

For your
Backyard
Bird *Life*

A guide to feeding
and photographing
wild birds at home.



COUNTRYMAX STORES[®]
For your *REAL* life.

Winter 2022



CountryMax Stores

have been a go-to resource for backyard bird enthusiasts for nearly 40 years. Whether you're looking for a specialty seed blend designed to target specific birds or you just like attracting bright colors to your yard, CountryMax has seeds, feeders and so much more. We're passionate about bringing this little slice of nature into your life. Now more than ever, we think that backyard birding is a worthwhile pursuit.

As our natural world changes, birding takes on even greater importance. We've created this guide to inform, educate and inspire you on this journey. It's a hobby every generation can enjoy. Even better, with the exceptional quality of today's camera phones, you can take and share incredible photos of birds at your feeders throughout the year. In addition to helpful information and products, look for photo tips throughout this guide.



-CountryMax Stores

Why Feed Wild Birds?

Quite simply, it's fun, fascinating and beneficial to birds and our environment! Wild birds are among the most crucial aspects of a healthy, balanced ecosystem – spreading and pollinating seeds and berries, eating insects, providing food for natural predators and so much more.

Feeding wild birds gives them an opportunity to stabilize and normalize population levels that may be challenged by humans and predators. Wild birds use backyard feeders as

supplements to their natural feeding behaviors, and turn to these sources when natural food is lacking.

One more reason: incredible photographs!

By providing a backyard filled with well-maintained bird feeders, you create a natural outdoor "studio." In just a few short months you'll be amazed by the variety and volume of stunning shots you can take. Have fun!



Northern Cardinal



(*Cardinalis cardinalis*) Striking and popular, the male northern cardinal's red feathers are a treat at any feeder. Typically spotted in mated pairs of males and females. Female coloring is a duller red-olive or gray color. Usually, the first bird at your feeders in the morning and last to leave at night. Present in New York State year-round.



Blue Jay

(*Cyanocitta cristata*) Boldly colored and behaving, the blue jay is a boisterous addition to any backyard feeder. Known in the birding community to be both beneficial to nearby birds by aggressively challenging predators like hawks, while also being a "bully" and scaring other birds away while it feeds. Present in New York State year-round.

Mourning Dove



(*Zenaida macroura*) Peaceful and soothing in appearance and sound, the mourning dove can usually be found foraging for spilled seed below feeders or from platform feeders on the ground. Remarkably prolific breeders, mourning doves are found in great numbers across the entire US. Their distinctive "coo-coo" vocalization is easily recognizable and pleasant. Present in New York State year-round.

Common Birds of New York State

Fall and Winter Months



Downy Woodpecker

(*Dryobates pubescens*) The smallest of the North American woodpeckers, the downy woodpecker is a frequent visitor to suet and nut feeders. Strikingly similar looking to hairy woodpeckers, the downy woodpecker is commonly heard "drumming" and responding to other downy woodpecker "drummings" as they drill for insects in tree trunks. Present in New York State year-round.

House Sparrow



(*Passer domesticus*) Quite possibly the world's most abundant wild bird, the house sparrow's proliferation has been often remarked upon throughout history. Comfortable in urban, rural, or wooded settings, the house sparrow often prefers proximity to humans and as a result is a frequent sighting at bird feeders. Small seeds and insects make up the bulk of their diet. These omnipresent birds are viewable in New York State year-round.



House Finch

(*Haemorhous mexicanus*) Appearing similar in size and appearance at first glance to house sparrows, the male house finch can be identified by a colorful, red head, neck and shoulder. Females typically have brown and white streaks and are most easily confused with house sparrows. Prolific across North America currently, these finches have dramatically increased their range over the past 80 years from primarily the western and southern US to the entire United States. Present in New York State year-round.



American Goldfinch

(*Spinus tristis*) One of the most popular wild birds to attract to feeders — the American goldfinch brings a streak of golden yellow to your backyard that is breathtaking to see. Males are distinctively golden with streaks of black on head and back in the summer, transitioning to olive colored in the winter. Goldfinch preference for small seeds like thistle and ability to cling to mesh feeders has delighted backyard birders with their uniqueness for many years. Present in New York State year-round.

