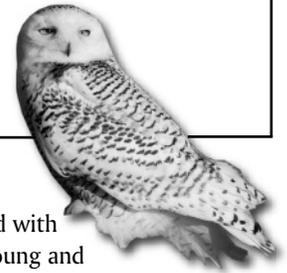




Annual Mid Winter Blahs Sale

Our annual Mid Winter Blahs sale is
SUNDAY Feb. 23, 2014 • 9am-5pm. See inside for details.



Some winters, large numbers of snowy owls appear along the East Coast like big fluffy marshmallows. The birds are normally found in Canada and the far northern reaches of the United States. Their occasional winter range expansions are called "irruptions," and the winter of 2013 is one of the biggest on record. Snowy Owls have been showing up everywhere: on beaches in New Jersey, in North Carolina, even in Bermuda.

Snowy owls are movie star birds—you may remember Hedwig, the snowy owl that was Harry Potter's companion.

The Snowy Owl is the official bird of the Canadian Province of Quebec. It is also widely sought after by birdwatchers and nature-enthusiasts alike.

This largest (by weight) North American owl shows up irregularly in winter to hunt in windswept fields or dunes, a pale shape with catlike yellow eyes. They spend summers far north of the Arctic Circle hunting lemmings, ptarmigan, and other prey in 24-hour daylight. In years of lemming population booms they can raise double or triple the usual number of young.

In some years, some North American Snowy Owls remain on their breeding grounds year-round, while others migrate in winter to southern Canada and the northern half of the contiguous United States. In the northern plains, New York, and New England, Snowy Owls occur regularly in winter. Elsewhere, such as in the Pacific Northwest, the Midwest, and eastern Canada, Snowy Owls are irruptive, appearing only in some winters but not in others. Snowy Owls are regularly seen at Logan Airport and at Plum Island in winter.



The Season of the Snowy Owl

Male Snowy Owls are barred with dark brown when they're young and get whiter as they get older. Females keep some dark markings throughout their lives. Although the darkest males and the palest females are nearly alike in color, the whitest birds—including the ones

that played Harry Potter's Hedwig—are always males and the most heavily barred ones are always females.

Snowy owls are territorial on their breeding areas, and sometimes their wintering areas as well.

NESTING FACTS

Clutch Size: 3-11 eggs
Number of Broods: 1
Egg Length: 2.2 in, 5.7 cm
Egg Width: 1.8 in, 4.5 cm
Incubation Period: 32 days
Nestling Period: 18-25 days

Egg Description: White
Condition at Hatching: Wet and blind (eyes usually open by day 5); within hours a Snowy Owl hatchling is a little white fluff ball of downy feathers.



Some Snowy Owls defend their winter territories fiercely, even engaging in combat with other Snowy Owls. Some banded Snowy Owls return to the same wintering site year after year.

Though Snowy Owls have few predators, the adults are very watchful and are equipped to defend against any kind of threat towards them or their offspring. During the nesting season, the owls regularly defend their nests against artic foxes and swift-flying jaegers; as well as dogs, gray wolves and avian predators. Males defend the nest by standing guard nearby while the female incubates the eggs and broods the young. Both sexes attack approaching predators, dive-bombing them and engaging in distraction displays to draw the predator away from the nest. They also compete directly for lemmings and other prey with several predators, including Rough-legged Hawks, Golden Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, Gyrfalcons, Glaucous Gulls, Short-eared Owls, Great Horned Owls, Eurasian Eagle Owls, Common Ravens, Wolves, Artic Foxes and Ermine. They are normally dominant over other raptors although may (sometimes fatally) lose in conflicts to other large raptors. Some species nesting near Snowy Owl nests, such as the Snow Goose seem to benefit from the incidental protection of snowy owls that drive competing predators out of the area.

