

## Our Feathered Friends - April 11

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I woke up early this past Saturday morning and peeped out the kitchen window to see what was lurking about at my bird feeding station. There were about eight or ten individuals of two different varieties of Doves feeding on the bare spot where I put out millet on the ground. The place where my old van was parked keeps the area bare and makes it easier for my ground scratchers to locate their food.

**Tammy Taylor's** son **Stephen Sullivan** seems to have taken a liking to our feathered friends. This past Friday we were talking about trees that produce food such as the mulberry tree in the back of the yard. Stephen is in Boy Scouts and has worked on such projects as sinkhole cleanups and other things at the Cedars of Lebanon State Park. Later Easter afternoon, the mulberry tree was attacked by a couple of dozen Cedar Waxwings. The berries are starting to ripen and they start at the top of the tree eating their way down. Probably in the next few weeks Waxwings will begin their journey north to their breeding grounds.

A few summers ago as I sat on the shore of Lake Huron, there were the resident Cedar Waxwings having a go at some type of fruit producing tree. I guess they might have had a nest close by as there were juvenile birds begging for food. It kind of makes me wish that they could live here, raising their fledglings.

Another bird that I have been missing showed up at my feeding station eating from the ground. The Brown Thrasher is one of my favorites from over at the old place. I am in hopes that it will stay at the back property line in the thick bushes there. A few years ago we would sit out back and watch mom and pop Thrasher teach the little ones how to fend for themselves. The adult bird would take his heavy, slightly curved bill and practically sling it through the leaves to displace its future lunch. There will be plenty of leaf litter here in the small drainage ditch to keep them well fed and safe, scratching up a myriad of insect dwellers here.

I just got off the phone with my old compadre, Anthony Gray, who was headed down State Route 840 to pick up his mother. While talking, he said a Great-blue Heron flew over his car not too high in the air. Some of you might remember Anthony from one of my stories about a couple of Canada Geese chasing after us. I usually just call him by his nickname, "Bubba." Does that sound redneckish or what?

Another ground feeder that has been hanging around lately is the Chipping Sparrow. So far it has not been singing, but is kind of brave, allowing me to get fairly close to it. Of course it only comes when I don't have my camera handy. Several years ago at the Dixon Merritt Nature Center at the Cedars of Lebanon State Park, we found a pair of nesting Chippers right outside the front door on a low limb.

Carole Young was asking me the other day, "where have the Goldfinch gone?" Today she told me not to worry because they were back. I told her that maybe they had found some natural food somewhere. Birds were here long ago and had survived without our help.

We would love to hear from you as to what's lurking about in your neighborhood and at your feeders. You can e-mail Karen Franklin at [This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it](mailto:kfranklin@lebanonstatepark.com), and you can write me at 606 Fairview Ave., Lebanon, TN, 37087 or e-mail me at [This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it](mailto:kfranklin@lebanonstatepark.com)

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