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"Nature News" from Wild Birds Unlimited at Moana Nursery House Finch Bird-of-the Month



**Out with the Old,
In with the New!**

New feathers, that is. Birds need high-protein foods now as they molt into new feathers.

Molting Birds Need High-Protein Foods

High-protein foods help to provide birds with energy, especially important as many are undergoing a seasonal "wardrobe change," known as molting.

High-protein foods include, peanuts, Nyjer® (thistle), sunflower chips and Jim's Birdacious® Bark Butter®. While they pack the energy birds need to grow new feathers,

most of these foods are also tidy feeding options.

Save on High-Protein Bird Foods, Now thru 8/15/2013

Enjoy a 10% discount on the following bird food (5 lb & 20 lb.)

- Finch Blend
- Nyjer
- Sunflower Chips
- Peanuts (shelled and in the shell)
- Bark Butter
- Bark Butter Bits

Cannot be combined with other offers

Out with Old, In with the New

Just as people make seasonal wardrobe changes, many birds are beginning a transformation of their own, losing and replacing their feathers in a process known as molting. Molting is when a bird replaces some (partial molt) or all (full molt) of its feathers.

This complicated process requires a lot of energy and may take up to eight weeks to complete. Molting is so physically demanding for most ducks and geese that they can't fly and will molt in seclusion to avoid predators.

Molting season varies by species and time of year. Right now many birds are beginning their main molt of the year, however, American Goldfinches (pictured above) are one of the last to molt. Due to their late nesting period, they won't start their molt until late August.

Distinguishing birds that are molting from those that are not can be difficult. Though some birds may lose patches of feathers and appear "balding," most birds' feather loss and replacement are far less noticeable. Feathers are made of more than 90% protein, primarily keratins, so every molting bird needs extra proteins to grow strong feathers for proper flight and effective insulation.

For the next few months, offer high-protein bird foods, such as Nyjer® (thistle), peanuts,



Jim's Birdacious® Bark Butter® and mealworms, to ensure that your birds have a reliable source of protein to help them with molting.

Visit us soon for all of the high-protein foods that will meet your birds' needs. We have everything you need to help your birds keep going (and re-growing feathers) during this critical time.

Jacque Lowery, Manager
Wild Birds Unlimited at Moana Nursery



August's High Desert
Bird-of-the-Month:

House Finch

The House Finch is one of our "comfort" birds. No matter if it is winter or summer, if there is snow flying or sun beating down, we can almost always count on seeing a House Finch or two or maybe a dozen. Although they are not a flashy bird (the female is plain, plain, plain), they have other

endearing qualities. Their lilting, many note song is delightful to hear over and over. They are highly social birds, so it's not unusual to see several traveling and feeding together.

House Finch was originally a western bird. Sometime around 1940 a few caged birds were released on Long Island in New York. The population quickly grew and spread; by the 1990's, House Finch could be found all across the eastern United States and into southern Canada. In the East, House Finch can be found in almost any kind of habitat connected with human development. In their native West, they also frequent more natural habitats including dry deserts, grasslands, and riparian areas. The population of House Finch is very large, estimated at between 300 million and a billion individuals. Despite such large numbers, they are not considered a pest species, unlike others such as House Sparrow or European Starling.

[Click here to read all of Jacque's complete House Finch Bird-of-the-Month article.](#)

How To Help Your Birds Stay Colorful

For many birds, the color and brightness of their feathers play a very important role in their breeding success.

The more color and more brightly colored a bird is, the more likely it is to attract a mate. Bright, vibrant plumage signals that the bird, usually the male, can be a good provider and successfully obtain a sufficient amount of quality food.



Bullock's Oriole: Male

Feather Facts

Though feathers are more than 90% protein, fats are essential for developing the best feather coloration.

In many bird species, carotenoids (from fats) are used much like the pigment dyes that color clothing. Carotenoids provide red, orange and yellow to violet colors in feathers. Without fats and proteins, birds, such as House Finches (pictured above), American and Lesser Goldfinches, would appear less bright.

How You Can Help

By providing foods that are loaded with fats and proteins, you will help your colorful birds maintain their vibrance.

Peanuts are the best single source of protein and fat for your birds and attract woodpeckers, nuthatches, chickadees, jays and more.

