



BACKYARD nature center News

February 2021/March 2021 • Issue 62

Who is nesting in your yard?

Considering how many birds there are in North America only about 85 nest in cavities (holes in trees). Since cavities are harder to find these days (we tend to chop down snags and rotting trees) we can convince many of these birds to use nest boxes.

Most popular backyard nesters?

Well, the House Wren has to top this list. These tiny guys LOVE to use any hole they find and once they set up housekeeping they are very gregarious neighbors.

Titmice and Chickadee are also apt to use our manmade cavities. They create the softest nests... strew some cat or dog hair around your yard and they will pick it up and line the nests with it!

Bluebirds are very desired in backyards. These birds, described by Thoreau as “having the sky on their backs” or by Disney as the “bluebird of happiness” are wonderful to behold! They prefer open habitat over treed areas.

Sometimes larger birds can be enticed to nest as well. Woodpeckers certainly will although they seem to prefer to “make” their own cavities. Small birds of prey like kestrel and screech owl might also take up residence.

Come in to the Backyard Nature Center and let us know what kind of habitat you have in your yard. We can then steer you to the right house for your backyard friends.



Abby and Emmy, in honor of our Sweet Ruby.

Many of you have asked us if we are going to replace sweet Ruby with another “store cat”. In our hearts, no one could replace her. The day she passed away; a friend called to say that her neighbor had rescued a tiny black mommy cat that had just given birth to 4 black kittens in her garage. Coincidence or karma?

Barely 6 weeks old, we brought two little females’ home, thinking they would keep each other company in the store. Little did we realize that they would grow quickly to be such wild and crazy little stinkers, chasing, rolling, and almost tripping us when we walk near their food bowls! Rambunctious and ornery, sweet and loving but not suited for the sedate life of a “lazy” store cat. I fear we would have to restock and re-arrange each morning after accessing their nights frolicking! It’s likely that we’d find them on top of the gazebo looking so innocent!

Ripley's Believe It or Not?

We never say never at the BNC! Anything is possible.



A rare sighting in Kansas, especially in winter! An Anna's hummingbird has been sighted, photographed and documented in a yard near Augusta and has been a daily visitor to the family's hummingbird feeder since December 9th.

The Annas normally winters in northern California, Oregon and Washington. Weather patterns being what they've been this year and most of our storms

coming down from the west, it surely could be a factor. A male, he is a large-headed and chunky. Lacks any rufous coloring but has a shocking magenta colored head that appears dark when not in the sunlight. I hope this means that spring is on its way!

Quote for Our Time:

"I believe Nature teaches us that if we learn about her, honor her risks, and live our lives accordingly, she will continue to show us her riches."

~ Maria Rodale

Raccoons and squirrel problems at your feeder?



Try our new "Hot Chips"! Sunflower hearts, the full-sized hearts, shelled and infused with Cayenne pepper in such a way that critters with sensitive taste buds will turn up their noses and take off. Birds have very few taste buds and a very bad sense of smell and really won't skip a beat at the feeders! I was a skeptic until Nick put a trail cam with night vision on a ground feeder that was getting cleaned out every night. First a raccoon came and went in 3 seconds, next a skunk came and left as fast, then some more of the raccoon family, non-believers I guess, came, sniffed and said "let's get out of here!" I believe now. Worth its weight in gold!



Best Nest Box Recycled Ultimate Bluebird House



Designed to be the most functional and bird-friendly bluebird house on the market today, the Ultimate Bluebird House is approved by the North American Bluebird Society. Designed to allow nest-viewing, provide

protection from predators, and it's the easiest house to clean out after each brood, which almost completely eliminates nest mites for the next babies. The premier destination for bluebirds everywhere!

10" to 6' Art Poles 20% off



All poles come with their own ground socket for easy placement indoors or outdoors. Beautiful designs for the perfect message.

Expires March 31, 2021

Springtime is no time to take down your feeder!



