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## "Nature News" from Wild Birds Unlimited at Moana Nursery

Go for the Gold(finches)

It's time to go for the gold in your yard, and you don't need a pole vaulting pit or an Olympic sized pool to do it.

Goldfinches live throughout the United States and southern Canada, a fact that makes attracting them to your backyard a bit easier.

In July and August, after the male has serenaded the female with canary-like songs, goldfinches begin their nesting season. The location of the nest is usually five to 10 feet high in trees or shrubs and often near a water source.

But you can't talk about goldfinches without mentioning their favorite food, Nyjer® (thistle). In fact, it's one reason goldfinches delay breeding until the greatest number of thistle, dandelion and other composite flowers are seeding.

But that's good news for you.

This delay gives you the opportunity to focus your attention on goldfinches during this exciting time of song and activity (especially since other birds can be less active and busy with their new families).

So instead of an expensive trip to London for the Summer Olympics, you can bring the gold to your yard - goldfinches that is.

Visit us soon to get everything you need to keep goldfinches visiting your yard:.

- . Mesh finch feeders
- . Perch finch feeders
- . Nyjer seed in 5 lb. & 20 lb. bags
- . Finch Blend in 5 lb. & 20 lb. bags
- . 'Drip or mist' for the birdbath
- . Birdbath
- . Brush and Poop Off to clean your birdbath and feeders

Jacque Lowery, Manager  
Wild Birds Unlimited nature Shops at Moana Nursery



## August High Desert Bird of the Month: Downy Woodpecker



The active little Downy Woodpecker is a familiar sight at backyard feeders and in parks and woodlots, where it joins flocks of chickadees and nuthatches, barely outsizing them. An often acrobatic forager, this black-and-white woodpecker is at home on tiny branches or balancing on slender plant galls, sycamore seed balls, and suet feeders. Downies and their larger lookalike, the Hairy Woodpecker, are one of the first identification challenges that beginning bird watchers master.

Downy Woodpeckers are small versions of the classic woodpecker body plan. They have a straight, chisel-like bill, blocky head, wide shoulders, and straight-backed posture as they lean away from tree limbs and onto their tail feathers. The bill tends to look smaller for the bird's size than in other woodpeckers.

Downy Woodpeckers give a checkered black-and-white impression. The black upperparts are checked with white on the wings, the head is boldly striped, and the back has a broad white stripe down the center. Males have a small red patch on the back of the head. The outer tail feathers are typically white with a few black spots.

Downy woodpeckers will eat suet, Bark Butter, peanuts and Cranberry Fare Seed Cylinders from feeders.

## Fun Facts:

- Woodpeckers have a better sense of smell than most birds and may be able to detect the strong odor of formic acid that ants, bark beetles and termites excrete (smells like Sweet Tarts).



Scientific tests have shown that Downy woodpeckers

do actually use the presence or absence of the red patch on the back of other downies' heads to determine whether they are male or female.

For lots more bird of the month information and great birding information, visit our local Reno/Sparks WBU website by clicking [here](#)

## How to Attract Woodpeckers

Now is the best time of year to attract woodpecker families with fledglings out of the nest cavities and parents showing them where and how to find food.

- Cranberry Fare Cylinders contain pecans, sunflower, safflower, peanuts and cranberries. They are perfect for attracting woodpeckers & chickadees. Available in 2 sizes. Available in 2 sizes and we have a selection of feeders to hold them.
- Jim's Birdacious Bark Butter. No single bird food attracts a greater variety of birds. Bark Butter comes as a spreadable suet and in plugs for use in suet log feeders, suet cages or crumbled into tray feeders.



- WBU Mesh Peanut Feeder: Woodpeckers and other clinging birds like chickadees, nuthatches and wrens enjoy feeding from our WBU Mesh Peanut Feeder. Ideal for a diverse option of enticing foods such as peanuts or Bark Butter Bits. Easy to fill, easy to clean.



