



THE BIRD STORE NEWS
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THE BIRDS OF AUTUMN MIGRATING

Hawks

Hawks are seen in the greatest numbers during fall migration. Thousands of birds that breed to our north and northeast, and their offspring move through Massachusetts in significant numbers.

Fall migration begins in August with small number of migrating hawks, and peaks during September. Most numerous is the Broad-winged Hawk, which at times can be seen in flocks, or kettles, of hundreds, occasionally thousands of birds, "boiling" high into the sky. The next most commonly seen September migrants are the Sharp-shinned Hawk, American Kestrel, Osprey, Northern Harrier (Marsh Hawk), and Turkey Vulture.

The total number of migrant hawks declines but the variety improves in late September and early October when you are likely to see Cooper's, Red-tailed, and Red-shouldered hawks; Golden and Bald eagles, Peregrine Falcon, and Merlin.

The fall migration continues through October and into November, with good opportunities to see Northern Goshawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Eagles, and Rough-legged Hawk. These late migrants are often found wintering in Massachusetts.

In the fall, the best migration conditions can occur the day of and up to two days after the arrival of a high-pressure system or cold front. The cold, clear air riding over the warm earth on a sunny day creates thermals or columns of warm air that rise high above the ground. Hawks will circle together in the warm air, soaring to the top of the thermal. The hawks then use the altitude gained in this leisurely manner to glide serenely towards their destination.

When they "peel off" from the top of a high thermal, their gradual descent can cover miles before the birds seek another thermal to ride aloft.

Moderate to weak winds, generally less than 20 mph, blowing anywhere out of the north, from northwest to northeast, are best for good thermal activity inland.

On good days hawks can be moving at sunrise, although prime time is probably 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. but birds can be seen before or after those hours.

If you are interested in hawkwatching Massachusetts' two premier hawkwatching sites are Mt. Tom and Mt. Wachusett.

Are You Getting The Latest Updates?

If you haven't signed up for our enews you are missing out on the specials, trips, sighting and Monthly News 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

We are also on FACEBOOK, click the link on our store web site or search for The Bird Store and More.

SOMETHING NEW FOR

Kids!

We are excited to announce that Dezeree, our Bird Store helper, and right hand gal is going to move her Creative Arts Program to the Bird Store! She has been busy designing her new space and will be starting lots of new arts and crafts projects and after school programs. Dezzie has run a successful after school program and a summer arts program for kids in Charlton for the past couple of seasons. With her move to the Bird Store she will have more space to provide your kids with loads of arts and crafts activities. Stop by to say hi to Dezzie and see her new space. You can also check out her web site at www.dezzieteachesus.com

BECAUSE YOU



Asked



Q: How long do hummingbirds live?

A: Most hummingbirds die their first year, but when they've survived a full annual cycle, their life expectancy goes up dramatically. The oldest known age of a banded ruby throat hummingbird is nine years one month. Pretty impressive for a bird that only weighs 3 grams. That means it survived at least 17 migrational trips. The average age is around 5 years.

Q: What do Bumble Bees do with the pollen they collect?

A: Bumble Bees collect nectar and pollen and return it to the nest and deposit it in brood cells (baby bee cells), or into wax cells for food storage. Bumble bees only store enough food for about 5 days. Their nests are usually made underground and usually only have approximately 50 bees. The colonies are not overwintered. Toward the end of summer, the queen begins to lay unfertilized eggs that develop into drones (male bees). Female offspring produced at this time become new queens, and mating takes place soon afterward. The drones and workers then die, and the new, mated queens fly off in search of safe places to hibernate. When they emerge in the spring they look for a place to build a nest, and the cycle begins again.

Bumble bees are important pollinators of many plants. Both queens and workers collect pollen and transport it back to the colony in pollen baskets on their hind legs. Workers are small if born early in the year, and large if born later in the year.



Q: Why are the Yellow Jackets and other bees in my hummingbird feeder?

A: Bees and wasps are attracted to the color yellow. Since many hummingbird feeders have yellow plastic "flowers" or other parts, try removing such parts or painting them red before hanging your feeder in the spring - once bees learn where food is, they fly right back to the hive to tell all their friends, so avoiding their attention up front works best. Bees tell each other about good nectar sources using pheromones, so it may help to clean the feeder daily with vinegar. It may also help to rub a clove of garlic around the ports. Using saucer type feeders that the bees can't get into usually helps, but if the wasps persist, first try moving the feeder, even just a few feet; insects are not very smart, and will assume the food source is gone forever. They may never find it in its new location, while the hummers will barely notice that it was moved. If that doesn't work, take the feeder down for a day, or until you stop seeing wasps looking for it. You'll see hummers looking for it, too, but they won't give up nearly as soon as the wasps. Also, reducing the sugar concentration to 1 part sugar in 5 parts water will make it less attractive to insects, but probably won't make the hummingbirds lose interest.

