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## Conservation Notes

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## Backyard Bird Feeding Tips

**Bird feeding is a wonderful way to enjoy nature and insure the survival of birds during our harsh winters. However, you need to know which birds will come to your feeder, the types of foods they prefer, and where they prefer to eat. This fact sheet will provide you with a list of species you can expect in northeast South Dakota, the types of feed these birds prefer, and some simple rules to follow that will ensure the health and well-being of the birds you are feeding.**

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### Bird Seed

There are several types of seed available. We recommend the following for this area; black oil sunflower seed, niger seed, and/or millet. Cracked corn should be added if you have Ring-necked pheasants nearby. Avoid purchasing pre-mixed birdseed. These mixtures usually contain fill such as wheat and milo that most birds ignore. Recommendations for types of bird feeders and feeder location are given on the next page. Remember to clean your feeders every few weeks!

### Suet

Suet is the fat trimmed from around the kidneys and loins of cattle. Suet is not usually sold commercially except for suet cakes that have been blended with various seeds. Contact your local butcher or meat market to see if suet is available for sale. Suet is best placed in metal baskets located next to tree trunks. Domestic pets and some wild mammals will take suet if placed too low to the ground or in plastic mesh baskets. Suet will turn rancid in warm weather.

### Hummingbird Nectar

During the summer months, Ruby-throated hummingbirds can be attracted to your yard by offering home-made nectar. To make hummingbird nectar bring to a boil a solution of one part white sugar and four parts water. Boil the mixture for two minutes and let cool. Do not use honey or sugar substitutes. Do not add red food coloring. Fill feeder with cooled mixture, but only enough for one to two days feeding. Store any extra solution in the refrigerator. If the solution becomes cloudy, an indication the solution has fermented, remove and add new. Placing the hummingbird feeder in shade will increase the shelf life of the nectar. You should clean your feeder once a week. Hummingbird feeders should be maintained from early May through mid-September.

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## **Protect Your Feeding Station From Predators!**

**Keep cats and dogs on leashes away from your feeding station and cover!**

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## Feeding Zones

There are four feeding zones birds will utilize at your feeding station.

Ground Level– Spread millet and cracked corn at this level for ground feeding species like sparrows.

Table Top or Low Post Level—Offer millet, cracked corn, and sunflower seed on a low table feeder. Sunflower see can also be placed in a post mounted feeder located two to three feet above ground. A good location for this type of feeder is next to conifer trees and shrubs.

Hanging or High Post Level— Hang tube type feeders filled with niger or sunflower seed five to six feet above ground from a post or tree branch.

Tree Trunk—Hang large metal suet baskets next to the trunk of a tree for large woodpeckers like the Pileated. For smaller woodpeckers like the Downy, suet bags or baskets can be hung below tree branches or from high posts. Keep in mind when placing suet feeders, that pets and wild mammals will eat your suet if within reach.

**Preferred Food and Feeder Location by Species**

<b><u>Species</u></b>	<b><u>Feeder Location</u></b>	<b><u>Preferred Food</u></b>
Red-bellied woodpecker	tree trunk	suet, sunflower seed
Downy woodpecker	tree trunk	suet, sunflower seed
Hairy woodpecker	tree trunk	suet, sunflower seed
Northern flicker	tree trunk	suet, peanut hearts
Pileated woodpecker	tree trunk	suet
Blue jay	table top, low post	sunflower seed, cracked corn
Black-capped chickadee	all locations	suet, sunflower seed
Red-breasted nuthatch	tree trunk, all posts	suet, sunflower seed
White-breasted nuthatch	tree trunk, all posts	suet, sunflower seed
Brown creeper	tree trunk	suet
Northern cardinal	table top, low post	sunflower seed, cracked corn
Slate-colored junco	ground level	millet, cracked corn
American tree sparrow	ground level	millet, cracked corn
White-throated sparrow	ground level	millet, cracked corn
Purple finch	hanging, high post	niger seed, sunflower seed
House finch	hanging, high post	niger seed, sunflower seed
Red crossbill	table top, all posts	sunflower seed
White-winged crossbill	table top, all posts	sunflower seed
Common redpoll	hanging, high post	niger seed, millet
Pine siskin	hanging, high post	niger, sunflower seed
American goldfinch	hanging, high post	niger, sunflower seed
Evening grosbeak	table top, low post	sunflower seed