



Nature Expert Newsletter

Fall 2021



Northern Cardinal, Photo by Michel Bordeleau

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Hello,

Fall is a great time to put up bird feeders to attract birds close to home and keep them throughout the winter months. Birds feeders and heated bird baths are two tools that will put the odds in your favour.



Come visit us!

5120 rue de Bellechasse
Montréal QC
H1T 2A4

Opening Hours :

Sunday - Monday

Closed

Tuesday - Wednesday

9:30am to 6:00pm

Thursday- Friday

9:30am to 7:00pm

Saturday

9:30am to 5:00pm

Online Store Open 24/7

In this newsletter, you'll find information on new kinds of food that birds will love, and squirrels will leave alone. You will also have information on the Grand Défi QuébecOiseaux and a unique way to reduce bird predation by cats.

Happy birding,

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



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, Argentina,
Ecuador, Brazil, Spain,
Peru, Columbia and
the Galapagos islands.

You will find all his
travel destinations on
his
website: PITPITPIT.CO
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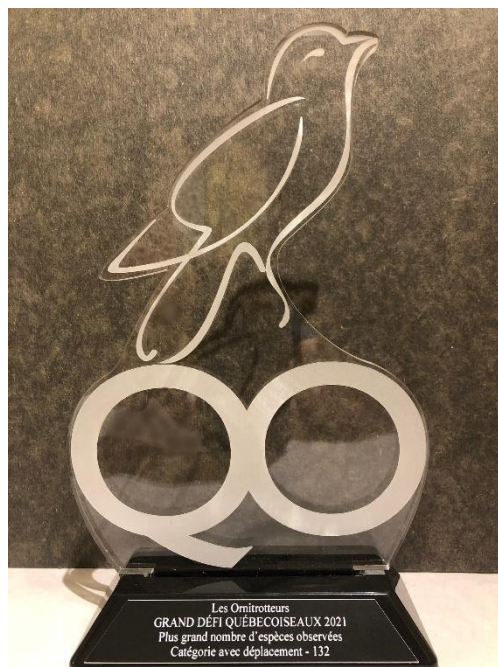
Have a nice trip! You
will be in good hands.



Grand Défi QuébecOiseaux



The ornitrotteurs team had their Grand Défi QuébecOiseaux (a 24-hour of birding) on mai 23rd. We had a few restrictions due to Covid regulations such as a curfew but we did manage to observe 132 bird species in 24 hours. More importantly, we were able to raise \$5414 that will go towards bird conservation and research. We would like to thank all the generous donors who faithfully supported us and the cause again this year. Funds will be split equally between Regroupement QuébecOiseaux and the Rimouski Bird Observatory.



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>

Earthvalues



Luna Moth Cocoons



Photo: Jacques Tonnancour

The Luna Moth (*Actias luna*) is one of the largest and most beautiful moths in Quebec. It is recognized by its jade green wings (7 to 11.5 cm in length) and by the extension of its hind wings. According to a recent study, these growths are used to outwit predators, such as bats, which use echolocation. Indeed, the movement of these "tails" creates an acoustic diversion that can lure the attack of those predators away from the abdomen. The presence of these "tails" can reduce predation by bats by 47%.

In June 2022, you will be able to purchase Luna moth cocoons at Nature Expert. We will have kits made up of five cocoons and a cage to accommodate the moths. This will be a wonderful activity for the whole family. You will then have a front row seat to observe the emergence and flight of this magnificent moth. You can then release them or breed them.

If this activity is of interest, you can reserve your cocoon kit today!



Photo: René Limoge

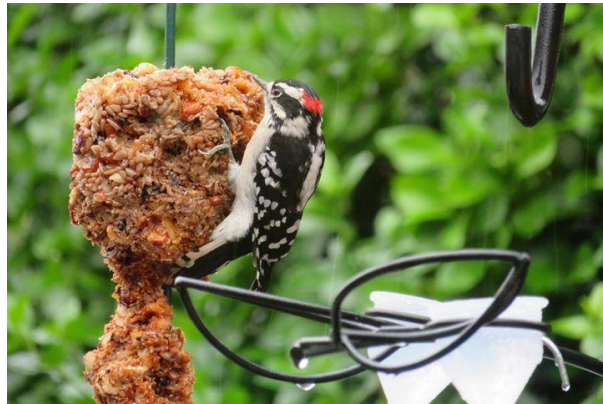
Nut cylinders with hot peppers

We now offer nut cylinders with hot pepper. These are made up of almost a kilogram of different seeds, nuts, and mealworms. These items are not fat based and will not melt in the hot sun. They can therefore be used year-round. Their large size allows them to last for several weeks, reducing the frequency of re-filling the feeder.