Lastly if you are worried about keeping your hummingbird feeders out too long be aware that hummingbirds will not delay migration if a feeder is present; they are driven by forces more powerful than hunger and will not hang around when it is time to go.

Those Darned Seed Moths!



There are moths and little tiny worms in my bird seed! We hear this every year, so here is some information on those pesky insects.

Sometimes called Seed Moths, or Flour Moths they are actually the Indian Meal Moth. Found in almost every grain product, they can be found just about everywhere. Seed moths lay hundreds of eggs in grain and grain based products. When the eggs are warm enough, they hatch. Larvae eat the grain, pupate and eventually develop into the adult moth.

Once adults, these pesky insects chew through food packaging looking to mate. Any grain based product will do. Bird seed, pasta, flour, egg noodles, breakfast cereals. Just about anything seed or grain based is a perfect place to lay eggs.



PREVENTION: Preventing a huge infestation as much as possible minimizes seed moth woes. Wild bird seed is a common culprit. Since these seeds are harvested and packaged for wild birds, quality control (especially pest control) standards are much lower than those used for human or domestic animal consumption. Therefore, you are more likely to find pantry pests of all sorts in wild bird seed or dry feed.

Buy no more than what you need for 2 to 4 weeks. Bulk packaging saves you money but can cause you problems. Freezing all bird seed for 48 - 72 hours will kill any eggs and larvae. If you purchase large bags of bird seed, you can store your seed in a large sealed container. You can even stick a Moth Trap on the lid to capture any moths that are in the seed. Then put a couple of pounds at a time in a zip lock bag or freezer sized container and freeze it to kill eggs and larvae. By taking the initial precaution of freezing for a minimum of 48 hours you will greatly reduce the possibility of an infestation.



In general, flying pantry pests of this kind can be identified by their numbers (they are highly visible, as opposed to clothes moths) and location. Since they are insects which love grains, you will most likely see them in your kitchen. In some instances, these pests can be found in dried flower arrangements, pet foods (dog food, dog biscuits, any dry animal feed) seeds (including bird seed and dried beans), nuts, chocolate, and dried fruit. Pantry pests can also be found in rice, pasta, cake mixes, breakfast cereals, children's art work (containing pasta, corn, etc.), herbs, and spices.

The gold standard to get rid of moth infestation is the use of Pheromone Based Pantry Moth Traps. These pantry moth traps use a super sticky glue board, and a pantry moth pheromone that is released by the female moth when she is ready to mate. Male Pantry Moths will follow the scent and become trapped in the pantry moth trap, which prevents them from breeding, and breaks the pantry moth life cycle. Set up Moth Traps in areas where moths are flying. We have found that Revenge Moth Traps control the seed moth population at the Bird Store.



The moral of the story here is, keep your food sealed, watch for larvae webs and never underestimate the breeding potential of just a few moths.

BIRD PROFILE

Ruddy Duck

Everyone knows our cute little songbirds, so I thought I would profile some of our non bird feeder species. The Ruddy Duck is a member of the "stiff tailed ducks".



The Ruddy Duck has a stiff tail that often stands straight up in display. In addition to its beautiful ruddy color (ruddy is defined as having a healthy reddish color) the stiff tail standing up is a dead giveaway when you spot this duck.

The Ruddy Duck is a small duck with large white cheek patches, a dark cap, and a blue bill. The male Ruddy Duck is a bright cinnamon red during breeding season. The female has a grayish brown neck and body. The sides of the head and neck are dull buff-brown with a single dusky horizontal stripe crossing a pale-gray cheek patch. The bill is dark gray.

About 25 percent of the Ruddy Duck population winters along the eastern US. They winter in coastal bays and unfrozen lakes and ponds. The Ruddy Ducks dive and swim under water, they eat seeds of plants, pond weeds, algae, roots of aquatic plants, and aquatic insects and shellfish.

Ruddy Ducks are often reluctant to fly, and when disturbed, often will sink below the surface and swim away underwater like a grebe rather than fly away. They are nearly incapable of walking on land, with legs and feet set very far back on the body.

Getting Ready For The Season Ahead

There's probably no better way to attract birds in winter than by adding heated bird baths. Not only will more birds visit, but you'll get an even greater diversity of birds coming to your yard. All bird lovers place feeders out for the birds in winter, and many offer more than one kind of seed. But very few understand the importance and results of adding a heated bird bath during winter.

Offering water is the single most important resource you can give birds in winter. If you've never offered a source of water during winter do so today. You'll be rewarded with a wide variety of birds. Though birds need water both summer and winter, much energy is wasted searching out open water sources in winter. By providing a heated water source, you'll not only be helping the birds, but you will also have a greater variety of birds to watch.

