



Wild About Birds

Summer 2004

# BirdChat

Backyard birdfeeding experts serving the Cincinnati area since 1989!

## Understanding Birds' Life Stages

by Kevin J. Cook

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Issue 2

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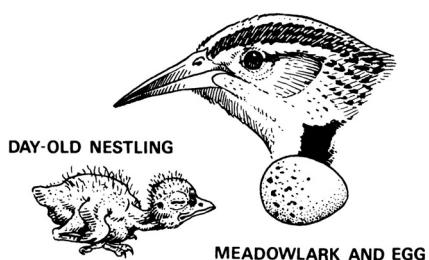
Attracting Birds and  
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**M**ost birders use the terms "chick", "juvenile", "fledgling", "immature", and "subadult" as synonyms for any young bird. A bird might be a juvenile in one breath and an immature in the next.

If these terms are precisely interchangeable, then our language is burdened with more words than it needs. If these terms are distinctive, then legitimate criteria must distinguish them.

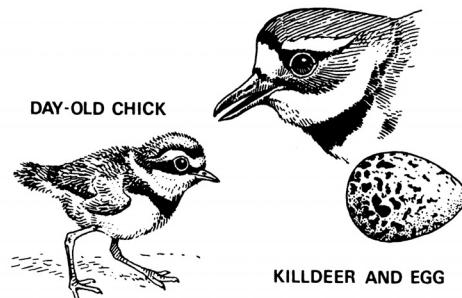
Historical bird literature reveals that ornithologists have not always used terms consistently and occasionally overlooked specifically defining certain terms. Nevertheless, these are the traditional ornithological descriptions:

- ◆ **Hatchling.** A bird freshly out of the egg. No specific standardized criteria define how long the hatchling period lasts, but two criteria are possible. A bird remains a hatchling while it relies on its remaining yolk supply or until it is able to regulate its own body temperature.
- ◆ **Nestling.** A bird that remains nest bound until able to fly.



- ◆ **Chick.** A young bird that leaves the nest soon after hatching and typically wanders by walking in a family group until able to fly.

- ◆ **Fledgling.** A bird able to fly but still dependent upon parents for food and other care.



- ◆ **Juvenile.** A young bird incapable of breeding and in its first plumage of non-downy feathers. These are mostly soft feathers that quickly abrade and must be replaced.
- ◆ **Immature.** A young bird capable of breeding and in its first plumage of hard feathers gained after molting its soft feathers, but not yet identical either in pattern or color to adult feathers. "Subadult" is a synonym of "immature".
- ◆ **Adult.** A mature bird capable of breeding and in a plumage that no longer changes in appearance with successive molts. (With the exception, of course, of birds that assume winter plumage, such as American goldfinches.)

*Wild About Birds* is owned and operated in Milford, Ohio by Peggie Flierl. *BirdChat* is a periodic newsletter written by Ms. Flierl for customers of *Wild About Birds*. Material appearing in *BirdChat* may not be reprinted without permission. Any comments should be directed to Ms. Flierl at:

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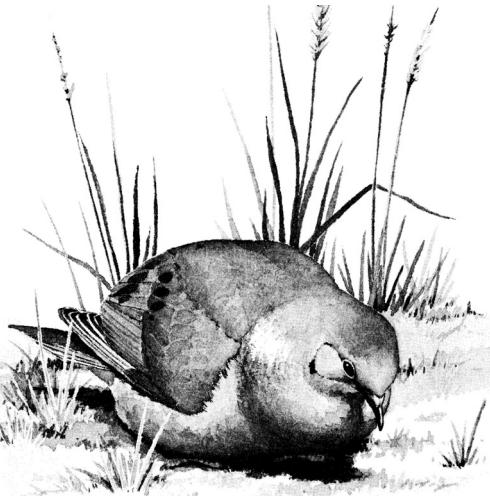
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## Species Specifics: Mourning Dove

*“...puffs up its throat, bobs its tail, repeatedly bows its head, and coos...”*

**S**ome inexperienced bird watchers think they've got an owl in the backyard when they hear a dove's coooo-coooo! Mourning doves, members of the same family as pigeons (rock doves), are about 12" with long pointed tails and long slender wings. The male has a slightly rose-tinted breast and the top of its head is grayish; the female is dull brown all over. Doves will visit your feeding station for seeds—their favorites include millet, cracked corn, safflower, and nyjer (thistle). They prefer to eat on the ground but will take seed from platforms and feeders with trays.

The courtship behavior of the male dove is often observed—it puffs up its throat, bobs its tail, repeatedly bows its head, and coos for the female. The male selects the site for the nest, 3-30' above the ground on a branch or in the fork of a tree. The male brings the nest material—twigs, grass, weeds, pine needles—to the female and together



they spend a few hours each morning for 1-6 days building a sloppy nest about 8"-12" across. Mourning dove nests are often not very sturdy and are easily blown down in storms. Doves occasionally nest on the ground and sometimes don't build a nest at all but use another species abandoned nest to which they add bits of their own material.

Two white eggs are incubated by both parents—the male all day and the female all night—for about 2 weeks. Both parents feed the nestlings “pigeon milk” which is skin tissue from the adult's crop mixed with partially digested

seed from the crop. The baby doves are brooded by the parents full time for 10 days! After the young fledge, they will often stay in the nest tree for a week and sometimes will sleep in the nest. Mourning doves have 1-2 broods each year.

