

# Summer-Time Birds



*On the Watch*  
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It's that time of year again for us to be reminded about some basic, scientifically-researched bird behaviors, as we clean and tidy our yards. This will help us all to understand, help and deal with wildlife - particularly with the birds who come to visit us every summer.

First on the list: Hummingbirds. They fly 1,000's of miles northward in April and May, to be able to nest in Canada and are very tired and hungry when they get here. Every day a Hummer must eat/drink twice

its weight to be in good health! Sapsuckers return just before they do and open up their old tree holes for the sap for themselves but Hummers are right behind them, to use those sap holes too. Hummingbird feeders have saved many a Hummer from starvation.

When we buy a Hummingbird feeder, it should always be red. Why? Because they are just like red flowers that have the perfect nectar for their bodies. The recipe for that COLOURLESS liquid nectar is: thoroughly clean, rinse feeder every time before you fill it. In a pot: 1/4 cup of sugar + 1 cup of water; bring to a boil; cool; fill the feeder. NO RED FOOD COLOURING. Scientist have found that the young of parents that have eaten red food colouring "nectar" can be born terribly deformed and die. Hang the feeder out of the sun and wind. We leave our feeders out until into November, when the last of them head south. They

are very intelligent birds - tapping on our cottage window when the feeder is empty!

Next: If you live on the shores of a lake, plant a foot or two deep at the water's edge with small bushes or plants. This does two things: run-off rain water is rich in plant nutrients that, once in the lake, become fertilizer for water weeds. Grass does not soak up as much of this as other plants. Secondly, Canada Geese, if they are a problem at your place, will not come ashore because they are afraid that a fox etc. may be lying in wait for them in those bushes.

Thirdly: Birds were hitting our windows and dying - they see the mirror image of what is behind them. When Bob and

I realized this, we bought yards of cloth netting. Bob put a screw on each of the outside corners of a window; stretched the netting \*taunt to latch onto the screws and cut off the excess netting for another window. Not one bird hit the windows after this! It was such a joy to see them put on their brakes and turn or even hit the netting, bounce off and fly away.

Fourthly: Squirrels can be a problem at bird feeders. Solution: Put the pole through a child's slinky toy and anchor it at the top at the feeder before putting the pole in the ground. If you are a good guy/gal, toss some seeds on the ground for the squirrels.

Finally: Do not eat bananas during bug season - your body gives

off a scent that blackflies and mosquitoes can't resist. It works for me!

*Photo above: A beautiful Ruby-Throated Hummingbird.*







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