

## Birds & Butterflies

# NEWSLETTER

2008-4



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It's hard to believe that fall is almost here. We always look forward to this time of year with the cooler temperatures, changing colors of the foliage and seeing different birds passing through our yard and arriving to spend the winter. What a great time of year to get out and enjoy this beautiful creation. We hope you will spend some time outside this fall.



Thank you for your continued support of Birds & Butterflies and enjoy this newsletter.

If you do not want to receive the newsletter please let us know by email at [birdsbutterflies@geopolus.com](mailto:birdsbutterflies@geopolus.com).  
If you know anyone else who would like to receive the newsletter please give us their email address.

## WHITE-THROATED SPARROW (*Zonotrichin albicollis*)

The white-throated sparrow spends its summers from northern Pennsylvania northward into New England and Canada.

This small sparrow, about 6.5 inches long with a 9 inch wing-span, can be found along woodland edges. The male has a conspicuous white throat, a dark bill and black crown with a buff or white central stripe. Its eyebrow is



Photo by Pat Lynch  
Credit: U.S. Geological Survey, Department of the Interior/USGS, U.S. Geological Survey/photo by Pat Lynch

usually white; sometimes tan, with a yellow mark in front, just behind the base of the bill. The upper parts of the body are a rusty brown and the under parts a grayish color. Females have less bold colors on the head and more streaking on the breast.

White-throated sparrows feed primarily on the ground eating weed seeds, insects and fruit. They make a cuplike nest of grasses lined with rootlets and hair on the ground under a small shrub or tree.

During late September and October white-throated sparrows arrive in the Aiken area to spend the winter. Their distinctive song usually marks their arrival. The song is described as "Old Man Peabody, Peabody, Peabody." If you lived in Canada you would describe their song as "I Love Canada, Canada, Canada." They will spend the entire winter in our area, usually in small flocks on the ground. They love to forage in our yards under small shrubs like azaleas and camellias.

If you want to attract white-throated sparrows offer them shelled sunflower seed or white millet, preferably on a

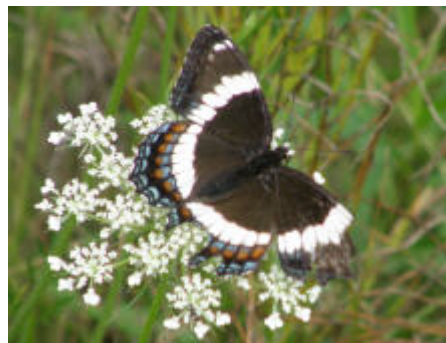
ground feeder. You will often see chipping sparrows using the same feeder.

## FALL MIGRATION AND WINTER BIRDS

Fall migration is ongoing in September and October in our area. Many northern species will be moving through our area on their way to the southern U.S. or Central American for the neo-tropical migrants. You have the opportunity to see many different species of birds during this period.

We have quite a few species that will arrive here from more northern areas to spend the winter. Some of the more common species that you can expect to spend their winter vacation with us are white-throated sparrow, chipping sparrow, song sparrow, yellow-rumped warbler, pine warbler, red-breasted nuthatch, yellow-bellied sapsucker, American goldfinch, Baltimore oriole, cedar waxwing, golden-crowned and ruby-crowned kinglets and palm warbler.

## WHAT KIND OF BUTTERFLY IS THIS?



Email your answer to us and the first individual with the correct answer will receive a \$20 gift certificate from Birds & Butterflies.

## OCTOBER FEEDER ACTIVITY “SLOW DOWN”

**QUESTION:** Why do I see fewer birds at my feeders during the fall? Am I doing something wrong?

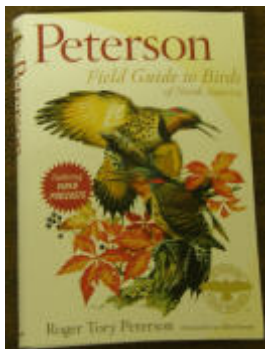
**ANSWER:** Often during October we experience a “slow down” in bird activity at our feeders. This is due to the increased availability of seeds and berries this time of year, providing an abundant supply of food. With so much “natural” food available many birds abandon use of our feeders or use them less. If there is an abundant crop of seeds and berries, this “slow down” can last into December. If the crop is not as good you could see the decreased feeding activity for only a few weeks.

In the 12 years we have been selling bird seed in Aiken there has been one or two years when there was no perceptible decrease in bird seed sales during this time period, and perhaps 5 or 6 years when seed sales decreased as much as 50-75%.

So don't be surprised if you see fewer birds at your feeders this fall. You are not doing anything wrong. Nature has just provided a banquet for the birds and as soon as the pantry is empty they will be back.



## NEW BOOK



### PETERSON FIELD GUIDE TO BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA

by Roger Tory Peterson

If you grew up using Peterson's Field Guide, like we did, you will want to add this new, updated version to your library. It has been printed in celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Roger Tory Peterson's birth.

The book covers both eastern and western North American, has 40 new paintings, digital updates to Peterson's classic paintings, all new maps with the most up-to-date range information and a website to download more than 3 hours of video pod casts.

Stop by the shop and take a look at the newest field guide available. It is only \$26.00 at Birds & Butterflies.

