

# HELPING BIRDS in WINTER

Peter Green

You can help our feathered friends by providing some of their basic needs this winter, like **FOOD, WATER, & SHELTER.**

Birds come in all sorts of sizes, shapes and colors and make all kinds of noise. Learn to identify the birds that visit your yard this winter. American Goldfinches are very small, but Wild Turkeys are really big. Blue Jays are blue and Tufted Titmice are gray, but they both have pointy heads. Black-capped Chickadees say their own name "chick-a-dee, dee, dee" and Northern Cardinals say "cheer, cheer, cheer" which is always a good way to start the day!

## FOOD

Birds can usually find plenty of food in nature, but if you provide healthy snacks like black oil sunflower seed, safflower seed, Niger thistle, peanuts and corn, they will stop by your yard on a regular basis. You can make one of the feeders below, throw some seed on the ground, or put some on a tree stump. In winter, suet provides extra energy for birds – and woodpeckers love it!



## PINECONE BIRD FEEDER

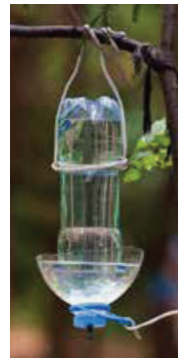
Materials: pinecones, string, peanut butter or shortening, birdseed, spoon, pie plate, scissors.

- Tie a long string to the top of your pine cone.
- Use a spoon to spread peanut butter or shortening all over your pinecone.
- Roll the cone in birdseed so that the seeds stick to the peanut butter or shortening.
- Head outside and tie your pinecone feeder to a tree branch.



## WATER

Just like you, birds need clean water to drink and bathe in. Put a shallow pan of fresh water out for the birds. Add a rock in the middle where they can perch. Make a water drip for birds using an empty plastic bottle or milk jug. Poke a hole in the lid or in the bottom, fill the bottle with water and hang it over a shallow pan. The drip, drip will attract birds and other wildlife. Water freezes when it gets cold, so it is important to check your bird bath daily.



## MILK CARTON BIRD FEEDER

Materials: scissors, milk or juice carton, string, birdseed, chopsticks or 10"-12" twigs, Wash the carton and let it dry completely.

- Create a hole in the top edge of the carton and tie a string through this hole.
- With scissors, cut feeding holes two inches up from the bottom. Make the feeding holes two to three inches in diameter.
- Add perches by making a hole, then push chopsticks or twigs through it to make a perch.
- Add bird seed and hang it outside.



## SHELTER

Birds need places to hide from predators and get out of the rain. Bushes and trees provide good shelter, so put your feeders and bird baths nearby. After the holidays, put your Christmas tree out near the feeders for the birds to hide in. Clear glass windows reflect the sky, so birds often fly into them by accident. Place your bird feeders 3 feet or less or farther than 30 feet from big windows.

## CATS

Cats love to watch birds too, but they will also eat them if they can. Keep your cats inside and let them birdwatch from a window.

