

Migrating Birds

(Story/Photos/Feeder Maintenance by Bob and Maxine Tinney – April-May 2019)
The Lazuli Buntings



Arriving in April, the male **Lazuli Buntings** light up dry brushy shrubs in the Tinneys' yard, flashing the blue of a lapis gemstone mixed with splashes of orange on the breast, touches of white on the belly, and white and black wingbars.



The softly colored female **Lazuli Buntings** have pale breasts and drink and bathe in the water feature. Both males and females are also seen hopping between branches and on the ground looking for caterpillars, spiders, grasshoppers, ants, beetles, butterflies, other insects, and seeds.



A group of males partake of drinks from a water pan while a group of females nibble at a seed block. The beauty of the Lazuli Bunting did not escape the early naturalist who named it *Passerina amoena*, meaning beautiful sparrow. Prescott is within their breeding territory which extends to the Northwestern United States, with the females weaving their nests for a clutch of 3 or 4 greenish-blue eggs and perhaps 2 broods a year.

April also brings the return of the Hummingbirds, which are small, colorful birds with iridescent feathers. Their name comes from the fact that they flap their wings so fast (80 times per second) that they make a humming sound.



On April 21st a **Calliope Hummingbird** lands on a window screen (photo 1 from inside) and the picture is blocked by the screen, so Maxine goes outside and catches the magenta throat-feather rays of the Calliope Hummingbird while it is resting/sleeping (photo 2), but it soon awakens (photo 3) and flies to a nearby tree. The Calliopes, one seen drinking from the Hummingbird feeder, are considered rare-transient by Dr. Carl S. Tomoff's *Birds of Prescott Arizona*.



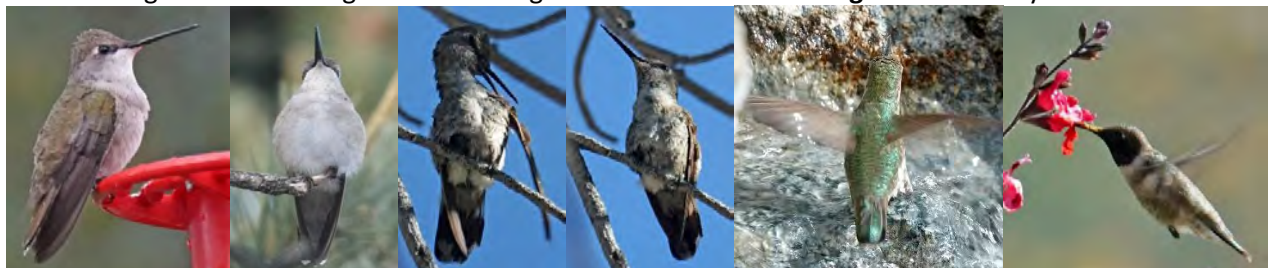
The stunning male **Anna's Hummingbirds** with bright red crowns and throats, and a duller female Anna's.



Male **Black-Chinned Hummingbirds**, velvety black throats with thin, iridescent purple bases, and a **Broad-tailed Hummy**.



The brilliant orange male and the green-and-orange female **Rufous Hummingbirds** are feisty and relentless attackers.



Hummingbird identification is often difficult – it helps to know body/bill/tail shapes, coloration, and sexual differences.

Warblers and Other Birds



The male and female **Audubon's Yellow-rumped Warblers** come to the water feature for drinks and baths.



The compact **Nashville Warblers** have gray heads, eye rings, olive-green backs, yellow breasts and no wingbars.



The adult **Yellow Warblers** with chestnut stripes and beady black eyes forage for insects.



The **Orange-crowned Warblers** are migrating from southern climates to the NW for breeding season.



The brightly marked **Green-tailed Towhee** (photos 1 and 2), **Bridled and Juniper Titmice** (photos 3 and 4) and **Bushtit** have again returned to the higher elevations of the Prescott area for the breeding season.

The **Townsend's Warblers** visit 3 times, but Maxine did not do so well with sneaking to the camera, they flew!

The Brown-Headed Cowbirds



In May, our first male with black body and brown head, the brown female/immature with streaking bellies visit the yard. They are western **Brown-headed Cowbirds** and are chunky, smallish members of the blackbird family.



The **Brown-headed Cowbird** (*Molothrus ater*) is a brood parasite, meaning that the female lays her eggs in nests of other species of birds, which in turn, raise the Cowbirds' young as their own.

Some Species of Birds have/are migrating further Northward.



Most of the **Dark-eyed Juncos**, **Ruby Crown Kinglets**, **Chipping** and **White-crowned Sparrows** are among other species of birds which are travelling northward for the breeding season.

