



FUN FACT

A pair of mourning doves can raise up to six broods a year in warm southern climates.

How to...



Be a friend to wild birds

Find out how you can help turn your neighborhood into a safe habitat.

Wild birds need our help. Nearly 30% of the bird population in North America has disappeared over the past 50 years because of issues like habitat loss, pollution, and climate change. Some of the most affected species include sparrows, warblers, finches, and blackbirds. By making a few simple changes, you can help create a safe haven for birds near your home. Here's how to get started.

Offer materials for nesting. Spring is nesting season, and birds like to pick up natural materials to build their homes. Instead of clearing the materials off your lawn, leave twigs, small sticks, bark strips, pine needles, and leaves where they are so the birds can easily get to them. Be sure to leave only materials birds would find in nature, not synthetic products like acrylic yarn.

Give birds shelter. Build or buy a nest box or birdhouse made of wood. Other materials, like plastic, can get too hot for birds. Aim for a roof that extends over the entrance, to protect birds and their young from rain. Carefully place your birdhouse in a location predators can't reach, such as on a sturdy pole, a tree, or under a house eave.



Home sweet home

Be smart with feeders. If you have a bird feeder, keep the seed dry. As the weather outside gets hot and humid, damp seed can turn moldy and pass toxins to birds, who then spread disease to other birds. To prevent this, fill your feeder no more than halfway so the seed isn't sitting out for long. Also clean your feeder in the dishwasher or with hot water and a bottle brush at least once every two weeks (don't use soap). Let dry before refilling.

Leave insects alone. In the spring and summer breeding months, songbirds rely on insects to feed their young. But many people spray their yard with chemicals that kill insects. Talk to your family about skipping these chemicals (called insecticides) around your home.

Keep windows safe for birds. When a bird looks at a window, it sees a reflection of the sky or trees instead of glass. This is why so many birds mistakenly fly into windows. You can help avoid these collisions by making your home's windows more visible to birds. Talk to your family about whether you could keep bug screens on your windows year-round. With an adult's permission, you can also attach tape strips or decals to windows.

Make a bird feeder



Start with a clean, empty coffee can. Ask an adult to supervise as you follow these steps.

1. Using a can opener, remove the can bottom. With scissors, cut the can's plastic lid in half.
2. Paint the outside of the can as you wish. Let it dry.
3. Place the plastic lid halves on both ends of the can, lining them up with each other. Use hot glue to secure the lids.
4. Cut a piece of string to your desired length, then thread it through the can and knot it.
5. Add seeds to the feeder. Hang it away from where squirrels or other predators can reach.