



BACKYARD nature center News

December 2017/January 2018 • Issue 44

Wonders of the Season

Here it is mid-November and I'm home writing the winter newsletter. Fire in the fireplace, a chill in the air. Days are still in the low 50's but nights are dipping down below freezing. As I walk to the end of our long driveway to retrieve the mail, I hear my darling Carolina Wrens busily flitting around in the viburnum bushes but with a definite destination in mind. Not bothered a bit by my presence, quickly one wren pops into the pretty little white and copper bluebird box beside the drive. Seconds later, and to my surprise, a second wren pops in. It's late afternoon, light is growing dimmer, it's obvious that these two little darlings are planning to spend the night in the nest box I had filled with cozy soft mulch back in October. I often tell folks at the store to do this even if they don't see anybody go in or come out. I was just super lucky!

Doesn't it make you wonder what the birds are doing during the cold weather? How do they keep warm? Do they sit quietly on a branch with their feathers fluffed

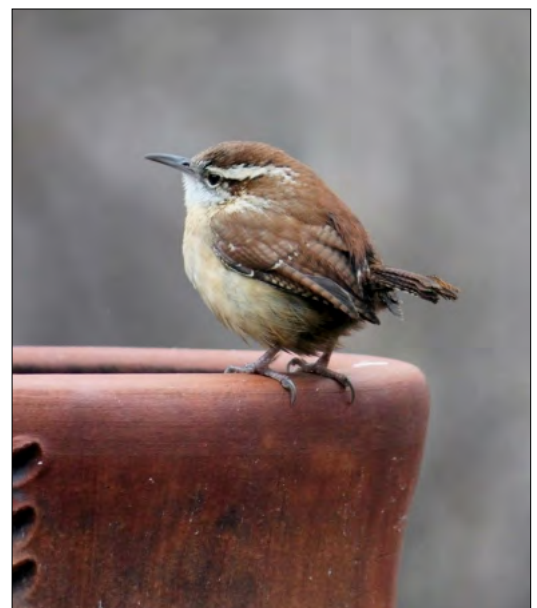
out insulating themselves or do they search for a cozy roost box where they can feel safe and warm? The answer is: they do both! A cardinal will not be looking for a cozy house to get into. That's not his way. Think about it, a



***"For people who
feed and care about
backyard birds"***

cardinal builds an open cup nest in the spring to start his family. He wouldn't be comfortable crowding his 7 1/2" body into a little hole, would he? On the other hand, a cavity nesting bird

such as a titmouse, chickadee, Carolina Wren, nuthatch and all the woodpeckers are in fact looking for just that. A natural cavity or even a birdhouse filled with fresh sawdust or mulch to help them insulate from the wind and bitter weather. This is what they are comfortable with when raising their young in the spring so why not use the same place for a winter hut? Any nest box will do except one. A house wren box normally has a 1" opening, or the size of a quarter. House wren is not here in the winter, where the slightly larger Carolina Wren is here year-round. Tuck that box away til early spring. While you may not be as lucky as I was to witness the smart little pair popping in for the night, you may just be surprised!



Visit your BACKYARD
Nature Center for all your
gift-giving needs.



Book Review:

Tea with Lady Sapphire

Some things are just extraordinary and deserve a second look. It's been some years ago that I did a book review on this book and if you don't have one, here's your big chance because I've brought it back. The book is about sharing your love of birds.

This has been an extraordinarily busy year in many ways. We meet ourselves coming and going. We are so obsessed with making things perfect for the holidays and for our loved ones. Perfection is overrated and exhausting! This year my holiday gift to you is the gift of nature. It is my hope that you will share this book with friends and loved ones and especially if you have children or grandchildren in your life. *Tea with Lady Sapphire* is a most beautifully illustrated little book about a grandmother sharing her love of birds, along with hot cocoa and a cup of tea, acknowledging that it's okay to slow down, stop fussing and take in all the beauty around us. The joy in watching a perky little chickadee cracking a nut and gratefully devouring it, bright red cardinals enjoying the feast of sunflower, millet and nuts that you placed on a platform feeder, a woodpecker working diligently upside down on a suet feeder to get that perfect bite. Breathe slowly and feel your pulse comedown. Life can be complicated or simple, you chose. **SHARE** the beauty that nature has to offer and count your blessings. *Tea With Lady Sapphire* is a treasure of a book!



