

Flora & Fauna

4 Ways You Can Help Wild Birds This Summer

Summer is a busy time for birds. They're raising their young, evading predators, and eating as much as they can in preparation for fall migrations. Songbird numbers have been on the decline in recent years thanks to habitat loss, the increased use of pesticides, and threats from window glass, wind turbines, speeding cars, and more.

Here's how you can help protect our feathered friends this summer:

1. Provide a source of water.

Birds can find plenty of food during summer months, but water is hard to come by, especially on hot days. Birdbaths and water features should be kept clean and filled with fresh water.

Hummingbird feeders should be cleaned often and the sugar water within replaced before it starts to ferment (3–5 days depending on sun/heat exposure).

2. Don't "rescue" baby birds.

If you happen to come across an obviously young bird (one with a mixture of fluffy baby feathers and mature ones) hopping around the ground, don't pick it up and take it inside.

In order for baby birds to learn how to fly, they need to be encouraged out of the nest. The parents are likely close by keeping an eye on their little fledgling, who might spend two or three days hopping onto low branches and hiding in tall grass until he's ready to take flight.

If you find an obviously injured bird, place it in a towel-lined box and take it to a local wildlife rehabilitation center. Don't try to force it to eat or drink. Leave its care to experts.

3. Be a good neighbor.

It can be frustrating when birds build their nests in eaves, porch lights, and garages. Many people knock these nests down and consider nesting birds "pests."

Try to keep in mind that the birds living in those nests will only be there a few short weeks. And while they're around, they'll eat hundreds of insects, including BBQ-ruining mosquitoes.

Once you're certain the birds have gone, you can remove the nests to discourage parasites and predators.

4. Avoid pesticides and other poisons.

The problem with pesticides and herbicides is that in addition to killing nuisance bugs and weeds, they can also kill birds. When you spray insects and plants, birds eat the dead bugs and seeds and bring them back to their nests for their babies.

Stay away from neonicotinoids or "neonics," which can be lethal to birds, bees, and butterflies. Even so-called "safe" pesticides will hurt the living things around them.

Clean Bee Flooring & Upholstery Care

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Cleaning Corner:

How to Clean Off Sand from the Beach

- **Feet:** If your skin is relatively dry, but the sand is still sticking, rub your feet with a little baby powder or corn starch and the sand will fall right off.
- **Clothes:** Dunk clothes in a bucket of clean warm water and gently swirl them around. Much of the sand will come out in the water and sink to the bottom. Hang clothes to dry and then shake out any leftover sand outside. Wash normally after that.
- **Car:** BEFORE you head to the beach, cover your backseat and trunk with an old bedsheet. When you get back home, carefully pick up the sheet and shake it outside.
- **Hair:** Comb your hair out with a fine-toothed comb or lice comb to remove sand grains. For really sandy locks, rub a little baby powder into dry hair and massage it into your scalp. Wash with shampoo and rinse thoroughly.

July

- 1785 Congress resolves that the US currency should be named the "dollar" and adopts decimal coinage
- 1799 The Rosetta Stone, a 6-foot-tall granite slate that was instrumental in deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphics, is found in the Egyptian village of Rosetta by French Captain Pierre-Francois Bouchard
- 1881 World's first international telephone call takes place between St. Stephen, New Brunswick, Canada, and Calais, Maine, United States
- 1928 The first all-talking motion picture, *Lights of New York*, is shown in New York, NY. The film cost \$23,000 to produce, and grossed over \$1,000,000
- 1963 ZIP codes are introduced for United States mail
- 1983 US Supreme Court rules that retirement plans can't pay women less than men

Healthy Living: 7 Secrets for Slimming Down

Eating right and exercising are the keys to weight control. There's no magic pill or easy shortcut, no matter what you see on TV or in magazines at the grocery store. There are, however, a few less well-known tips that can help boost your success rate. Try out these simple tips along with your diet and exercise plan to help make your efforts pay off fast:

- **Eat breakfast.** Numerous studies show that individuals who skip breakfast tend to eat more than they should later in the day. Regular meals and occasional low-calorie snacks help prevent this "famine-then-feast" syndrome. Fill up first thing in the morning with nutritious foods such as a high-fiber cereal, whole-grain bread, eggs, or fruit.
- **Make a "busy list."** Jot down a list of small projects and post it on the refrigerator. This could include things like "organize the medicine cabinet," "do a load of laundry," or "clean the bathroom." The next time you head to the fridge for a snack, tackle an item from the list instead. The distraction will help you ride out the cravings and do something productive instead!
- **Serve yourself half the amount.** If you're used to cleaning your plate, reduce the portions you normally take by half. You can also trick your brain by using smaller plates to make less food look like more.
- **Keep burning fat and calories.** Studies show that after a good workout, your body continues to burn calories even at rest. Regular aerobic exercise, such as walking, biking, swimming, or rowing, are great ways to get your heart rate up. Add in some weightlifting and your body will keep burning calories for hours after you leave the gym.
- **Bite into something sour.** Pickles and lemons have little to no calories, plus their sour taste may curb your appetite. If you don't have either on hand, try brushing your teeth. You'll be less likely to crave a snack when your mouth is minty fresh and clean.
- **Take time to enjoy your food.** It takes about 20 minutes for your brain to receive the signal that you're full. Slow down at meal times and put your fork down in between bites. Chew slowly, and savor each flavor and texture.
- **Drink plenty of water.** For years, dietitians have been recommending that people drink more water in addition to eating a low-calorie diet and exercising. A recent study confirms that not only does drinking more water help you lose weight, but it also helps keep it off.

Kid Corner: Talk to Your Kids About Not Smoking

Every day in the U.S., more than 3,000 kids under 18 make the mistake of "trying just one" cigarette. Many are barely in their tweens. Nearly half of them will develop a long-term habit, and a third will die of tobacco-related diseases. It's important for all parents to talk to their kids early and often about not smoking.

Why "Just One" is One Too Many

It doesn't take much for adolescents to get addicted to tobacco. Yes—it can happen after just one cigarette. "Kids are more vulnerable because the brain is still developing and can rewire itself more quickly to crave nicotine," says Joseph DiFranza, M.D., professor of family medicine and community health at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Worcester. His research indicates that roughly half of teens get hooked by the time they've smoked as few as 10 cigarettes.

The Effects on a Young Person's Body

Teen smokers find themselves short of breath three times more often than non-smokers. Higher rates of coughing, headaches, and flu make them twice as likely to feel in poor overall health. It takes longer to get well when you're sick and longer to heal when you're injured. Prolonged smoking leads to cancer, heart disease, fertility problems, and even osteoporosis.

Learn the Warning Signs

- **Odors** – Cigarettes leave a noticeable odor on clothes, hair, and skin. If your child claims the smell comes from other smokers, check his pockets, backpack, and room for matches or a lighter.
- **Suspicious Behaviors** – Suspicious behaviors include making frequent excuses to go outside, leaving bedroom windows open, and using lots of mouthwash, mints, or gum to cover up the smell of nicotine.

Voice Your Concerns – Calmly

Raise the subject when you're doing something together, such as watching TV or riding in the car. Start by saying, "I'm worried that you may be smoking." If your child denies it, don't push. He'll push back or shut down completely. Instead, tell him you're worried about his health and let him know you're always willing to talk and only want him to be healthy. Most teens who smoke say they want to stop, but don't know how. By calmly discussing your concerns, your teen will find it easier to ask for help.

Reach Out for Help

There are lots of resources available to help you talk with your kids about smoking. Check out www.teenquit.com (Teen Quit), www.tobaccofreekids.org (Tobacco Free Kids), or www.lungusa.org (The American Lung Association) for advice and ideas.

