



Birds & Butterflies

NEWSLETTER

2009-3

117 Laurens St. NW - Aiken, SC 29801
803-649-7999

It seems like summer had just begun and now we are enjoying the cooler temperatures of fall. We have often heard from older folks that "time passes more quickly as we get older," and it certainly is true. As we are preparing this newsletter we are enjoying many of the migrating birds that are passing through our area or coming to spend the winter. In the past few days we have seen in our yard American redstart, Parula warbler, Magnolia warbler, Yellow-throated warbler and Red-eyed Vireo. We anticipate the annual winter residents that will come in the next several weeks like White-throated and Chipping sparrows and the Yellow-rumped warbler.

We hope you enjoy this issue of Birds & Butterflies Newsletter and take some time to enjoy God's magnificent creation this fall.

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

NEW DROLL YANKEES BIRD FEEDERS

The Droll Yankees Company has introduced two new types of tube feeders in the past year. The "Onyx Clever Clean" was introduced early in 2009 and the "Ring Pull" feeders have become available in September 2009. Both models offer easy cleaning and the same durable construction and lifetime warranty against squirrel damage and defective parts that you expect from Droll Yankees feeders.

Stop by and see these new feeders and accessories at Birds & Butterflies

Ponder this!!!

What this country needs is dirtier fingernails and cleaner minds.

Will Rogers



Onyx Clever Clean

- twist & release base for easy cleaning
- comfort perches that are attractive to more bird species
- feeding port construction allows unobstructed interior resulting in a fluid seed flow and easier brush cleaning
- cap detached easily for thorough cleaning

Ring Pull

- lift the cap then pull the metal rod to remove ports and feeder base in seconds
- rustproof metal parts
- polycarbonate tube



Droll Yankees also has a new "Versa Perch" that fits all their tube feeders. Rather than the traditional tray, the new metal perch lets all the seed debris and water pass through while still providing perching areas. It attaches without tools.

WHAT IS THIS A PICTURE OF?



Email your answer to us and the first individual with the correct answer will receive a \$20.00 gift certificate from Birds & Butterflies.

Bring this coupon to Birds & Butterflies and get 15% off any "Onyx Clever Clean" feeder, "Ring Pull" feeder or "Versa Perch".

Expires November 15, 2009

EASTERN SCREECH OWL – *Megascops asio*

The Eastern Screech Owl is the smallest owl that occurs in our area. It is 8 ½ - 9 inches tall. It has ear tufts that can be lowered or raised. It can be a rufous red or gray color, with the rufous color being more predominant in the southeast. Males are slightly smaller than females. They have vertical stripes on the breast with horizontal dark bars. Screech owls readily habituate to humans and can be found near homes and even in cities.

Screech owls feed on mice, insects, small birds, salamanders, crawfish, etc. In cities they can sometimes be found eating in-

sects attracted to streetlights.



Photo by Susan Dillard.

Breeding courtship begins in late January through early March. The first egg is laid early in March.

The nest is in some type of natural cavity, old woodpecker hole, or they will readily use man-made nest boxes of the proper dimensions. They lay 3-5 eggs that are incubated approximately 25-34 days. The male feeds the female while

she is sitting on the eggs. They can have both red and gray young in the same brood. Screech owls have only one brood per year. They may continue to use the same cavity or nest box for several years. They may also roost in these same places during the non-breeding season.

Most screech owls live less than 5 years but the maximum age recorded is 14 years.

People have excellent success attracting screech owls to nest boxes placed in their yard. We have cedar nest boxes available at Birds & Butterflies.

SOUTH CAROLINA PRODUCTS

Pictured below are some products sold at Birds & Butterflies that are made by South Carolina artisans. Locally made items always make nice gifts for friends and family. Stop by and see these items.

Notecards of Hitchcock Woods by Aiken's Sandra Etherington Tucker



Beautiful hand-painted gourd birdhouses and feeders by an Aiken artisan, Cass Meinardi



Handcrafted cypress bird and butterfly houses by Lexington, SC crafter



Wooden spinners made of native and exotic woods by Greenville artisan



Cedar Bluebird Nest Boxes made by Graniteville crafter



Steeplechase Track Bluebird Trail – 2009 Results

In April 2009 some of you joined us for a field trip to the Steeplechase Track Bluebird Trail at the corner of Audubon and Powderhouse Roads in Aiken. There were lots of nests, eggs and hatchlings at that time and the good success continued throughout the summer.