These nut cylinders contain capsaicin, an active compound in hot peppers. The presence of this compound keeps squirrels away. This is because capsaicin is an irritant to mammals, such as squirrels, while in birds this substance does not trigger the production of molecules responsible for the irritation. Birds can therefore feed on the cylinders safely and without any discomfort.

A study published in Nature in the early 2000s suggests that plants containing capsaicin discourage mammals because they disperse seeds less efficiently than birds.

Hot pepper nut cylinders and suet are safe for birds. However, we do not recommend hot pepper seed mixes as they often contain chili or hot pepper powder, which is volatile and can come in contact with squirrels' and birds' eyes and cause painful irritation.



References :

Clark, L., Hagelin, J., & Werner, S. (2015). The chemical senses in birds. *Sturkie's avian physiology*, 89-111.

Tewksbury, J. J., & Nabhan, G. P. (2001). Directed deterrence by capsaicin in chillies. *Nature*, 412(6845), 403-404.

Golden safflower bells

Another product has been added to the shelves of Nature Expert! Golden safflower bells. These bells are made from a new variety of safflower seeds developed by researchers at Safflower Technologies International (STI) and the University of Montana. The STI claims that these seeds do not contain GMOs (genetically modified organisms).

The "golden" safflower owes its name to the color of its shell, which is brownish. It is 40% thinner than that of conventional safflower shell, making the seeds easier for birds to open and, most importantly, less debris around the feeder.

Golden safflower seeds contain 15% more oil, 25% more protein, and 30% more fat (and therefore energy) than conventional safflower. In addition, according to the STI, preliminary results indicate that golden safflower attracts twice as many birds as traditional safflower. Finally, blackbirds, starlings and squirrels are less fond of golden safflower.



Cat collars

Considered one of the 100 most harmful invasive alien species (IAS) in the world, the domestic cat (*Felis catus*) is a serious threat to biodiversity. In 2015, an American study identified predation by domestic cats as the greatest anthropogenic threat to passerines in North America. For more details on this issue, see an article previously published in this newsletter: [Nature Expert Newsletter Winter 2010](#)

In the context where the numbers of several families of birds are in decline, this is a serious ecological issue. You can now act directly on it by purchasing a Birdsbesafe® multicolored fabric cat collar at our store.

A British study published in 2019, showed that these cat collars reduce the number of birds caught by 78%. The same study recalls that cat bells are not effective in reducing predation, due to cats being able to adjust their behavior to avoid ringing the bell. It is better to reveal the presence of the cat by a visual signal rather than a sound signal. In fact, the eyes of passerines are particularly suitable for spotting bright colors since they have additional light receptors (cones and rods) in their retina. A fourth type of cone accentuates vivid colors and field of vision, while additional rods increase vision at dawn and dusk.

To maximize the effectiveness of your collar, choose one whose colors contrast with the surroundings. Thus, the 2015 American study recommends avoiding frills made of orange, yellow and red in the fall since they would then be less visible. Also, to prevent it getting stuck and the cat being trapped, the collar is equipped with a quick release mechanism that detaches the collar.



References :

- Article in QuébecOiseaux magazine, august, 2021.
- Willson, S. K., Okunlola, I. A., & Novak, J. A. (2015). Birds be safe: can a novel cat collar reduce avian mortality by domestic cats (*Felis catus*)?. *Global Ecology and Conservation*, 3, 359-366.
- Pemberton, C., & Ruxton, G. D. (2020). Birdsbeseafe® collar cover reduces bird predation by domestic cats (*Felis catus*). *Journal of Zoology*, 310(2), 106-109.

New products and suggestions

Nut Cylinder with Hot Pepper



What makes this product special is the formula; sunflower hearts, peanuts, golden safflower, and mealworms with enough hot “kick” to foil the squirrels.

Large size means it will last for days and days, no more running out to refill the feeders constantly.

No waste, no mess, never melt. Attracts birds much more quickly than suet and without the problem of melting in the summer heat. Great for year-round bird feeding.

Golden Safflower Bell



These bells contain 100% golden safflower. Excellent for squirrel prone areas, as squirrels generally don't like safflower.

The seed is preferred by cardinals, grosbeaks, House Finch and more, while grackles, sparrows and starlings generally don't like safflower.

No waste, no mess, never melt. Great for year-round bird feeding with low maintenance.

The Birdie Bell



The Birdie Bell is a versatile and easy way to provide just the things your birds need at the right time of year.

Will hold seed bells, fruit (orange halves, apple slices), nesting material, and suet.

Bring more birds into your yard by refilling your Birdie Bell with nesting material during the spring and early summer. Perfect for Bluebirds, Robins, Orioles, Finches, Wrens, and Chickadees over 50 species of North American birds.

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