

Four Steps to Birding Success

1

Provide a desirable food source in the appropriate feeder.

Black-oil sunflower seed is popular with the greatest number of bird species. The thin shell and large nutmeat are ideal for most types of feeders, such as tubes, hoppers or platforms. Other examples would include thistle in tube feeders, suet in suet cages and mixed seed on platform feeders or scattered on dry ground. Using a suitable feeder for the type of seed you are offering will eliminate waste. Ensure your feeders are filled during early morning and early evening hours when birds are most active.

2

Landscape with food source and protective cover in mind.

Many ornamental plants provide valuable food supplies for the bird population. For maximum nourishment, select plants that flower and fruit throughout the season. Some plants, such as multi-stem trees and shrubs, form a dense canopy that will satisfy needs for nesting and also provide cover. Mixes of deciduous and evergreen plants provide protection from inclement weather and natural predators such as hawks and neighborhood cats.

3

A source of fresh water is also necessary to maintain your bird population.

The water source should be shallow (no more than 2"-3" deep) and replaced on a regular basis. Running water, such as a shallow fountain, is the ideal water resource. The water source should be elevated or in the middle of an open area to minimize predation by cats and other animals.

4

Enjoy your new-feathered friends by managing your backyard habitat wisely.

Keep water sources and feeders clean. This can be done by periodically sanitizing water features and raking seed debris from the feeding area; check the feeders for waste at this time, as well. Monitor any squirrel activity and if necessary, situate your feeders so that they can't jump on them from above. To prevent access from below, erect feeders five feet above the ground and add a guard over the feeder pole. Start a backyard bird journal for notes about your backyard observations.