

# Wild Bird Chalet

*Bringing you the freshest, highest quality seed available & feeders to last a lifetime.*

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue N° 2 — Spring 2007

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## Around The Chalet

*The Wild Bird Chalet customers are great people with diverse backgrounds and many interesting stories to tell.*

**Thank You:**

These first six months of new business ownership have been flown by. I've had the privilege of meeting many devoted bird and wildlife lovers. Your visits have made running the Wild Bird Chalet a pleasure as well as an education.

Some of you go about your business, quietly creating habitat and feeding all of your wild visitors. Others work tirelessly writing articles and letters to keep the rest of us informed.

A heartfelt thanks to those of you that have generously supported the Chalet. It is deeply appreciated.

**Bird Visitors:**

We have a Cooper's Hawk that likes to visit and pick up a meal whenever possible. A Merlin was also seen in January.

Cedar Waxwings fed on hawthorn berries in November. Other sightings include a White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Juncos, Black-capped Chickadees, House Finches, and a plethora of Goldfinches. I even got to usher a Song Sparrow from inside the building. It's encouraging to know that a tiny island of food, water and shelter can be a sanctuary for so many.

**Coupon:**

Look in the "Best of Bellingham" coupon book for \$10 off a purchase of \$50 or more. April's coupon book will feature a Pileated Woodpecker photo taken by our own local bird lover, Harold Bays. Every time I look at the photo, it makes me feel good. The bird is absolutely stunning!

**Dog & Cat Products:**

Don't forget your cat and dog when buying bird food. We now carry a limited supply of healthy cat and dog food, treats, and toys. Our kitty catnip cigars will make your cat completely forget those birds she would like to catch.

**Indoor Bird Food:**

We've received so many requests for indoor bird food that we decided to bring

in a couple varieties of Zupreem brand natural food.

**From Afar:**

A second story apartment dweller from Anchorage, Alaska said that two brave little chickadees on a Chalet window feeder brought incredible delight to the cold, gray days of winter.

**Hours:**

Store hours are Monday through Friday 11-5 and Saturday 10-4. Come visit us; check out our new items and tell us what is happening at your place.

—Valeri Wade



To see our newsletter online, visit our website at [www.WildBirdChalet.com](http://www.WildBirdChalet.com)

# Buy Local-Keep our economy strong

*All of our dollars that support local businesses help keep our area clean, green, and friendly to wildlife - the kind of place we all like to live.*

## What Kind of Feeder?



Birds will tell you what kind of feeder and seed they like. First look at the size of the birds that you want to feed - they need room to perch if they are not able to cling. Next notice at what height they tend to spend most of their time - ground versus 4-10'. Also look at beak shape.

Tube shaped feeders are the most common types. They offer the seed some protection from wind and rain and limit the size of bird who can perch to eat. Trays can be added to most, for seed catching and room for larger birds.

Tray feeders are open platforms that allow any size bird to perch. They also provide a large seating area for squirrels. Ground tray feeders keep seed clean.

Other types of feeders include globe, window, hummingbird, butterfly, oriole, squirrel, squirrel-proof, Nyjer, and suet.

Come in and we'll be happy to help you find the perfect feeder for your situation.

## Bird Houses



If you have not already put up nesting boxes, now is the time to do it.

With decreasing habitat, birds often face heavy competition for nesting sites and sometimes settle for unsafe locations.

Different birds need different size houses with different size entrances. Some nest boxes should go in woodlands, like a flicker box, while chickadee boxes can also be placed at the edge of the woods.

Identify birds that already visit your area, then choose a nesting box that is vented and opens easily for quick cleaning.

To help the nest builders, you can provide materials such as cotton, wool, clean feathers, and moss (no dryer lint though). Many generations of birds will visit a yard with consistent food, water, and nesting areas.

We now have barn owl boxes and nesting boxes exclusively for swallows, with diamond shaped holes.

## Berry Nutty Buffet



Loaded with seeds, nuts, and fruit, this mix is designed to draw birds that aren't the usual birds at your feeders, such as Waxwings, Towhees, Varied Thrushes and Robins.

Pine Siskins have been seen arguing (and winning) with Evening Grosbeaks over who will get to eat the feed. Jays will carry away several peanuts plus half a walnut piece. Spotted Towhees and Chestnut-backed Chickadees grab peanuts and black oil sunflower seeds.

Berry Nutty Buffet works best in a tray feeder where bigger birds can perch and enjoy themselves. This is a complete blend that does not need to be mixed with any other seed. All the contents are safe for human consumption and it really does smell good enough to eat.

We put out just enough in the feeder to last through the day, and because these are larger pieces of food, the tray stays relatively clean.