(Continued on page 3)

THE DEAD

Robins

AND OTHER WINTERING BIRDS



There are Robins in my yard in January! They're all going to die!! You may laugh, but we have gotten this call more than once. Now, just look at those flocks of dead robins, cedar waxwings, and bluebirds flying around the yard. Yes they are supposed to be here in the winter. Contrary to what you may have been told as a kid robins do stay in our area in the winter. They may not be on your lawn until we get a January thaw, and a nice rainy day, then bam there they are, searching out the worms in the thawed ground. It gets cold again, and they head back to the berry bushes along the swampy areas. The same holds true for wintering flocks of Cedar Waxwings and Bluebirds. The cedar waxwings will come through in a large flock and strip your bushes of berries in one fell swoop. Occasionally they will get into Juniper berries or some other fermented fruit and then you have a bunch of very drunk and happy birds.

Robins mainly eat berries and seeds found on vines. You can offer them mealworms or raisins, berries, and apple slices. Water is also important for the birds to drink and clean their feathers; a clean bird is a warm bird!

Bottom line, winter robins go where food is. They stay until it's gone. Then they move on in search of more.

Are You Getting The Latest Updates?

To receive monthly updates enter your email address on our website.

www.thebirdstoreandmore.com

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook!

MYRH AND ALF ANNUAL

Mid Winter Blah's Sale
The Bird Store
and more...

SUNDAY Feb. 23, 2014 • 9am-5pm

The sale is Sunday - The Bird Store will open EARLY 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 the use of their parking lot. Please do not park across the street.

20% off
everything in the store
(optics excluded)

Be an early bird like Myrh and Alf, and join us for our annual Mid Winter Blah's 20% off everything in the store Sale.
One day only, Sunday February 23, 2014.

Here's the rules!

- Doors open at exactly 9:00am not earlier
- Save 20% 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 23, 2014 only! Not Friday, Not Saturday... Just Sunday 9:00am till 5:00pm.

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

The Season of the *Snowy* Owl

(Continued from page 1)

Unlike most owls, Snowy Owls are diurnal. They'll hunt at all hours during the continuous daylight of an Arctic summer. And they may eat more than 1,600 lemmings in a single year.

Snowy Owl young may disperse remarkably far from their birthplace. From a single Snowy Owl nest on Victoria Island in the Canadian Arctic, one young bird went to Hudson Bay, one to southeastern Ontario, and one to the far eastern Russian coast.

Having thick feathers for insulation from Arctic cold, Snowy Owls are North America's heaviest owl, typically weighing about 4 pounds—one pound heavier than a Great Horned Owl and twice the weight of a Great Gray Owl (North America's tallest owl).

John James Audubon once saw a Snowy Owl lying at the edge of an ice hole, where it waited for fish and caught them using its feet.

The oldest-known Snowy Owl was banded in Massachusetts in 1988 and found again in Massachusetts in 2004. It was at least 16 years, 8 months old.

Whether the tundra or the Great Plains, an airport field or beach dunes, Snowy Owls like treeless places and wide-open spaces. Because they often sit right on the ground to hunt, they prefer rolling terrain where they can find a vantage to survey the surrounding area. On their wintering grounds they'll also perch atop a fencepost, hay bale, building, telephone pole, grain elevator—anywhere with a good view.

Snowy Owls mainly eat small mammals, particularly lemmings, which at times on the tundra may be all these birds eat. Sometimes they'll switch to ptarmigan and waterfowl. Snowy Owls are also one of the most agile owls, able to catch small birds on the fly.

On both their breeding and wintering grounds, their diet can range widely to include rodents, rabbits, hares, squirrels, weasels, wading birds, seabirds, ducks, grebes, and geese.

Snowy Owls nest in remote areas, have huge territories, and in winter their migrations are widespread and unpredictable, so it's very difficult to estimate their population size. Like all raptors, Snowy Owls are protected from trapping and shooting, and this may protect them during winters in populated areas. Their remote breeding grounds are largely free

from direct human disturbance, although it's not clear how climate change will affect them. The Snowy Owl population probably rises and falls with the population cycles of its prey; for example, on Banks Island in Canada, the Snowy Owl breeding population has ranged from 2,000 to 20,000.

