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"Nature News" from Wild Birds Unlimited at Moana Nursery

Oh, That Marvelous Millet

It's that time of year again.

But before you cringe at the thought of the upcoming fall and winter, remember this: the millet specialists are moving in to your yard and if you're not offering millet, you will be missing out on some of the best bird feeding action that the seasons have to offer.

White millet is a small round seed packed with the carbohydrates that makes it a favorite of numerous birds, including juncos, doves, quail and many of our most handsome native sparrows, such as White-crowned and Song Sparrows.

These ground-feeding birds select their seeds based on what is the most abundant and



easiest (fastest) to open - and millet is at the top of the menu. Harder to open seeds, even those with a higher fat and protein content - such as oil sunflower - are much less likely to be eaten.

Visit us soon. We have the quality seed blends with just the right amount of millet that will keep your millet specialists fat and happy all season.

Also, don't miss our Bird Food Sale, featuring our very own Mix & Match. Basically, when you buy five suet/dough/seed cakes or suet logs, you get one FREE! It's a great way to save, try something new and attract different birds. See below for more details.

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

October "High Desert" Bird-of-the Month: American and Lesser Goldfinches

Both the American (pictured below) and Lesser Goldfinch (pictured here) inhabit our area, though the Lesser is far more commonly seen. The breeding male American Goldfinch has a bright yellow body, black cap, wings, and tail, and a white rump and undertail coverts. The wings have flashy white patches. Bill is pink and conical. The winter American Goldfinch, like the immatures, are either brownish or grayish above. The male may show some black on the forehead.



The female American Goldfinch is duller yellow than the male, has olive above and lacks the black cap and yellow shoulder bar.

The Lesser Goldfinch is a small finch with dark green back, black crown, and bright yellow underparts. Wings and tail are black with white markings. Winter male is duller. Female is smaller, duller, and lacks black cap. Juvenile is similar to female but has greener underparts.

Goldfinches prefer nyjer and premium oil sunflower seeds. They will eat from finch tube feeders, mesh tube feeders, seed tube feeders, hopper feeders and tray feeders.



Fun Facts:

- Unlike many birds, the American Goldfinch undergoes a complete molt each spring. This molt requires a large amount of nutrients and energy which probably diminishes their ability to nest earlier in the season.
- American Goldfinch can weave their nest so tightly that it will temporarily hold water.
- Like their cousin the American Goldfinch, Lesser Goldfinches will delay breeding until the greatest number of thistle, dandelion and other composite flowers are seeding.
- The Lesser Goldfinch is believed to be monogamous with its mate during the breeding season and will bring food to the nest for her while she incubates their eggs.

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

Attract More Goldfinches to Your Yard



Food

Goldfinches' favorite food is Nyjer® (thistle). It's high in protein and fat (which they love) and helps meet the demands of nesting and raising a family.

Goldfinches are also partial to fine sunflower chips which work well alone or combined with Nyjer, such as in our Finch Blend.



Feeders

Our EcoClean® and Quick-Clean® Finch Feeders are specially-designed for Nyjer and Sunflower Chips and are perfect for the small bills of goldfinches. These feeders protect food from excess moisture and are easy to clean with their removable bases.

We also offer Mesh

Finch Feeders that are perfect for attracting goldfinches and meeting their needs.



Water

Goldfinches are almost exclusively vegetarians. Unlike many birds that feed their young insects, goldfinches feed their young seeds. Because of this high-vegetation diet, they drink a lot of water.

Goldfinches will also use a bird bath for bathing. Attract birds with more success with a Water Wiggler™. It creates ripples in the water to attract birds' attention. The ripples also prevent mosquitoes from using the bath as a breeding ground.

More Ways to Save on Attracting Goldfinches

Large Seed Cylinders

Tightly packed combinations of seeds and nuts (our Cranberry Fare also has fruit), our large cylinders last longer, requiring you to refill your feeders less often when it's cold and/or snowy outside. Use our Decorative Seed Cylinder Feeder, and protect your bird food from the inclement winter weather.