Contrary to popular belief, filling backyard feeders for wild birds is at least as important in the spring as during winter months. During the fall and into winter, more natural sources of seed and berries are available than during the spring and summer. By spring, most of these foods have been eaten, and new crops of natural foods won't mature until next fall. Everything re-seeds in fall.



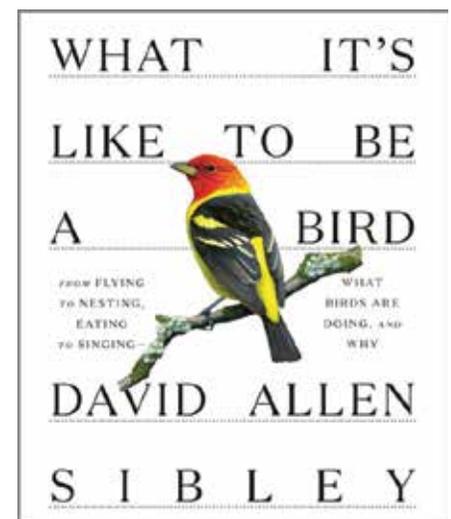
Spring feeding is appreciated by birds we consider permanent residents, such as cardinals, goldfinches, chickadees, tufted titmice and all the woodpeckers you've enjoyed all winter. It also helps migrants and birds that arrive early to their breeding grounds. When migrating birds see other bird activity in your yard, they are more likely to check it out, if only for a drink of water. By late spring most birds have begun to nest and they need extra energy as males define and defend territories and females build nests and produce eggs. In late spring you can enjoy parents bringing their fledglings to the feeders, and watch the awkward youngsters beg and eventually learn to feed themselves. It's a sweet sight.

Sibley What It's Like To Be a Bird

The bird book for birders and nonbirders alike that will excite and inspire by providing a new and deeper understanding of what common, mostly backyard, birds are doing--and why.

- Can birds smell?
- Is this the same cardinal that was at my feeder last year?
- Do robins 'hear' worms?

In *What It's Like to Be a Bird*, David Sibley answers the most frequently asked questions about the birds we see most often. This special, large-format volume is geared as much to nonbirders as it is to the out-and-out obsessed, covering more than two hundred species and including more than 330 new illustrations by the author. While its focus is on familiar backyard birds--blue jays, nuthatches, chickadees--it also examines certain species that can be fairly easily observed, such as the seashore-dwelling Atlantic puffin. David Sibley's exacting artwork and wide-ranging expertise bring observed behaviors vividly to life. (For most species, the primary illustration is reproduced life-sized.) And while the text is aimed at adults--including fascinating new scientific research on the myriad ways birds have adapted to environmental changes--it is nontechnical, making it the perfect occasion for parents and grandparents to share their love of birds with young children, who will delight in the big, full-color illustrations of birds in action. Unlike any other book he has written, *What It's Like to Be a Bird* is poised to bring a whole new audience to David Sibley's world of birds."





For people who feed and care for backyard birds

The Shops at Tallgrass

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www.backyardnaturecenter.com

316-683-2121

STORE HOURS

Monday–Saturday: 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
Sunday: Closed

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:
WWW.BACKYARDNATURECENTER.COM



from left to right
Tammy, Cathy & Nick

February SEED SALE!



Best quality at the best price!
Now Through February 28th

Birds eating you out of house and home? Consider this: natural seed is at its lowest point of the year. Songbirds have been working all winter on what was naturally produced in the fall. Temps are still bitter; some cavity nesters are looking for nest sites in out of the cold. Increased energy levels are requiring more visits to the table. Make sure your table is full!

EARLY BIRD SEED accounts can be added to or opened, with a minimum of \$150. Early Bird accounts enjoy a lovely 20% discount on all seed, suet, nuts, and mealworms in any size bag! Or.... You can simply purchase 20- to 50-lb. bags at 20% off and take them with you at that time. Either way, your birdies will be grateful!

Now through February 28, 2021