Now Through August 31st, 2012  
Buy any Hummingbird Feeder ...

- Get one free Hummingbird Nectar ... OR ...
- Save 30% on one hummingbird plant or shrub (see store for plant list)

Offer expires 8/31/2012 and cannot be combined with other offers

## Local Bird Sightings by Jacque Lowery

6:30 AM. This morning I take my coffee and binoculars to the front porch to spend some quality time checking on hummingbirds in my yard. There are reports of Rufous, Anna's, Black-chinned, and even a Costa's in town, but I have been too distracted by other things to pay too much attention to activity at the feeder until now.

I am rewarded almost immediately with a female Black-chinned, first hovering at eye level to check me out, then lapping nectar at the feeder. She comes back a few times, once to work on the gladiolas and butterfly bush. Then a male Black-chinned comes in for his morning drink, but quickly leaves when the female shows up. She is aggressively chased a minute later by a female Rufous. Later I was hand watering some new flowers right below the feeder and was scolded fiercely by both female and male Black-chinned for being too near their feeder. This was so much fun I may have to make



Female Black-chinned Hummingbird by Jacque Lowery

this a morning must-do for the next month!

At this time of year you will see immature hummingbirds and it can be a challenge to distinguish between adult females and immature males, as



Female Anna's Hummingbird

they haven't attained full color adult plumage. In addition, differences between females of various species can be very subtle. The photo on the left is a female Black-chinned - the bill is longer than Anna's and there is usually a white spot only behind the eye. Anna's usually have white above the eye also, as shown in the photo on the right. Rufous are easy because

of the rufous color on the sides and in the tail. Keep your eyes peeled for the next month or so, as you may get a chance to see more than one species of hummingbird as they continue their southward migration.

## August Nature Happenings

- \* Aug. 1 & 31: Full Moon, Aug 17: New Moon
- \* Aug. 12 - 13: Perseids Meteor shower
- \* Daylilies are in bloom.
- \* 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.
- \* Watch for migrating nocturnal Common Nighthawks.
- \* 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.

## Animal Ark Upcoming Events

Sponsor's Night!

Saturday, August 4

4:30 - 6:00 pm

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? Please come and purchase either status at the door.

*Only for members and adoptive parents!* Reservations required.

Ark at Dark

Saturday, August 18

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! Guided tours start promptly at 8:00 p.m. Gates open at 7:30 p.m. for you to enjoy the sunset and our picnic area. 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.](#)

## Lahanton Audubon Society Upcoming Events

Meetings

Meetings are held the fourth Tuesday, August through May, at the Moana Nursery Landscape and Design Center, 1100 West Moana Lane, in Reno. Social hour begins at 6:30 pm; meeting begins at 7:00 pm.

- August 23, 2011 - Carl Lackey, Nevada Department of Wildlife - Bears of Nevada: Managing a Charismatic Omnivore
- September 27, 2011 - Tom and Ann Howell - Birds and Mammals of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa
- October 25, 2011 - Gary Cottle -- Dept. of Defense Partners In Flight Program

Field Trips

- [Saturday, August 18, 2012 - Spooner Lake State Park](#)

- [Saturday, August 18, 2012 - Birds, Views, and Falls](#)

[Click here for more information on the Lahanton Audubon Society](#)



Thank You for 45 Years!  
45th Anniversary Celebration Sale Continues...  
Great for Home Improvement, Gardening &  
Birdscaping ... [Link here to see all our red hot specials.](#)  
Want the nursery newsletter ... [click here.](#)

## Did You Know?



Tuesday is a special day at all three Moana Nursery/Wild Birds Unlimited retail locations. We call it Senior and Military Tuesday ... show your appropriate ID and if you are 65 or older, or if you are a current member of any branch of our armed services, we are pleased to take an additional 10% off your total purchase.

Tuesday is the day we honor our seniors and our military volunteers; we appreciate your service to our country.

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