



20% off
everything in the store
(Excludes Optics and Bear Proof Poles)



News
from the bird store

Mid Winter Blah's Sale
Friday, Feb. 24 - Saturday, Feb 25, 2023 See back page for details.

WHAT WERE YOU Grateful For?

It was January 1st, a new year and there were loads of "2022 Year in Review" commentaries, most of which were showing everything negative and horrible that happened in 2022.

We posted a challenge on our Facebook page to tell us just one good thing that happened in 2022. We are still receiving posts on this. It turns out that the overlying theme is Faith, Home, and Family including new pets. Folks who replied, found churches, got closer to family, or added to their family with spouses, children, grandchildren and pets. Being grateful for everyday and enjoying the beauty of nature. God is brilliant! We are grateful for all of the wonderful people who replied and those who bring us joy everyday by entering through our doors. Thank you all for sharing the GOOD STUFF.

New Stuff!

We have new items coming in daily! Here's a few items from Zaer and Lucuma Designs. Lots more to come.



VALENTINES DAY IS COMING.
Don't forget your sweetie! We have loads of gift ideas for your special Valentine.

Bird Seed Has an Expiration Date



Yes, bird seed can expire. Bird seed typically doesn't have a long shelf life due to its delicate nature. For example, Sunflower seeds are high in oil content, they can oxidize and go rancid. If left in its sealed package too long, several months in most cases, the seed can spoil. Depending on the type of bird seed and the storage conditions bird seed typically has a shelf life of 6 months to a year. Avoid feeding your birds expired seed, which can cause nutritional deficiencies and other health problems. Spoiled birdseed can also cause digestive upset and can even be toxic to birds if left uneaten for too long.

The best way to avoid spoilage is to purchase smaller amounts of birdseed and to store it in a cool and dry place.

Lizzie Mae, our seed company packages and ships weekly so our seed stock is always fresh. It's best to use your seed up within a month so it is at its freshest.

Winter Reminders



February is national Bird feeding month. Fill your feeders and enjoy!

Help the birds survive and repopulate. Do what you can to create inviting habitats for our beautiful songbirds to thrive!

Make sure to have food, shelter and open water for the birds and mammals alike. We have had a relatively mild winter so far, but you just never know what Mother Nature has in store for us.

Ditto's Journey



What's a Ditto? The better question is Who is Ditto. Ditto is a European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), yup one of THOSE birds that most people despise until they get a look at Ditto up close. Now they love Ditto as the exception to the universal dislike of Starlings.

Ditto's journey began sometime in May of 2022, most likely in the big bird house in front of the Bird Store. We regularly have Starlings and House Sparrows living in the "bird condo".

Ditto apparently was the runt of the clutch of Starlings and didn't develop properly. He (we think it's a He but it could be a She. Hard to tell until we see some adult plumage and beak color) was probably the smallest and got pushed aside by his siblings who were stronger. Survival of the fittest as it is, the Starling family fledged and Ditto was left behind.



But Ditto was a scrappy little runt and with poop stuck all over his butt managed to fledge and make his way to the Secret Garden on the side

of the Bird Store. We spotted him on July 1st. He was just a little puff ball with a big yellow baby beak trying to peck at seeds under the bird feeder. He also tried to convince the Pigeons to feed him, and even though he begged they just pushed him aside. We didn't intervene, just watched for momma Starling to come and feed her baby. This happens after the babies fledge, they usually don't go very far and the parent birds still bring them food and give them flight lessons. Hours went by and no momma bird came.

It was now 4pm and the little puff ball of a Starling was looking sad and weak. We knew he wouldn't survive. This is the cruelty of nature, but we had a birds eye view and couldn't just watch this little guy suffer so out we went with a bird cage and just picked him up.

The next thing was to get some liquid into him and pick the poop off his butt. It took all three of us to accomplish the task but we did it. Then it was to see if our 2 black cats, Dakota and Koko were willing to share their raw cat food with a baby Starling. Unlike the pigeons the kitties were willing to share. Such good boys they are!



Ditto grew on a diet of mashed up cat food, hard boiled egg, calcium, and applesauce fed to him on a spoon every 10 minutes. Luckily birds eat only during the day! He started to grow and

learned to eat on his own out of a dish. He was so malnourished that all of his tail feathers broke in half. Even without tail feathers once he learned how to fly he started to venture out of the cage and hop around.

One of his favorite things to do was to bathe in his water dish. He did this numerous times a day splashing all the water out of the dish and all over the cage.



Did You Know

All the European Starlings in North America descended from 100 birds set loose in New York's Central Park in the early 1890s. The birds were intentionally released by a group who wanted America to have all the birds that Shakespeare ever mentioned. It took several tries, but eventually the population took off. Today, more than 200 million European Starlings range from Alaska to Mexico, and many people consider them pests.

Once Ditto had mastered his wings he started to fly back and forth across the store. Then he went higher landing either in the office or near the upper windows at the front of the store. It was then that we figured out that he could fly up but not down because he had no tail feathers. We would chase him back and forth across the store until he got tired and stayed still long enough in the office that we could pick him up and bring him back to his cage for food and water. Eventually his new tail feathers grew in and then the games began.

Ditto loves to fly, and he's fast. Flying from one side of the store to the other, and regularly brushing the hair on your head as he is going by. This is a trick he seems to love, as if he's playing tag on his way by us.

As Ditto got older he began to get his speckles, they came in on his chest first and it looked like he was wearing a polkadot vest. We started calling him Ditto Dots. Incidentally the name Starling came about because the dots look like stars.

