



**On the  
Watch**  
June Hitchcox

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## Finch Forecast for Winter 2018 - 2019 by Ron Pittaway

Blue Jays loudly calling at our feeders here; Downy Woodpeckers appreciating our suet feeders; Nuthatches, Mourning Doves and Sparrows - lots of birding activity. Ron Pittaway has again issued his forecast, telling us of where various species will be seen in Ontario this winter - not due to the weather - but due to the availability of the food needed for each species to be able to

survive. Ron has birding friends all over Ontario and beyond who keep him posted regarding good crops, so-so crops and poor crops of the food that each species needs to survive. If their type of food has had a poor crop this past year, the birds MUST move on - east, west, south - hoping to find their particular food more plentiful. Bird feeders are often critical for their survival, keeping birds alive while they search.

Here are Ron's "Finch Predictions" for six varieties:

**Pine Grosbeaks:** Southern Ontario should see some - the Mountain- Ash Berry crop and Conifer seeds are in short supply in the north. Black Oil Sunflower are their favourite at feeders as are European Mountain- ashes and Crab apples.

**Purple Finch:** poor seed crops in the north have seen most of these Finches moving south of Ontario. At feeders, they prefer black oil sunflower seeds.

**Red Crossbills** will also be scarce this winter. White-winged Crossbills will have already moved east or west where the spruce cone crops have been much better.

**Common Redpolls :** should be lots this winter inter-mixed with Hoary Redpolls. Niger seeds cause feeding frenzies - they cannot believe their good luck!

**Pine Siskins:** Not many - most have moved south or west for better crops. They, too, relish niger seeds.

**Evening Grosbeaks:** Moderate number - black oil sunflower seeds for them.

### AA Meetings:

**Mondays 7:00 at the  
Glen Alda Community Centre  
- or -**

**Confidential Contacts in Apsley  
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Also, here is information about three non-finch passerines which are linked to the irruptions (flights) of boreal finches: Blue Jays: most moving south due to poor crops; Red-breasted Nuthatches: we may see them; and Bohemian Waxwings: that will probably fly further south.

Have fun with your feeders. Winter is such a great time!

*Editor's Note* (also from Ron's forecast): Algonquin Provincial Park is an exciting winter and birding opportunity. Cone crops are poor in the park so crossbills, siskins and Purple Finches will be mostly absent this winter. The feeders at the Visitor Centre should attract Common and Hoary Redpolls, Evening and Pine Grosbeaks. The bookstore there has a large selection of natural history books. Be sure to see the Birds of Algonquin Park (2012) by former park naturalist Ron Tozer as it is one of the finest regional bird books. The nearby Spruce Bog Trail and Opeongo Road are the best spots for boreal species such as finches, Canada Jay, Boreal Chickadee, Spruce Grouse and Black-backed Woodpecker.

Photo: by Amy Reed from Unsplash.com.

