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The Importance of Bird Feeders

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Birds are commonly seen flying through backyards, occasionally perching in a tree or on a fence and some may even choose to build nests in your backyard. Birds can be entertaining to watch and some people may desire to attract more birds to their yard or encourage birds to stay longer in their backyard for the enjoyment of bird watching. If you have wondered how to attract more birds to your yard and encourage them to stay awhile, a good way to encourage birds to do so is to provide feed for them. However, the type of birds you attract will depend on the type of feed you put out, the type of feeder you use and the location of the feeder.

There are several different types of feeders. The most common are platform feeders, tube feeders, suet feeders and hanging feeders. There also are variations and combinations of these feeders. Such as, ground level platform feeder or a raised platform feeder or a high or low hanging feeder. Location, high or low, as well as surrounding cover will have as much to do with the likelihood of birds using the feeder as does the type of feeder. Having cover nearby the feeder will give birds more protection from predators and make them feel safer and more comfortable visiting the feeder.

Along with cover water is another important consideration in backyard habitats, especially in the winter, when sources of water may be hard for birds to find. A birdbath may attract as many birds as the feeders. Using a birdbath heater in the winter will help ensure birds have access to water even when the temperature drops below freezing. Make sure to locate the birdbath where it will be easy to fill and close to an electrical outlet if you choose to use a birdbath heater.

Like all animals birds require food, water, and shelter and food is often the resource that is hardest for birds to find during the winter. Because food can be more difficult for birds to find during the winter, bird feeders play an important role in the winter and keeping bird feeders full of feed this time of year is very important. If you are new to feeding birds and are wondering what type of feed birds prefer, black oil sunflower seeds are the most appealing to a variety of bird species according to Kansas State Horticulture Specialist Ward Upham. Upham recommends using a bird feed mix that has a high percentage of black oil sunflower seeds if you are new to feeding birds. In addition to black oil sunflower seeds, white proso millet is also preferred by many birds, especially dark-eyed juncos, sparrows and the red-winged blackbird. If

your goal is to attract different types of birds to your yard, Upham also recommends using different types of bird feeders as well as different types of seed.

If you are interested in finding out more about the types of feed different bird species prefer or would like more information on the what bird species can be found in your area contact one of the Wildcat District Extension offices.

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