A record number of 101 bluebirds were fledged in 2009, 50 more than 2008. Since 2006 there have been 258 bluebirds fledged on this trail from 21 nest boxes.

Thanks to Jack Wetzel for allowing us to monitor the boxes and for buying most of the nest boxes that are in place there. In addition Sally Counts, and Glen and Gail Hendry did most of the monitoring of the boxes and their efforts are greatly appreciated.

It is gratifying to know that these efforts are helping the bluebird population in the City of Aiken.

AIKEN BLUEBIRD PROJECT – LOOKING FOR COOPERATORS

Many of you have placed eastern bluebird nest boxes in your yard and are monitoring them throughout the nesting season. We thought it would be fun and informative to begin summarizing nesting information from as many individuals as possible. Therefore, we are looking for individuals who would be interested in sharing information with us beginning in March 2010. The



information could be sent to us on hard copy or email. You can participate even if you have only one box in your yard or if chickadees, nuthatches, titmice, etc. are using your box.

Let us know if you are interested in becoming part of the "Aiken Bluebird Project." More information will be forwarded to those expressing interest. Give us a call at 803-649-7999 or email to birdflies@aol.com to let us know your intentions.

NOT ALL BIRD FEED IS THE SAME

You probably already know that there is a vast difference in the quality and price of wild bird feed, and the number of birds that it attracts. Some of the wild bird feed that is sold in big box stores, grocery stores and feed stores may seem like a bargain, but is it?

I recently purchased a 5# bag of mixed bird seed at one of our local grocery stores for \$2.19, and compared it to a 5# bag of Coles Special Feeder from Birds & Butterflies at \$10.00.

The seeds in the mixes are as follows:

Grocery Store Mix

Milo
White Proso Millet
Sunflower Seed



Grocery Store Mix - milo, millet on the left; sunflower on the right.

Coles Special Feeder

Black Oil Sunflower
Sunflower Meats
Black Striped Sunflower
Raw Peanuts
Safflower
Pecans

The seeds making up the highest proportion of the mix are listed first. The grocery store mix was made up primarily of milo and white proso millet. Milo

is not eaten by most songbirds except perhaps mourning doves, and white proso millet has limited use as well, unless it is in a ground feeder. These seeds are placed in the mix to reduce the cost and are often referred to as "filler."

I separated the sunflower seed from the rest of the mix and weighed each portion. In the 5# of seed mix only 15%, or 3/4#, was sunflower seed. The quality of the sunflower seeds was very poor, with many seeds having been infested with bugs, and the seeds were very small.

All the seeds in the Coles Special Feeder were of high quality and there was no "filler" seed in the mix.



Research has shown that birds are able to choose seeds that contain higher percentages of protein and crude fat. That is why you may see birds discarding some seeds at the feeder and eating others. That is also why many individuals report seeing more birds and a greater variety of birds at feeders when using quality seed mixes.

The protein and crude fat for the two mixes were vastly dif-

ferent:

Grocery Store Mix	Protein	Coles Special Feeder
10%		17%
4%	Crude Fat	32%

Finally, are the less expensive seed mixes really "less expensive?" If you consider the cost of the sunflower seeds in the Grocery Store Mix I purchased, the seed that is likely to be eaten by birds, it really cost \$2.75 per pound. And remember that in the mix I examined, I would estimate that 50% or more of the sunflower seeds were bad and probably would not be used by birds. The Coles Special Feeder costs \$2.00 per pound for quality seed that has no waste seed in it. In this comparison I think there is no doubt which seed mix would be a better value.

We hope this information will help you to consider the quality of the bird seed you are buying. Birds & Butterflies is not the only store that sells quality bird seed, but we think Coles seeds will compare favorably in price and quality to any on the market.

HELP WANTED

We need an individual to work part-time at Birds & Butterflies from Thanksgiving thru Christmas. It will involve working some Saturday's. Call us at 649-7999 if interested.

PHOTO SECTION



Early Morning in Hitchcock Woods



Reflection on Black Gum Pond



Dr. Harry Shealy led two tours of Hitchcock Woods on Oct. 17

Photos
by
Ron Brenneman



Gulf Frillary Caterpillar



Blue Ridge Parkway, Oct. 18, 2009 - 34° at 2:30 p.m.



Snow on Cold Mountain, Oct. 18, 2009

If you would like to submit photos for inclusion in future Birds & Butterflies Newsletters please send email them to 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.