ON SALE: 10/1 - 10/15/2012: SAVE 20%



WBU Bird Food Sale:

October 1 - 15, 2012

- **All bird seed (except quail blocks & finch socks) is on sale - including 5 lb. bags**
- **Save 20% on Seed cylinders* & dough cylinder (*excludes Hoot the Owl)**
- **Mix & Match - Buy 5, Get One Free:** suet cakes, dough cakes, seed cakes, suet logs(**equal or lesser value, excludes quail blocks)**

All offers limited to stock on hand. Cannot be combined with other offers



New Hoot the Owl Seed Cylinder is now a media darling along with Preston the Penguin and Buttons the Snowman -- It's adorable and available only at Wild Birds Unlimited. Our Hoot the Owl Seed Cylinder is a fun addition to any yard. Made up of mostly seeds and fruits, Hoot can help you attract many of your favorite backyard birds to visit your feeders for a meal.

Hoot the Owl, Preston the Penguin, and returning by popular demand, Buttons the Snowman are adorable Bird Food Cylinders that offer a convenient alternative way to feed the birds. These whimsical shapes are a fantastic way to introduce children to the hobby of bird feeding.

"These new foods are a fun new way to connect kids of all ages with nature and to bring song, color and life into your own backyard," said Jim Carpenter, CEO and Founder of Wild Birds Unlimited. "You can get a glimpse of the vibrancy of spring during the winter months with some of the most beautiful birds, including jays, woodpeckers, cardinals,

chickadees, finches, and nuthatches."

Local Bird Sightings by Jacque Lowery

Even though the leaves have barely started turning, the winter bird residents are beginning to arrive. Northern Flickers returned to our neighborhood the first part of September. For some Reno neighborhoods the Flickers are a permanent presence, but I lose them in spring and really look forward to the return of their piercing calls and beautiful coloration in the fall. Some years I am very lucky to see intergrade Flickers (cross between eastern yellow-shafted and western red-shafted), with various combinations of colors and patterns from both species.



Another winter resident, White-crowned Sparrows, started to appear over two weeks ago. Based on my memory (which sometimes fails me!), I think their return is earlier than usual. This might be a harbinger of an early winter, or maybe a lack of natural food sources due to drought conditions further north and east. Some of these birds might have come all the way from Alaska to spend time with us. Whatever brought them early is



fine as I love their winter singing. I think they are one of the few song birds who actually sing in the fall and winter. I can usually tell if it is an adult singing or a juvenile, as the juveniles tend to sound like they are singing underwater until they learn their song well. To make sure these guys get their fair share of food (since they are almost always on the



ground) I have a ground tray feeder with a wire cover to keep out the quail and dove. I also find they like the finch feeder with perches.

Dark-eyed (Oregon) Juncos are usually a later arrival, but there are also scattered reports of them arriving already. Juncos are another great winter visitor; it is also a ground-feeding bird which will forage under shrubs and trees and in leaf litter.

These birds that spend most of their time looking for food on the ground are one more reason not to be a super neat gardener. Leave leaf litter under shrubs; it provides cover for insects, which in turn provide food for these birds. Flower heads with seeds (coreopsis, coneflowers, sunflowers, hollyhocks) should also be left as they provide food for the sparrows and finches in winter.

It is still migration season, so spend some time in your yard with binoculars and your ears attuned to your garden sounds. You might see some great migrating visitors and surely will enjoy the White-crowns' song. To learn more about our local birds and what their songs sound like, visit Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology www.allaboutbirds.org.

Attract More Groundfeeding Birds to Your Yard

Food



Most ground-feeding birds prefer millet. It can be eaten quickly, an important fact when the weather is working against you.

Our Deluxe Blend is loaded with sunflower, safflower and millet.

Our No-Mess Blend also has hulled millet and will not leave seed debris.

