

August 2026 Newsletter



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Upcoming Events:

August
6th-17th

FINCH FRENZY! 15% Off All Finch Feeders!

In-store at WBU Woodbury and at
www.myWBU.com/Woodbury (use code FINCH15)

Late summer is the perfect time to invite finches of all kinds to visit our feeders. American Goldfinches are late-nesters and must find an abundance of seeds to feed their young. Other finches, like the House Finch, are highly active seed eaters and are out showing their young where to find good food sources. Now is a great time to upgrade or pick out a new feeder to help draw these finches into your yard!

August
8th & 9th

POLLINATOR CELEBRATION Maiden Rock, Wisconsin - American Legion FREE events from 10am – 5pm each day

LONG LIVE THE POLLINATORS!

WBU Woodbury is a proud sponsoring partner of the Pollinator Celebration hosted by the Cooper Hansen Habitat Initiative.

Honey tasting, native plant sale, a moth & butterfly experience, “attracting hummingbirds to your garden,” live music, and a keynote presentation by Heather Holm are just some of the wonderful events taking place throughout the weekend.

Please visit www.CooperHansen.com for more details

What to Watch for This Month in Nature:

- Fall migration underway for several bird species heading south:
 - Purple Martins
 - Baltimore Orioles
 - House Wrens
 - Indigo Buntings
 - Several species of waterfowl
 - Tennessee, Magnolia, and Blackburnian Warblers
 - Field Sparrows
 - Broad-winged Hawks

Some of these species may be completely south of Minnesota by the end of the month

- Hummingbird activity picking up with migrants that nested in Canada returning south. With hummingbird's territorial behavior waning, watch for multiple hummers at a time visiting your feeders, which is less common during breeding season
- Some trees such as Sumac and Red Maple are beginning to redden
- Monarch Butterflies starting their migration south to Mexico for the winter
- Goldenrods and Mullein blooming

August can offer some of the best hummingbird activity of the year in Minnesota! Hummingbirds are notoriously territorial with their favorite meal sites - even a male and female pair that mated together will not typically share food sources. Once breeding season wraps up, the hummingbirds become more tolerant of each other and some yards will see multiple hummers at their feeders at a time. Hummingbirds “imprint” on good food sources and often return to the exact same yards each year (*amazing!*). Keep your hummingbird feeders out, clean, and full of fresh nectar so you can catch many of the newly hatched hummers recently born in Canada as they move south. Set the birds up for success as they embark on their 2,000+ mile migration and set yourself up for increased hummingbird traffic next year! **We recommend keeping hummingbird feeders full for at least (2) weeks after the last known hummingbird activity in your yard**, usually in September or October.

Bird of the Month:

American Goldfinch

There are three goldfinch species across North America - Lesser Goldfinch, Lawrence's Goldfinch, and the American Goldfinch. Minnesota and Wisconsin are home to just one of these species, the American Goldfinch, which we will touch on as our August Bird of the Month!

Goldfinches are year-round residents in our area, but they don't necessarily stay put all year. Goldfinches are known to be nomadic birds, often traveling several miles throughout the day in search of food sources. It's not uncommon for some yards to have lots of goldfinch activity one day, then no goldfinches for a stretch of time, only to have them show back up in large numbers without warning. This is often *not* a result of the person doing something "wrong" with their yard or feeders, it's just part of how the goldfinches operate!

Most of our backyard birds shed (molt) their feathers once a year towards the end of summer. American Goldfinches molt twice a year, late-summer and late-winter. In summer the goldfinches are a vibrant bright yellow that's difficult to miss, with the males having a black cap on their head that the females lack. For their winter plumage the male and female goldfinches both turn a drabber olive-yellow color, with the males and females looking nearly identical.



The change into their brighter plumage doesn't happen overnight, but you can see signs of it as early as January or February in most cases. Look for a few bright yellow body feathers to begin showing first, along with the black cap feathers on the males as they start to slowly emerge. This molting requires a *lot* of nutrients, so keep your finch feeders clean, full of fresh seeds, and available year-round as a great way to help the goldfinches in your area.

In addition to changing the color in their feathers for the winter, the goldfinches also change the coloring in their feet, legs, and bills. In the winter those body parts will be a more subtle grey-brown, then returning to a much brighter yellow-orange coloration for summertime.



Goldfinches have a unique diet compared to most of our other backyard birds. Most adult birds that prefer eating seeds and nuts themselves will feed their babies mostly insects while they're still in the nest, but not the American Goldfinch! They eat exclusively seeds, and they feed their nestlings exclusively seeds. Because of this, goldfinches breed later in the year than nearly any other bird in North America, ensuring that seed supply will be plentiful enough to feed their young.

In addition to needing abundant seed supply to feed their nestlings, goldfinches also rely on the down from thistle and other plants to line their nest. The male and female will choose a nest site together, but the female will handle all of the construction duties. She can weave the nest so tightly that it can temporarily hold water!

Brown-headed Cowbirds are local "parasitic" birds that will lay their eggs in the nest of other species, leaving the host parents to feed and raise their young. Because of the strict vegetarian nature of the goldfinches, most Brown-headed Cowbird babies will not survive in a goldfinch nest more than a few days due to the lack of insects in their diet.

American Goldfinches are beloved feeder visitors for so many of us, bringing a wonderful addition of color, movement, and song to our backyards all year long!