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**News**  
 from the bird store

# LOOK, LISTEN & Learn Events

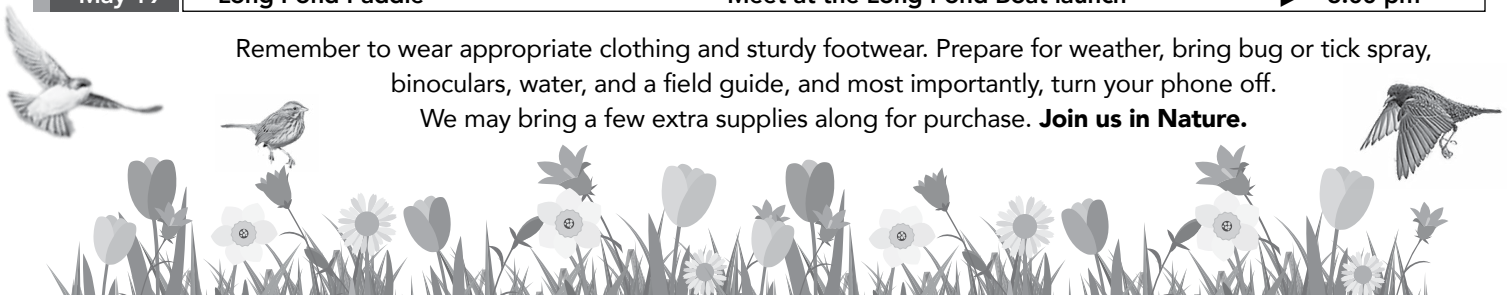
The birds are singing, and spring migration is beginning - come join us in Nature!

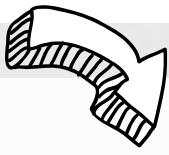
New bird walks and events are posted on the Bird Store and More calendar. Take a look and sign up for a walk. Please register no later than four days before the event. You can sign up online, in person, or by phone. Some walks are held in partnership with Opacum Land Trust and require registration through their website. Trips will not run if fewer than three participants are registered. We will contact you using your signup method the day before if an event is canceled for any reason.

DATE	EVENT	PLACE	TIME
April 3	Woodcock Walk	Meet at the Bird Store	▶ 6:00 pm
April 7	Woodcock Walk	Meet at the Bird Store	▶ 6:00 pm
April 14	Westville Dam	Meet at the Westville Dam parking lot	▶ 7:30 am
April 16	Brimfield Trail	Meet at the Rt 20 parking lot in Brimfield	▶ 7:30 am
April 18	Birding for Beginners - with Opacum Land Trust at Claire Birtz Wildlife Sanctuary in Southbridge. Sign up through the Opacum link. <a href="https://www.opacumlt.org/events/birding-for-beginners/">https://www.opacumlt.org/events/birding-for-beginners/</a>		▶ 8:00 am
April 21	Grand Trunk Trail	Meet at 5 Bridge Rd parking lot	▶ 7:30 am
April 24	Grand Trunk Trail - River Road	Meet at the River Rd parking lot	▶ 7:30 am
April 25	Morneau Farm Walk with Opacum Land Trust. Pending more info to follow.		
April 28	Wells State Park	Meet at Wells State Park parking lot	▶ 7:30 am
May 2	Lu Ann's Bakery & Cafe walk	Meet at Lu Ann's Bakery 42 Main St Stafford CT	▶ 7:00 am
May 2	Wells State Park	Meet at Wells State Park parking lot	▶ 7:30 am
May 5	Hope and St John's Cemetery Worcester	Meet at the front gate at Hope cemetery	▶ 7:30 am
May 9	Sleepy Hollow Walk with Opacum Land Trust - Pending more info to follow.		
May 10	Skinner Mountain (Skinner State Park Hadley MA)	Meet at the parking area at the entrance	▶ 7:00am.
May 12	Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge	Main gates open 6:00 AM park inside early and meet us in front of the chapel by the main gates We will begin the walk from there at 7:15 AM sharp!	▶ 7:00 AM.
May 19	Long Pond Paddle	Meet at the Long Pond Boat launch	▶ 6:00 pm

Remember to wear appropriate clothing and sturdy footwear. Prepare for weather, bring bug or tick spray, binoculars, water, and a field guide, and most importantly, turn your phone off.

We may bring a few extra supplies along for purchase. **Join us in Nature.**





# SPRING Reminders

**Cleaner Feeders, Happier Birds** Take your feeders down and give them a good scrubbing and a bleaching. As the weather gets warmer the feeders will need more cleaning to stop the spread of disease. Remember, birds can easily transmit conjunctivitis while feeding, so let's keep our birds healthy with cleaner feeders!