## Attracting Birds and Keeping Them Safe in Your Yard

*“...guidelines for safe and responsible bird feeding...”*

**I**n December 2003, “The Wall Street Journal” ran an article which knocked the bird-feeding industry on its heels. In essence, it said, feeding the birds was not a good thing! Peter Stangel, director of the Southern Region of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation quickly came to the defense of the industry. In Atlanta, in January 2003, the site of our annual BirdWatch America Trade Show, Mr. Stangel called for an all-industry discussion. Eventually, a group of A-list industry leaders outlined guidelines for safe and responsible bird feeding. Last November, these guidelines were formally approved by the Wild Bird Feeding Industry (WBFI). In the future you will see these guidelines published by wild bird seed distributors and bird feeder manufacturers nation-wide.



The “6 Tips for Attracting Birds and Keeping Them Safe in Your Yard” are as follows:

1. Enhance your backyard bird habitat by landscaping with native plants and by providing feeders, natural food sources, water, shelter, and nesting sites.
2. Refill feeders regularly with foods suited to the birds in your area and to the season.
3. Clean feeders, baths, and feeding areas regularly.
4. Avoid using pesticides or herbicides near areas where birds feed, bathe, or nest.
5. Keep cats indoors. They will lead longer, healthier lives and you will keep your yard safer for both cats and birds and other wildlife.
6. Reduce bird collisions with windows. Move feeders within 3' of windows where possible and add decorations such as decals to the outside surface of windows where collisions occur.

# Father's Day Special

# \$5 off

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(Coupon expires 06/20/04)

We have so much new merchandise this summer, I don't know where to begin...how about in the garden! I found a new line of garden critters; they are made right here in the USA and are made of stone-like material, not resin. Check out the frogs, turtles, squirrels, owls, ducks and ducklings! We also got in a line of garden statues made in Zimbabwe out of discarded oil drums. You must come see the exquisite egrets and herons; they're about 25" tall and I'm sure one of them would look great at the edge of your garden pond! Another new item that many of you have asked for is a re-circulating birdbath that is solar powered...we've got it!

Don't forget about all the different wind spinners we carry—colorful acrylic, copper with decorative accents like large marbles, stained glass figures, etc. Many customers have purchased the spinning birds (hummingbird, cardinal, goose, etc.) made by Premier Kite, well they recently came out with a new line of garden flags and they are beautiful. Premier Kite also makes

Dream Catchers which are attracting a lot of attention hanging in front of our shop. They'd look great in your garden, too!

When you're done putting in the garden, spoil yourself, or Dad, with Burt's Bees products. We've expanded our line a bit and now carry Burt's hand salve and, for the gals, a new product called Lip Shimmers: Burt's famous lip balm with a little color added! You can "fancy up" your mailbox with our new vinyl Mail Wraps with Hautman brothers' artwork—just gorgeous!

Many customers have expressed a desire for high quality and affordable binoculars so we've added Audubon binoculars by Sheltered Wings. We offer this line at the lowest price permitted by Sheltered Wings which means you won't find a better price at another dealer nor on the internet. We're only carrying two models right now—the Family Binoculars and the Minoculars; we'll increase the line in the near future.

Happy Father's Day!

Peggie

Dear BirdGal, What should I do if I find a baby bird in my yard? Alice

Dear Alice, If the baby is a nestling, make every attempt to put it back in the nest. Don't worry, your scent will not cause the parents to abandon the nest – that's an old wives' tale! If you can't reach the nest or it has been destroyed, make a new one! Place nesting material and babies in an open basket (like the ones strawberries come in at the supermarket) and place it in a tree or shrub as close as possible to the original location. Secure the new "nest" to a branch with twine. If the baby is a fledgling, leave it alone. The parents are probably nearby watching the baby as it learns to fly. If you must take the baby in, place it in a shoe box lined with soft tissue paper and keep it warm. Do not try to feed it! Call Second Chance Wildlife immediately for further instructions (513-875-3433). BG

Did you know that at *Wild About Birds* we treat you special because you are special to us! That's why we offer these special services, just for you:

We will assemble any feeder you buy from us...FREE! Okay, if you bought it someplace else, we'll assemble that one, too.

We'll always offer to carry your purchases to your car.

We can repair most feeders and we'll charge you only for the parts we use for the repair.



Shop news...



Dear BirdGal



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*(...and gift shop)*

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### Things to do!

- ✓ In warm weather you must change the hummingbird feeder nectar every few days. Clean the feeders thoroughly before refilling with fresh nectar; I have had really good luck cleaning my feeders with white vinegar.
- ✓ Plant black-eyed susans and cone-flowers; watch the goldfinches flock to the seed heads this fall.
- ✓ Clean your birdbath at least once a week (I use white vinegar for this chore, too) to prevent mosquitoes from breeding and help stop the spread of West Nile Virus.
- ✓ Attract more birds with moving water. Suspend a milk jug filled with water over your birdbath, punch a tiny hole about 1/2" up from the bottom and, voila, you've installed an inexpensive dripper!



### Did you know?

- ✗ A bird's feathers are heavier than its skeleton.
- ✗ The robin is a forest bird that, over time, adapted to suburban areas.
- ✗ Chimney swifts, the only swifts east of the Rockies, eat about 1,000 flying insects per day.
- ✗ Birds defend their territory with song and the display of colorful feathers.
- ✗ Ducks and geese usually "imprint" during the first day after hatching; auditory imprinting begins 1-2 days before hatching!
- ✗ Cowbirds are parasitic brooders: They lay their eggs in other birds' nests. The cowbirds often hatch earlier and grow faster than the host's young, thus crowding them out of the nest.
- ✗ The heart of a hummingbird beats 20 times faster than a human heart.