

The Weekly Wing
By Brandon Jackson (The Birding Expert)
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In this issue we will talk about the Pileated Woodpecker, the Northern Cardinal, and House Finch.

The Pileated Woodpecker is Minnesota's largest woodpecker, ranging from 16-19 inches in height. Even though this bird is huge, it doesn't mean it can't latch on to small feeders. A single cage feeder is just fine, but they especially like the double cage suet feeder. We've had the most luck with log feeders (we made our own from logs that we found from dead trees, we got logs about 2-3 inches in diameter and cut out small holes about an inch and a half along the side of the log and filled them with suet).

Northern Cardinals are a very common species at feeders that contain black oil sunflower seeds. In the summer you can sometimes see the mother and father feeding the chicks at the feeders. The male cardinals are well known for their brilliant red feathers and beaks, the females however are a light brown with spots of red. The only way to tell the difference between the juvenile and the female is the beak. The juveniles have a grey or silver beak while the female has a red one. Cardinals will often come around at dusk so they can be a little harder to see.

House Finches have an interesting connection with the Christmas season. They like to nest in your Christmas wreaths if you leave them out too long. There is another type of finch called the Purple Finch, but they actually aren't purple. So be sure to check your wreaths before you throw them out.