**Bathtime!** Birdbaths need a good spring cleaning too. Birds often drink from the same water they bathe in, so give the bath a thorough scrub and refill it with fresh water. While you're at it, rake up the birdseed that has accumulated under your feeders. Your lawn will thank you. We've got cleaning products and copper discs to help with the task!

**Bluebirds of Happiness** Winter feeding flocks of Eastern Bluebirds are beginning to break up as they search for nesting sites. Offering mealworms can give them a helpful boost as the nesting season gets underway. If adults have to spend too much time away from the nest during cold or rainy spring weather, the nestlings can be at risk of hypothermia.



**House Call!** Many birds are already scouting spots for nesting, so now is the time to open and clean your nest boxes. Mice may have moved in over the winter, and any debris should be removed. Wear gloves and use a small garden trowel to make cleaning easier. Do not use chemical cleaners inside the box. Replace any boxes that are in disrepair or cannot be properly cleaned.

**Humm-dinger!** Hummingbirds start returning between mid and late April. We recommend putting your feeders out around April 15th to welcome them back. We have Hummingbird Nectar in stock to get your season off to a great start, along with a selection of feeders, including the Birdfy smart nectar feeder!



**Sweet Arrivals - Orioles & Catbirds** Orioles and Catbirds usually arrive around April 21st. Put your feeders out for them, they're more likely to nest in your yard if a reliable food source is waiting. Bird Berry or Grape Jelly and fresh oranges are their favorites. We're fully stocked with feeders to help you welcome these sweet visitors.



## Can We Feed Squirrels Peanuts? Here's What Science Says

### Can We Feed Squirrels Peanuts?

Here's What Science Says: We love squirrels here at the Bird Store, and we love to watch them feast on peanuts and other treats! We've also heard concerns from some of you about the health risks squirrels can face when these treats become staples of their diet.



### So, we've done research and wanted to share our findings.

Peanuts are high in phosphorus and low in calcium; if they become a major part of their diet, this can throw off a squirrel's nutrient balance. In rehabilitation settings or captivity, this imbalance can lead to health issues like weakened bones and nerve dysfunction. In the wild, though, squirrels naturally seek out a wide variety of foods, so these risks are much lower unless peanuts make up most of their meals.

Another concern is mold, which can produce aflatoxins that can harm internal organs if squirrels eat enough contaminated nuts. This is mostly a worry if peanuts and treats are improperly stored or are of poor quality, and is exactly why we only offer the highest quality food for our backyard friends, like Lizzie Mae's peanuts and C&S squirrel treats.

### So, what does this mean for our bushy-tailed friends?

Treats like peanuts, sunflower seeds, and other squirrel snacks are okay in moderation. Occasional feeding won't harm healthy wild squirrels and can be a joy to watch. The key is to keep it supplemental, not a primary food source, and to keep their diet varied, just like it would naturally be.

Store peanuts in a cool, dry place and always check them for mold before offering them to squirrels. Also, consider collecting natural food for the squirrels - such as acorns and pinecones when available - and mixing these into feeding your routine. We are nutty about our squirrels and - more than anything - want to see them healthy, happy, and thriving!



**References:** <https://rsne.org/supplementary-feeding>  
<https://www.ewildagain.org/squirrel-natural-history-with-rehab>

## OUR ANNUAL Baby Bird and Squirrel Reminder

It is nesting season, and every year we receive many calls about baby birds found on the ground. Most of the time these little fuzz balls are fledglings. The parents are usually nearby and will continue to feed them on the ground while they learn to fly.



Only if you think a baby bird is in imminent danger, place it in a small basket filled with grass and hang the basket on a nearby tree branch, out of harm's way. The parent bird will find and feed it there. Please do not take the bird home. In most cases the baby is just fine and still figuring out how to fly, and the parents will be looking for it.

The same goes for baby squirrels. The mother is most likely around and will move them to a safe location. If you find a baby squirrel that is in danger, put it in a box or basket close to the location where it was found. It may take the mother a few hours to come back to move her babies but their squeaking will lead her to them.



**Please do not touch the baby bird or squirrel, don't take it home, to us, or to a veterinarian. Instead, leave it where it is and do not interfere. Unless it is visibly injured!**

# GET UP and Get Outside

Time to come out of hibernation. Spring is here, which means it's time to get outside, and the Bird Store has everything you need to do just that. Gear up with birding, hiking, and paddling supplies, guides, books, and charts. Need some bug spray to keep the mosquitoes away? We've got that. Maybe a clip to hang your hat on when you're not wearing it? We've got that too! How about some rugged and stylish outdoor garden tools and knives? **Yes - new to the store, we've got 'em!**

Now that you're all geared up, here are a few FIRSTS to get out and look for.