Black-Capped Chickadee



(*Poecile atricapillus*) One listen to a chickadee call and you'll know where their name comes from — the distinctive “chick-a-dee-dee-dee” call can be identified by almost anyone immediately. Despite the seemingly simple call, scientists have been studying the minute differences in these calls for decades, finding incredible variation in note and tone bringing various meanings from identifying predators to signaling a food source. Strikingly comfortable around humans, they can even be taught to feed out of your hand! Present in New York State year-round.



Tufted Titmouse

(*Baeolophus bicolor*) The small, energetic tufted titmouse can appear to be a cross between a northern cardinal's head on a black-capped chickadee's body — although coloring is not similar. The namesake “tuft” of plumage on their head gives character to a bird made up primarily of gray, white, and black coloring. Commonly “scouting” bird feeders, tufted titmice like to observe a feeder, fly in and take a seed, and retreat back to a tree branch away from the feeder to eat. Present in New York State year-round.

Common Grackle



(*Quiscalus quiscula*) Aggressive at the feeder, common grackles have long been known to chase or scare other desirable birds away from backyard feeders. Black bodies with a blue iridescent colored head, grackles are fond of emptying a bird feeder and also targeting crops with similar zeal. While some may like to see any birds at their backyard feeder, that hasn't been the sentiment of most — a group of grackles is called a “plague”! Present in New York State year-round.



Red-Bellied Woodpecker

(*Melanerpes carolinus*) Counter-intuitively, the red-bellied woodpecker is identified by a red patch of plumage on the back of its head. Like most woodpecker varieties, the “drumming” heard by them drilling for insects into trees is also a form of communication to other red-bellied woodpeckers. While insects make up the bulk of their diet, suet and/or nut feeders can be popular destinations in the winter. Present in New York State year-round.

Red-Winged Blackbird



(*Agelaius phoeniceus*) Quite possibly North America's most populous bird, some flocks have been estimated at over one million(!) birds during the winter. Distinctive red plumage on male wings with a yellow “cap” of color and a black body give the red-winged blackbird a splash of color that's instantly recognizable. Females are of duller brown plumage. Present in New York State year-round.

Bird Identification by Coloring

Why are most male birds more colorful than their female counterparts?

Color helps with not only ornamentation, but mate selection. When it's time to mate, male birds show off their plumage to attract a mate. Experiments have confirmed that female birds prefer males with more fanciful feathers, or brighter colors. In competition, males use feather color to warn rivals that they occupy a piece of territory. Females have muted coloring to help camouflage them and their young from predators.



Northern Cardinal

Male cardinals are a brilliant red all over, with a black face immediately around a reddish bill. Females are pale brown overall with warm reddish shades in the wings, tail and crest. They have the same black face and red-orange bill.



Blue Jay

Since male and female blue jays are almost identical in appearance, sharing the same plumage, it is challenging to tell them apart. Males are slightly larger than females. Observing nesting behavior and courtship are additional ways to distinguish the difference.



American Goldfinch

Springtime is when one can best differentiate between male and female goldfinches. Males are bright yellow with a black forehead, black wings with white markings, and white patches above and beneath the tail. Adult females are olive with duller yellow beneath.



Downy Woodpecker

The main difference with downy woodpeckers is that males have a red patch at the back of the head, and females are only black and white.



House Sparrow

Male house sparrows are brightly colored birds with gray heads, white cheeks, a black bib and rufous (reddish-brown) neck. Females are plain buffy-brown overall, with gray-brown underparts. Their backs are noticeably striped with buff, black and brown.



Red-Winged Blackbird

Quite possibly the most mis-matched bird mates in appearance. Males have a distinctive red plumage on their wings with a yellow "cap" of color and a black body. Females are of duller brown plumage.

Wild Bird Seed Quick Reference Chart

When it comes to filling your feeders, attracting the types of visitors you want depends on selecting the right seed and feed. Here's a helpful quick reference guide to identifying what to choose – see the next pages for an in-depth description of each!



