



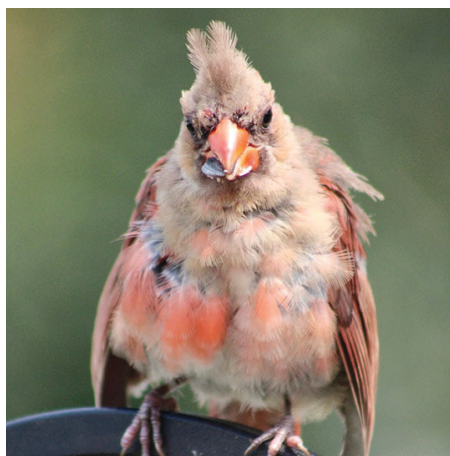
BACKYARD nature center News

August/September 2026 • Issue 95

Peace and Quiet A Welcome Change for Sure

Spring and summer have been busy in our yards for sure. Orioles and hummingbirds arrive for nesting and our year beloved year-round; Cardinals, Bluebirds, Chickadees, Blue Jays, Tufted Titmice and woodpeckers are all busy creating homes and feeding young from February through May. Showing their young the “ropes” and where the good food offerings are. At last, quiet, almost eerie. But why, and why do my birds look so strange? Why is the seed moving through the feeders so slowly? All good questions! Let me clear things up a bit.

With nesting over, no one is singing to attract a mate or drumming to sound bigger and stronger. Your birds look strange and scraggly because they are in the middle of a “molt”. I’d lay low and hide



too if I looked that bad, not to mention flight is just not as reliable during the molt. Basically, they are losing the summer feathers only to be replaced with stronger, fuller feathers in preparation for migrating long distances or to prepare themselves for the cold temps to come. All adult birds molt.

Most all seed eating birds remain here year-round. I think adult birds are so

bedraggled after raising kids, they deserve some new clothes for winter! I can understand!

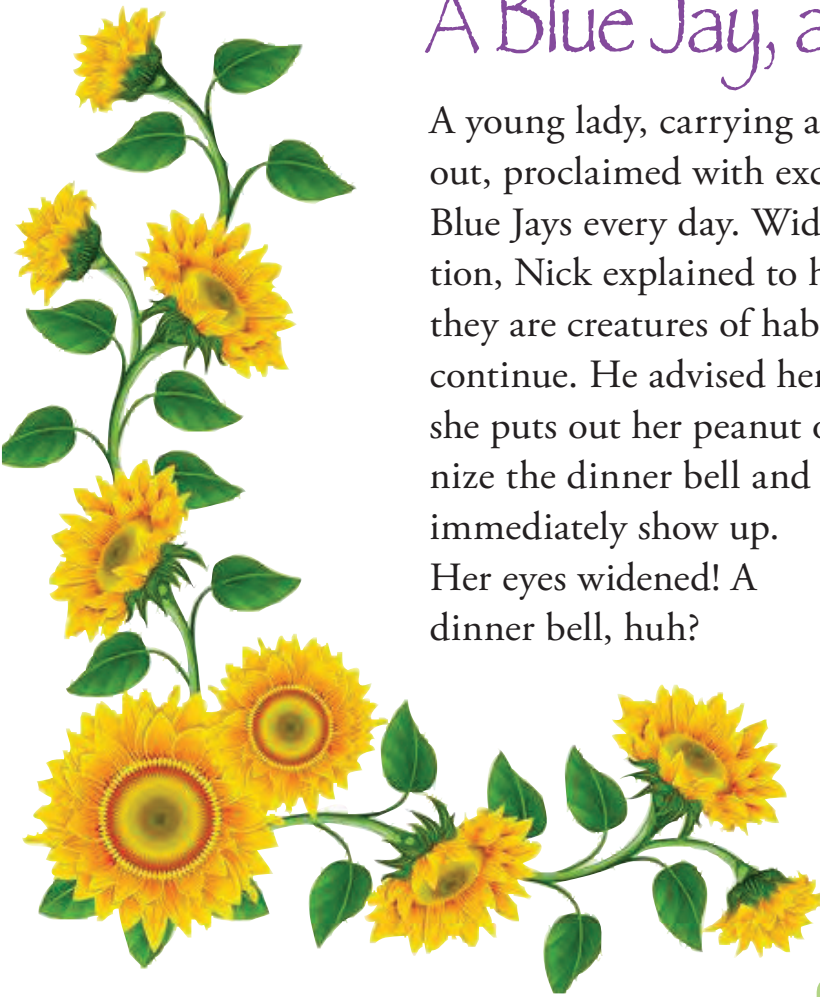
As to why seed in the feeders is going down slower at this time of year... consider this...ev-

ery plant in nature re-seeds itself in late summer. Natural seed is very abundant. Many birds enjoy the bounty until it becomes weathered and undesirable from a little weather and then look out, they’re back looking for the dry, yummy seed you have just put out for them. I think they’re grateful.



A Blue Jay, a Dinner Bell, and Nick

A young lady, carrying a bag of peanuts in the shell to the check-out, proclaimed with excitement to Nick that she loved to feed her Blue Jays every day. Wide-eyed and ready to absorb more information, Nick explained to her that birds are a lot like humans in that they are creatures of habit. Looking skeptical, she allowed Nick to continue. He advised her to ring a bell or tap on a tin pan after she puts out her peanut offering, the Blue Jays will come to recognize the dinner bell and immediately show up. Her eyes widened! A dinner bell, huh?



DID YOU KNOW?



For the first year, a young cardinal has a black beak. It's not until the following year that his feathers

bloom, revealing male or female, and the beak turns orange/red. Isn't nature amazing?



Celebrate our 35th Anniversary

**On Saturday, August 22,
35% Off One In-Stock Item**

(excludes seed & binoculars)

One day only!

**We are grateful for your
continued support!**

Summer Jewels

Hummingbirds are definitely more active. Nesting is over and it's time to put on some body-mass in time for migration to South and Central America. Rufous and Broad tailed hummers migrate through Kansas, following rivers and streams for cover. If you saw hummingbirds in the early spring and wondered what happened to them in June. They were busy nesting, building and feeding demanding young mouths. It gets pretty quiet in mid-summer until young birds follow their parents back to the feeders to show them where the good stuff is! Keep nectar feeder's fresh through August into mid-September. You will be helping the migrating birds plump up. They will often stay for a few days before moving on. If you see two, put up a second feeder to accommodate them! I love this time of year!



Words to live by...

*Nature is the greatest stress reliever.
Take time today to watch the birds.
They'll amaze you.*



photo by Bruce Huss



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Introducing the Squirrel Defeater Double-Suet

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PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:

www.BackyardNatureCenter.com



Happy Labor Day, September 7!

We appreciate your business!

– Steve, Nick, Cathy, Trudy, Tammy & Drew

Merlin Bird ID

The Merlin Bird ID from Cornell Lab of Ornithology is a free App to download on your phone. It can identify the birds you see or hear, anywhere in the world. I use it all the time, in my yard, or traveling. Sound ID listens to the birds around you and shows real-time suggestions for who's singing. Compare your recording to the songs and calls in Merlin to confirm what you heard. It works completely offline.

You can create a life list. You'll be amazed at what you can see and record. Kansas alone has 400+ species that call Kansas home, at different times of the year.

Drinking our morning coffee on the screened porch, we like to let Merlin identify what it hears and bring it up on the screen. It will list the birds, then light up when it hears it again. In the past, Nick and I have carried all kinds of minimal id recordings for you to purchase. These were very disappointing. No more, this app is so easy and fun, and it's free! Anyone can enjoy the Merlin Bird ID!

