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Feeding and Attracting Wildlife Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service Joan Brigham, Naturalist February 1973 16 pages

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# Jeeding & Attracting Wildlife

**COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE** 

**MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY** 

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Issued in furtherance of cooperative extension work in agriculture and home economics, acts of May 8, and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. G.S. McIntyre, Director, Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

#### FEEDING AND ATTRACTING WILDLIFE

By

Joan Brigham, Naturalist Fenner Arboretum

Observing wild life, perceiving their needs, learning to understand and respect their role in the environment and their relationship to man may all be achieved by attracting wildlife to your back yard.

This beneficial activity gives the dual satisfaction of enjoying the "fun" involved as well as providing for the important needs of wildlife in the winter. Learn the joy of utilizing your senses in the immediate vicinity of your home. Observe the bright red of the cardinal and the brilliant blue of the jay reflected against the stark white of the snow. Watch the incessant feeding activity necessary to maintain their high body temperatures - 105-112 degrees. Listen to and learn the calls of your backyard visitors. Notice how new birds appear and old ones leave as the seasons change. Listen for their spring territory songs as they prepare to nest in the houses or shrubby borders around your yard. Watch for and learn to identify the tracks of the little chickadee, the busy squirrel or the elusive pheasant. Use your nose to note the presence of other wildlife. Taste the nutritious sunflower seed that is sustaining other winter wildlife. Sense the feel of the elements against the fur and feathers of your winter friends. Wonder at how they maintain fragile bodies when the wind chill index is minus 30 degrees and locate their source of shelter from driving winds and snow storms.

Remember, once you begin to feed wildlife they become dependent on you as their source of food for the winter. Don't discontinue it. This is an activity that may be enjoyed by all ages. Many youth groups actually build and stock feeders for their own enjoyment or for the benefit of others. Home-bound senior citizens or individuals confined to nursing homes, just by making these observations, may discover an added dimension to their lives. Many families maintain feeders the year around as a project. One of the finest service projects that may be undertaken stocking and maintaining feeders for those who are incapacitated. Though they may be bedridden, their powers of observation are still intact and they may derive many hours of pleasure from this ben ficial hobby.

#### THREE BASIC REQUIREMENTS OF WILDLIFE

You may attract an astonishing assortment of wildlife by supplying in your backyard environment their three basic needs; FOOD, WATER AND SHELTER.

Food: A variety of foods and feeding locations will insure an abundance of wildlife. Fancy hanging feeders are not a necessity. Many birds prefer to feed on the ground. Leave standing sunflower and corn stalks in your garden to simulate actual feeding conditions. Plant your shrub beds so they are both colorful and attractive food for wildlife. If you have an extensive area, think in terms of planting rows of multiflora rose for both food and shelter. Many animals like salt. Buy rock salt at your feed store to make salt licks for deer and other salt-loving mammals. Many kinds of nuts will be attractive to a number of mammals. Don't forget to plant flowers attractive to hummingbirds. With their long bills and tongues they are attracted to red-colored flowers such as jewel-weed, bee balm, columbine, honeysuckle, trumpet vine, salvia, coral bell, geranium, nasturtium.

<u>Shelter</u>: Homes and protection from the elements are very important. This pamphlet includes a variety of designs for houses and nesting boxes. It is important to remember to leave in your yard a number of natural sites. Don't cut down that dead tree in your yard unless it is a safety hazard. It will soon have holes for cavity-nesting birds and mammals, and provide interesting opportunities for observation of wildlife in a natural setting. Pile brush and tree limbs to provide shelter for pheasants, other birds, rabbits, etc. Don't discard your old Christmas tree. Decorate it for the birds with suet, peanut butter and seeds and set it out for food and shelter as your gift to them.

<u>Water:</u> Bird baths and drinking areas are one and the same, as birds drink and bathe in the same water. All wildlife needs water. They may be able to survive a short time without food, but not for long without water. If you want to keep wildlife attracted to your area for any period, water is a necessity. A fancy device is not necessary. A ground pool lined with plastic or a garbage can cover on a stump is adequate. The water should never be more than two inches deep. Running water or dripping water is very attractive.

