

Nature Expert Newsletter

Winter 2020



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Harlequin Duck. Photo by Michel Bordeleau

Hello,

2019 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 2020. The birds have also been preparing for the winter of 2020, but they could use our help. In this newsletter, you will read about how we can better protect birds according to several experts in the field.

The Nature Expert team wishes you an excellent 2020!



Come visit us!

5120 rue de Bellechasse
Montréal QC
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Opening Hours :

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Closed

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9:30am to 6:00pm

Thursday- Friday

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Saturday

9:30am to 5:00pm

Online Store Open 24/7

Do you enjoy traveling to look

***Alain and Dara Goulet,
owners and bird
enthusiasts.***

New Year's resolutions: for the birds!

By Alyssa DeRubeis, MSc



We have contacted all the large conservation agencies and several experts in the birding world to get their opinion on the best habits that we can implement in order to help birds in 2020. From their input, here's our comprehensive list on how to make your New Year's resolutions for the birds!

1. Be bird-conscious in your consumption. Our actions directly impact birds. Studies have shown that climate change *is* affecting numerous species in negative ways. So curbing your carbon dioxide and methane emissions (found in car exhaust, beef production, and food waste) will make a positive difference for birds. Also watch out for

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, Argentina, 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.

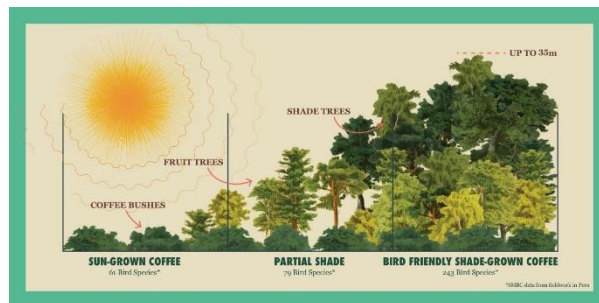


Binocular Exchange Canada

plastic, as it finds its way to the ocean and kills seabirds that ingest it. Consult the World Wildlife Federation's ten tips to reduce your plastic footprint

(<https://www.wwf.org.uk/updates/ten-tips-reduce-your-plastic-footprint>).

Also, many of our neotropical migratory songbirds overwinter in coffee plantations. However only a minority of coffee plantations are *shade-grown*, meaning that they provide more trees and habitat for these birds. Look for the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center's certified bird-friendly logo on coffee bags.



Images obtained from the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center.

2. Make windows safe. Clear windows may look nice, but birds will try to fly through them. And migrating birds



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>

Earthvalues



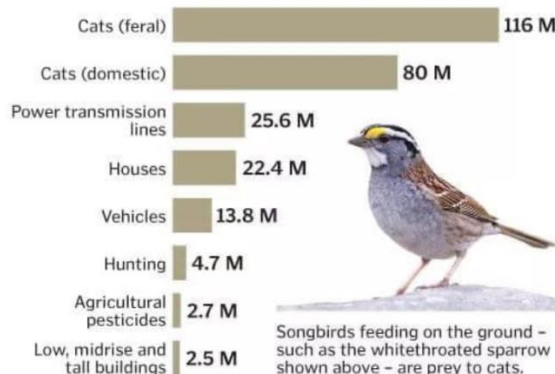
following constellations at night are attracted to city buildings' lights. Consequently, many migrating birds die by window strike. Support Audubon's Lights Out Program (<https://www.audubon.org/conservation/project/lights-out#>) and make your own windows reflective with shiny tape or window decals.

And be sure that your bird feeders are either less than 0.9 meters (3 feet) or greater than 3 meters (10 feet) from windows; that way the likelihood of birds injuring or killing themselves via window collision is minimized.

3. Keep cats indoors. Free-roaming cats, and even well-fed felines with a noisy bell collar, will still predate and are a cause of stress for birds. It is the greatest cause of bird mortality in Canada (after habitat loss).

Bird deaths in Canada

The top causes of bird deaths in Canada each year, with estimated annual death toll, in millions:



Source: Environment Canada

DENNIS LEUNG/OTTAWA CITIZEN

Alternative options for giving your cat fresh air include leash-training, offering a variety of indoor toys, and creating confined outdoor spaces called catios. We understand very well that many cats currently go outside regularly and it would be very difficult to change their habit. We would therefore encourage everyone that is considering getting a cat to make it an indoor cat.



4. Participate in citizen science. While scientists know a thing or two about birds, there are still many questions left unanswered! Where do birds live throughout the seasons, and how does it change over time? You can help shorten this knowledge gap by submitting bird observations to databases like eBird and iNaturalist, or by participating in events like the [Great Backyard Bird Count in February](#) and [Christmas Bird Count](#).

