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# The Chat

Lakeland Audubon Society

May 2020

## No May Meeting But the Birds are Migrating Back!

We hope you and your families are safe and healthy during these unprecedented times. Our meetings, unfortunately, have been canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic until further notice.

Hopefully, you'll have more time to enjoy the returning birds, some of which nest here and others which stop for a few days to rest and feed before flying further north. The orioles are back, so it's time to put out oranges and jelly to welcome them. Hummingbirds have also arrived and are visiting feeders throughout the area. See the recipe for hummingbird nectar on the next page.

Warblers, often called the "butterflies of the bird world" because of their gorgeous colors can also be seen and are the highlight of spring birding for many. Birding by ear is an excellent and challenging option for identifying warblers and other birds hidden in vegetation or poor lighting. Wayne Rohde's fourth article on warbler vocalizations on page three is a must-read to help you in this endeavor.

There are also many online sources of information on birds and bird-watching:

### **Ray Brown's Talkin' Birds**

A radio show about birds and conservation. Talkin' Birds is a live and interactive radio show about wild birds and the beauty of nature. The radio show is broadcast in a few eastern states, but we here in Wisconsin can check out their website: [talkinbirds.com](http://talkinbirds.com) There you'll find many fascinating bird-related videos.

### **Lake Geneva Avian Committee's Online World Migratory Bird Day Celebration**

The celebration is happening on their facebook page through the end of the month. Here's a link to the page: [Lake Geneva Bird City/Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/lakegenesabirdcity/) The page includes photos, videos and book suggestions.

### **BirdNote**

BirdNote transports listeners out of the daily grind and into the natural world. The stories told are rich in sound, imagery, and information, connecting our lives to the ways and needs of birds. BirdNote inspires listeners to care about the natural world — and take steps to protect it. BirdNote shows are aired on public radio stations around the country every day and can be found online at any time. See their website at: [birdnote.org](http://birdnote.org)

## A Hummingbird Garden

Plant a garden of native nectar plants for your yard to supplement the nectar you provide in your feeder. Native plants usually offer more nectar than do non-native plants. Some hummingbird favorites are Blazing Stars (*Liatris* species), Wild Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), Orange Jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*), Blue Phlox (*Phlox divaricata*) and the native Turk's Cap Lily (*Lilium michiganense* or *L. superbum*). Hummingbird plants are the best option if you are unable to clean feeders as often as recommended below.

Hummingbird Nectar Recipe

Please make your own hummingbird nectar

4 Cups of Boiled Water

1 Cup White Granulated Sugar

**Do not** use raw or organic sugar, it contains iron

Bring water to a boil, remove from heat, add sugar, stir very well & let cool.

**DO NOT** use **RED DYE**, or store bought nectar. Please clean every 1-3 days. **Do not add anything else.**



### Important Hummingbird Information

On hot or cold days, to maintain feeders, fill with less, more often.

70°-84°F (21°-28°C)....Clean every 3 days

85°-87°F (29°-30°C)....Clean every 2 days

88°-99°F (31°-37°C)....Clean every single day

Nectar can be stored in the refrigerator for up to one week.

**IMPORTANT:** **Never** let your feeder become cloudy or moldy, bacteria and mold will kill. Always keep clean.

Problem with Ants: Use an ant moat filled with water only.

**Never** use Vaseline or oil based products on or around the feeder, ground or hooks.

Feeding hummingbirds is a big responsibility. If you don't have time to keep your feeders clean and fresh, just plant flowers.

Hummingbird safety is always the first priority.

If you find an injured bird find a local rehabber here:

[Animalhelpnow.com](http://Animalhelpnow.com)

 The Hummingbird Whisperer

## Warbler Vocalizations (Part 4) By: Wayne Rohde

I'm penning this article, the fourth and final one in the series about warbler vocalizations, in early May while listening to the pleasing songs of White-crowned Sparrows right outside my door. And as you might suspect, several warblers have already arrived in southern Wisconsin even as they continue to work their way north, singing as they travel.

The warbler "parade" began in April with Yellow-rumped Warblers, followed by Palm Warblers. Shortly thereafter Yellow Warblers and Common Yellowthroats appeared in their usual summer habitats. As of today, I've also seen and heard Black-and-white, Black-throated Green, Nashville, Orange-crowned and Wilson's Warblers, as well as American Redstarts, Ovenbirds, Northern Parulas and Northern Waterthrushes. Nearly every outing yields another warbler species, and I hope to find 31 (or more!) species by the end of the month: *a warbler a day for the month of May!*

As for our consideration of the songs of warblers, there's only a handful which remain to be covered, and all of them are in what I call "the Redstart complex."

The variation in the songs of American Redstarts makes them a challenge to identify by ear. Adding to this challenge is the fact that several other warblers (e.g., Black-and-white Warbler, Yellow and Chestnut-sided Warblers, and Magnolia and Hooded Warblers) can sound at least somewhat similar.

The Black-and-white Warbler sings a moderately-paced, two-syllable "Wee-see, wee-see, wee-see, wee-see, wee-see" series of notes, reminiscent of the sound of a spinning squeaky wheel on a wheelbarrow. This leads some to render it, "Grease me, grease me, grease me, grease me, grease me, grease me."

The Yellow Warbler's song is more complex, as is that of the Chestnut-sided Warbler. The former sings a cheery, "Sweet, sweet, sweet, I am so sweet!" – with an upslurred ending; the latter, "Pleased, pleased, pleased to MEET-cha!" – with an emphatic and downslurred ending. But be careful: warblers don't always obey the rules; there's overlap in the songs of these two species, and one can sound very much like the other.

The Magnolia Warbler's song is very fast-paced and short – even abrupt: "Weeta, weeta, weeto." Although the short version of Hooded Warbler's song can approximate that of the Magnolia's song, it generally sings a louder, slower-paced and longer song, with a unique emphasis: "Wee-ta, wee-ta, wee-TEE-oh" – with the "TEE" accented and higher-pitched than the rest of its song.

And this brings us to the centerpiece of "the Redstart complex" – namely the American Redstart. Its song tends to be shorter, faster-paced and snappier than that of the Black-and-white Warbler, and often ends with an accented and "sneezey" lower note with a raspy or burry quality: "See, see, see, zip!" or "See-ya, see-ya, see-ya, zip!"



How are *you* faring at birding by ear this spring?

Wetlands, grasslands and woodlands are already ringing with the music of the birds: the gentle, soothing trilling of Yellow-rumped Warblers, the nervous, energetic "Dear me, dear me!" of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, and the clear, whistled, "Pure, Sweet Canada, Canada, Canada" of White-throated Sparrows. Whether you're hoping to locate a Canada Warbler with its "Jack-in-a-box!" jumble of explosive notes (much like the quality of the White-eyed Vireo) or longing to find the elusive Connecticut Warbler with its "I WANT to get some ICE cream with a CHERry on the TOP!" squeaky, singsongy rhythm of a tune, there's still plenty of time to get out, and to listen and learn before the symphony fades in late July, and the curtain goes down on yet another season of bird song.

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## Bird Walks

**May 23: Kishwauketo Nature Conservancy**  
8:00-10:00 AM  
251 Elkhorn Rd (Hwy 67 And Stark St),  
Williams Bay, WI  
Meet across the street from the Field House.

**May 30: Turner Tract - Hackmatack NWR**  
8:00-10:00 AM  
Half mile north of Genoa City, WI on the west  
side of County Highway H.  
Look for the brown and white sign.



A Ruff was photographed in a flooded field on April 24  
(Walworth County, WI) By Wayne Rohde

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