#### NOCTURNAL ANIMALS:

Many animals are active only at night. By erecting a floodlight in your feeding area, you may learn a good deal about the habits of night-time visitors. Flying squirrel living in the hole in your dead tree will eat the sunflowers on your pole feeder.

A FINAL NOTE: Don't be discouraged if you have an over-abundance of "undesirable" wildlife such as sparrows, starlings and jays. The sight of a great number of species congregating at your feeding station will invariably attract other more "desirable" species.

Through your continued observation of your wildlife feeding area, you may acquire a number of interesting new hobbies. Learn to recognize wildlife calling cards - tracks. Make plaster casts, photograph your wildlife visitors, keep track of their seasonal changes and habits, keep records of their visits, learn their calls and you will realize the numerous rewards of a beneficial hobby.

#### \*\*\*\*\*

For more information on feeding and attracting wildlife, these are good references:

Hausman, A. Leon. Beginner's Guide to Attracting Birds. Cornerstone Library, N. Y.

Hickey, J. J. A Guide to Bird Watching. New York, Oxford University Press.

Hillcourt, William. Field Book of Nature Activities and Conservation. New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons.

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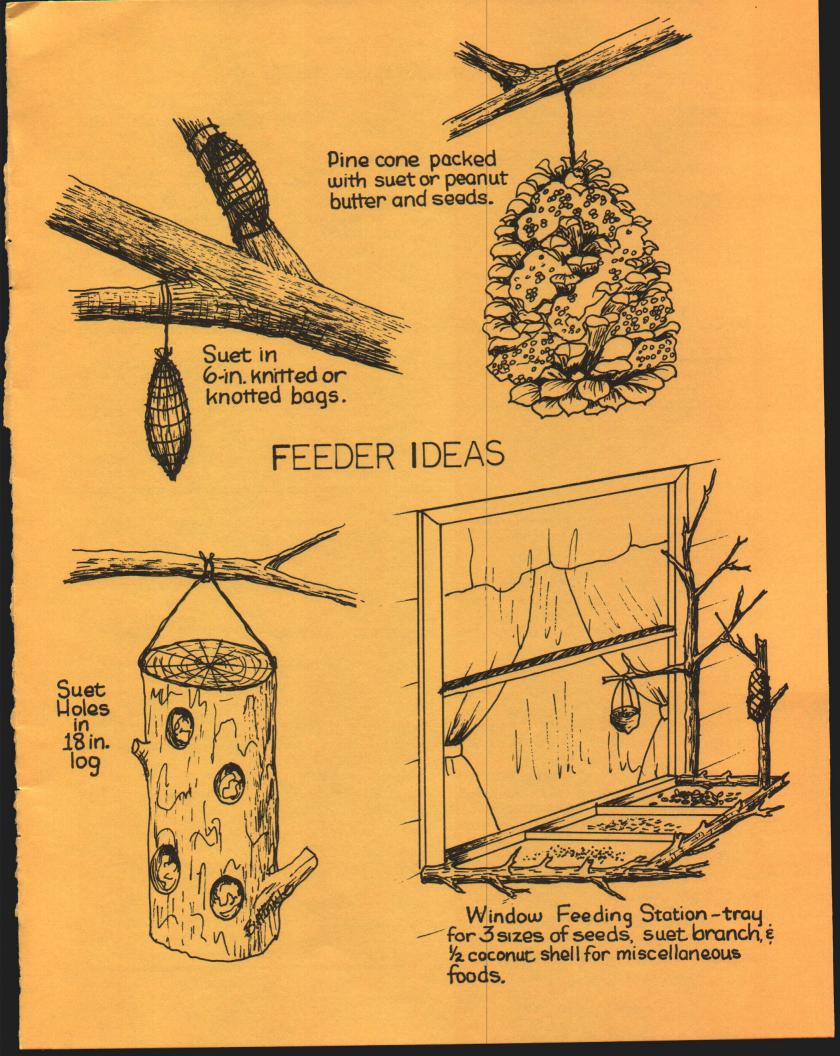
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Peterson, Roger T. Bird Watchers Anthology. Boston, Massachusetts. Houghton Mifflin.

