



November 2009 Newsletter

from Whidbey Wild Bird

In This Issue

November News
Product News
Seed, Seed, Seed
Steller's Jay
Quote of the Month

Sign Up

SIGN-UP!

Whidbey Island Wildlife Habitat
Project
Whidbey Audubon Society



Where does the time go? It seems as if we just finished a newsletter and here it is time for another one!

Our trip to Eastern Washington was absolutely fabulous. We both needed some time to recharge our batteries and watch some new birds. We accomplished both and had a great time at our trade show as well. This is a picture in Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge ... a definite must if you travel near Spokane.

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.

We are now open on Sundays again. Hours will be Monday-Saturday from 10:00 AM to 5:30 PM and Sunday 12:00 to 4:00 PM.

NOVEMBER NEWS



Hope you are safe and sound during this incredible daily storm surge we have been having. Our little pond is overflowing, but we have only had a few limbs down.

We just got a new roof put on at the Sike's Sanctuary just in time! If you need an excellent roofer, we would highly recommend Old School Roofing. A very professional and caring job.

We are enjoying our Winter ground birds arrivals, such as the Juncos, Fox Sparrows, Golden Crowned Sparrows and Towhees. Our earliest visit by a Varied Thrush occurred almost 3 weeks ago followed by a Townsend's Warbler, what a beautiful bird. Our Steller's Jay comes in several times a day looking for his daily supply of peanuts in the shell. What a magnificent and sassy bird!

REMINDER: It is time to get your Mason Bee orders in for early Spring. Remember, they are usually gone by February, so come on in and put your name on the list.

We wish you all a very Happy Thanksgiving! We are most thankful for you, our dedicated customers and friends.

PRODUCTS NEWS



'Tis the season to be thinking about those special holiday gifts. We have several items with deep discount stickers on them right now, so come take a look. Here are some gift ideas for those nature lovers in your life.

We have the new **Identiflyer Ultra**. Have fun learning bird songs at home or take it along on bird walks to identify the birds in the wild. The Ultra uses advanced digital technology to help nature lovers identify 120 birds and 10 frogs by their songs and colors. Birds can be searched by region, color, habitat, or alphabetically.

Brightness and contrast control. Belt clip and Wrist strap.

Also new is the *Whidbey Island's Special Places and the People Who Love Them*, by Dan Pedersen ... an eye-opening read for both residents and visitor. It celebrates the selfless people who work to keep our island a soothing refuge of forest, farms, prairies and shores. Don't forget we have lots of great bird books and field guides and books for kids.

Lots of new Garden items including much asked for **Whirligigs**. New shipments of **Wind Chimes, Stained Glass, Tree Ornaments**, and Hummingbird Feeders are also on display. We also have a easy new Pull-Ring Feeder that makes cleaning a cinch ... come in and let us give you a demonstration.

Now is also the time of year to sign up for your early spring **Mason Bees**. Give a "Bee" Gift Certificate, or if you are just undecided we always have **Gift Certificates** for anything in the store.

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. We also have a cute Snowman Seed Wreath.

STELLAR'S JAY



The Steller's Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri*) is a jay native to western North America, closely related to the Blue Jay found in the rest of the continent, but with a black head and upper body. It is also known as the Long-crested Jay, the Mountain Jay, and the Pine Jay. It is the only crested jay west of the Rocky Mountains.

The Steller's Jay shows a great deal of regional variation throughout its range. Blackish-brown-headed birds from the north gradually become bluer-headed farther south. The Steller's Jay has a more slender bill and longer legs than the Blue Jay and has a much more pronounced crest. The head is blackish-brown with light blue streaks on the forehead. This dark colouring gives way from the shoulders and lower breast to silvery blue. The primaries and tail are a rich blue with darker barring.

It occurs over virtually the whole of the western side of North America from Alaska in the north to Central America in the far south and east to south-western Texas, completely replacing the Blue Jay in most of those areas. Some hybridization with the Blue Jay in Colorado has been reported. The Steller's Jay lives in coniferous and mixed woodland, but not in completely dense forest, and requires open space. It typically lives in flocks of greater than 10 individuals.

As they are omnivores, their diet is about two-thirds plant matter and one third animal matter. Food is gathered from both the ground and from trees. The Steller's Jay's diet consists of a wide range of seeds, nuts, berries and other fruit. Many types of invertebrates, eggs, small rodents, and nestlings are also eaten. There are some accounts of them eating small reptiles, both snakes and lizards. Acorns and conifer seeds are staples during the non-breeding season; these are often cached in the ground or in trees for later consumption. They exploit human-provided food sources, frequently scavenging picnics and camp sites.

The nest is usually in a conifer but is sometimes built in a hollow in a tree. Similar in construction to the Blue Jay's nest, it tends to be a bit larger (25 cm to 43 cm), using a number of natural materials or scavenged trash, often mixed with mud. Between two and six eggs are laid during breeding season. The eggs are oval in shape with a somewhat glossy surface. The background colour of the egg shell tends to be pale variations of greenish-blue with brown- or olive-coloured speckles. The clutch is usually incubated entirely by the female for 17 to 18 days. Like all jays, its calls are numerous and variable.

Like all jays, its calls are numerous and variable. Notably, its alarm call is a harsh nasal "wah". It also imitates the cry of the Red-tailed Hawk and Red-shouldered Hawk, which has the effect of causing other birds to vacate feeding areas at the Steller's Jay's approach. Some calls are sex-specific; females produce a rattling sound while males make a high-pitched "gleep".

QUOTE



I am often amazed at how much more capability and enthusiasm for science there is among elementary school youngsters than among college students.

Carl Sagan

This link is to Carl Sagan reading the Pale Blue Dot. A few minutes well spent from your busy day. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p86BPM1GV8M>

Good Birding,

**Phil & Lydia Sikes
Whidbey Wild Bird**

email: wildbird@whidbey.net
phone: 360-279-2572
web: <http://whidbeywildbird.com>

