

THE BIRD STORE NEWS

FEBRUARY, 2012, VOL. 5, ISSUE NO. 1



The Bird Store
and more...

Annual Mid Winter Blahs Sale

Our annual Mid Winter Blahs sale is SUNDAY, February 26, 2012.
See inside for details.



COUNT THE

Birds



You can find information
at www.BirdCount.org

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent. Anyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds.

The 15th Annual Great Backyard
Bird Count February 17-21, 2012.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is led by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, with Canadian partner Bird Studies Canada.

This is what your count will help determine:

- How will this winter's snow, (or lack of) and cold temperatures influence bird populations?
- Where are winter finches and other "irruptive" species that appear in large numbers during some years but not others?
- How will the timing of birds' migrations compare with past years?
- How are bird diseases, such as West Nile virus, affecting birds in different regions?
- What kinds of differences in bird diversity are apparent in cities versus suburban, rural, and natural areas?
- Are any birds undergoing worrisome declines that point to the need for conservation attention?

Join the fun!

Here is a snapshot of last year's information 2011 Totals for the Great Backyard Bird Count

Total Checklists Submitted: 92,218 • Total Species Observed: 594
Total Individual Birds Counted: 11,471,949

The most numerous bird counted in the 2011 GBBC was the European Starling—a species that was entirely absent from North America before the late 19th century. One hundred birds were introduced in New York's Central Park in 1890 and 1891.

According to *The Birds of North America Online*, the descendants of these few birds now total more than 200 million and are distributed across the entire continent. The American Robin was the second most numerous species reported in 2011, with more than 800,000 reported from Florida—for the third year in a row, the site of a massive roost near St. Petersburg. Overall, GBBC participants made 1,044,346 observations of robins this year.



HOW ABOUT THIS *Hummingbird*

You never know what you may find when you check your email. We got this great report in our email on January 2nd.

To All,

Attached is a photo of a very special hummingbird!

Jan 1st has marked him as entering the 10th calendar year of his life.

He was "banded in Jan of 2005 and was at least 2 years old at the time of his banding.

We have been blessed to have him visit us every winter since 2004 (documented).

I remember when I originally became interested in hummingbirds their life

expectancy was thought to be about 4-5 years.

Now with studies and "banding" efforts we know they live longer (generally 6-8 years).

But this guy (my old guy) is probably going into the record books as the oldest

recorded Male Ruby-throated Hummingbird in the US. (At least for the time being)

Joe, Lakeland, FL



1/1/2012 "Male Ruby-throated Hummingbird", Lakeland, FL

Joe is a summer resident here in Sturbridge and has been involved in hummingbird banding for many years at his winter residence in Florida. What a great bird to have in your yard.

Are You Getting The Latest Updates?

If you haven't signed up for our e news you are missing out on the specials, trips, sighting and 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 and you can also find us on FACEBOOK

MINNY - MYRH AND LACEY

ANNUAL



Sunday Feb. 26, 2012
9:00am – 5:00pm

The sale is Sunday - The Bird Store will open at 9:00am

Parking is also available at Sturbridge Veterinary Clinic next door.

The Veterinary Clinic is closed on Sundays and they have graciously allowed us use of their parking lot. Please do not park across the street.

25% off

everything in the store
(optics excluded)



Jay Gemma from Pentax Optics will be here today. If you were thinking of trying out some binoculars today is the day!

We will be offering one day only special pricing on in stock Pentax merchandise.

Be an early bird like Minny-Myrh and Lacey, and join us for our annual Mid Winter Blah's 25% off everything in the store Sale.

One day only, Sunday February 26, 2012.

Here's the rules!

- Doors open at exactly 9:00am not earlier
 - Save 25% on your purchases (excluding optics)
 - No coupons, bucks, or other discounts apply today
 - No special orders, rain checks, internet orders, or phone orders
 - Sale is on in stock merchandise only; once it's gone it's gone!
 - You have to be here to get the goods!
- Sale is Sunday February 26, 2012 only! Not Friday, Not Saturday... Just Sunday 9:00am till 5:00pm.

Get rid of the mid winter blah's and think spring!

Did you know that there is no such thing as a Deer tick? When Lyme disease was first discovered it was thought to be transmitted to humans by a newly discovered tick. The new tick was given the scientific name of *Ixodes Dammini* better known as a deer tick. It took almost 13 years to realize that *Ixodes Dammini* was actually *Ixodes Scapularis*, better known as a black legged tick. In 1993 it was determined that they were the same species and as a result the tick has retained the older scientific name *Ixodes Scapularis*. In short, the Deer Tick and the Black Legged Tick are one and the same.

Deer Ticks

More studies need to be done but it appears that birds not only eat ticks but are also poor reservoirs. Dr. Ostfeld's studies have also shown that the more you get away from fragmented forest and into large tracks of uncut forest there is less Lyme. Forest fragmentation causes the larger animals to move out and allows the little animals to flourish, chipmunks, white footed mice and shrews that are very competent

reservoirs. This is known as the dilution effect, the less we mess with the environment the more biodiversity and less disease. Isn't that funny! The more trees we cut and destroy forest the more likely we'll get sick. For more information you can read Dr. Ostfeld's book *Lyme Disease The Ecology of a Complex System*. Or listen to an interview with Dr. Ostfeld by Mark Lynch on his radio show *Inquiry on WICN FM*. The interview can be found by clicking on podcasts, *Inquiry*. The podcast is dated May 5, 2011.