Peterson, Roger T., Field Guide to the Birds (Eastern) Boston, Massachusetts. Houghton Mifflin Company.

Pettit, T. S., Birds in Your Backyard. New York, Harper Brothers.

Sawyer, E. J., Bird Houses, Baths and Feeding Shelters, Bloomfield Hills, Cranbrook Institute of Science.



## \*\*\* A TABLE OF FOODS FOR WINTER FEEDING STATIONS \*\*\*

#### FOOD OFFERED:

### MOST COMMONLY ATTRACTED ARE:

Beef suet, hard fat, peanut butter, sweet butter, cottage cheese.	Chickadee Tufted Titmouse Downy Woodpecker Hairy Woodpecker Other Woodpeckers (which may linger) Red-breasted Nuthatch (need evergreens)	White-breasted Nuthatch. Brown Creeper Golden-crowned Kinglet(early winter) Ruby-crowned King- let (early winter) Bluejay Starling Squirrel.
Sunflower seeds	The Crosbills ) south	Tufted Titmouse Red-breasted Nuthatch Goldfinch (in drab winter dress) irregular visits in years when seed is low in North. Flying Squirrel
Crumbs, especially greasy ones of doughnuts, piecrust, heavy cake, pancakes and bread crumbs.	Almost all species when ere and when snow and ic natural food supply.	
Small mixed seeds, such as hemp, millet, rape, buckwheat, canary bird seed, chick- feed, clover	Junco White-throated Sparrow Song Sparrow English Sparrow Goldfinch Pine Siskin Cardinal Snow Bunting.	Tree Sparrow White-crowned Sparrow Purple Finch Pine Grosbeak Redpoll Horned Lark
Larger seeds, such as soy beans, sunflower seeds, wheat, oats, corn (small), millet, rye, buckwheat. Some of these seeds should be left in the head, such as wheat, rye, corn, sunflower and millet. Add ground-up oyster and clamshells, and sprinkle around pond to attract ducks.	Bobwhite Quail Ruffed Grouse Mourning Dove.	Pheasant Meadowlark

DON'T FORGET TO PROVIDE DRINKING WATER and coarse white sand or ground-up clam shells or oyster shells for grit. Also, provide some coarse salt for northern finches that have a liking for this, such as siskins, redpolls, and grosbeaks. SALT LICKS - blocks of rock salt-may be purchased at feed stores to attract deer and other salt-loving mammals. FLOWER and GARDEN

KEEP PAGE

## WINTER BIRDS

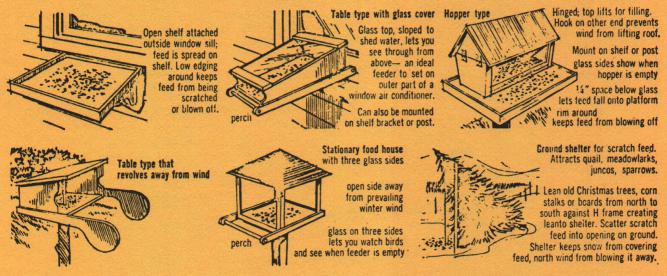
WINTER BIRD

HOW TO HAVE WINTER

The sound, color and motion of birds by your window in winter are a special kind of enjoyment. Almost anywhere you live, you can partake of this fun by doing a few simple acts of encouragement. Food, shelter and water are the three main things birds need in winter. Start feeding in fall while weather cools, to keep some of the summer residents from deciding to move south. Birds are more likely to stay if they find dense shrubbery for shelter, and open water when the ground is dry and frozen. Once you start feeding, keep it up for birds soon come to depend on this steady supply. Should it disappear for long in midwinter, they would be in serious trouble. Put feeders where you can watch them. You may as well enjoy the show. Birds soon become bold enough to come even to window ledges. Don't begrudge sparrows their share — their friendly commotion around a feeder helps attract birds you'd rather have.