	Cardinals	Chickadees	Doves	Finches	Grosbeaks	Jays	Juncos	Nuthatches	Red-Winged Blackbirds	Sparrows	Titmice	Woodpeckers	Squirrels, Other Wildlife
Black Oil Sunflower	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cracked Corn	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Dried Mealworms		✓		✓		✓		✓			✓	✓	
Nyjer (Thistle)		✓	✓	✓			✓						
Peanut Hearts	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Peanut Pickouts	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Peanuts in Shell	✓	✓				✓		✓			✓	✓	
Safflower	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Striped Sunflower	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Sunflower Chips/ Hulled Sunflower	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
White Millet	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	
Whole Corn	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓

All About Seeds

As you might imagine, the wide variety of backyard birds you can attract to your feeder depends on what you offer for them to eat. Not all birds eat all seeds, and while there is a lot of crossover you can tailor your mix to target your preferred birds by knowing the following info.



Black Oil Sunflower

The gold standard for wild bird seed blends, black oil sunflower can be fed straight, mixed in with other seeds, with shells or without shells. High protein, fat and fiber content along with natural oils and a thin shell make this the perfect nutritious energy-packed source that birds love.



Striped Sunflower

Much like black oil sunflower, a high protein, fat, fiber and natural oil content make this a perfect seed for wild birds. Striped sunflower shells are tougher and thicker than black oil, which makes it harder for smaller birds to crack and eat.



Sunflower Chips/Hearts

Sunflower chips or hearts are the de-shelled version of sunflower seeds. These are typically found in “no-waste” blends, because birds do not have to crack the shells to get to the meat. All of the nutritional benefit with no mess makes these extremely popular in high-end blends for the seasoned wild bird feeding enthusiast.



Nyjer (Thistle)

Originally named to describe origins in the African country of Nigeria, Nyjer seed is the perfect seed to attract finches and other small birds, most notably goldfinch. Specialized feeders with openings small enough to keep seed in are required and readily available. A truly exceptional nutritional profile of high fat/protein makes this the ideal seed for finches needing fuel for the winter season.



Dried Mealworms/ Soldier Fly Larvae

Rapidly growing in popularity, dried mealworms and black soldier fly larvae are bursting with high energy content and protein levels. Black soldier fly larvae is less common than dried mealworms, but superior nutritionally and quickly gaining traction with experienced bird feeders. Fed straight or as part of an ultra-premium blend, these are among the most high-quality options you can provide.



White Millet

While millet can get a bad reputation as a “filler” seed in bird seed blends, smaller ground-feeding birds like house sparrows and Mourning doves love white millet seed. Keep an eye on your feeder when using blends with white millet – you can see larger birds typically eat around the white millet seed and it can build up. Knock it off onto the ground where those smaller, more timid birds will thank you!



Peanut Hearts/Pickouts

Much like benefits of sunflower chips/ hearts, these are all the goodness of peanuts in shell without the work. Better suited for gravity feeders with large ports, birds of all sizes including woodpeckers love peanuts with none of the work to get them out of shell.



Peanuts in Shell

Another favorite of large birds like blue jays, peanuts in shell are an excellent way to encourage varied species to your feeders. High energy, calorie filled option for winter feeding, but loved year-round. Fill a ground feeder with these peanuts in shell, and watch birds, squirrels, chipmunks and more come to visit. And no, these are not fit for human consumption unless labeled so!



Whole/Cracked Corn

The ideal option for those who want to feed wild birds and other wildlife, whole and cracked corn is the perfect all-around option for those who enjoy any kind of feeder activity – not just birds! Care must be taken to ensure corn doesn't get wet or stay moist for long periods of time to inhibit growth of aflatoxins. Fed as a straight ingredient or in a blend, corn has been a staple of bird seed mixes from the beginning, and will continue to be a great option for bird feeders of all abilities.



Berries/Fruits (assorted)

Many high-end blends include berries/ fruits like dried cherries, cranberries, raisins, and more for a colorful, flavor filled option for wild bird feeders. High sugar content provides instant energy for birds that rely on constant energy to keep moving. Found in many no-waste blends for the ultra-premium seed feeder.



