky and it stretches down causing frustrated squirrels!

She also said it's pretty funny to watch.

Here's a funny squirrel story for you. And it happened at our customer's feeder. Safflower seed was being served in this particular feeder and the squirrel went up to get a meal. After eating some safflower seed the squirrel jumped off the feeder and promptly spit up all his seed. I guess he really didn't like the safflower!





## Survival Series

Imagine that you are lost in the woods. To survive you will need to provide yourself with food, water, shelter and perhaps fire. Would you know what to do?

Join Kevin Chalifoux to learn these important survival skills. Kevin has spent the past 5 years studying tracking and survival at the renowned Tom Brown Jr's Tracking School in the Pine Barrens of New Jersey. His enthusiasm led him to be a teacher in training last summer and to embark on his first vision quest (a truly life altering endeavor).

Kevin finds joy in teaching other what he has learned and to share his experiences. PLEASE JOIN KEVIN IN THIS SURVIVAL SERIES. YOU CAN TAKE PART IN ONE OR ALL THREE CLASSES (AT A DISCOUNTED RATE.). IN CASE OF INCLEMENT WEATHER, A MAKE UP CLASS WILL BE SCHEDULED.

### PROVIDING SHELTER IN THE WILDERNESS

**Saturday, July 11, 2009**  
**10:00am-3:00pm**

Location to be determined in the local vicinity. Adults/teenagers accompanied by an adult. COST: \$35 OR \$90 for the entire series.

You will be hiking into a wilderness setting at which time you will need to set up a camp (a shelter). Kevin will teach you how to do just that. You will break for lunch and enjoy wilderness games. BRING A LUNCH, WATER, A BANDANA, AND A NON-FOLDING KNIFE WITH A SHEATH.

### CREATING FIRE IN THE WILDERNESS

**Saturday, July 25, 2009**  
**10:00am-3:00pm**

Location to be determined in the local vicinity. Adults/teenagers accompanied by an adult. COST: \$35 OR \$90 for the entire series.

Fire can provide you with warmth as well as comfort and security. You will be hiking into a wilderness setting at which time you will need to perfect your fire making skills. Kevin will keep you entertained at lunch with some wilderness games. BRING A LUNCH, WATER, A BANDANA, AND A NON-FOLDING KNIFE WITH A SHEATH

### FINDING FOOD AND WATER IN THE WILDERNESS

**Saturday, August 8, 2009**  
**10am-3:00pm**

Location to be determined in the local vicinity. Adults/teenagers accompanied by an adult. COST: \$35 OR \$90 for the entire series.

There are no Dunkin Donuts, McDonalds, or groceries. Find out what plants are edible and how to find and drink water safely. At lunch Kevin will entertain you with wilderness games. BRING A LUNCH, WATER, A BANDANA, AND A NON-FOLDING KNIFE WITH A SHEATH

FREE DELIVERY within 10 miles!



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

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