## **TYPES OF FEEDERS**

## - for loose grain, other food in particles



#### FEED TO USE

Commercial bird food mixtures or scratch food such as you would buy for poultry containing sorghum, millet, wheat, sunflower seeds, cracked corn, and the like are good for attracting a wide range of birds — chickadees, bluejays, cardinals, tufted titmice, woodpeckers of different kinds, nuthatches, blackbirds, juncos, finches, and sparrows. Sunflower seeds are considered choice by bluejays, blackbirds, cardinals, towhces, chickadees, nuthatches and titmice — but a solid diet of them can become expensive. Bread crumbs, cracked nuts, whole or broken peanuts will attract a wide crowd. Raisins, currants and cut up apples will bring early spring arrivals among the catbirds, thrashers, robins and mockingbirds. Even waxwings might be tempted by them. Other loose feed includes popcorn (unsalted), corn meal, rolled oats, pumpkin or cantaloupe seeds, squash seeds. If lasting snows are common in your area, provide a little bird gravel with the feed.



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# WINTER BIRDS

#### FEED TO USE

WINTER BIRDS

In suct holders insert clean fresh slabs of beef suct. Stuff the holder full so birds can reach the food. Suet will attract jays, woodpeckers of all kinds, flickers, chickadees, nuthatches and starlings. Cakes in which seeds are bound together with melted suet or fat are sold commercially; it is also easy to make your own for filling special feeders such as coconut halves or drilled logs. Merely heat suct to liquify it, mix in as much small bird food as you can, then pat into molds and let cool. Birds will also take peanut butter from such feeders.

# SHRUBS AND TREES TO SHELTER AND ATTRACT BIRDS ALL YEAR

SERVICEBERRY (Amelanchier canadensis)

JAPANESE BARBERRY (Berberis thunbergi)

HACKBERRY (Celtis occidentalis)

CORNELIAN CHERRY (Cornus mas)

TATARIAN HONEYSUCKLE (Lonicera tatarica)

WASHINGTON HAWTHORN (Crataegus phaenopyrum)

**REGEL'S PRIVET** (Ligustrum obtusifolium regelianum)

CANAERT JUNIPER (Juniperus virg. canaerti) Large shrub-tree with reddish berries in June, provides nesting and food.

Dense thorny low shrub with red berries in fall and winter. Cardinals will nest in it.

Large tree with blue-black berries fall to spring, a favorite of dozens of birds.

Large shrub with scarlet cherry-like fruit in August.

Dense eight-foot shrub with red berries in June. Morrow's honeysuckle (L. morrowi) has berries a month later and Amur honeysuckle (L. maacki) produces them in early fall. All are good nesting shrubs.

Small tree, thorny, with red berries fall to spring, favorite of robins and cedar waxwings.

Dense medium shrub with blue-black berries fall to early spring.

Dense small evergreen tree with abundant blue berries fall to spring. BOSTON IVY (Parthenocissus tricuspidata) tricus-

COLORADO AND NORWAY SPRUCES

(Picea pungens and abies)

AUSTRIAN, SCOTCH AND WHITE PINES

(Pinus nigra, sylvestris and strobus)

PIN OAK (Quercus palustris)

AMERICAN CRANBERRY (Viburnum trilobum)

RUGOSA ROSE (Rosa rugosa) Vine will cover trees or buildings, blue berries fall to spring. Some birds nest in it.

Upright dense evergreen trees, with cones containing seeds taken by many birds.

Upright evergreen trees, with cones containing seeds taken by many birds.

Large tree, with small acorns that appeal all year to bluejays, nuthatches, woodpeckers. Dead leaves hang on most of winter, provide shelter.