Loaded with protein and fat, Jim's Birdacious® Bark Butter® has attracted more than 100 different bird species. It's easily spread on tree bark or a Bark Butter



Finch Blend

Feeder.

Nyjer® (thistle) and Finch Blend are a favorite of goldfinches, and they contain fat and protein that will help these birds maintain their yellow glow.



Peanuts for Western Scrub Jay



Bark Butter

August Nature Happenings

- * Watch for Common Nighthawks hunting over open ground for flying insects in the late afternoon light.
- * Hummingbirds are active at feeders and at flowers, sourcing protein from spiders and insects and sipping nectar for sugars.
- * Male hummingbirds start their southbound migration this month, averaging 20 miles a day to wintering grounds in Central America and Mexico. Females head south later and juveniles will stay around until early October.
- * Many of our summer visitors have finished their nesting cycle and will begin their migration south.
- * Male Black-headed Grosbeaks will disappear from the landscape as they begin their southern migration; females and juveniles will follow in the coming weeks.
- * Bullock's Orioles, our summer visitors that love to chatter notes high and low, will begin to migrate south.
- * Perseids Meteor shower is mid-month.
- * Daylilies are in bloom.
- * Yellow jackets make paper-like nests.
- * Migration begins. Keep feeders full with fresh food for "stopover" migrants.
- * Pinon Jays, normally found exclusively in the pinon/juniper areas, gobble lots of seed at bird feeders.
- * Geese, ducks, cranes, etc. usually fly in 'V' formation. The theory is that all but lead

bird gain lift from wing-tipped vortices produced by lead bird.

* American Goldfinches finish nesting late this month.

Local Bird Sightings by Jacque Lowery

July has been a fun month of watching the new avian generations in the yard. I am not sure where in the neighborhood the Robins nested this year (they always have such a tough time defending their nests from the Jays), but they successfully fledged a few babies. For two or three weeks we were treated to the always touching and comical attempts of the parents to teach their young how to fend for themselves.



I witnessed the nest building, brooding and feeding of one Western Scrub Jay nest, but there must have been others nearby because the juveniles begging for food have been too numerous to be from just one clutch. Both the jays and the robins are very upset with the Red-tailed Hawk that comes to roost in the raptor tree every night. Of course, the hawk pays absolutely no attention to their scolding and alarm calls

[Click here to read the rest of Jacque's article.](#)

Upcoming Meetings & Events:

Lahanton Audubon Society

Meetings

Monthly Meetings are held every fourth Tuesday, August through May, 6:30 p.m. (social) 7:00 p.m. - meeting begins. Monthly meetings are held at the Moana Nursery Landscape and Design Center, 1100 West Moana Lane, in Reno.

- August 28, 2012 - Kim Toulouse, NDOW - "A Brief History of Recorded Time on the Truckee River"

- September 25, 2012 - Bob Goodman - A Closer Look At "STAY AWAY!"
- October 23, 2012 - Gary Blomquist - Attack of the Pine Bark Beetles!
- Sunday, August 3rd, 2013 - Birds, Views, and Falls - Galena Falls, Mount Rose Trailhead, Reno, NV

Field Trips

- Sunday, August 3rd, 2013 - Birds, Views, and Falls - Galena Falls, Mount Rose Trailhead, Reno, NV
- Saturday, August 17th, 2013 - Spooner Lake State Park

The nearby Plumas Audubon Society also has field trips scheduled that area birders may find of interest. For more details please visit <http://www.plumasaudubon.org/>

[For information on the Lahontan Audubon Society, click here](#)

Animal Ark

Sponsor's Night!

Saturday, August 3

4:30 - 6:00 pm

Only for members and adoptive parents!

This is an invitation-only event for Members and Adoptive Parents! Bring a treat for your animal; talk to the animal keepers; and hear behind-the-scenes stories. Not yet a member or an adopter? Become a Member or Adoptive Parent here! Reservations required.

Ark at Dark

Saturday, August 17

7:30 - 9:45 pm

Reserve early as this event sells out! RSVP: 1-775-970-3431

Prices for this special evening event: Adults \$15; Seniors \$13.50; Children \$12.

Wolves and coyotes howling and big cats growling in the night: it's Ark at Dark! Gates open at 7:30 p.m. for you to enjoy the sunset and prepare for the tour. No golf carts are available at this event. Children must be at least 8 years old to participate.

[For more information about Animal Ark click here.](#)



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