



# BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

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ALL SEASONS  
WILD BIRD  
STORE

## Winterize!

### Early winter checklist

### Northern Cardinal

inside >



*In this issue...*

Feature Article .....	1
Chirps.....	2
Seasonal Checklist .....	2
Feeder Favorite .....	3
Habitat Help .....	3
Winter Birdbath Ideas.....	4

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*Bird's-Eye View* is published to share the joy of backyard birds with All Seasons Wild Bird Store's customers and friends.

## FEATURE ARTICLE

# Creating a Winter Oasis

By Bloomington Assistant Manager TRISH WAGLE

The birds have been so busy lately! Do you think they are trying to tell us something? Before we settle in for our long Minnesota winter, we should re-evaluate our backyard environment from a bird's point of view. Here are some ideas:

### Prepare a winter buffet

Birds need to increase their daily food intake by approximately 25% in colder temperatures. A well-equipped winter buffet for your birds includes seed, suet, peanuts and mealworms. These high-fat, high-protein foods help winter diners increase their caloric intake and fuel their fast metabolisms.

**Seed** \* With chipmunks in hibernation for most of December through February, you can provide seed for your birds in a ground feeder, a preferred style of dining for many species of birds. Use seed mixes rich in millet, such as our **Spectrum Mix** or **Finches' Choice**, to attract flocks of Dark-eyed Juncos and native sparrows, including White-throated, White-crowned and Tree Sparrows.

Northern Cardinals and Mourning Doves are attracted to safflower, both white and golden. **Golden Safflower** is a good choice for winter, since it has a higher protein and fat content than white safflower. Similarly, our **Cabin Mix** is rich in fat due to a higher proportion of black-oil sunflower seeds and peanuts. Wild Turkeys and Ring-necked Pheasants feed on whole or cracked corn and enjoy our **Critter Crunch** mix as a nice change of pace.

To avoid a buildup of shells under the feeder, try one of our "less mess" or "no mess" mixes, in which some or all of the hulls have been removed. These include **Songbird Delight**, **Kracker Jax**, **Medium Chips**, **Fine Chips**, or **#1 Select Chips**, which are whole sunflower hearts.

**Peanuts** \* In-shell peanuts delight Blue Jays and Red-bellied Woodpeckers. The smaller **Peanut Pickouts** will attract both Red- and White-breasted Nuthatches as well as chickadees.

**Suet** \* For an irresistible treat woodpeckers, nuthatches and chickadees (*continued page 4 . . .*)

## Share Your Stories

### How is feeding birds rewarding to you and those around you?

I recently became aware of a new research project that is trying to measure how wild bird feeding affects the bird community in a natural area and the health of individual birds. Although this type of research is exciting because nobody has ever truly studied this before, my intuition tells me that it's going to tell me something that I already know: that all of us who offer food, water and shelter to birds are providing a real benefit to the wild creatures that visit our backyards.

I'm more interested in the benefit to the people creating backyard oases for the birds; I think that's something we rarely reflect on. Feeding birds is a rewarding experience for me because it brings some of the most beautiful wildlife within feet of my kitchen window, which then prompts a smile and often questions from my spouse and kids. In turn, their interest becomes contagious to anyone nearby, and all of a sudden there's a great conversation going on about the beauty that is nature, and the stresses of the "real" world are forgotten. In a few minutes a challenging day is transformed and relationships forged, just because I feed birds.

**If you'd like to share how bird feeding is rewarding to you, please email us at [shop@wildbirdstore.com](mailto:shop@wildbirdstore.com).** We'd love to publish a few excerpts in the months to come.

Have a great holiday season and we hope to see you smiling and shopping soon!

*~ Al and Dave Netten*



Feeding birds engages the whole family.



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&  
DEC.

## Early Winter

By Minnetonka Manager CAROL CHENAULT

- Set out a heated birdbath with a **Carol's Dry, Dry Birdie** insert to provide a safe source of open water for your birds.
- Add a suet feeder (or two) to your feeding station.
- Provide dried mealworms and suet pellets to tray, dish or hopper style feeders.
- Keep your **Nyjer™** feeder stocked for winter finches (Goldfinches, Pine Siskins, House Finches and possibly Red Polls and Purple Finches).
- Offer our **Peanut Pickouts** in a peanut feeder for Black-capped Chickadees, White-breasted Nuthatches and Red-breasted Nuthatches.
- Consider adding an in-shell peanut feeder for Blue Jays and Red-bellied Woodpeckers.**
- Apply suet directly to tree bark to attract brown creepers (try **Tree Icing** suet or suet plugs).
- Install a winter roosting box where the morning sun will warm it.



- Sprinkle Spectrum Mix or Finches' Choice on the ground or in a ground feeder for Dark-eyed Juncos and White-throated, White-crowned, Chipping and Tree Sparrows. Or, try Critter Crunch ground feed to attract turkeys, pheasants, jays, cardinals and critters.**

- Move some feeders to the deck rail or under the eaves for close-up viewing and easy filling. Consider using large capacity feeders to reduce refilling trips out in the snow.
- Add an extension to your pole system and raise your baffle to allow for the height of the snow cover.

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Visit our Facebook page to post photos, ask questions and be the first to know about upcoming sales and events.



# Northern Cardinal

## Dressed Up for the Season

Contributed by customer CAROLYN MARSHALL

*The last leaves flutter to the ground, the daylight hours dwindle and the snow begins to fall. The start of a long, colorless winter? Not in Minnesota! The brilliant red Northern Cardinal is a splash of color in winter's drab landscape, flying from feeder to ground to bird bath and back to the feeder and calling a familiar, "chit, chit, chit."*

Of all the non-migrating songbirds the male cardinal stands out the most, offering a stark contrast against a snowy background. In addition to his bright red color the cardinal sports a crested head with a black chin and neck. Even the brown female glows with her red accents and sharp crest. And because they're year-round residents, their bright red color symbolizes the beauty and warmth of the holiday season.