Spreading high shrub with scarlet fruit summer to late fall.

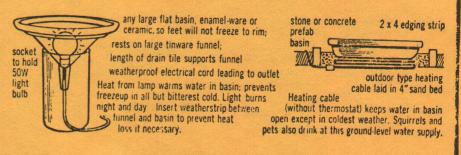
Dense medium thorny shrub with orange-red "hips" in fall to spring.

## WHEN SQUIRRELS BECOME PESTS

When squirrels become pests by stealing from feeders (or sometimes even running off with the feeder) you can ward them off in various ways. Safeguard hanging feeders by suspending with wire, well away from nearby perches within leaping distance. Provide feeder posts with a guard made of sheet metal fitted around the shaft. Any local sheet metal worker can make such a device to suit your situation.

## HOW TO SUPPLY WATER

In cold climates an open water supply is vital to birds. Where snow is plentiful the problem is slight, but where there is no snow, you must provide some source of moisture. Two home made devices sketched will keep water unfrozen in all but the bitterest weather. A few manufactured devices are on the market for keeping water in bird baths unfrozen.



## FRUIT-BEARING TREES, SHRUBS AND VINES ATTRACTIVE TO BIRDS

NAME	DATE IN FRUIT	NO. OF SPECIES OF BIRDS EATING
#*Five-leaved ivy or Virginia	August-February	12
Creeper # Boston Ivy	September-March	
# Red and Black Chokeberries	July-November	3
#*Spicebush	July-November	6
#*Japanese Barberry (Fruits are eaten mostly during the spring)	July-June	3
*Common Barberry	July-June	
Black or Cherry Birch	September-April	
# Yellow Birch	September-April	
Red Birch	June-September	
# Hackberry	January-December	10
#*Dogwoods	June-March	19
White-flowering Dogwood	August-January	24
Cornelian Cherry	July-November	
#*American Hawthorns	October-April	
#*English Hawthorn	August-March	5
Weigelia or Diervilla	November-March	
Oleaster or Wild Olive	September-April	
Japanese Oleaster	July-September	
# Wintergreen	January-December	
Black Huckleberry	July-October	11
Shrubby St. John's-wort	November-April	
*Common Juniper	January-December	12
*Irish Juniper	January-December	
*Red Cedar	January-December	16

# - The tiny bagworms that infest these trees are fed upon extensively by Siskens and Redpolls.

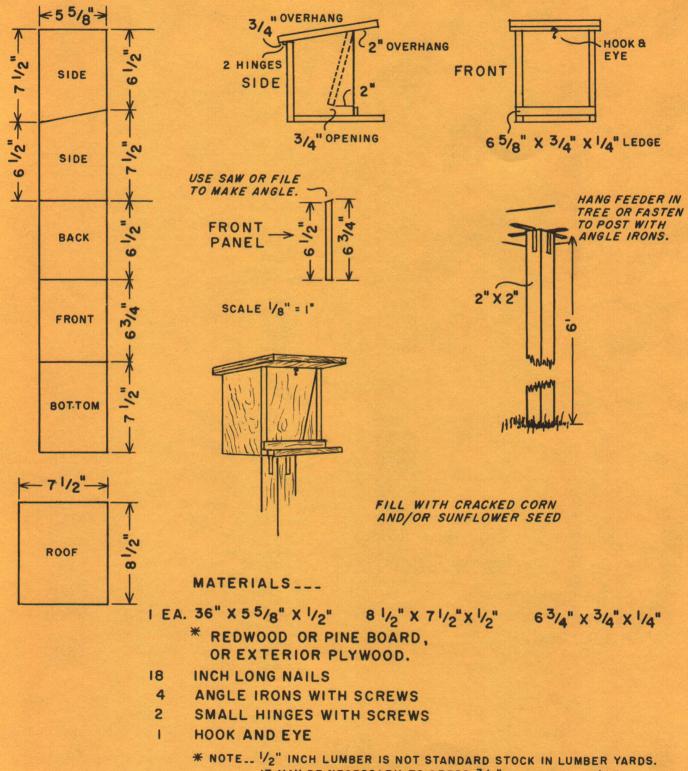
NAME	DATE IN FRUIT	NO. OF SPECIES OF BIRDS EATING
American & European Larches	October-April	
#*Common Privet	July-April	
*Riegel's Privet	July-April	2
#*Tartarian Honeysuckle	September-May	9
Fly Honeysuckle	March-June	
#*Wild Grapes	August-June	15
# Partridge Berry	January-December	3
# Mulberry (one of the best)	May-August	28
*Bayberry or Candle Berry	July-June	
# Sour Gum or Tupelo	July-October	10
<pre># Maheleb Cherry (best of wild cherry bird foods)</pre>	June-July	
# Wild Red or Bird Cherry	June-November	
Sand Cherry	June-August	
Wild Black Cherry	July-November	21
#*Flowering Crab	September-June	
#*Buckthorn	August-April	10
# Sumacs	January-December	16
#*Blackberries & Raspberries	June-October	30 and 20
#*Black Elderberry	July-October	27
Red Elderberry	June-August	
# Sassafras	July-October	
Buffalo Berry	June-October	
#*Green Brier	August-June	
# Nightshade or Bittersweet	July-April	5
# Mountain Ash	August-April	10