## NEW ITEM - “RAIN CHAINS”

Rain Chains are now available at Birds & Butterflies. Rain Chains originated hundreds of years ago in Japan. They act as linked funnels that are a distinctive alternative to a gutter downspout. Rainwater playfully dances and flows down these hand-crafted copper channels producing a pleasing sound as it is guided from the rooftop to the ground.

Rain Chains are available in polished copper or Verdi. There are 14 styles available and we have 8 styles on display in the shop. Copper rain basins can also be added to the chains. Stop by and see these unique Rain Chains.



## 2009 SEMINARS & FIELD TRIPS

We would be interested in hearing any suggestions you have for new seminar topics or field trips for 2009. We will be putting together our schedule in November, so please let us know your thoughts.

## COLLECTION OF DEAD BIRDS

If you should find any dead birds that have inadvertently flown into your windows or doors, or see a dead songbird along the highway please bring them to Birds & Butterflies. We have been included on the University of Georgia, SREL collecting permit, so it is legal for us to collect these dead birds. They will be turned over to Dr. Lehr Brisbin and used for scientific and educational purposes.

If you do find a dead bird put it in a zip lock bag and place it in your freezer, or

bring it to Birds & Butterflies immediately. We don't want any decaying birds. Please record the date and location where the bird was picked up. It is always sad to see a dead bird, but at least in their death they will be helping to educate others.

## GET YOUR BIRDFEEDER CLEANED

If your bird feeder is nasty looking and needs to be cleaned, bring it to Birds & Butterflies and we will clean it for you for \$5.00. You can have a clean feeder back in 1 or 2 days.

## BOX TURTLE FACTS

- A female box turtle can produce fertilized eggs up to four years after mating with a male.
- The record for the longest living box turtle is 138 years. Several others were known to live 100 years.
- If you see a box turtle with red eyes you can be about 90% certain it is a male. Most female box turtles have brown irises.

## PLACES TO VISIT - JONES GAP STATE PARK

Jones Gap State Park encompasses 3,346 acres in Greenville County, SC. Jones Gap State Park along with Caesar's Head State Park form the Mountain Bridge Wilderness Area, 11,000 acres of mountain woodland.



and viewing the abundant spring wildflowers.



There are opportunities for picnicking, hiking, and fishing. The Middle Saluda River runs through the park providing fishing for brook, brown and rainbow trout. There are numerous hiking trails from ½ mile to 10 miles in length. It is also an access point for the 76-mile Foothills Trail.

We have visited Jones Gap State Park several times and enjoyed hiking to a small waterfall

The park is located 6 miles off of Highway 276 near Marietta, SC. Their phone number is 864-836-3647 or you can find them on the internet. Pets are allowed on a leash.



Driving time from Aiken is approximately 2 ½ -3 hours. You can leave early in the morning and return the same evening. It would be worth a trip to Jones Gap State Park this fall. There are several other State Parks in the vicinity as well.

**Photos by Ron Brenneman**

## NEW PRODUCT BUSHNELL BACKTRACK

Bushnell Outdoor Products has just released their new "Bushnell BackTrack" to the market. This small, hand-held device marks a location and helps you navigate back whenever you're ready using GPS satellite technology. In addition to the obvious use for hiking, backpacking, camping, etc., it can also be used to get you back to your car or hotel. It can also be used as a regular digital compass.

We took a BackTrack along on a recent trip to the Adirondack Mountains of New York and it worked great. When we took a hike, we marked the location of the vehicle and throughout the hike

were able to see how far we were from the vehicle and the direction back to it. We also marked the location of our "home base" in the Adirondacks and

when we arrived back in Aiken the location was still saved in the BackTrack, indicating we were 781 miles (as the crow flies) from where we had stayed.



Several years ago my mother-in-law went to a yard sale at a large fair-ground. When she arrived early and parked, there were few vehicles there. When it was time to go home the vast parking lot was full of vehicles and she couldn't find her car. She eventually found it with help of the parking attendants, but if she had had a BackTrack it would have been much easier.

If you would like to see the BackTrack demonstrated, stop by the shop. It would make a great Christmas gift.

Adam was a gardener,  
and God who made him sees  
that half a proper gardener's work  
is done upon his knees  
*Rudyard Kipling*

## PHOTO SECTION



Adirondack Stream



New England Aster



Large White Pine

## Adirondack Mountains Trip - September 2008

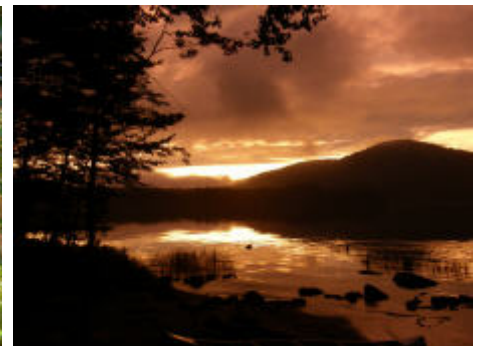
Photos by Ron Brenneman



Bear Track



Purple Pitcher Plant in Bog



Sunset on Piseco Lake

If you would like to submit photos for inclusion in future Birds & Butterflies Newsletters please send email them to [birdsbutterflies@geopolus.com](mailto:birdsbutterflies@geopolus.com). Please include a short description of the photo and your name. We can't promise to use all of them but we will try.