

Selective Bird Feeding

How to safely feed birds

What makes a safe birdfeeder ?

No Predators- Feeders should not provide food for mammals such as squirrels and raccoons or jays.

No Feeding Competitors-

Non-selective feeders attract non-native bird species such as the House Sparrow and European Starling that are both highly competitive against native bird species.

No Nest Parasites-

Brown-headed Cowbirds parasitize songbird nests by depositing their eggs in the nests of small songbirds. As a result, the host bird raises cowbirds instead of their young! Non-selective feeders may support cowbirds.

No Disease- Feeders that are not well cleaned or monitored can spread diseases such as avian pox, house finch disease and conjunctivitis. Clean your feeder with 10% bleach water solution and leave it down until sick birds move on.

No Window Collisions- In order to prevent window collisions a feeder should be located either within 3 feet of a window or 30 feet from a window.



Klamath Bird Observatory
P.O. Box 758
Ashland, OR 97520
Www.KlamathBird.org



Selective bird feeders

How You Can Safely Feed Birds:

Types of Feeders

A selective bird feeder is a feeder that encourages some bird species such as chickadees and finches while discouraging feeding by predators and non-native species. Seed on the ground, open tray feeders, and feeders with large perches bring in predators or parasitic species such as jays, starlings, sparrows, and cowbirds, and are examples of non-selective feeders. Selective bird feeders are often caged and offer smaller perches.

Selective tube feeder : The pictures above are excellent examples! These types of feeders are great for smaller birds such as chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, goldfinches, pine siskins, purple and house finches.

Selective cage feeder: Cages with suet that are only open in the bottom are more starling resistant and are perfect for woodpeckers, nuthatches, chickadees, titmice, and sometimes wrens.

Positioning of Feeders

Keep feeders away from shrubs where predators may be hiding and waiting for birds. Install predator guards (additional elements to the feeder) to keep squirrels and rodents from feeding on your seed. Do not feed birds if you have cats in your yard.

Also keep in mind species competition and preferences for different feeding levels. For instance, goldfinches, house and purple finches feed at shrub level, whereas nuthatches, titmice, chickadees, and woodpeckers feed at tree level.

Selective Bird Feeding

How to safely feed birds

Tips For Responsible Bird Feeding

When to Feed

Do not feed birds if the feeders are supporting nest predators such as jays, raccoons, and squirrels.

Seed Selection

Seed selection is important since different species prefer different types of food. For example, suet is attractive to insect-eating birds such as titmice, wrens, woodpeckers, nuthatches, and chickadees. Avoid millet which is highly attractive to non-native bird species such as house sparrows.

Monitor your Feeder

Watch for sick birds, predation events, and moldy seed. Keep feeders clean by removing all old seed when you refill and temporarily remove them when there are sick birds or stalking predators. Clean feeders one to two times a month with a 10% bleach water solution and rake seed from the ground below your feeder. If you have more than one bird feeder keep them separated from each other to hinder overcrowding and pathogen spread. For information on how to recognize diseased birds visit: www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/aboutBirdsandFeeding/DiseasedBirds.htm

Create Bird Habitat

Birds rely on native plants for safe nesting and feeding habitat. To determine what to plant in your yard, mimic the plant community in the surrounding wild-lands and open spaces. (See Klamath Bird Observatory's Native Plants flyer). Plant only native or non-invasive plants in your yard. Never plant Scotch broom, pampas grass, purple loostripe, teasel, Scotch thistle, tansy ragwort, medusahead grass, or yellow star thistle which are invasive plant species.

Project Feeder Watch:

Project Feeder Watch is a citizen science project sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. People who participate in this project count the highest numbers of bird species that they see at their bird feeders from November through April. The data collected by participants is important in monitoring bird populations and distributions during the winter. (See link below).

Additional Resources: Klamath Bird Observatory (www.klamathbird.org), National Audubon Society Bird Feeding Basics (www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/bird_feeding/index.html), PRBO Conservation Science Helping Birds at your Bird Feeder (www.prbo.org/cms/185), Project Feeder Watch (www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/)



Project Feeder Watch at North Mountain Park

© North Mountain Park



Black-capped Chickadee

© Jim Livaudais

Klamath Bird Observatory © 2009