



“Seven Swans A-Swimming: A message to celebrate the beauty of the unknown. Swans are birds of elegance and mystery. Seven represents mystery and elegance, largely in part to the movement of the seven planets (only seven were known until 1846). Planets moved unlike all the other stars and had their own intricate patterns – nothing was more elegant and mysterious. Oddly, although the swans are swimming they represent Air, which as an element includes the sky and the heavens.



“Eight Maids A-Milking: Here be eight Magpies. Magpies are black birds with milky white patches. Magpies are birds full of power and are portents used in fortune-telling. Eight has many different meanings symbolically, but one very important one is a new beginning. Different numbers of magpies can mean different

things, "five for silver, six for gold, seven for a secret never told," but eight magpies remind us to put the old behind us as we start afresh. It seems significant but

must be only a coincidence that by some reckoning that New Year's Day is the Eighth Day of Christmas.

“Nine Drummers Drumming: With this verse, the order of the gifts we sing is changed from the original. Instead of ladies dancing, in the earliest known version, on this day drummers were drumming. In England and mainland Europe, the most common drumming bird was the Snipe. Where and when snipes do their drumming is important. Snipes drum in the spring soon after fields have been plowed and are most fertile. The number nine represents harmony and eternity. Fertility coupled with both harmony and eternity creates the most powerful force we can know.



“Ten Pipers Piping: We sing the song with the ten lords a-leaping, but originally it was ten pipers piping, at least in England. In earliest known variant found in North America, on the Tenth Day of Christmas, the true love sent ten **Cocks A-Crowing**. It's all the same, however. The English green sandpiper has a reputation for being noisy, excitable, loud, and shrill. Cocks, and to a lesser extent sandpipers, were legendary for being vain and arrogant, feisty, and sexually aggressive. It was shortly after the broadside was published that the word "rooster" replaced "cock" in polite company in North America. That may help explain why we don't hear that version today. One explanation I've heard for this day is that it represents the Ten Commandments. That is not just silly, it is hilariously ironic. Can you imagine how many of the Ten Commandments might be broken on a day ruled by troublesome, brawling, lecherous, and loud noise-makers?



“Eleven Ladies Dancing: The dancing, of course, is a code word for passion and courtship. The dancing ladies are Lapwings that wildly wheel, roll, and tumble in the air during courtship displays. Eleven is a lucky number, but, of course, luck is a dual force that might bring good or ill. On this day of dancing, passion, and courtship, let's hope this day brings us good luck (knock on wood).



“Twelve Lords A-Leaping: The lords a-leaping are cuckoos. And the cuckoo hen notoriously lays her eggs in another bird's nest. Because of this the cuckoo became a symbol for immorality and disorder. Not just this day, but the whole season of twelve days was a time of misrule and sexual license. The world was turned upside down. During

these twelve days, right is wrong, the strong are weak, the first is last, and the lowliest laborers might become the highest lords. The twelve lords a-leaping bring the song to an end, since twelve is the number of completion. As we return to normal life again, we remember that spring will be coming, life will be renewed, order will form out of disorder, and the cycle will continue.

There you have it -- the HIDDEN meaning of "The Twelve Days of Christmas." Either that or this explanation is **for the birds.**

Page created and maintained by John R. Henderson

<http://www.icyousee.org/twelvebirds.html>

<http://www.makingmusicfun.net/>

—From the Album—



Leopard frog from Jonathan Reynolds



“Perfect serenity” — Isle Dubois — from Jonathan Reynolds





LLELA Christmas at the Cabin Noon-3 p.m. December 17, 2016

Take a trip back to an 1870s Christmas and celebrate the old-fashioned way! Enjoy a tour of the historic Minor-Porter Log Cabin, make a corn husk doll or an ornament to take home to your own Christmas tree, create a hand-dipped candle, enjoy carols, sip hot cider by the campfire, and more. Visitors are welcome to arrive at any time during the open hours and join in at their own pace. This activity is free; visitors only pay the regular gate admission to LLELA (\$5 per vehicle, cash or check only). Musicians with appropriate acoustic instruments get in free to participate in a holiday jam session at the cabin. Please contact dwhetherbee@cityoflewisville.com to participate.

For more information call [972.219.3550](tel:972.219.3550) Monday through Friday, or [972.219.7980](tel:972.219.7980) on weekends. You may also contact kcooper@cityoflewisville.com.

Next Year Resolve to Take a Creative and Proactive Approach to Your Garden

Join BRT in 2017 for our new workshop series "Permaculture 101" with certified permaculture designers Kim Martin and Laurie Bostic of Barking Cat Farm and learn how to work smarter not harder. Whether you want to grow some of your own food or just get a greater return on the time you spend in the garden, this series is for you! Martin and Bostic will walk us through the basics of Permaculture, or the practice of using thoughtful observation to learn how to work with your land and employ techniques that mimic natural systems.

- The four workshops that make up this series are:
- Introduction to Permaculture for Home Gardeners (2/4/2017)
 - Introduction to Vegetable Gardening (3/4/2017)
 - Raised Beds and Irrigation (4/1/2017)
 - Building a Herb Spiral (5/6/2017)

For more information about these classes please click [here](#). To register, please click [here](#)

Riddle for Master Naturalists from Becky:

Why didn't the hills want to play hide-and-seek with the mountains?

Because the mountains peak.

*Don't forget Chapter Christmas Party/
Luncheon December 8, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00
p.m. If you can help set up on the morning of
and/or help get cleanup done before deadline
at 1:00 p.m., please contact Linda Cox.*