\* - Starred ones provide nesting sites as well as fruit for certain birds.

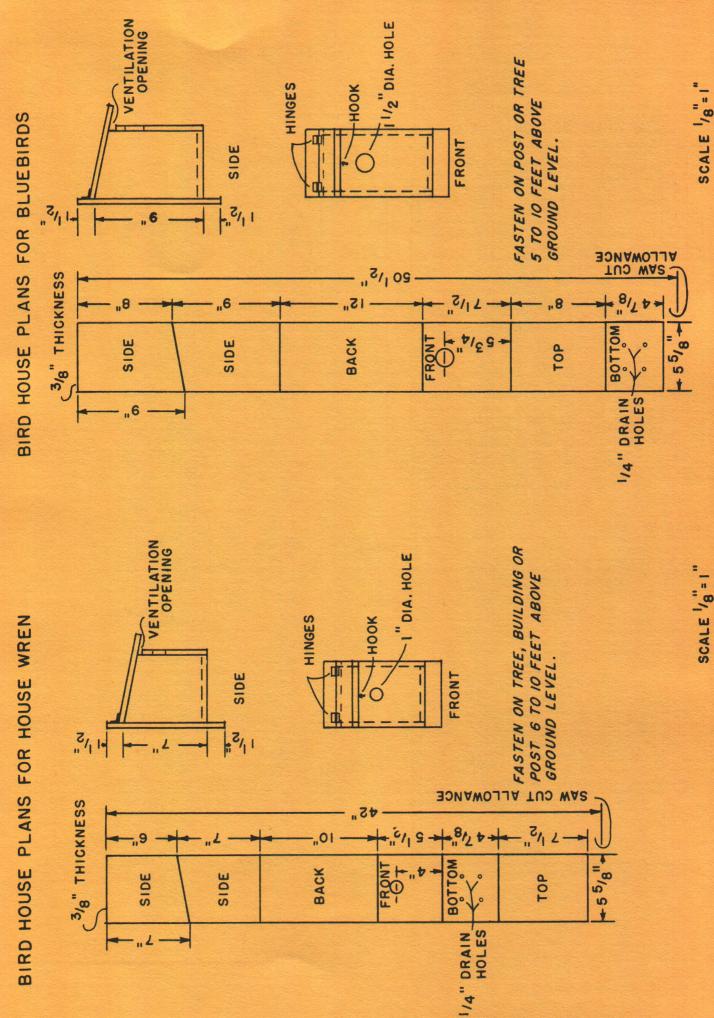
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3 4 8	6	18 22 20	23	
10 11	14	1. BARN SWALLOW 2. CLIFF SWALLOW 3. PURPLE MARTIN 4. CHIMNEY SWIFT 5. STARLING 6. GRACKLE 7. BLACKBIRD 8. BLUEBIRD 9. ROBIN	FLIGHT SILHOUETTES 10. GOLDFINCH 11. HOUSE SPARROW 12. KINGFISHER 13. FLICKER 14. BLUE JAY 15. MEADOWLARK 16. PRAIRIE CHICKEN 17. PHEASANT	18. KILLDEER 19. COMMON SNIPE 20. WOODCOCK 21. MOURNING DOVE 22. BOBWHITE 23. NIGHTHAWK 24. SPARROW HAWK 25. SHARP-SHINNED HAWK 26. CROW
15		Identifying Backyard Ne	TYPICAL ROADSIDE SI 1. SPARROW HAWK 2. RED-TAILED HAWK 3. TURKEY VULTURE Eighbors	LHOUETTES 2 1 2 3
	10 11 13 14	HOUE 12 15 15 15 15 15 15 15 15 15 15	18 19 20 22 23	25 26 27
	2. CUCKOO 10   3. CARDINAL 1   4. BLUE JAY 1   5. CEDAR WAXWING 1   6. HORNED LARK 1   7. UPLAND PLOVER 1   8. PHOEBE 1	P. PHEASANT 16. GRAC 0. MOURNING 17. STARL DOVE 18. RED-W 1. FLICKER 19. COWE 2. MEADOWLARK 20. HUMM 3. BOBWHITE 21. ROBIN 4. KILLDEER 22. KINGE 5. CROW 23. SHRIK SHORE and WATER SILHO	ING 25. KINGFISHER VING 26. HOUSE SPARROY BIRD 27. PURPLE MARTIN VINGBIRD 28. BARN SWALLOW J 29. TREE SWALLOW BIRD 30. CLIFF SWALLOW E 31. BLUEBIRD	V
NACK 1 5	1. GREAT BLUE HERON 2. NIGHT HERON 3. GREEN HERON 4. CLAPPER RAIL 5. MARBLED GODWIT 6. DOWITCHER 7. HUDSONIAN CURLEW 8. YELLOW-LEGS 9. BLACK SKIMMER	10. HERRING GULL 11. COMMON TERN 12. SEMIPALMATED SAND 13. SANDERLING 14. SPOTTED SANDPIPER 15. BLACK-BELLIED PLOVE 16. RINGED (SEMIPALMAT PLOVER 17. RUDDY TURNSTONE	R	19 19 10 13 14 12 13 14
		8		16 17

