

WHIDBEY
WILD BIRD



Jan/Feb 2010 Newsletter

from Whidbey Wild Bird

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Sign Up

SIGN-UP!

Whidbey Island Wildlife Habitat
Project
Whidbey Audubon Society

Another year all used up and a fresh one waiting for us and our birds.

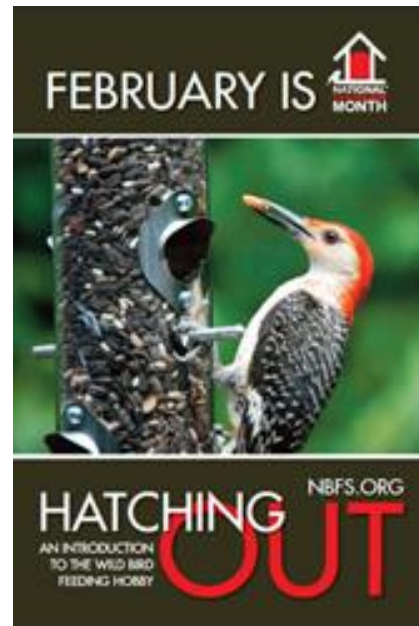
Our little bird store continues to amaze us in these serious economic times. A big thank you to all of our valued customers. Even with life's little foibles, we seem to somehow continue on our merry way.

Our daily visits with our loyal customers make our lives a little better each and every day.

NATIONAL BIRD FEEDING MONTH

February is designated National Bird Feeding Month because it's one of the most difficult months in the U.S. for birds to survive in the wild. Be sure to keep your feeders filled with the high-energy, high-fat foods that provide your birds with the crucial nutrition they need to survive.

Bird feeding is the second most popular hobby in the United States, and over 55 million Americans over the age of 16 watch or feed wild birds or other wildlife around their homes. We spend \$3 billion per year on bird seed, and approximately \$800 million on bird feeders, bird baths, bird houses, and other bird feeding accessories.





FEBRUARY NEWS - I don't think we have ever had as many Northern Flickers as we have seen this year. Eight at a time on the front suet feeders is a pretty common occurrence.

The Junco's have been amazing this year in our yard. If you have them also, it is more than likely they are the same ones from years previous as they do return home every year.

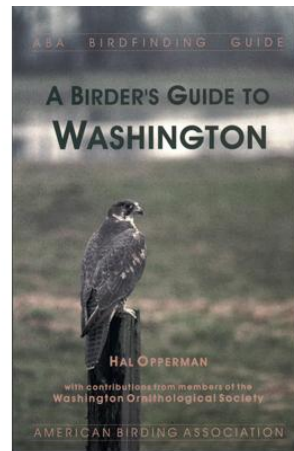
We are enjoying our Winter ground birds more every day. The antics of the Juncos, Fox Sparrows, Golden Crowned Sparrows and Towhees are a real treat on our gray winter days. More Varied Thrush have arrived and what a beautiful bird they are. And speaking of beautiful birds, next time you have the opportunity, take a good look at the little Brown Creeper.

REMINDER: It is time to get your Mason Bee orders in. Remember, they are usually gone by February, so come on in and put your name on the list. We should have them in stock any day now.

Please take a look at the Events section. There are some great things to participate in the next couple of months. See you all there!

PRODUCT NEWS -

National Bird-Feeding Month (February) introduces you to the joy of wild bird feeding by surveying basic techniques to create a successful wild bird feeding and watching experience. To get started you just need a bird feeder, bird seed and a place from which to watch your birds. Next steps to enhance your experience include adding a variety of bird feeders, novel foods and binoculars to view your feathered friends.



Come see us and learn about the various types of food and feeders for the different birds in your yard. We specialize in food, feeders, optics and books for learning and identifying the birds you see.

A few new book arrivals merit some attention this month. First up, the new Sibley's Waterproof folding guides are in. Even though the titles say Eastern North America, they

also cover the majority of our birds as well. We have "Ducks of Eastern North America", "Owls of North America" and "Raptors of Eastern North America" in stock. These have the beautiful Sibley drawings we are all so used to combined with behavioral notes, range maps and other information on the birds.

The "older" this time around refers to the ABA Birdfinding Guide, "A Birder's Guide to Washington" by Hal Opperman. For the birder traveling around this beautiful state of ours this book is indispensable. Lydia and I used this extensively on our recent trip around Eastern Washington.

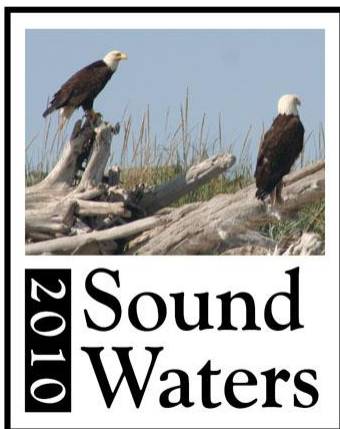
This book details hundreds of birding routes and sites in the state and some adjacent areas in British Columbia. Also listed is year-round access information and birding advice. This book led us to some truly wonderful birds last September and we will not travel without it now.



