

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

by Marg Hendrick

Feeding birds throughout the winter has become a favourite occupation of many people. Should this be your interest, now is an opportune time to get your feeders up. This will give wintering-over birds the opportunity to find your feeding station well before winter sets in.

If you are interested in attracting specific species, it is important to offer foods that they prefer. Conversely, if you wish to discourage House Sparrows and European Starlings, you should avoid putting out table scraps which they favour, but are of little interest to most other winter species. However, if you already have House Sparrows and starlings they will probably remain as they also like fat and various seeds. One advantage to having them is that they are noisy and will help to attract other birds.

In order to help you choose the type of seed best suited to your needs, I have extracted information from a bird feed preference chart which appeared in "The Nature Society News". I have included the results of my experience with niger seed, which was not mentioned in the publication. Niger seed is expensive, so you would be well advised to present it in a distleflink silo feeder as it permits only one seed to be extracted at a time. This may save you from bankruptcy!

The all important sunflower seed is favoured by Northern Cardinals, Blue Jays, Black-capped Chickadees, White and Red-breasted Nuthatches, American Goldfinches, Evening Grosbeaks, Pine Grosbeaks, House Finches, Purple Finches and Pine Siskins. Niger seeds are of high attractiveness to American Goldfinches, House Finches, Pine Siskins and Common Redpolls. Redpolls also

like mixed seeds. White millet is the choice of Tree Sparrows, Song Sparrows as well as various other sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos. Pine Siskins, White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows are quite fond of milo. Cracked corn is enjoyed by Blue Jays, Mourning Doves and by the early spring migrant

"blackbirds". Mourning Doves also enjoy mixed seeds and cracked wheat. No feeding station is complete without some form of beef fat. It is favoured by Black-capped Chickadees, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, White and Red-breasted Nuthatches and is often the mainstay of birds that have been caught here in the winter outside of their normal range.

The above information covers a limited number of species and lists only their favourite foods. It omits data on nuts, fruits and some of the less favoured seeds. If anyone wishes more detailed information please phone the writer.

If you plan to buy the usual packages of wild bird seed, you will find that most are low in sunflower seed content. You can get around the deficiency by buying packages of sunflower seeds to augment your mix. If you use large amounts of seed, you would be better to buy your seed separately at a feed mill. You can then choose the type of seeds that you desire at less cost, and make your own mix according to the number and species of birds that you are feeding. We find that buying sunflower seeds, white millet and cracked corn fills our needs nicely. As a luxury we buy niger seed. It is more difficult to obtain and we purchase it wherever we can. We also buy scrap beef fat and hang it out in net bags. There are other ways of presenting it, but avoid metal mesh containers unless the

metal is covered by plastic. Some of you may be interested in taking part in the Ontario Bird Feeder Survey, which involves gathering information obtained by watching your feeder. If so, write Feeder Survey, Long Point Observatory, P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, Ont. NOE 1M0 for more information.

The North Leeds Birdwatchers (NLB) turned up 63 species on their field trip to Amherst Island including Red Knots, Black-bellied and Lesser Golden Plovers, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary, Least and Pectoral Sandpipers and Wilson's Phalaropes. The NLB outing to Charleston Lake yielded 55 species some of which were an Olive-sided Flycatcher, 5 Scarlet Tanagers and the following warblers: Common Yellowthroat, Nashville, Northern Parula, Blackburnian and Magnolia. On

personal walks members of the NLB found Ruddy Turnstones, Sanderlings, Short-billed Dowitchers, Semi-palmated Plovers, Semi-palmated Sandpipers American Redstarts, Bay-breasted, Golden-winged, Black-and-white, Black-throated Green and Chestnut-sided Warblers as well as Ovenbirds and a Swainson's Thrush.

Bill Cutfield was lucky enough to come across a group of 6 House Wrens singing in unison. It must have been quite an experience! Bill also saw a Common Raven near Red Horse Lake.

The white European Starling reported by Gladys Burt in the spring has disappeared. However, one of its offspring, also white, travels with other starlings near her home. Gladys also had a glimpse of a Northern Cardinal in the same area.

June McFadyen had a Rufous-sided Towhee near her home as did another lady - and I did it again - mislaid her

name! Eastern Bluebirds still bathe in Rene Waterfield's birdbath and have been joined by other species such as the American Goldfinch. Her Ruby-throated Hummingbird was last seen on Sept. 19. If you have a later date for this species please call as it would be of interest for the NLB records.

Joe Kenney was kind enough to report that the last Barn Swallows were seen at the Kenney Hotel on Aug. 25. Four Common Snipe and 3 Killdeer appeared in the puddles on Clifford Smith's lawn after heavy Sept. rains. Canada Geese are migrating and soon Evening Grosbeaks and other winter finches will arrive. Please report your new sightings. The number to call is 359-5178 and until next month

GOOD BIRDING!

OCTOBER COMING EVENTS

- 1 Portland Public Library begins Storytime for preschoolers, 10-11 a.m.
- 6 Rideau Lakes Horticultural Society Plant Sale at regular meeting 7:45 p.m. at Forfar Hall. Speaker Bill Sutherland on Hydroponics
- 9 Rideau District High School - Interim reports to students
- 13 Sheldons Community Centre, Plum Hollow - Paul Arnold, Westport OPP will talk about Neighbourhood Watch program at 8 p.m.
- 15 Rideau District High School first Parents' Night from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.
- 16 Delta United Church Annual Turkey and Ham Harvest Dinner at 5:00 pm
- 16 Rideau Lakes Union Library presents 1837 - the Farmers' Revolt at Portland Community Centre at 8 pm
- 16 St. Barnaby's CWL Harvest Dance at Colonade Country Club - Contact 542-0542 or 382-2655 for tickets. \$15./couple
- 16 **WORLD FOOD DAY**
- 17 St. John's Anglican Church, Leeds Craft Fair at Lyndhurst Legion from 10:00 - 4:00. Admission 50¢
- 19 RLUL presents Craftsmas - a celebration of Christmas arts and crafts at Seeley's Bay Library 7 pm
- 24 BBQ Ham Supper at Masonic Hall Philippsville starting at 4 p.m. Proceeds to Harmony Lodge International gathering in May 1989.
- 29 RLUL presents Craftsmas - Christmas designs for the Home presented by Royal Botanical Gardens at Philippsville Seniors Hall at 7:30 p.m.
- 31 **HALLOWEEN**

RIDEAU LAKES UNION LIBRARY

Hours of operation	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Librarian
DELTA 928-2991		1:30-4:30		7-9p.m.		9-11 a.m.	J.Gunnewiek
ELGIN 359-5315		11-4p.m. 7-9p.m.	1-4p.m.	1-4p.m. 7-9p.m.	1-4p.m.	10-1p.m.	M.Keates D.Haskins
LYNDHURST 928-2277			2-5 7-9p.m.			10-1p.m.	W.Royal
PORTLAND		6-9p.m.		11-3p.m.	2-4p.m.	11:30-2:30	J.Gunnewiek
SEELEYS BAY 387-3909		1:30-4:30		1:30-4:30p.m.	2:30-5p.m.	10-1p.m.	H.Simpson 6:30-9