### Things Birds Eat First

- Insects
- Larvae
- Spiders
- Dormant Berries
- Tree Buds

### First Wildlife

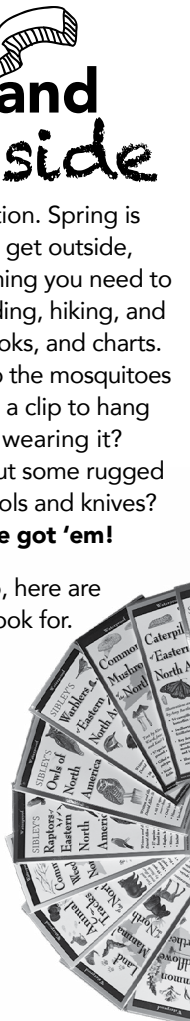
- Turkey Vultures
- Red winged Blackbirds
- Eastern Phoebe
- Mourning Cloak Butterflies
- (Mourning Cloak butterflies hibernate as adults)

### First Sounds

- Spring Peepers
- Wood Frogs (quacking sounds)
- Chickadee song

### First Flora

- Skunk Cabbage
- Pussy Willows
- Red & Silver Maples
- Snowdrops
- Crocus
- Bloodroot
- Columbine
- Trillium
- Jack in the Pulpit



## Did you know?

**Who's Who in the Wild:** We have Bird and Nature ID posters, including our very own Bird Store and More Bird ID chart, with helpful information on the reverse side to identify your local birds. These charts are perfect for figuring out who's visiting your feeders.

Earth, Sky, & Water also offers a variety of nature guides and posters to help you identify plants, trees, mushrooms, and more.

**It's Mud Season:** Here in New England, we get an "extra" season - Mud Season! While it can make drives and yards messy, mud plays an important role for many species.



Cliff and Barn Swallows use mud to build their nests, and Robins rely on it for their nest construction as well. Phoebes combine mud with grass and moss to craft their homes.



The Mud Dauber wasp is a solitary builder, molding its nest from mud mixed with its saliva. These nests are usually attached to crevices, walls, or overhangs.

Even bears take advantage of mud, using puddles to cool off. Wallowing helps regulate their body temperature, protects their skin from the sun, and keeps pesky insects at bay.

**Crazy for Catbirds:** Gray Catbirds are known for their distinctive cat-like "mew" call and their ability to mimic a wide variety of sounds, including other birds, frogs, and mechanical noises. Their songs are often long and improvised, lasting up to 10 minutes, and can include whistles, squeaks, gurgles, and nasal tones. Unlike Mockingbirds, which mimic the exact tone and quality of the birds they copy, Catbirds reproduce the sounds using their own voice. You can hear the pattern or phrasing of a cardinal or other bird for example, but it still unmistakably sounds like a Catbird.



## Marshmallow's Musings

### Notes from Marshmallow the Cockatiel

Hi, it's Marshmallow. I'm glad it's spring. There were a lot of days this winter when the whole world looked white and there wasn't much to look at. I even blended in with the background!

I started wondering about some of my bird friends and learned something pretty interesting about one of them. The Peregrine Falcon regurgitates pellets made of the indigestible parts of its food, just like an owl. I didn't know that, and I'm certainly not getting close enough to confirm it. My friend the falcon would not hesitate to have me for lunch!

Unlike owls, which often swallow small mammals whole, falcons take on larger prey and tear it apart, swallowing some bones and feathers along the way. An owl pellet usually contains a more complete little skeleton, while a falcon pellet is different. Their pellets are made of compacted feathers and fragments of bone. A falcon forms a tight cylinder about 2 to 4 cm long and roughly 1.5 cm wide, made up of bone fragments wrapped in feathers. The size is just right for the throat so the pellets can be "cast" out, by coughing them up at regular intervals, without much trouble.

**Yikes! I think I'll stick with my bird pellets for lunch.**

Love,  
Your Friend Marshmallow



# Bee & Bug Houses



We have plenty of new items this spring to help you support the insects and pollinators in your yard. A healthy yard is full of beneficial and beautiful bees, butterflies, and other insects.

Hand made from porcelain, **Bee Cups** offer a safe and stylish way to hydrate bees and butterflies in your outdoor space. The center is hand-painted with a patented Ultraviolet Bee Vision Glaze, designed to mimic the UV glow and patterns of flowers, making them highly visible to pollinators.

Embrace the beauty of nature with a floating bee island! The honeycomb-inspired **Bee Pontoon** provides a familiar and inviting landing pad for thirsty pollinators. With a textured surface, the Bee Pontoon provides a secure landing spot and safe access to water for beneficial insects like bees, butterflies, and other pollinators.

**Solitary Bee Houses** in a variety of styles provide the perfect spot for our solitary pollinators to lay their eggs. A solitary bee house can significantly benefit your garden by enhancing pollination and supports these vitally important parts of our ecosystem.



**Bird Store Hours:**  
10:00 am-6:00 pm Monday - Saturday  
Closed Sunday

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