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News
from the bird store

Ditto's Journey FLYING Free



Ditto the Starling is flying free.

It was a bittersweet moment in our journey with Ditto. When we took him in as a fledgling last July, we didn't know if he would live, let alone thrive. But live and thrive he did, bringing both you and us joy and laughter with his antics. From the giant splash baths and checking for bugs under our shoes, he never stopped.

We weren't sure that he would release, as he had lived the winter out in the comfort of The Bird Store. But as the days grew longer Ditto would sit in the window and watch the birds in the garden. There was a call from the wild that was for sure. On days when it was warm and sunny we would bring him out to the garden protected in a cage. He watched the goings on and even made a few bird calls himself. On the third day in the garden a couple of Starlings flew down to his cage and we decided it was time to see what Ditto would do. When Bill opened the cage Ditto didn't even hesitate, he was out in a flash and meeting up with the other Starlings. We watched all day to see what he was doing. He stayed high up in the trees with a couple other Starlings. A bittersweet moment for sure.

In the end Ditto is doing exactly what he was born to do - fly free. We were blessed to have been part of his journey from fledgling to freedom.



SPRING Cleaning



This is the time to take those 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, let's keep our birds healthy with clean feeders!

Birdbaths also need a deep cleaning for spring. Remember that birds poop in their water so clean it up.



And while you're at it rake up the birdseed that has accumulated under the feeders, your grass will thank you. Old moldy seed hulls begin to stink and get slimy when they accumulate.





Spring Walks

New birdwalks and events are being posted on the Bird Store and More Calendar. Take a look and sign up for a walk.

You can find our walks on the **Calendar and Blog tab.**

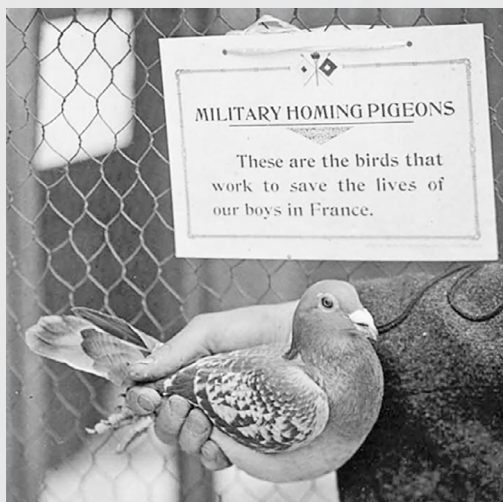
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Did you know?

In WW2 the U.S. Signal Corps Army Pigeon Service trained 54,000 homing pigeons, 36,000 of which were sent overseas for active duty. Trained birds, which could fly at 40mph or faster, relayed messages back from the front lines to headquarters, often more reliably or securely than telecommunications or radio. More than 95 percent of all messages carried by U.S. Army pigeons were successfully delivered under combat conditions.

One American bird, 'Cher Ami' was awarded a French medal for her service within the American sector near the town of Verdun.

On her last mission she successfully carried her message, despite being shot through the chest, and purportedly saved the lives of 194 American soldiers with her news.



Optics Update



Do you enjoy watching the birds in your yard, or perhaps watching a warbler high in a tree.

Maybe you like to look across the water at the ducks. Whatever type of birdwatcher you are there is a pair of binoculars to fit your needs.

Are your eyes close set or wide apart? Do you wear glasses? Small hands or large hands, maybe a little shaky or not? What will you be using them for? There is a lot of things to consider when purchasing the "right" pair of binoculars. What works well for one person may be a terrible fit for another.

We carry Opticron binoculars. Founded in the UK in 1970, Opticron is a family-owned business with fifty years' experience in consumer optics. In that time, they have met and exceeded the demands of tens of thousands of people looking for a pair of quality affordable binoculars, a fieldscope or accessory to help them pursue their pastime, hobby or obsession. Irrespective of age, budget or experience they aim to always provide wildlife watchers with the best mix of quality, choice, value and customer service possible.

Opticron's mission statement "smaller, lighter, brighter, sharper" is the driving force behind the compact and lightweight equipment they offer. Designed and engineered to meet the demands of sometimes highly discriminating customers who actively use their equipment, they offer a wide range of models to ensure people get to own an instrument suited to them.



If you're in the market for a new pair of binoculars stop by and take a few pairs out to the garden. You will be pleasantly surprised at how many advances have been made the quality and size of binoculars over the last few years.