Pine Siskin

Aww The Pine Siskin

Who, you ask? Do we have those here? Absolutely a possibility! Cornell Lab of Ornithology says "flocks of tiny Pine Siskins may monopolize your thistle and sunflower hearts one winter and be absent the next. This nomadic finch ranges widely and erratically across the continent each winter in response to seed crops. Better suited to clinging to branch tips than to hopping along the ground, these brown-streaked acrobats flash yellow wing markings as they flutter while feeding or as they explode into flight. Flocks are gregarious, and you may hear their insistent wheezy twitters before you see them."

When your Goldfinch are feeding in the winter make sure you take a good look at the flock. Siskins run with the finches – but their streaks make them easy to pick out of the flocks! Some years we are inundated...others-not so much!



American Goldfinch





Gift Ideas



7" LED Lighted Crackle Glass Globe—Brighten any home with this lighted cardinal globe in a natural setting snowy setting. Batteries not included.

Check out our kids department full of sturdy puzzles, games, Folkmanis puppets and great books.!



Covered ground feeder for snowy, blustery days. Covered



attached top, screen bottom and made of long lasting composite material. Great for attracting cardinals, juncos, doves and quail! Being covered is a great safety feature from any nearby hawk that may be lurking.

BIRDS, BIRDS, BIRDS!

Learn your birds with your kitty! We've discovered the best DVD for entertainment and bird calls! Use it simply to enjoy the picture and the songs, or click on the portion that has narration for learning.



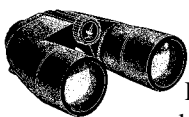
Got Canada Geese?

Having a "love/hate" relationship with Canada Geese in your yard? We have an answer for you. Drop by and see the



life-sized Osprey kite that we fly in the middle of our parking lot. The kite is made of weather

resistant Tyvek and flies so naturally, even somewhat irradicably, from a 16' composite pole, dropped in a PVC ground socket. His actions in flight are very suspicious to a Canada goose. The Osprey, after all, is a predator. The goose wants to keep its distance and have him in their sights at all times. Yours may be the yard that they don't come in!



Binoculars as a gift...

Do you know someone who would like to get a better view of the birds outside their window? We can help you and we can make it easy for you. We carry ALPEN optics. Some are waterproof, no questions lifetime warranty, fully armored, multi coated optics in an affordable binocular. Rated a best buy from Outdoor Life Magazine, these binoculars are a great value for any level of bird and nature viewing. We can guide you to the best fit for the user with a 7, 8 or 10 power magnification, roof or porro configuration, 24 to 50 mm objective lens, compact or standard. It doesn't have to be mind boggling. Let Nick assist you. He knows his optics and we really love our ALPENS!

Holiday Wild Card

\$20% OFF
one item only
(optics excluded)



C171101; Expires December 31, 2017.
Cannot be combined with other offers.

Give your birdies a treat!

FREE
seed ornament when you buy 4
Includes seed and nut balls, bells, seed houses!
Just the right gift for friends and their birdies!

C171102; Expires December 31, 2017.
Cannot be combined with other offers.

**BACKYARD
nature center**

For people who feed and care for backyard birds
The Shops at Tallgrass
8336 E. 21st Street, #500 • Wichita, KS 67206
www.backyardnaturecenter.com
316-683-2121

STORE HOURS

OPEN 7 DAYS WEEK

Monday–Friday: 10 a.m.–6 p.m.

Saturday: 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Sunday: 12 noon–4 p.m.

Christmas Eve: 12 noon–4 p.m.

Closed Christmas Day

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:
WWW.BACKYARDNATURECENTER.COM

Remember to Recycle



With grateful hearts
we wish you and yours
a Happy Holiday
season.