Ingredients – Broth:

- 8 whole cloves
- 6 ribs celery, roughly chopped
- 5 bay leaves
- 3 sprigs thyme
- 2 yellow onions, quartered
- 2 heads garlic, halved crosswise
- 2 lemons, halves
- 1 cup salt
- 3 Tbs coriander seeds
- 2 Tbs dill seeds
- 2 Tbs mustard seeds
- 1 1/2 Tbs red pepper flakes
- 1 1/2 Tbs cayenne pepper
- 1 Tbs whole allspice
- 1 Tbs whole black peppercorns
- 1 Tbs sweet paprika
- 2 gallons water

Ingredients:

- 4 lbs small red potatoes, cubed
- 6 ears of corn, cut into 4" pieces
- 5 lbs unpeeled, head-on large shrimp
- Melted butter, for serving
- Cocktail sauce, for serving
- Lemon wedges, for serving

Directions:

1. Combine all broth ingredients into a large pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium and simmer, stirring occasionally, until onions and celery are soft, about 40 minutes.
2. Add potatoes to the broth and cook until tender, about 15 minutes. Add corn and cook for another 6 minutes.

3. Add shrimp and cook, stirring occasionally, until the shrimp are just cooked through, about 4 minutes more.
4. Using a large slotted spoon, transfer the shrimp and vegetables to a large paper-lined surface (such as a picnic table covered with a layer or two of butcher-block paper). Serve with bowls of melted butter and cocktail sauce, lemon wedges and the reserved cooking liquid.

Tip: Assemble the broth ingredients in a plastic bag earlier in the day. When you're ready to cook, just dump the bag in with the water.

Six Tips for Hosting Houseguests

When you have friends or relatives coming to stay from out of town, make their visit a pleasure by thinking ahead and offering up some of the simple courtesies outlined below. With a little advanced planning, everyone will enjoy the visit more.

1. **Do a deep cleaning.** The best way you can make your guests feel welcome is to give them a clean space to stay. A day or two before their arrival, dust the furniture, wipe the mirrors, vacuum the floors, clean the toilets, and make sure the bed has a clean set of bed sheets.
2. **Stock the bathroom.** Make sure there's plenty of toilet paper, clean towels (for both bathing and drying hands), and disposable cups for drinking or rinsing. A basket filled with travel-size toiletries, like shampoo, conditioner, a nail file, toothbrushes, floss, toothpaste, and disposable razors will also be much appreciated.
3. **Make a meal plan.** If it's a couple of close friends crashing for the weekend, you can get away with looser meal plans. But if you've got a large crowd or little kids with tummies that have to stick to a schedule, you need a more detailed game plan. What night(s) might you be going out to eat? Does anyone have any allergy or dietary restrictions?
4. **Set out a snack tray.** A tray or bowl in the kitchen filled with easy-to-grab snacks will come in handy in case your guests get a little hungry between meals. Apples, bananas, clementine oranges, and granola bars are good options that won't spoil an appetite for later.
5. **Write down the WiFi password.** In today's day and age, connectivity is key. Make it easy for guests to connect their devices by writing down your WiFi network and password. Post it on the fridge or leave it on a note in the guest room.
6. **Offer up extra pillows and blankets.** Everyone has different sleeping preferences, and sometimes guests may feel awkward asking for additional bedding. Help your guests get a good night's sleep by placing extra pillows and blankets in the bedroom for them to use as needed.

... Carpet Talk... Control Carpet Odors

Your carpet acts like a giant filter, trapping dirt, dander, hair, and other airborne particles in your home. Unfortunately, your carpet can also trap odors, which is why regular cleanings are so important. In between regular cleanings, here's how you can do a little odor control at home:

Cigarette/Cigar: Tobacco odors are extremely hard to remove, so the best course of action is to keep smoke outside. You cannot keep your carpet deodorized if someone keeps blowing smoke in your home.

Burned Food/General Smoke: Sprinkle a little baking soda over the carpet. Use a corn straw broom to gently brush the baking soda into the nap of the carpet. Leave it overnight. Vacuum thoroughly the next morning.

Pet Odors: Try to clean up any pet messes (urine, feces, vomit) as quickly as possible. Use a little bit of dish soap and water and a clean white cloth to gently blot and remove as much of the substance as possible. Once the carpet is dry, sprinkle some baking soda over the area, let it sit overnight, and vacuum thoroughly the next day.

Mold/Mildew Odors: A musty smell in your carpet might indicate a bigger problem in your house. If your carpet is in a humid environment or if it was wet for an extended period (longer than 24–48 hours), you might have a mold or mildew problem. If that's the case, call your carpet care professional for an in-depth evaluation and treatment.

