



Nature Expert Newsletter

Winter 2019



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Hello,

2018 has come to a close and we have been taking time to prepare for the coming year.

We are grateful to have such faithful customers who share our passion for birds and for conserving their natural habitat. We cannot thank you enough for having chosen us again this year and we look forward to seeing you in



Come visit us!

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2019. The birds have also been preparing for 2019, but for a different reason: winter has arrived. In this newsletter, you will find an article on how birds survive our cold winters, as well as a description of our new products.

The Nature Expert team wishes you an excellent 2019!

Alain Goulet, owner and bird enthusiast.

How do birds survive our winters?

By Serge Beaudette



Photos below by Pierre Morin



With the cold weather we are facing, it seemed necessary for me to address the topic of winter survival. Observing birds at my feeders increased my admiration for their ability to survive the winter in such harsh conditions. Before the existence of man and the installation of feeding stations, birds were doing very well without us. But what strategies do they use? While several birds move to milder climates during the winter, these feeder warriors have established a battle plan both on the physical and behavioural fronts.

Full of resources, birds have adopted effective strategies to fight against winter constraints. Among these constraints, we think immediately of the cold, but the shorter days and the less abundant food (especially insects) are other important factors. During the winter season, diurnal birds have significantly less time to search for food, and their main source of food is a lot more scarce. Food is their fuel! They turn food into energy ... and the colder it is, the more they need to eat! In terms of feeding, there are plenty of strategies: nuthatches will hide food under the bark of trees in anticipation of winter, which gives them a reserve of food. This reserve is also available to other birds such as woodpeckers.

Do you enjoy traveling to look for birds?

Join Serge Beaudette. His trips are breathtaking. I, Alain Goulet, went on one of his trips and simply loved it.

Serge leads trips to destinations such as: Point Pelee, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Brazil, Spain, Peru, Columbia and the Galapagos islands.

You will find all his travel destinations on his website: PITPITPIT.COM

Have a nice trip! You will be in good hands.



Blue Jays on the other hand, will bury their food in the ground even if the snow cover might become too thick to retrieve it later. Blue Jays will also weigh their peanuts before carrying them off, in order to optimise energy expenditure! Chickadees will feed more quickly in winter than in summer, thus compensating for the shorter days.

Birds are, like mammals, animals that maintain quite a high body temperature. This is why many of the birds' physical reactions to cold are similar to ours. For example, you must be familiar with that shivering reaction when you're cold and standing still? It is a reflex of the body which, reacting to this critical situation, starts to activate

Binocular Exchange Canada



Binocular Exchange Canada is a project that aims to engage more people in outdoor activities and to find a use for older, but working birding equipment.

At Nature Expert, we will accept any equipment that would help a birder in an outdoor observation situation: binoculars; spotting scopes; backpacks; field guides (from anywhere in the world); cameras; tripods; ornithology textbooks; etc. Upon reception of the donation we will estimate the value of the equipment and Earthvalues will issue a charitable tax receipt, if desired.

Earthvalues Institute is the organization under which the project is run.

<http://www.earthvalues.org/en>

the muscles under our skin to produce heat. Birds of all sizes also adopt this mechanism when they are motionless on a branch. In the same way, I am convinced that you know the efficiency of human warmth. Birds have avian warmth. Some birds, such as crows, redpolls, sparrows, and Boreal and Black-capped Chickadees, gather together, only in the winter. At night, they can gather in cavities carved out by woodpeckers, or in natural cavities. On top of heat conservation, it allows them to find food more efficiently and it reduces the risk of predation.

Moreover, after the fall moult, feather production is often more abundant. Redpolls and chickadees have more than double the amount of feathers they would have in the spring and summer. This new coat allows for better insulation during cold weather. And if worse comes to worse, they have the option to "ruffle" their feathers. This method allows air to enter their plumage which is a very effective insulator. Research has also shown that the Black-capped Chickadee has the ability to reduce its body temperature during the night by 10 to 12 degrees! This fascinating phenomenon allows these birds to conserve their energy for the day, during which they work tirelessly.



A phenomenon that comes close to hibernation is known in only one species of bird. The Common Poorwill, who

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lives in the Rockies, can slow down its vital functions to a minimum for up to three months!

Once again, birds never cease to amaze me! When it is freezing outside and I don't dare step out, I look out my window at these brave and ingenious little heroes with much admiration!



New products and suggestions

Squirrel Buster Suet Feeder



For the past year, we have been testing the new Squirrel Buster suet feeder and have given our comments to Brome Bird Care. After having made a few changes to the feeder, the final model is almost ready. The feeder is designed to hold 2 suet cakes or 2 nut wheels, while keeping the food safe from squirrels. We've seen many birds at the feeder, including Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatch, American Goldfinch, Downy and Hairy Woodpecker and 2 Northern Flicker in the middle of winter! Most importantly, no squirrel has been able to access the suet in this feeder.



We are happy to finally see a squirrel-proof suet feeder that allows all types of birds to feed from it. This feeder will be available in the next few months. If this feeder interests you, you can contact us and ask to keep one aside for you when we receive them.



Suet Nuggets



These suet nuggets can be placed in a wire peanut feeder or in a tray. The nuggets are made from suet and are a high energy food source for birds. We have three kinds in stock: peanut, sunflower, and one with peanuts and raisins specifically designed for woodpeckers.

Viato Backpack



The Viato backpack is an ideal tool for transporting a

spotting scope (or camera) and tripod. It is discreet and very comfortable.



It is well made and solid. Since it is permanently attached to the upper part of the tripod's legs, you'll never have to place your backpack directly on a muddy or wet surface.



You can place everything you need for your birding outing inside the backpack: binoculars, books, lunch, water bottle, etc. By filling up the pocket, you'll also stabilize your tripod and spotting scope.

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