A social bird, winter finds the cardinals traveling and feeding in flocks of a dozen or more while foraging for food that consists mainly of seeds and fruit, with a supplement of insects. This behavior is in sharp contrast to the mating and nesting season when they



move around in pairs, the female answering her mate's song while sitting on the nest. She is, after all, one of the few female American songbirds that sing. Not only does she share song phrases with her mate, but her songs are often longer and somewhat more complex.

Cardinals tend to be a little skittish, but with patience and the right approach you can soon make them regular visitors to your backyard feeders. They're ground feeders by nature so start by putting some safflower or sunflower seed on the ground beneath your platform feeder. Be sure to offer water,

especially during the winter season.

Further entice them by providing dense foliage, such as shrubs, pine trees or similar landscape ornamentals. The foliage offers nesting possibilities as well as protection from predators. With the expansion of backyards and the growing interest in watching and feeding birds throughout the years, the Northern Cardinal has thrived in the urban environment.

So invite the beauty of winter into your backyard and enjoy the beautiful cardinal just outside your window. ■

## HABITAT HELP

### Winter Roosting Box By Wayzata Manager MELISSA BLOCK

**Ever peek out on a cold winter day and wish there were something you could do to help your birds endure the frigid nights?**

Well, here's a solution: provide a winter roosting box. Research shows that an enclosed roosting cavity stays up to nine degrees warmer at night than a shrub or tree. Since birds drop their body temperature at

night to conserve energy, providing a roosting box offers up to 50% energy savings for your feathered friends. That's a return that's well worth it!

**Backyard favorites that typically nest in boxes**, including chickadees, nuthatches and small woodpeckers, may seek refuge in a winter roosting box. One box can house several birds.

**We recommend the Lone Pine Creations® Winter Roosting Box.** It's perfect for chickadees! ■



Photo Courtesy: David Wagle

## Creating A Winter Oasis

( . . . continued from page 1)

love, offer suet that is enriched with seeds, fruits or nuts, like our **Pine Tree Farms High Energy**. Or, consider suet pellets: they contain ground-up insect protein and are a convenient way to provide both fat and protein.

**Mealworms** \* Try freeze-dried mealworms in the tray of your feeder or create layers in a tube feeder. Live mealworms can be used in the winter as well. The birds eat them even if they freeze.

### Offer an open-water source

An open-water source attracts three times as many birds to your yard. It not only provides liquids, but also a place to warm up; some birds, like overwintering robins, enjoy the steam rising off the water. We have a number of birdbaths that attach to deck railings for easy filling and viewing. Use a product called **Carol's Dry, Dry Birdie** to prevent the birds

from bathing while still providing access to the deeper parts of the bath for a drink.

### Provide good cover

Between meals and saunas, the birds will need a place to stay warm and dry. Evergreens provide good cover, as large groups of birds gather close to the trunk to share body heat. Another option is a chickadee roosting box. This is a large box insulated and equipped with a small entrance to prevent heat loss. It should be mounted 6 feet high, facing the east or southeast, and protected from the wind.

### Consider your comfort, too!

Winter is a great time to reassess the location and types of feeders in your yard. Take another look at the placement of your feeders. With no leaves on the trees, there may be spots where you can see your feeders, and therefore your birds, better than in the summer. Also consider that with no leaves weighing

them down, some branches may rise up a little higher.

Invest in a large-capacity feeder, which means fewer trips to the feeder when it's cold and snowy. Move feeders in closer to your house or even onto your deck so they can be easily filled.

### Winterize your feeders

As snow accumulates, you may find that critters can reach your feeders. Thwart mid-winter raiders by raising feeders up with pole extensions. Our **Erva® Pole Extensions** (1" dia.) come in 9", 14", 20" and 28" lengths. Also, move the squirrel baffles up higher. The top of the baffle should be at least 5 feet off the snow pack.

Having created a backyard winter oasis for the birds, you can sit back and watch while knowing that your feathered guests are comfortable and well taken care of. ■

## WINTER BIRDBATH IDEAS



### Birdbath Safety Insert

#### Carol's Dry, Dry Birdie

**Carol's Dry, Dry Birdie** is a simple device that floats in your heated bath and provides your backyard birds several dry places to perch for a much needed drink. Carol's Dry, Dry Birdie also deters birds from taking the "polar plunge" when it's below freezing. It goes without saying that bathing is not recommended in freezing temps. Brrr! The birdbath insert comes in two sizes—

12" or 14"—diameter to accommodate most heated baths.

This product is locally manufactured right here in Minnesota, with design consultation provided by our own Carol Chenault, Minnetonka manager.



### Heated Birdbath

#### Erva® clamp-on birdbath with heated insert

The **Erva® 14"-diameter steel-ring, heated birdbath** comes in a handsome granite finish. The Erva® heated birdbaths are available in a variety of styles to meet your needs. One of our favorites is the deck clamp model;

this birdbath attaches to most deck railings, making it easy and convenient for you to refill. These baths are controlled by a built-in thermostat that shuts the heating element off when not needed and consistently provides water for the birds (down to -20°F).

### Cord Connector

#### The Cord Connect™ for heated birdbaths



The **Cord Connect™** protects the electrical supply to your heated birdbath by providing a snap-together,

water-tight seal that secures the connection between two power cords.

**Have an idea for a future issue of *Birds-Eye View*?** Photos and articles may be submitted by email to [info@wildbirdstore.net](mailto:info@wildbirdstore.net).  
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