On April 12 an Osprey (left) flies over our house possibly on the way to the northern US or Canada.

The merry month of May is prime time for the **Black-headed Grosbeaks** to return to this region.



The adult male **Black-headed Grosbeaks** have thick conical bills, rich orange cinnamon breasts, black heads and black and white wings (two left photos), while the female/immature **Black-headed Grosbeaks** have short necks with orange buff breasts with some streaking (two right photos).



Both males and females/immatures Black-headed Grosbeaks' massive bills make them well equipped for cracking seeds.



Besides snatching and crushing hard-bodied insects/snails, the nimble Grosbeaks dangle upside down to procure grapes.



The male **Black-headed Grosbeak** shares about equally with the female in incubating eggs and feeding young.

The Western Tanagers



Adult bright yellow **Western Tanagers** with red-orange heads pose in the trees and one bathes in the water feature.



The **Western Tanagers** methodically scan branches for insects to pluck and eat, although Bob's fruits are available.



The female/immature **Western Tanagers** (center and right photos) with two wingbars are on the move, but hopefully crisper photos will be captured in the near future.

The Bullock's and Hooded Orioles



Adult male **Bullock's Orioles** are bright orange with black backs with white wingbars, black eyelines and black throats. This oriole was named after William Bullock, an English amateur naturalist.



The possible female **Bullock's Oriole** is lighter yellow with white belly, and no identifiable seen markings on the throat.



Juvenile Bullock's Orioles also have black throats and imbibe the grape jelly.



This bird with a taste of orange may be a female **Hooded Oriole**, but also may be a **Scott's** juvenile with gray auricular.

Having just arrived from Mexico, a family of **Scott's Orioles**, visit the Tinneys' yard for about a week in May.



Large slender with a slightly curved bill, the male Scott's Oriole comes to dine in a black feather tuxedo and bright lemon-yellow lower waistcoat, while his female companion always appears in a luxurious lemon-yellow feathered gown with dark tattooed spotting on her feathered head and upper chest.



Even their Scott's juvenile 1st year youngster (probably a female) dresses in lemon-yellow pantaloons and dusky brown streaked jacket and matching barrette hat and makes a request of the father.

Youngster: *Father, please share some tips on appropriate dining etiquette.*

Father: *First take a very small portion of the jelly and whisk it lightly with your tongue to make sure that it is made with the finest of grapes, and if so . . . Go For IT!*



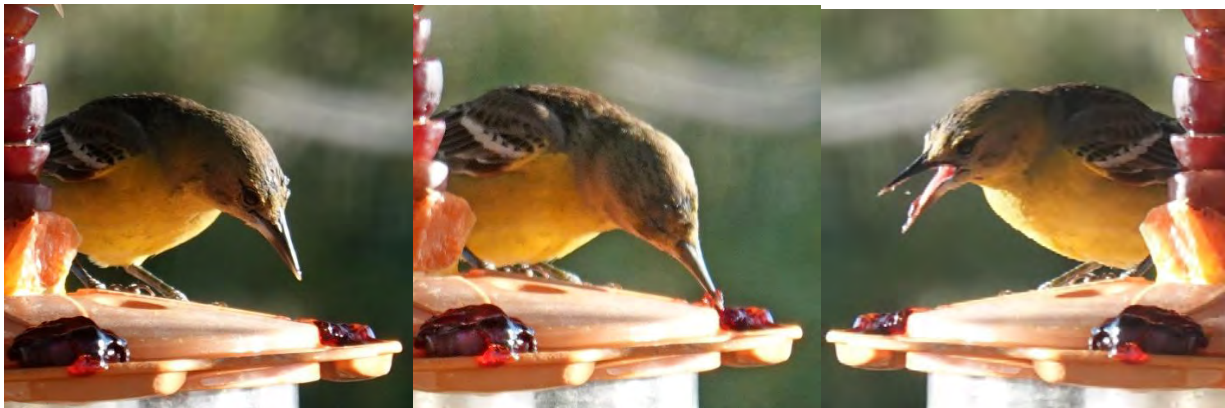
Youngster: *Locate the jelly, whisk it lightly with the tongue, and then what??*



Father: *Locate the jelly, whisk it lightly with the tongue, then . . . **Go For It!***



Mother: *Locate the jelly, whisk it lightly with the tongue, then . . . **Go For It!***



Youngster: *First take a very small portion of the jelly and whisk it lightly with your tongue to make sure that it is made with the finest of grapes, and if so . . . **Go For It! . . . I've Got It!***