Bee



Friendly to Pollinators

Many species of pollinators are experiencing dramatic declines. For example, populations of three bumblebee species in the eastern United States have declined by over 90% in the past 30 years. Populations of native bees and other pollinators are in decline due to climate change, pesticide exposure, habitat degradation and agricultural intensification, declining populations of native flowering plants, and introduced pathogens.

Fortunately, there are ways to help—and small changes can make a big difference.

Try mowing less of your lawn and converting the rest to a garden, or raise your mower to a higher setting to let violets and other small flowers remain.

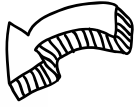
Minimize the use of pesticides and herbicides, which can kill pollinators and the plants they rely on.

Buy or build a bee hotel, a structure for bees to nest in.

It's time to live in harmony with the pollinators. Remember No Bugs- No Plants. No Plants-No Food.



OUR ANNUAL Baby Bird and Squirrel Reminder



It is the nesting season and every year we receive numerous calls about baby birds that are on the ground. Please be kind, these little fuzz balls are fledgling birds and the parent bird is usually around and will continue to feed the baby on the ground as well as helping it learn to fly. If you think the baby bird is in jeopardy take a basket, fill it with grass, then place the baby in the basket and hang the basket on a tree branch close by but away from danger. The mother bird will find and feed the baby. Don't take it home, to us, or to the vet. The baby is usually fine (it just hasn't quite got the hang of flying yet) and the mother bird will be quite upset if her baby goes missing.

The same goes for baby squirrels. The mother is most likely around and will move her young to a safe location. If you find a baby squirrel 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.



Because You Asked



Out of The Mouths of Babies

Q: Two little girls asked this question. Do birds Fart?

A: Generally speaking birds do not fart. They have the anatomical ability to do so but do not have the need to. Birds can digest food much quicker than humans and other mammals and they have comparatively shorter intestinal tracts. Birds poop frequently, every 5 to 15 minutes (we know this for a fact as Ditto and Marshmallow poop constantly) so there is not enough time for the digested food to ferment and produce gas. Birds also lack the stomach bacteria that would build up gas. The exception to the rule is chickens. Chickens can take up to 24 hours to digest their food, so there is gas to be expelled.



Forest Bathing Immerse Yourself

We all know how good being in nature can make us feel. The sounds of the forest, the scent of the trees, the sunlight playing through the leaves, the fresh, clean air — these things give us a sense of comfort. They ease our stress and worry, help us to relax and to think more clearly. Being in nature can restore our mood, give us back our energy and vitality, refresh and rejuvenate us.

Forest bathing started in Japan in the 1980's. Forest bathing, or *shinrin-yoku*. *Shinrin* in Japanese means "forest," and *yoku* means "bath." So *shinrin-yoku* means bathing in the forest atmosphere, or taking in the forest through our senses. It is not exercise, it's simply being in nature, connecting with it through our senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch. *Shinrin-yoku* is like a bridge. By opening our senses, it bridges the gap between us and the natural world.

According to a study sponsored by the EPA, the average American spends 93% of their time indoors. Taking a small amount of time in nature can have an impact on your health. A two-hour forest bath will help you to unplug from technology and slow down. It will bring you into the present moment and de-stress and relax you.

Forest bathing, how is it done? First, find a spot. Make sure you have left your phone and camera behind. You are going to be walking aimlessly and slowly. You don't need any devices. Let your body be your guide. Listen to where it wants to take you. Follow your nose. And take your time. It doesn't matter if you don't get anywhere. You are not going anywhere. You are savoring the sounds, smells and sights of nature and letting the forest in.

Bird's Choice Earth Friendly Recycled Feeders

One of our favorite bird feeder manufacturers is Backyard Nature Products, makers of Birds Choice and Green Solutions feeders. Backyard Nature Products strives to use plastic that would have ended up in landfills to create durable, weatherproof bird feeders and houses. Their recycled plastic feeders are made in Chilton, Wisconsin.



Backyard Nature Products has turned plastic bottles into feeders and houses that birds flock to. Recycled plastic bird feeders last up to 5 times longer than their wooden counterparts. This increased lifespan not only reduces waste but also cuts down on the manufacturing process and energy required to produce new feeders. Plastics are a less porous material, making them easier to clean and sanitize. If you want an Earth Friendly feeder look no further than the Birds Choice and Green Solutions lines by Backyard Nature Products.



New Product

Lizzie Mae's Very Berry Bird Jelly

Very Berry Jelly sounds good enough to have for breakfast! Very Berry Jelly is an Orioles feast with five different grapes and berries. Grapes, red raspberries, blackberries, strawberries, and blueberries and no corn syrup! Your Orioles & Catbirds will thank you.



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

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