



## Wild Bird Center of Boulder

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# “Boulder Backyards”



Your Backyard Bird Feeding and Bird Watching Experts

February 2008



## Ask Steve

**Q: I have at least 20 robins in my yard. Are they supposed to be here now?**

A: Yes, we always have robins along the Front Range Corridor year-round. Some winters, however, we have more than others depending on how severe the winter is and how much food (i.e. fruit) was produced in the previous summer. The notion that robins have red breasts and arrive in the spring is a leftover from European Colonialists. In Europe and Britain, robins are warblers that really do have red breasts and arrive in the spring. However, the American Robin is a thrush with an orange breast and is a partial migrant over much of its U.S. range. Partial migrants are birds that do migrate, but winter and summer ranges overlap. Robins have a huge overlap range and Colorado lies well within this intersection. I have also noticed more robins around my bird bath. It could be coincidence or it could signal the beginning of migration. Studies have shown that most robins migrate north along the 37°F average isotherm. That is the region which has an average daily temperature of 37°F. Check out the Great Backyard Bird Count Web Site to view range maps for robins at [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc).

## Seed Vender Update: Peanut Suet



We have a new seed vendor for the Wild Bird Center! They are based in Greeley and we look forward to a long and beneficial relationship with them. As it turns out, some of the new vendor's staff know us from a seed vendor we used back in 1989-92. They know the nature of our store and are striving to meet all of our needs. You may have seen some changes at the store. For example, Front Range Blend has changed to a similar seed mix called Supreme. Frequent Feeder credits will change to the new seed names and mixes. Again, we want to thank you for your understanding as we make this vendor switch and ask you to persevere with us as we strive to improve the store. Please give us feedback as we proceed. Thank you.

## Sandhill Cranes Wing Their Way North

by Scott Severs

In just a few weeks, the skies begin to come alive with the frog-like sounds of Sandhill Cranes. The airspace in the San Luis Valley and along the Platte River in Nebraska hosts the biggest show. Each place harbors tens of thousands of these stately ancient birds. These spectacles should not be missed; at least once in one's lifetime this awesome display of natural history must be experienced.



from the shore. Some of these cranes will migrate up to Alaska, continue over the Bering Strait and nest in Russia!

Each location provides a slightly different experience for the naturalist. Visitors to Monte Vista have the spectacular mountain backdrop framing the cranes' daily activities. In Nebraska, visitors are treated to an intimate portrait of crane life by visiting the blinds at Rowe Sanctuary and near Grand Island.

### Here are some important dates and links for viewing cranes:

- Colorado peak migration: Late February to mid-March
- Monte Vista Crane Festival, March 7-9, 2008: [www.cranefest.com](http://www.cranefest.com)
- Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge: [www.fws.gov/alamosa](http://www.fws.gov/alamosa)
- Nebraska peak migration: Early March to early April.
- Rivers and Wildlife Celebration, March 14-16, 2008, Kearney, NE: [www.nebraska.audubon.org/RWC.htm](http://www.nebraska.audubon.org/RWC.htm)
- Rowe Sanctuary, Kearney: [www.rowsanctuary.org](http://www.rowsanctuary.org)
- Wings Over the Platte, March '08, Grand Island: [www.visitgrandisland.com](http://www.visitgrandisland.com)

## Upcoming Events

### Great Backyard Bird Count Comes to Birders this Month

Local backyard birders can add to the knowledge of our American birds by submitting their sightings of local birds to the Great Backyard Bird Count, February 15-18, 2008. This nationwide count of birds is for all ages and all levels of birders, from beginners to experts. Boulder County birders are leaders in the state in terms of the number of participants. It is easy as 123 to participate, just count the birds for as little as 15 minutes on any or all the days of the count, then submit your sightings on line at [birdcount.org](http://birdcount.org). These counts help to assess the health of our birds, timing patterns of migration, irruptions of Arctic and boreal birds, and much more. On our birdwalk on February 16th, we will be counting the birds for the event. Kids can also count the birds around their schools too! Call 303-442-1322 for more information.

**Buy 3 Suet Cakes, Get the 4th One FREE!**

### Wild Bird Center Boulder

Mention CODE WBC208. Call (303) 442-1322 or bring in to redeem. Some restrictions may apply. Not valid in combination with other promotions. Expiration date: March 6, 2008.

## Send Us Your Pictures

A fun new feature at the store is a digital photo frame to show camera lens customer pictures. Please send us photos of your backyard wildlife and we will add them to our slide show. Along with your pictures please give us your name, date of the photo, and your general location. (We especially love to get pictures of birds on feeders) E-mails can be sent to [WBCBoulderCO@aol.com](mailto:WBCBoulderCO@aol.com).



## We Love to Hear From You!

Stop on in, send an email, or, give us a call. We love to hear about your latest birding experiences and look forward to sharing ours. Thanks for your support! Happy Birding! -- Steve, Scott, Marlene, and Bill