



Create a Bird-Friendly Habitat

Birding is enjoyed by more than 45 million across the United States¹. You can go birding just outside your door by planting a bird-friendly garden.

It starts by planting native plants that offer natural bird foods such as seeds, berries, nuts and nectar, as well as the insects birds feed their babies. You can add some supplemental feeders, a birdbath and nesting boxes and birds from colorful songbirds to acrobatic hummingbirds will be ready to move in. Many bird species are declining and planting for birds can help bolster their populations.

Find plants native to your area at [nwf.org/NativePlantFinder](https://www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder).

Did you Know?

96% of songbirds depend on caterpillars as a food source to survive? And a pair of Carolina chickadees requires between 6,000 and 9,000 caterpillars to successfully raise just one brood of young. It's important to plant native trees and plants to support other birds and wildlife. A native oak tree can support the caterpillars of over 500 species of butterflies and moths.

Tips & Info

Tips for Creating a Bird Habitat

- 1. Plant Natives.** Plant a variety of native plants – trees, shrubs and flowers – to offer food in the form of seeds, berries, nuts, and nectar. Learn more about plants native to your area at nwf.org/nativeplants.
- 2. Eliminate Insecticides.** Don't spray insecticides. Insects are the primary source of food for most bird species and are a critical source of protein and fats for their babies. Learn more about avoiding pesticides at nwf.org/sustainability.
- 3. Provide Water.** A simple birdbath is a great start. Birds require clean water, so change it every 2-3 days, this also prevents mosquitoes. Use a heater in the winter. Place 10 feet from dense shrubs or other cover that predators may use.
- 4. Build a Brush Pile.** Start with larger logs and top with smaller branches. Some birds will hunt, roost or even nest in brush piles.
- 5. Remove Invasive Non-Native Plants.** Invasive plants out-compete native species and destroy bird habitat. To find a list of invasive plants in your region go to the USDA National Invasive Species Information Center invasivespeciesinfo.gov/subject/lists.
- 6. Keep Snags.** Standing dead trees called snags provide cavity-nesting birds with places to raise young, shelter from bad weather, and a source of insects for food. Learn more about snags at: nwf.org/treesandsnags.
- 7. Add Birdhouses.** Install nesting boxes, also called “birdhouses,” to offer cavity-nesting species a place to raise young. Boxes should have the right size entry hole and dimensions for the species you are trying to attract, as well as ventilation holes near the top and drainage holes below. Mount the box at the natural nesting height for the bird species.
- 8. Prevent Window Strikes** - Many birds are killed when they fly into windows. Prevent bird strikes by marking or covering windows with bird tape, stickers, netting, or screens. Also, turn lights off at night, which disorient migrating birds.
- 9. Keep Your Cat Indoors.** Free-roaming domesticated cats kill billions of wild birds every year. Bells placed around an outdoor cat's neck does not help.
- 10. Go Up.** Take your bird-friendly habitat vertical by planting native trees. One tree can provide food, cover and places for birds and other wildlife and double the size of your habitat on the ground.
- 11. Fill a Feeder.** Bird feeders can supplement natural food sources and create great bird viewing opportunities.

1. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation.

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