SEED, SEED, SEED - With all of the winter birds back in town, now is a great time to think about a ground feeder and some of our Standard Blend or Dove and Quail mix to go in it. We feed lots of Dove & Quail mix in the winter months at the edge of our native hedges. It is a feeding frenzy for Juncos, Fox Sparrows, Golden-crowned sparrows, Song Sparrows, Towhees, Mourning Doves, and Quail.

This is also a good time to think about trying the All-Weather Blend. This blend is a variation on our Premium Blend, that replaces the corn and peanut pieces (which absorb more moisture) with safflower seed. Our House and Purple Finches, and even our Chickadees have taken a real liking to the safflower.

Don't forget to stock up on suet. This high energy food source is a must for the winter months. A real treat for the Chickadees, Nuthatches and woodpeckers in your yard.



EVENTS - Here are three great events that are a must. If you have not been to either of our local ones, give yourself a treat and go! Then we encourage you to participate in the bird count ... it only takes a few minutes and the data you gather is priceless to the ongoing research of the health of our feathered friends.

SOUND WATERS - Saturday, February 6th, 2010, Coupeville, WA

Keynote address by Dr. Nathaniel Scholz, NOAA
"Stormwater, Salmon, and the Health of Puget Sound"

Also, three sessions of classes, with time for lunch, and to explore the exhibits. There are over 60 classes to pick from. Go to: [Sound Waters 2010](#)

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT - February 12-15

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 and in Hawaii. 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.

Please participate!! Go To: [GBBC](#)

GARDENING WORKSHOP - Saturday, March 20th, Coupeville, WA

Whidbey Gardening Workshop is held each year in early March. It is a one day public workshop offering a wide variety of horticultural related classes. Our instructors include Master Gardeners, WSU Extension Faculty, and gardening experts from our surrounding community. This year's workshop features over 50 classes from Edible Landscaping and Growing Giant Vegetables to Getting Started with Bees and Gardening in Harmony with Nature. Whether you're a new gardener or an experienced hand, we've got a class for you!

2010 Keynote Speaker Our keynote speaker is Valerie Easton. Valerie writes about gardens, houses and the people who make them for Garden Design, Metropolitan Home, and in her weekly column and articles for the Seattle TimesFont



The HAIRY WOODPECKER (*Picoides villosus*) is a medium-sized woodpecker, averaging approximately 250 mm (9.75 inches) in length with a 380 mm (15 inch) wingspan.[1] The Hairy Woodpecker is listed by the IUCN as a species of least concern in North America, with an estimated population in 2003 of over nine million individuals.

Adults are mainly black on the upper parts and wings, with a white or pale back and white spotting on the wings; the throat and belly vary from white to sooty brown, depending on subspecies. There is a white bar above and one below the eye. They have a black tail with white outer feathers. Adult males have a red patch or two side-by-side patches on the back of the head; juvenile males have red or rarely orange-red on the crown (Jackson, Ouellet, & Jackson, 2002).

The Hairy Woodpecker is virtually identical in plumage to the much smaller Downy Woodpecker, which also has a shorter bill relative to the size of its head. These two species are not closely related, however, and are likely to be separated in different genera (Weibel & Moore, 2005; Moore et al., 2006). The best way to tell the two species apart other than the size is the lack of spots on its white tail feathers (which the Downy has). Their outward similarity is a spectacular example of convergent evolution. As to why this convergence has evolved, only tentative hypotheses have been advanced; in any case due to the considerable size difference, ecological competition between the two species is rather slight.

These birds are mostly permanent residents. Birds in the extreme north may migrate further south; birds in mountainous areas may move to lower elevations.

These birds forage on trees, often turning over bark or excavating to uncover insects. They mainly eat insects, also fruits, berries and nuts, sometimes tree sap. They are also known to peck at wooden window frames and wood sided homes that may house bugs.

The Hairy Woodpecker inhabits mature deciduous forests in the Bahamas, Canada, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Puerto Rico, Saint Pierre and Miquelon, Turks and Caicos Islands, and the United States. Mating pairs will excavate a hole in a tree, where they will tend to, on average, four white eggs.

There is something fascinating about science. One gets such wholesale returns of conjecture out of such a trifling investment of fact.



~Mark Twain, Life on the Mississippi, 1883

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP: Thanks to those of you who continue to bring in your old useable feeders. We have placed feeders at several locations. We have some feeders ready for nursing homes, hospitals or schools, so let us know of other places that may be interested. For every feeder you bring in you can save 20% on the purchase of a replacement feeder. Please help support this great cause!! Helping educate is one of our main goals, so please use the bird store for a source of information if you have any questions. And if you have special tips of your own, pass them on. Again, thank you for your support over the past 6 years. We hope to continue to help bring enjoyment to your favorite hobby.

Good Birding - Phil & Lydia



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