Snowy owls nest right on the tundra. They prefer slight, windswept rises that will be dry and blown free of snow. It is thought that the male selects the territory, and the female chooses the nest site within the territory. The Snowy Owl female builds the nest, scraping out a shallow hollow on the bare ground and shaping it by pressing her body into the depression. The process takes a few days, and the owls may reuse the nest site for many years.

Snowy Owls do a lot of sitting. They sit still in the same spot for hours, occasionally swiveling their head or leaning forward and blinking their big, yellow eyes to get a closer look at something. When they hunt, they use extraordinary vision and hearing to draw a bead on their prey—maybe a vole scurrying beneath the snow—and then fly, or even run, over to pounce on it. If successful, they'll down the rodent headfirst in a single gulp. On their breeding grounds, male Snowy Owls execute a fascinating mating display. First the male rises into the air with exaggerated wing beats in an undulating flight, holding a lemming in his bill or talons. Then he descends to the ground with wings flapping or held in a "V." He drops the prey on the ground, stands erect, then lowers his head

and fans his tail as the female approaches. To defend his territory from another Snowy Owl, a male lowers his head and sticks it forward, extending his wings and raising the feathers on his neck and back to seem bigger. To defend against other species, Snowy Owls have been known to dive-bomb and strike at humans. Once it was reported that a Snowy Owl attacked a pair of arctic wolves.

Snowy Owls are a rare treat. Birders on the Northeast Coast might see one snowy owl every other year; those further south could wait decades.



Reminders



Mid Winter Blah's Sale—

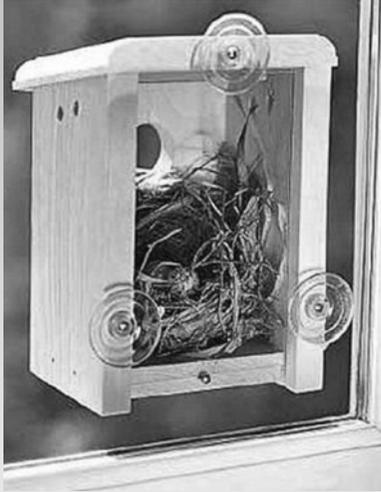
Sunday, February 23, 2014
9am-5pm



Valentines Day—

Don't forget your sweetie!
We have loads of "calorie free"
treats for your special Valentine.

Make sure to check your nest boxes in early March to get them ready for spring. Clean out any wintering mouse nests or old nesting materials and repair the boxes. If you have problems with Sparrows invading your boxes leave them open until later in the spring to discourage the sparrows from overtaking them.



Watching nesting birds is easy with a birdhouse that attaches to your window with suction cups. It is a great way to watch the nesting process from close range.

Product SPOTLIGHT

Coveside Window Nest Box



The suction cups provide stable mounting. Attach the nest and close the curtain or tape a paper on the window to cover the box. When birds begin to build a nest in the birdhouse you can open the curtain or move the paper periodically to observe the activity. This nest box is built with birds in mind; its dimensions accommodate most backyard birds and it is equipped with ventilation holes. The clear plastic panel of the back of the nest box allows you to easily observe the behavior and nesting habits of your backyard birds and it easily removes to clean out the box. This nest box is made from durable eastern white pine. The suction cup mounting style makes this nest box convenient to hang on almost any window. Handcrafted in the USA. This box does not have a one-way mirror. According to

Jim Turpin, Owner of Coveside Conservation Products “a one-way mirror, used in conjunction with a nest box, is a virtual guarantee that it will not be occupied. A bird, seeing his or her own reflection inside of a nest box will interpret that reflection as another of his or her own species and either aggress on it or move on.” The most brightly lit side of any one-way mirror becomes the reflective side. The entrance to the nest box will allow only minimal light to reach the one-way mirror, while the other side, against the window facing in to your well lit home becomes the reflective side. This may be good for marketing but not good for the birds, which is why Coveside does not offer a one-way mirror on their window nest box. Try one and see what the birds are doing!

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

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