5. Inspire kids to watch birds. We need to ensure that birds are protected now *and* in the future, and by encouraging children to respect birds now, they are more likely to care about birds in the future. There are many ways to promote bird-watching in our next generation: getting a bird feeder, going on a bird hike, visiting a zoo, reading a field guide, or watching nest cameras online. We suggest keeping tabs on Montreal's Peregrine Falcon nest camera, which features a nest box donated by Nature Expert: <http://ornithologie.ca/faucons/>.



6. Use native plants on your property. Studies have shown that native trees, shrubs, and grasses are more nutritious and support more insect food for birds over non-native plants. Check out Audubon's Native Plant Database to see our region's native plant species (<https://www.audubon.org/native-plants#>). FYI, traditional lawn grasses are *not* native, and constant mowing offers little protective cover.

7. Appreciate your local birds. We often find ourselves too busy to enjoy the great outdoors, but research has shown that time spent outside is good for our mental health. Additionally, investigating your local park or paging through a field guide will maintain your interest in birds. Is your favourite natural area protected? If not, consider what the options are to protect it (i.e. conservation easement).

8. Donate to wildlife and bird conservation organizations. Habitat loss and degradation are identified as the primary threats to wildlife globally. One way to help reverse this trend is to buy a Canadian Wildlife Habitat

Conservation Stamp. Since 1984, over \$50,000,000 has been raised through these stamps and has funded numerous wildlife habitat and restoration projects.



Other great bird conservation organizations include:

Birds Canada

Bird Protection Quebec

Regroupement Québec Oiseaux

Fondation de la faune du Québec

The Nature Conservancy

Canadian Wildlife Federation

Ducks Unlimited

Nature Quebec

Tadoussac Bird Observatory

McGill Bird Observatory

and many others.

Important: Conservation organizations that protect bird habitats will usually have the greatest positive impact on bird populations.

9. Eliminate pesticide use. One recent study found that White-throated Sparrows lose weight after eating pesticide-laden seed. Pesticides are especially dangerous for migrating birds because they require large fat reserves for their long journey. Look for eco-friendly alternatives to pesticides and remember that native plants can better defend themselves from native insects and diseases than exotic plants can!

10. Provide birds with food and water. Bird feeders can act as a critical food source for birds in urban settings, where native plants (and their insects) have been removed. Some studies have even demonstrated that reproductive success is higher for Black-capped Chickadees that nest in an area that has bird feeders! Climate change trajectories have predicted drought conditions throughout much of the world, so having water available to birds can also help birds in trying times.

However, feeders can be dangerous for birds if feeders become disease hubs. To reduce the risk of disease transmission, we strongly encourage that feeders and baths are cleaned with a 10% bleach or vinegar solution at least once a season.

Our team at Nature Expert are happy to discuss food and water options according to your specific needs!



We would love to hear about your conservation stories throughout the year. We often hear about bird populations doing poorly, but your uplifting experiences will inspire us and other customers!

New products and suggestions

Swedish dish cloth



This new product has been flying off the shelves! The reusable Swedish dish cloth is an eco-friendly alternative to paper towels. Your kitchen will love the added colour from cardinals and Blue Jays.

One cloth will replace 15 rolls of paper towels and can be used up to 9 to 12 months.

Can be washed up to 200 times in the washer or in the top rack of the dishwasher.

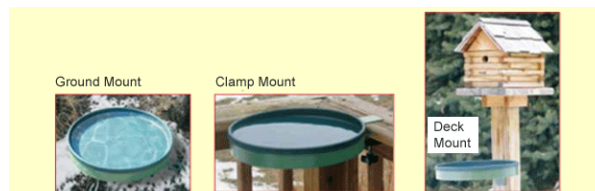
They come in packs of two.

Audubon plush toys



These adorable plush toys will bring birdsong to your home on a quiet winter day. We offer a wide variety of species, from loons and woodpeckers to hummingbirds and orioles.

Three-in-one heated birdbath



Unsure where to place your bird bath? Now you have *three* choices to try! This 35-cm diameter heated bird bath includes a clamp that can attach to vertical surfaces in two ways (post or deck), or you can place it on the ground with its stand.

Hot pepper suet



Tired of squirrels devouring all your suet? Here's your solution! The spicy flavour is not detected by birds, but squirrels hate the taste.

Important note: Hot pepper seeds are harmful to bird and squirrels because the hot pepper is usually applied in a powdery form and can therefore get in the squirrels' and birds' eyes. The hot pepper found in our suet is added in an oily form and does not get into the air when birds eat it.

Happy New Year!

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