



BACKYARD nature center News

June/July 2018 • Issue 47

To Help or Not to Help

by Barbara Jones

Baby-bird season brings a whole new dimension to the backyard, as the young literally spread their wings and learn to fly. The activity level soon reaches chaotic proportions, as frazzled parents work ceaselessly to keep their rapidly growing youngsters fed. New

shrubs and trees and gather strength, while their parents feed and train them. And you needn't worry that falls from the nests will cause injuries: Baby birds have so little mass that they actually kind of bounce to the ground.



The best thing to do in this case is to put the baby back in the nest. The parents will continue to care for it, even if it has been handled by people, and the parents are best equipped to provide food on a schedule that maintains optimum health.

If you can't find the nest, or if you can't reach it without threat to your life and limb, put the baby in a closed container with holes in the top (a shoe box is good) and take it to a licensed rehabilitator. Baby birds have specific food requirements and a daunting

"In the end, we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught."

—Baba Dioun, Conservationist

sounds echo through the woods and yards, as the adults announce their imminent arrival at the nest, and the young express their interest in being fed NOW.

And, inevitably, there are accidents. For one reason or another, young birds wind up on the ground and face a whole new set of challenges. Our dilemma is what we should do. How do we know if they are just learning to be birds or actually in need of help?

As a rule of thumb, if the bird is feathered and mobile, it is probably a fledgling on the ground on purpose. The young of many species, most noticeably robins, leave the nest before they are fully flight worthy. It's part of the process. Young birds are too crowded in the nest to develop the muscles they need to fly, so mom and dad encourage them to take a first step that usually leads them to the ground. For a day or more, the youngsters will hang out on the ground or in low

Birds grow rapidly, and the small songbirds that generally nest in our yards go from hatching to first flight in 10 to 21 days (depending on the species). Most young found on the ground are actually fledglings that are learning to fly. But if their eyes are still closed, or if there are few or no feathers, the bird is a nestling that has fallen from its nest.

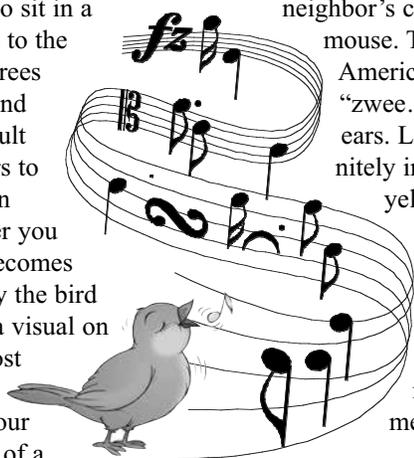


feeding schedule (every 20 minutes or so during daylight hours). No matter how good our intentions, the birds will be healthier and better adjusted if they are raised by someone who knows what to do and what not to. The right thing is sometimes the hard thing. So it is with baby birds. Our impulse is

always to help them; but very often, the best way to help is not to help.

Birding by Ear

June is a great time to sit in a lawn chair and listen to the birds, really listen. Trees are fully leafed out and some birds are difficult to spot. Use your ears to identify the singers in your yard. The longer you listen, the easier it becomes until you can identify the bird well before you get a visual on him. Some of the most delightful songs come from some of our favorites. The sound of a cardinal before the sun breaks through, being the first to arrive at a feeder, calling his mate to join him, "what cheer, what cheer, birdie, birdie, birdie"! High in the trees, a brown thrasher repeats every note of his song at least three times, as if he just can't get it right. Flitting around the brush, low on the ground, the Carolina Wren with his "tea kettle, tea kettle, tea kettle, or his raspy scolding call as if to say stay clear of my territory! Black-capped Chickadees sound like they are saying "feed me", "feed me", and sometimes they seem to say their name, "chickadee, dee, dee, dee"! Blue Jays are one of the tough ones because they mimic so many other birds like the Red-tailed Hawk. The Jay's bossy behavior, and alarm call when predators are close by are their signature for sure. Secretive and illusive, a Gray Catbird spends most of his time hidden in the shrubs, but mimics the yowl of the



neighbor's cat who just nabbed a mouse. The sweet sound of an American Goldfinch and his "zwee... zwee is music to my ears. Less common, but definitely in our area, the yellow-billed Cuckoo's call is almost hilarious, "cuc, cuc, cuc, cuc, cuc, cow, cow, cow, cow! I love to demonstrate this call in the store. It makes me burst out laughing!

Anyone can become an expert at Birding by Ear, all you have to do is listen, they'll tell you who they are!