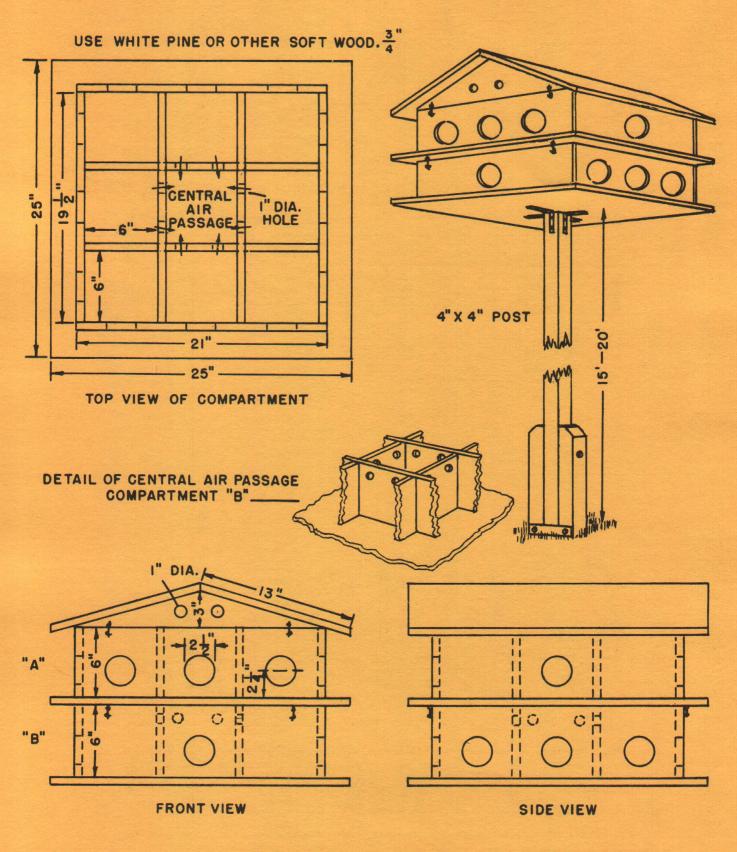
## BIRD FEEDER PLANS



IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO DRESS 3/4" MATERIAL TO 1/2".



PLANS FOR MARTIN HOUSE



BIRD	FLOOR	DEPTH	ENTRANCE	DIAMETER	HEIGHT
	OF	OF	ABOVE	OF	ABOVE
	CAVITY	CAVITY	FLOOR	ENTRANCE	GROUND
Bluebirds Robin Chickadees	inches 5 x 5 6 x 8 4 x 4	inches 8 8 8-10	inches 6 (1)* 6-8	inches 1 1/2 (1)*	feet 5-10 6-15 6-15
Titmice Nuthatches	4 x 4 4 x 4	8-10 8-10	6-8 6-8	1 1/8 1 1/4 1 1/4	6-15 12-20
House Wren Bewick's Wren Carolina Wren Tree Swallow Barn Swallow	4 x 4 4 x 4 4 x 4 5 x 5 6 x 6	6-8 6-8 6-8 6	1-6 1-6 1-5 (1)*	1 1 1 1/8 1 1/2 (1 <b>)</b> *	6-10 6-10 10-15 8-12
Purple Martin	6 x 6	6	1	2 1/2	15-20
Song Sparrow	6 x 6	6	(2)*	(2)*	1-3
Starling	6 x 6	16-18	14-16	2	10-25
Phoebe	6 x 6	6	(1)*	(1)*	8-12
Crested Flycatcher	6 x 6	8-10	6-8	2	8-20
Flicker	7 x 7	16-18	14-16	2 1/2	6-20
Red-headed Woodpecker	6 x 6	12-15	9-12	2	12-20
Down Woodpecker	4 x 4	8-10	6-8	1 1/4	6-20
