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

### The Toughest Bird in the Neighborhood

Just who is the toughest bird in the neighborhood anyway? Is it the Red-tailed Hawk that soars overhead each afternoon in search of squirrels or the Great Horned Owl that terrorizes the night with its stealthy hunting tactics?



In reality, it's neither of them...it's actually that cute little woodpecker that visits your suet feeder in the backyard!

No joke! That little Downy Woodpecker (or any of its woodpecker relatives) lives a punishing existence that most other birds would probably consider a life of being condemned to hard labor, and they have to be really tough in order to survive it.

And woodpeckers couldn't get much tougher - they are thick-skinned, hard-headed and heavy-hitting! Their skin is thicker





than most other birds in order to protect them from rough tree bark and biting insects. Their reinforced skull and bill are strong enough to withstand blows that exceed ten times the force of gravity as they repeatedly strike a tree at over 13 mph.

The other end of a woodpecker is also built tough. Its pointed tail feathers are especially strong and rigid, able to withstand the punishment of supporting its own weight as it climbs and clings to trees.

This month can often bring the best tough guy activity of the year to the feeders in your yard. With lots of young woodpeckers around and the molting process in full swing, woodpeckers are seeking the extra calories and proteins that feeders can provide.

Visit us soon and we'll make sure you have the expert advice and quality hobby products you need to make friends with the toughest (and cutest) birds in the neighborhood.

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



Hurry ... Select Birdfood On-Sale  
Now through July 15, 2012

20# Bird Seed Sale	Sale	Reg.	SAVE
Black Oil Sunflower	\$18.99	\$21.99	\$3.00
Nyjer	\$30.99	\$34.99	\$4.00
No Mess	\$30.99	\$34.99	\$4.00
Deluxe	\$17.49	\$19.99	\$2.50
Dove & Quail	\$13.99	\$15.99	\$2.00

Mix & Match Suet or Dough  
Buy 5, Get 1 FREE\*  
\*Of equal or lesser cost

Offers end July 15, 2012 ... then ...

July 16 through 31, 2012  
Free Seed with EcoClean Feeders

- Free 5# Nyjer (reg. \$12.99) with purchase of any EcoClean Finch Feeder
- Free 5# No Mess (reg. \$12.99) with purchase of any EcoClean Seed Feeder

Offer ends July 31, 2012

## July High Desert Bird of the Month: California Quail

The California Quail is a medium quail with a distinctive, curled black head plume and white-bordered black throat. Its breast is gray and belly is sharply scaled. The flanks are brown with white streaks and its back is olive-brown. Legs and feet are gray.

They forage on the ground for seeds, fruits, berries and insects and will readily eat cracked corn, berries and millet from ground trays.



Fun Facts:

- Multiple California Quail broods may mix after hatching and are attended by all the parents of those broods.
- The topknot looks like a single feather, but it is actually a cluster of six overlapping plumes.
- They can fly well but prefer walking.

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

## Local Bird Sightings by Jacque Lowery



Nesting season is almost over as we enter the hotter months of summer. Goldfinches are probably not as apparent in most yards, as they are later nesters and usually seek other locations for nesting sites. For the most part other songbirds have fledged their young (robins, chickadees, jays, etc.) and you might have a hard time distinguishing parents from young at this point. Some songbirds have begun, or soon will begin, a second nesting cycle for the year. Last year the Mountain Chickadees raised two broods; I'm watching to see if that happens again this year. The California Quail are right in the middle of their nesting season, so

be on the lookout for chicks ranging from downy fluff to what I call "teenagers."

Yesterday afternoon I heard a quail clucking insistently and finally located him standing on our back fence looking down at the patio area. Finding a window with a better vantage point, I discovered he was doing his little warning voice to our feral cat that was sleeping soundly on one of the chairs. I looked for other quail in the vicinity of the patio, but could see none. Then I noticed movement on the other side of the fence. Down the driveway marched Mama Quail with seven babies. They continued their food search on down to the rear area of our yard, with Papa clucking and watching the whole time. The babies were already feathering out and this was the first time I had seen them. This is a great example of how adept they are at keeping their little families hidden away from predators and spying humans.

The instinct to protect nests and young manifests in less subtle ways in other bird species. Outside the South Virginia Street Moana Nursery last week, Carol and I observed a Red-tail Hawk being attacked by a much smaller bird. The little bird (tentatively identified as a Western Kingbird) repeatedly hit the hawk on the head and wings. Logic would tell us the hawk (wingspan 49 inches) could easily become the aggressor and overcome the kingbird (wingspan 15 inches). The hawk, however, was completely in defensive mode, making evasive moves with flight and wings. It was a very entertaining and spectacular sight.



With ground birds like quail we get great opportunities to see protective behaviors. It's also fun to observe the "I found food, come share with me" calls and to see the sentinel watching out for danger while a whole covey forages in the yard. Some of these same behaviors also occur in other bird species, but the signals may be more subtle or the birds are hidden in foliage where we can't observe them as readily. Just one more reason to be observant anytime you are outside; you never know what wonders nature will open up to you if you take the time to watch and listen.

## July Nature Happenings

- \* July 3: Full Moon, July 19: New Moon
- \* July 28 - 29: Delta Aquarids Meteor shower peaks.
- \* July: NABA National Butterfly countbird for its size.
- \* Calliope Hummingbirds, our smallest bird in North America, also visit on their southern migration.
- \* Black-chinned Hummingbirds spill over from the mountains and visit feeders.
- \* Butterfly Weed is in bloom.
- \* Look for Monarch caterpillars on milkweed foliage.
- \* American Goldfinches are our last birds to nest, waiting for mature thistle plants to provide nesting material and food for their young.
- \* Keep finch feeders full of fresh Nyjer® (commonly referred to as thistle) seed.
- \* Robins have finished nesting, but will readily visit yards in search of worms and berries.
- \* Plant berry-producing shrubs or offer cherries, cranberries, raisins, grapes, or blueberries to help robins feed their young.

- \* Look for hummingbirds feeding on Trumpet Creeper, Columbine and Penstemon.
- \* Mallards and Wood Ducks molt into their "eclipse" plumage and are unable to fly for several weeks.
- \* First brood of immature hummingbirds begins to show up at nectar feeders later in the month.
- \* Rufous Hummingbirds visit mid-month on their southbound leg of the longest migration distance of any

## Animal Ark Upcoming Events

July is Military Month at Animal Ark.

We offer free admission for all active and reserve personnel.

Military family members will receive 50% regular admission prices. We're grateful for your service!

Lure of the Cheetah

Saturday, July 7

7:00 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.

Come see the world's fastest land mammal in action as our cheetahs run at top speeds - completely off-leash - around the Animal Ark cheetah field! Children must be at least 10 years old to participate.

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

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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