Feeders

Our EcoTough® Covered Ground Tray is perfect for these birds. Because food is not





open to the elements or directly on the ground, it remains fresher, longer. The roof also provides visiting birds protection from the weather.

If you have squirrels or raccoons, we have On-Guard™ cages that can fit on ground trays. This will allow smaller, ground-feeding birds to enter,

but keep the critters out.

If you are looking for a multi-function feeder, our Classic hopper feeder is elevated, but it lets seed spill to the ground, allowing birds to dine.



Location

Where feeders are placed is very important. Place feeders near shrubs or another kind of "windbreak" to provide your ground-feeding birds a safe place to hide, digest their food and escape from windy/snowy conditions.

Peru Bird Watching Expedition - - January 21 to Feb. 1, 2013

An extraordinary expedition through the Peruvian Amazon and the Highlands of Cusco, Machu Picchu and the Sacred Valley.

For detailed itinerary visit <http://ecoamericatours.com/birdwatching.html>.

October Nature Happenings

- * Oct. 15: New Moon, Oct. 29: Full Moon
- * Oct. 21 - 22: Orionids meteor shower
- * October is the best month to start watching for rare northern ducks and loons on the Front Range.
- * In the past, Mourning Doves were fall migrants. But due to an ever warmer climate, increased winter cover in suburban backyards and availability of wider range of food, they are seen in communal flocks through out the winter.
- * All members of the dove family favor ground feeders, seed blocks and flat trays of millet and cracked corn.
- * The first storms of winter usher in winter migrants which often seek shelter in the cover of backyards.
- * Many members of the sparrow family (White-crowned and Oregon Junco) join the ubiquitous House Sparrow at ground feeders.
- * Sparrows can be seen scratching for fallen seeds in fading gardens.
- * Leave spent perennials standing to provide cover and much needed food for our winter visitors.
- * Waterfowl migration continues to build throughout month.
- * Peak of raptor and hawk migration.
- * Pine Siskin return to lower elevations and feeders this month.
- * This is the month to install and repair nest boxes for use next year.
- * Bluebird and other nest boxes need to be cleaned out this month to prepare for winter roosting.
- * Sandhill Cranes migrate.
- * Remaining hummingbirds will depart this month.
- * Beavers are very active in the evenings while caching a winter supply of food.
- * Autumn colors peak in October.
- * Brown and Brook Trout spawn.

Animal Ark Upcoming Events

Harvest Festival Saturday, Harvest Festival October 6 & Saturday, October 20

10:15 am - 2:30 pm

Prices for this special day event: Adults \$15; Seniors \$13.50; Children \$12; children 2 years and under are free.

As part of our behavioral enrichment program, most of the animals will receive pumpkins filled with their favorite treats. Watch the enjoyment experienced by our predators when presented with these unique and delicious meals. Throughout the day, pumpkins will be

delivered to different animals. Come spend the day; bring the camcorder.....this is animal viewing at its finest! We will also offer pumpkin painting for kids.

Last Chance Cheetah Dash

Sunday, October 14

4:30 pm

Reservations required due to limited seating. RSVP: 1-775- 970-3431

Prices for this special evening event: Adults \$40; Seniors \$35; Children (10-16 years old) \$30.

This is the last Cheetah Run of the season! Reward yourself with an incredible experience: Watch these magnificent cats running with extraordinary speed, off-leash, across the desert in pursuit of an enticing lure. Children must be at least 10 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.

- October 23, 2012 - Gary Blomquist - Attack of the Pine Bark Beetles!

Field Trips

- Saturday, October 6, 2012 - Oxbow Park, Reno
- Saturday, October 13, 2012 - Taylor Creek, South Lake Tahoe

[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.](#)



Announcing Moana Nursery's New Birthday Club - Beginning in 2013

Easy to join - just give us your birthday month and you'll receive a birthday gift from Moana Nursery during your birthday month. Sign up at any location. If you're already a Rewards Member, just ask the cashier to add your birth month to your account.

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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