Hairy Woodpecker	6 x 6	12-15	9-12	1 1/2	12-20
Screech Owl	8 x 8	12-15	9-12	3	10-30
Saw-whet Owl	6 x 6	10-12	8-10	2 1/2	12-20
Barn Owl	10 x 18	15-18	4	6	12-18
Sparrow Hawk	8 x 8	12-15	9-12	3	10-30
Wood Duck	10 x 18	10-15	3	6	4-20

\* (1) One or more sides open

\* (2) All sides open

BIRDS USING NEST BOXES OR SUPPORTING DEVICES

- 9. Carolina Wren 10. Brown Thrasher
- 11. Tree Swallow

- 1. Eastern Bluebird12. Barn Swallow23. Red-headed Wood-<br/>pecker2. Robin13. Cliff Swallow24. Downy Woodpecker3. Carolina Chickadee14. Purple Martin24. Downy Woodpecker4. Black-capped Chickadee15. Song Sparrow25. Hairy Woodpecker5. Tufted Titmouse16. English Sparrow26. Screech Owl6. White-breasted Nuthatch17. Bronzed Grackle27. Saw-whet Owl7. House Wren18. Orchard Oriole28. Barn Owl8. Bewick's Wren19. Starling29. Sparrow Hawk9. Carolina Wren20. Phoebe30. Mourning Dove10. Brown Thrasher21. Crested Flycatcher31. Wood Duck11. Tree Swallow22. Yellow-shafted Flicker32. American Goldeneye

  - 33. Hooded Merganser