Ditto has been with us in the store for 6 months, and he now has beautiful iridescent feathers on his back. He has earned his keep by eating every bug he can find in the store. If he should find a stink bug he relishes it, rubbing it under his wings before gobbling it down. We have seen him catch seed moths on the wing and search everywhere to make sure he hasn't missed a bug. This happens to our shirt collars and our hair on a regular basis! Ditto checks everywhere. Although I wonder if the nightly office check of my hair is more of a grooming thing than a bug search because he seems to like hopping between my hair, and the back of the chair and back again.



One of Ditto's favorite places to sleep is behind the books in the office bookshelf. He will poke his head up over the top of

a book to see what you are doing and then tuck himself back in. He's quite the inquisitive character.

If you pour water in a bird bath for Ditto, he will spot it across the room and fly right over to enjoy splashing every bit of the water out of the bath. He is definitely a clean bird.

Starlings are relatives of the mynah birds, and like them they have impressive vocal abilities and a gift for mimicry. They can warble, whistle, chatter, make smooth liquid sounds, harsh trills and rattles. They will even talk. We talk to Ditto daily and we

are hoping that one day he will talk back. He seems to take everything in stride and gets along just fine, even "talking" to the mice that we regularly catch in the store.

Aside from being a bit messy (to say the least) with his toileting he is a wonder of curiosity and we have learned a lot from him.



Did You Know About BirdCast?

Did you ever wonder how many birds migrate at night during the Spring and Fall migration. BirdCast (birdcast.info) is a tool that can show when, where, and how far birds will migrate, or how many birds passed by the previous evening. The migration tools are available on birdcast.info and will be live again beginning on March 1, 2023 through June 15, 2023 and from August 1, 2023 to November 15, 2023. Historical data is also available for prior dates.

BirdCast is a consortium of interdisciplinary researchers primarily from three organizations. The Cornell Lab, Colorado State University, and UMass Amherst are the core partners.

Cornell Lab of Ornithology developed BirdCast and currently provides support for research, development, maintenance, and outreach content including research and data, and scientific expertise.

Colorado State University Aeroeco Lab engages in research, analysis and modeling to develop forecasting, lights out and threshold data, and continental estimates of migration. CSU also creates and supports the forecast map and lights out imagery.

University of Massachusetts Amherst provides machine learning expertise, developing pipelines and workflows to create forecasts, analysis and datasets.

Birdcast turns weather radar data into information on the numbers and flight directions of birds aloft. Every Spring and Fall, billions of birds migrate through the US, mostly under the cover of darkness.

Birds usually begin to migrate 30 - 45 minutes after sunset with the greatest number in flight two to three hours later. Migrating birds regularly fly up to 10,000 feet above ground, this can be impacted by seasonal timing and weather conditions.

Using BirdCast we checked a random spring date in 2022 to see what happened in Massachusetts. On the night of March 16, 2022 152,500 birds crossed Massachusetts between 7:00pm and 6:50am on March 17th.

The peak estimated migration traffic was 79,500 in the northeasterly direction at an approximate speed of 34 mph and altitude of 1600 feet. This was recorded at 12:40am.

[About](#)
[Migration tools](#)
[Science-to-action](#)
[News](#)

Showcasing the spectacle of bird migration

When, where, and how far will birds migrate? How many birds passed last night? Our tools help you explore the answers to these and many other questions about bird migration.

[Learn how](#)

MYSTERY OF THE MISSING MIGRANTS | © Charley Harper Art Studio

POWERED BY

Narrowing it down to just Worcester County the numbers for the night of March 16, 2022 were 59,400 birds crossed Worcester County. The peak estimated traffic was 13,800 in a northeasterly direction at a speed of 33 mph and altitude of 1600 feet. This was recorded at 1:00am.

Interestingly one of the threats to migration is light pollution. Light attracts and disorients migrating birds, confusing and exhausting them as well as making them vulnerable to collisions with buildings.

There are lights out efforts underway in over 30 cities in North America. The goal is to turn off or dim non-essential lighting during critical migration periods. Turning off lights dramatically reduces hazards from attraction to and disorientation by light, allowing birds to safely proceed with their migratory journeys. More information on the lights out efforts is available on BirdCast.

Get rid of the
mid winter blah's
and think spring!

The Bird Store
and more...
Mid Winter Blah's Sale

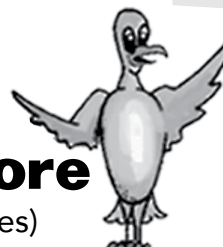
Friday, Feb. 24 - Saturday, Feb 25, 2023

You **MUST** bring
your newsletter
with you to receive
the sale price
NO EXCEPTIONS!



20% off
everything in the store

(Excludes Optics and Bear Proof Poles)



This coupon is good for a one time use

(This means one time and one coupon per household/family thank you.)

No other Discounts or bucks apply. Seed Saver Cards cannot be used in conjunction with the sale. In store items only no web/phone orders.

You MUST bring your newsletter with you to receive the sale price - NO EXCEPTIONS!

Here's the rules:

- Save 20% on your purchases (Excluding Optics and Bear Proof Poles)
- No coupons, bucks, or other discounts apply except for the MID WINTER BLAH'S COUPON
- Seed Saver Cards cannot be used in conjunction with the sale • No special orders, rain checks, web orders, or phone orders
- Sale is on in stock merchandise only; once it's gone it's gone! • You have to be here to get the goods!



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

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 736, Fiskdale, MA 01518
Phone: (508)-347-BIRD
thebirdstoreandmore.com

Sturbridge, MA 01566
(Route 20, Cedar Street Intersection)
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