Not all birds will come to your feeders, but all birds need water. A heated bird bath will introduce you to birds you didn't know were in your backyard during winter. To get started you'll need a power source. Most new homes have a GFCI installed on the outside of the house. These are those "plug ins" you use when using outside electrical tools, or putting out your Christmas lights. If you don't have one, it is pretty inexpensive to have one installed.

There are two ways to keep water open for birds during winter. The first, simply add a bird bath heater/de-icer to your existing bath. If you already provide water for birds during summer, just add one of these units to your birdbath and plug it in.

The second way to provide water in winter is with the complete heated bird bath. These are birdbaths sold as a unit with the heating element built into the bowl. Just set it next to your feeders, fill with water, and plug it in. One of the nice things about the all-in-one unit is that you don't have to look for your heater when winter arrives. We install a heated bird bath at the Bird Store for the winter, and we use a heated bird bath as a year round bath at our home. It serves as a regular bath during the summer and when the weather turns cold we plug it in. There is always activity at the heated baths, even in the coldest weather.

Yellow Jacket Information and Control

All wasps will defend their nests, but the Yellow Jackets and hornets are the most aggressive. They can be distinguished from bees by their thin "waists." Bees are thick-waisted. They fold their wings lengthwise when at rest. Like all wasps, yellow jackets prey on a variety of insects and other arthropods. Yellow jackets will also forage on foods that people eat, especially sweets and meats.

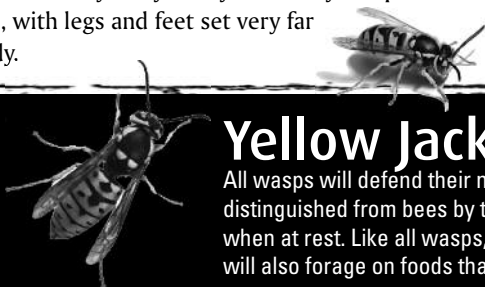
They are considered beneficial insects, eating other insects. The yellow jacket colony will remain active for only one summer, after which the queens will fly away to start more colonies. The remaining ones, die at the end of the summer, the nest is not reused.

Yellow Jackets usually nest in the ground. In the spring, most yellow jackets will feed on insects. In the fall, wasp colonies have become large, and foraging workers may be a serious nuisance as they search for food people eat or discarded food.

Eliminating possible food sources is important to reduce build up of foraging population during the summer to mid autumn. Trash containers should be kept closed and open containers should be emptied regularly.

If there are still yellow jackets around you can use a yellow jacket trap. This trap is very helpful during picnics, and cook outs by drawing the Yellow Jackets away from you.

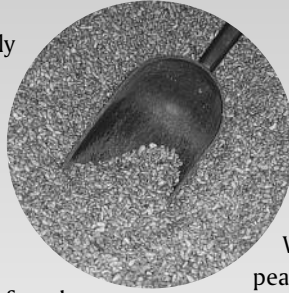
The traps come with a lure, however meat works best early in the season and fruit juice works well later in the summer and fall months. Keep in mind that Yellow Jackets do not like spoiled meats so keep them fresh. I have read that turkey ham works well. In the late summer and fall the nectar or juice works better, this is the reason that the Yellow jackets are around your oriole and hummingbird feeders in the late summer.



Seed Prices and Alternatives

The price of bird seed has increased dramatically in the past year, and like 2008 the brokers and distributors are not guaranteeing pricing. In short that means that our seed vendors can not lock in prices for us. We hope that with the new seed harvest, which is predicted to be good, there will be price reductions.

While we can not do anything about the price of seed, which is a commodity and is determined by the market, we can suggest some alternatives that will satisfy your birds. We have learned over the summer that the price increase in sunflower seed was due in a large part to the export of sunflower to Russia and the Ukraine. We heard that the crops in that part of the world failed and these countries had to import sunflower. We think of sunflower seed



as bird seed, but it is used for oil and food also, which is why it is such a big export item lately.

One of the things that you can use to supplement the bird seed with is suet. Suet is still relatively inexpensive and is a great source of fat and protein for the birds. Nuts in a peanut feeder are also another great alternative. Mr Bird's Pecan Feast is also a good solid block of nutrition for the birds.

We also have a new product called Tree Icing which is a peanut butter/suet spread that you can slather on tree bark, no feeder needed.

We will continue to keep you updated with current seed information. Most likely we will not be able to have a Bird Seed Sale this year, but we will continue to monitor the pricing and let you know as soon as possible. We will be updating information on our web site, Facebook

Page, and through our emails, so make sure you receive our electronic updates.

EYES ON NATURE WALKS

Make sure you check our web site www.thebirdstoreandmore.com

click on events or sign up for our email updates to get the latest trip information. You will also find our bird walks and events listed on our FACEBOOK page. We hope you will join us on one of our events! Exploring nature doesn't cost anything and it's healthy for you too!

FREE DELIVERY within 10 miles!



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

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