Richard S. Ostfeld is the Senior Scientist at the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies.

Unfortunately the common name, deer tick has stuck and many people still equate Lyme disease with deer, when in fact some studies have shown that deer may actually help to keep Lyme in check. Studies have shown that when deer are excluded from small parcels of land the percentage of ticks infected with Lyme increases significantly. Why would this happen? At first glance it may seem contrary to what we have heard in the past. Extensive studies have been done by Dr Richard Ostfeld, and to the surprise of many, deer do not replicate the zoonosis pathogen *Borrelia* efficiently. (A zoonosis pathogen is an infectious disease that can be transmitted in some instances by a vector from animals to humans). This does not mean that they cannot replicate the bacteria at all but that they do a poor job at it. The ability for an animal to reproduce or not reproduce the bacterium efficiently is referred to as being a competent or incompetent reservoir. It turns out that deer are not a very competent reservoir. In other words, if an infected tick bites a deer it is much less likely that the bacterium will replicate itself within the deer and infect other ticks. You may be surprised to find out that Squirrels, Raccoons, Skunks, and Opossums are also incompetent reservoirs. On the other hand Mice, Chipmunks, and Shrews are very competent reservoirs and will readily pass along the bacterium. So in short the more incompetent reservoirs i.e. deer, skunk, raccoon, opossums, and yes squirrels that live in your yard the less chance Lyme will spread to you and your pets. Another interesting note is that opossums are such fastidious groomers that they eat as many as 95% of the ticks that get on them.

NEWS FROM THE Bird CAGE

(Lacey) Hey Myrh, how come there aren't as many birds at the Bird Store bird feeders this year?

(Myrh) Well it's been pretty warm outside and when it stays warmer out, and there is no snow cover the outdoor birds don't come to the feeders as much.

(Chippy) How come they don't come to the bird feeders?
I always go to my food dish when I am hungry.

(Lacey) Not always Chippy! I see you picking seed off the floor!

(Chippy) Well most of the time I go to my food dish, so why don't the outdoor birds?

(Myrh) Unlike us, the outdoor birds don't get all of their food from one location. As a matter of fact they only eat about 5 to 7 percent of their food from any one place. So when there is no snow there are berries and seeds from the grasses to eat. And if it's not cold the outdoor birds don't have to eat as much to stay warm.

(Lacey) Yeah, we probably eat too much, Dr Ann, the bird vet said we were fat!

(Myrh) I heard Bill and Nancy say that the Sturbridge Christmas count bird numbers were low this year.

(Chippy) I also heard them saying that there was a lot of damage to the trees from the Tornado, Hurricane, and Snow Storm and that may be why we don't have as many birds around our area.

(Myrh) Bill and Nancy also said that the summer birds migrated out and the birds that usually winter here may not have migrated in because it has been so mild.

Many of the Christmas Bird Counts in our area this year have had low numbers. Looking at information from different areas it seems that our winter birds have stayed more to the north this year. There are many factors that contribute to the winter migration patterns from food availability to weather conditions. To see the trends across the country and in particular counts you can look at National Audubon's website at <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count> This year's count numbers will be available in the coming months, and you can see previous year's numbers and information.



DID YOU Know...

That the first artificial snow was produced by scientist Vincent Schaeffer right here in Massachusetts. It was first produced in 1946 by dispersing dry ice from a plane into the clouds over Mount Greylock.

Blue Jays—Do you love them, or do you hate them? It seems that we humans have a love hate relationship with the Blue Jay. Some folks love their blue color and raucous behavior; others think they are bossy and annoying. No matter what side you are on you have to appreciate the Blue Jay.

Blue Jays are known for their intelligence and complex social systems with tight family bonds. Their fondness for acorns is credited with helping spread oak trees after the last glacial period.

Here are some interesting facts about Blue Jays

Blue Jays are birds of forest edges. One of their favorite foods is acorns, and of course anything in your bird feeder. They are often found near oaks, in forests, woodlots, towns, cities, and parks. Blue Jays build their nests in the crotch or thick outer branches of a deciduous or coniferous tree, usually 10-25 feet above the ground. Male and female both gather materials

and build the nest, but on average the male does more gathering and female more building. Twigs used in outer part of nest are usually taken from live trees, and birds often struggle to break them off. Birds may fly great distances to obtain rootlets from recently dug ditches, fresh graves in cemeteries, and newly fallen trees. Jays may abandon their nest after detecting a nearby predator.

The Blue Jay frequently mimics the calls of hawks, especially the Red-shouldered Hawk. These calls may provide information to other jays that a hawk is around, or may be used to deceive other species into believing a hawk is present.



Dezzie Teaches Us

Looking for something to do with your kids during February School Vacation? Check out Dezzie's creative arts programs. You can find information at www.dezzieteachesus.com or at www.thebirdstoreandmore.com Dezzie Teaches Us tab

Blue Jays lower their crests when they are feeding peacefully with family and flock members or tending to nestlings.

The pigment in Blue Jay feathers is melanin, which is brown. The blue color is caused by scattering light through modified cells on the surface of the feather barbs.

The black bridle across the face, nape, and throat varies extensively and may help Blue Jays recognize one another.

The oldest known wild, banded Blue Jay lived to be at least 17 years 6 months old.



FREE DELIVERY within 10 miles!



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

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