



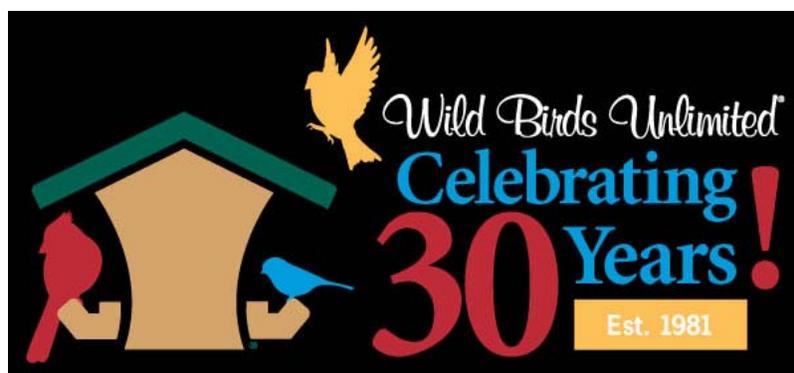
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"Nature News" from Wild Birds Unlimited at Moana Nursery



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Clean Feeders = Happy & Healthy Birds

Why do we need to clean our bird feeders? The most obvious reason is to keep your backyard flock healthy. Dirty feeders can harbor mold and bacteria from spoiled seed, feces or diseased birds that can easily be spread to other birds in the communal feeding area. Cleaning bird feeders is an easy way to avoid spreading diseases among birds, but there are many other reasons to keep feeders clean as well. For details on why to clean your feeders, [click here](#).



January Bird of the Month - Mountain Chickadee

The Mountain Chickadee is a medium chickadee with gray upperparts, black cap and bib, white cheeks and nape and pale gray underparts. The wings and tail are gray. Bill is black, legs and feet are gray-black. It has a white eyebrow which differentiates it from all other North American chickadees.

They typically eat insects, spiders, eggs of both, conifer seeds, berries and glean food from foliage and tree bark, often by hanging upside down. They will readily eat suet, sunflower seeds, peanut pieces and Bark Butter from feeders.

Fun Facts

- They cling to the undersides of branches and to tree trunks, searching for food in the bark or breaking seeds open by hammering them with their beaks.
- The nest cup of a Mountain Chickadee is molded in fur and then plugged with loose fur. The unincubated eggs are covered with the fur plug while the female is not in the nest.

For more bird of the month information, visit our local WBU website by clicking [here](#).



Cooper's Hawk by Jacque Lowery

Local Bird Sightings by Jacque Lowery

While enjoying your morning coffee you see the quail clucking among themselves, doves and finches are eating from your hopper feeder and goldfinch are quietly squabbling over the finch food. Suddenly there's a blur and all the birds wildly take flight, alarm calls filling the air. For several minutes there is complete silence, not a bird in sight.

What just happened? Obviously it was a predator of some sort, since all the birds scattered. Did you catch a glimpse of a dark back and long, barred tail? Then you probably saw a Cooper's Hawk or Sharp-shinned Hawk in action.

The quickness of both the Cooper's Hawk and Sharp-shinned Hawk make them difficult to differentiate. Cooper's are usually larger than Sharp-shinned (Sharpies) and their tails are normally somewhat curved where Sharpies are straight. There are slight differences in head shape and size, but again it is very hard to study these field marks in the blur of movement at your feeders. If the hawk is successful in obtaining lunch you might be lucky enough to observe him on the ground or a perch as he consumes his lunch. Or if he is unsuccessful, he may sit on a limb for awhile as if to say "Where did I go wrong, I must improve my hunting skills!" Since Cooper's Hawks are more numerous in our area than Sharp-shinned, odds are that your visitor is a Cooper's Hawk.



Sharp-shinned Hawk by Jacque Lowery

I know it might be upsetting to see a dove, quail, or even a finch succumb to those sharp talons and hooked beak. However, it is part of the natural world and hawks have to eat, too! There is a food chain among all the creatures in the world, including birds, and it is fascinating to watch the stealth and cunning of these predator birds. If this happens frequently in your backyard, you might try a more protected location for the feeders, where the little birds can quickly escape into cover.

It is a federal offense (serious jail time and fines) to harm any birds, so attempting to shoot a hawk is not a good idea. Research shows that the incidence of hunting at backyard feeders is no more prevalent than other natural hunting locations. Also, 70% of hawks and falcons do not survive their first year because they didn't develop sufficient hunting skills. So the occasional catch in your yard may tip the scales for the other 30% of these beautiful birds.

January Hobby Essentials - Click [here](#) for the January Hobby Essentials Flyer Wild Birds Unlimited 30 Year Anniversary Specials

- **FREE** Seed sample and Color Feeder Bird ID Poster with a minimum \$30 purchase of bird

food, suet, bird feeders, houses or birdbaths (excludes sale items)! *While supplies last.*

- Buy one Nutty for Nuggets, Get one FREE (*same or lesser value*).
 - 18.5 oz. Tub - \$4.99
 - 10 oz. Stackable - \$3.99

[Click here for a fun and informative NPR article on urban bird feeding!](#)

January Nature Happenings

- Jan. 3 - 4: Quadrantid Meteor Shower - See up to 60 falling meteors per hour!
- Jan. 15: New Moon, Jan. 29: Full Moon
- Rather than search for worms in the frozen soil, large winter flocks of robins will visit fruit trees for food.
- Cedar Waxwings will visit yards in search of fruit, often staying for hours before moving on.
- Juncos will hunt for fallen seed, often before dawn.
- The smaller the bird, the earlier its hunt for food in the winter darkness.
- Tree-loving birds such as mountain chickadees, nuthatches and various woodpeckers will leave their winter night's cavity or roost box in search of high calorie food.
- Listen for Great Horned Owls' "hoot" as they pair up for mating season.
- Now through late March is a difficult time for birds; it's important to provide food and an open source of water.
- Winter is a great time to look for birds' nests. Admire the craftsmanship, but leave the nest in place.

Participate in Project Feeder Watch

Join the thousands of FeederWatchers across North America who count the birds at their feeders from November through early April. The 2010-11 FeederWatch season began November 13, but there's still time to join for this season, which runs through April 8, 2011. [Click here to join!](#)

The Great Backyard Bird Count Is February 18-21, 2011

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent. Anyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy-and it helps the birds. [Click here for more information.](#)

Lahontan Audubon Society Upcoming Field Trips

- Saturday, January 8, 2011 - Virginia Lake, Reno
- Saturday, January 15, 2011 - Winter Birds of Reno and Sparks

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

Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge Events

- Winter bird count for kids & families! Click [here](#) for details.



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