# Anna's Hummingbird

November 27th, 2006, Above Lake Whatcom

Photo courtesy of Jim Williams

By Valeri Wade, with the help of local hummingbird experts.

So tiny, so fast; they look delicate, yet they are so tough. They enchant us with their beauty and trust. They will come within inches of us, perhaps land on our finger. Even the most ardent hummingbird enthusiast may be struck speechless.

Hummingbirds are creatures of contrast. Relative to their size, they have the largest heart of any bird. It beats 1220 times a minute while flying, yet in extremely cold temperatures can slow to 50 beats per minute. They weigh less than a nickel, but will fiercely defend their territory from birds much larger than they are.

Anna's Hummingbirds can consume half their weight in sugar each day, especially in the cold of winter. Anna's also eat more insects than any other North American hummingbird. Spiders and insects provide the protein necessary to get them through the night and nectar offers quick bursts of energy.

Over-wintering Anna's Hummingbirds have shown up on the Bellingham Christmas bird counts since 1975, though

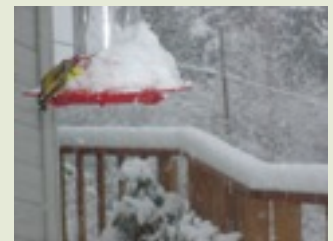
it's fairly certain they've been here since 1965. The numbers jumped in 2006, with a record 13 known sightings, up from one sighting the previous year. More data will need to be gathered before we are sure that Anna's numbers are on the rise in the Bellingham area. Seattle and Victoria, with their milder winter temperatures, have reported a definite increase in numbers of Anna's Hummingbirds.

Our Thanksgiving snowfall stimulated creative feeding solutions. Some people switched thawed feeders with frozen ones every couple of hours. Several people saw Anna's appear within minutes of a fresh feeder being put out. Others put out heat lamps, and one person placed her feeder on a heating pad on top of a stool. Anna's accepted these changes and rewarded enthusiasts with close up views (and even some photos).

One way to encourage Anna's to stay around is to increase habitat by planting flowering shrubs that produce nectar. Red Flowering Currant (*Ribes sanguineum*) for dry areas and Black Twinberry (*Lonicera involucrata*) for wet areas are two native plants loved by hummingbirds. There are many other native and ornamental shrubs

that will attract hummingbirds while adding beauty to your yard.

If you would like the chance to have hummingbird babies in your yard, provide a shrubby area to build a nest, such as in a mock orange, with nearby nesting material, perhaps from willows going to seed. Anna's also want a nearby food source. They nest early, so try putting your feeder out in late February or early March (or keep it up all year).



Anna's hummingbird, a daily visitor.

Photo courtesy of Joan Bird

**Buy a hummingbird feeder during the month of March, mention this article and get a free hummingbird and flower identification poster.**

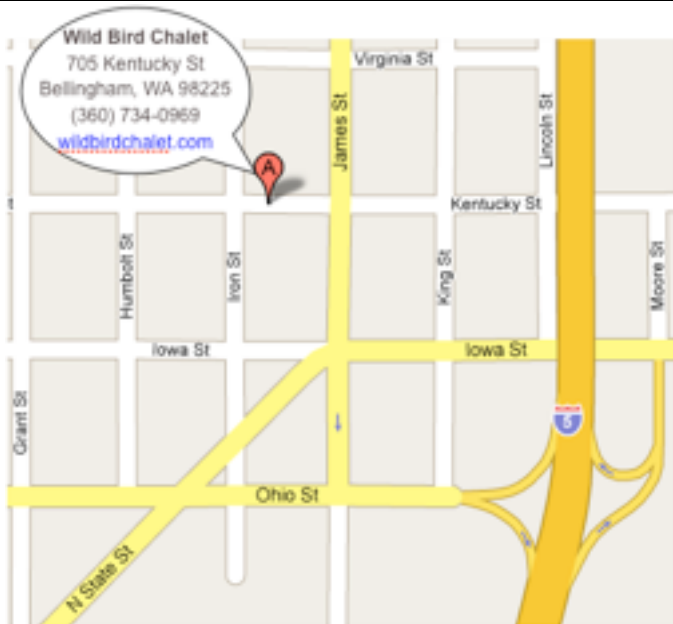
Please share Anna's sightings with George Heleker, who is informally collecting data: [earthman1950@comcast.net](mailto:earthman1950@comcast.net)

# Encourage Predators & Pollinators

*Control rodent and insect populations naturally. Adult Barn Owls can eat a rat per night. Bats can eat the equivalent of one mosquito every six seconds. Cold-hardy native Orchard Mason Bees start pollinating early when our first fruit and berry blossoms are opening. Provide homes for nature's helpers with one of these homes.*



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