Celebrate Dad on His Day Sunday, June 17

Give Dad the gift of nature
from the
Backyard Nature Center!
Here are a few suggestions:

- High-quality optics
- solar fountain
- squirrel-proof feeder
- birdbaths
- nest boxes



Solar Solar Solar

20% OFF
any solar bath or
solar bath product

C180601; Expires July 31, 2018

Happy Father's Day all you dads! We appreciate you!

20% OFF
any squirrel-proof feeder
to help eliminate Dad's frustration

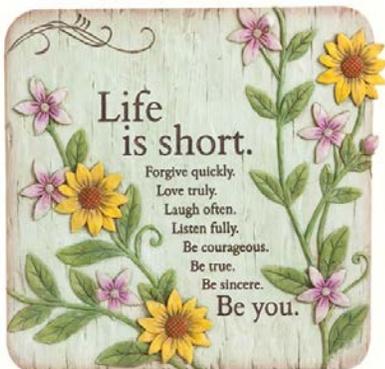
C180602; Expires July 31, 2018. Cannot be combined with other offers.

Why not, I asked!



Nick and Cathy Clausen are master gardeners, avid birdwatchers and owners of the BACKYARD Nature Center.

Recently Nick and I were asked by an old high school friend, “you’re over 65, why haven’t you retired”? I pondered that question for a moment, but the answer was an easy one. We’ve owned and operated the sweetest little shop for almost 28 years (a unique shop), we get to work together (when we want to,) we now have two of the greatest employees you could ask for, almost every person who comes through our door is in a good mood and excited about the birds they just saw in their yard and they want more, what could be better? We do a minimum of advertising and most of our growth over the years comes from word of mouth from kind folks like you. We’ve been buying our products from the same made in the USA craftsmen and vendors who faithfully fill our orders and stand behind them. We can go see spring migration of the whooping cranes in Nebraska, travel to Yellowstone in the fall to enjoy the trumpeter swans on Yellowstone Lake, go tropical birding in Belize. The point is, we love what we are doing every day at the BACKYARD Nature Center and don’t mind at all birding from our screened



porch any time of day or season, then showing up the next morning to help folks find the same peace of nature and

the love of birds that we find right in our own backyard! In other words, it’s a pretty good gig. Thank you.

New Products

Acadia Solar Birdbath



Creates a relaxing atmosphere on your patio, deck, balcony or in your garden! Operates in direct sun only. Underwater integrated solar panel and pump system. Low maintenance resin construction. Simply drain, wipe down, rinse and refill. Recycles water from a hidden reservoir. Solar, it’s the future!

Squirrel Buster Legacy

A new, larger version of the Squirrel Buster will accommodate cardinals! With a larger feed port for cardinals to get their big beak in and larger perch, perfect for the cardinal to feel comfortable and stable. It’s a proven winner!



Typical Kids!

By this time, some pairs are working on their second brood of young. Be sure to clean out those nest boxes after each brood has fledged and always check for wasp nests at the top of the box. Nobody wants wasps in their house. Adult birds will be

bringing their little ones to the feeders and showing them the ropes. Most young will try begging but if Mom is firm about it, they can figure out how to feed themselves, they just don’t want to. Typical kids!

Keeping Things Current

When Nick, Mary, Tammy and I ask for your address when you check out, don’t be alarmed, we are not stalking, we just want to keep you alive on our newsletter list so you will be receiving our bi-monthly issue in the mail. Thank you!

**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.

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:
WWW.BACKYARDNATURECENTER.COM

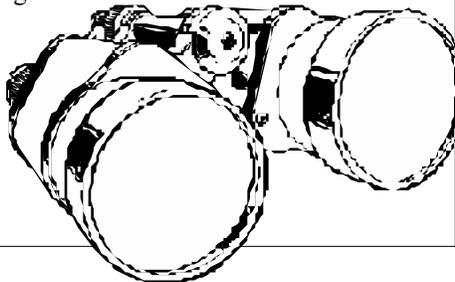
Remember to Recycle



Alpen
Optics
Sale

20% OFF any of our fine ALPEN binoculars or spotting scopes!

After enjoying the quality and service of this fine optics vendor, they are, unfortunately, closing their doors. It is to our loss for sure. In the almost 28 years of business, we have carried several high and mid-price binoculars and scopes for our customers. We will be researching a new optics possibility for the best line to replace them.



My Apologies

I'd like to apologize for any mistakes, improper grammar, or misspelled bird names in the last newsletter. Yes, I know there is no such bird as an "ORCHID Oriole", but rather an Orchard Oriole, that nest in our area. There were some other small errors in this newsletter. Forgive me, I do use spellcheck many times while composing my articles, but perhaps I was on pain meds from recent surgery, ha-ha. At any rate, you are a very forgiving audience and it is appreciated by this bird store owner.