Safflower

Rapidly growing in popularity, safflower seed is becoming more commonly found in mixes and fed straight to wild birds because larger "nuisance" birds like grackles, blackbirds, European starlings, and even squirrels typically avoid it. Most other varieties of songbirds love safflower and it is a healthy, nutritious option at any feeder.



Multiple feeders, multiple types of food. It might sound like we're just trying to sell you more stuff, but it's true! The more types of feeders and seed you have in your backyard, the more varieties of birds will visit.

Suet and Seed Cakes

When it comes to attracting and feeding backyard birds, no offering is complete without suet, seed cakes, and similarly composed “tasty things birds enjoy pressed into shapes.” Deploying an assortment of seed, suet, cakes and the various feeders that come along with a wide selection will have you bringing in northern cardinals, tufted titmice, northern flickers, downy woodpeckers and everything in between! Armed with an understanding of the basics below, you’ll be ready to confidently plan your next trip to the CountryMax wild bird department.

Suet Tips:

Buy in cases! Most suet cakes are sold in case quantities at lower prices than individual cakes.

Don’t let it go bad! Rancid suet is bad for the birds and your yard – discard any suet that gets overheated.



Suet: What is it? (do we want to know?)

As defined by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, “Suet is technically defined as the hard fat around the kidneys and loins in beef and mutton, but in common usage, most kinds of beef fat are also called suet and can safely be fed to birds.” Raw suet would melt immediately in warm weather, so it’s “rendered” to remove impurities and today’s suet can stay firm even in summer. Backyard Seed™ brand suet cakes will stay “no-melt” up to 120 degrees Fahrenheit, as do several others, so check for that label before you buy!

Why is it a smart choice to offer suet?

Surprisingly, suet is one of the best things you can offer your backyard birds year-round, especially in the winter. Suet is easily digested, metabolized and provides an incredibly high energy source for birds that are actively foraging for food all day. Many people who enjoy feeding birds in the winter don't realize that they are missing what may be the single most valuable food source for winter birds to thrive – don't make that mistake this year!



How do I provide suet?

There are a variety of suet feeders, typically called “cages,” that are available in many forms, some even attached to seed feeders. These dual-purpose feeders are excellent for a variety of birds. Be sure to include some free-hanging suet feeders apart from your seed stations to allow birds that may be intimidated by the activity and aggressiveness of the birds actively eating at the seed feeders. It may be surprising, but hanging suet (and seed feeders) in different locations in your yard and at different heights will give you a wider variety of feathered visitors.



Are there different kinds of suet?

While there are some choices for just suet cakes, the vast majority of suet include some sort of seed, nut, berry, insect or virtually any ingredient combination you can imagine. Some ingredients are traditionally thought of as bird specific – like peanuts for woodpeckers, or mealworm cakes for bluebirds but the reality is that most birds will eat just about anything.



Pay Attention to the Light. If you watch your bird feeders throughout the day, you'll see not only when the birds come to visit, but also when the light is most magical. Remember, the sun should be behind you to properly light your subject. Most good camera phones will adjust to the light available. But you may want to consider an additional light attachment.

When it comes to fun shapes, sizes, and mixes, suet isn't the only game in town. Seed cakes are pressed together blocks of... you guessed it, seed! Additions like mealworms, fruits, berries and other pieces just add to the healthy, nutritious fun!

Selecting the Right Feeder

Big ones, small ones, short ones, tall ones...no matter what size bird you're looking to attract, there is a feeder to match (or ten)! The variety of birds in our skies means there are seemingly endless choices to match the perfect seed with the perfect feeder. While the offering may seem overwhelming, look for these basic feeder styles as a place to start – most feeders will simply be variations of these classic styles.



#066214

Platform Feeders

Despite being the most basic feeder style, many backyards don't have a platform feeder – they're missing out! Platform feeders offer seed to a variety of birds including sparrows, pigeons, doves and grosbeaks that prefer ground feeding or may be less aggressive than the birds that compete for the feeder perches. Good platform feeders are elevated off the ground by at least 2 inches (and some are on poles many feet in the air) with mesh bottoms to allow water to drain out. Filling only enough seed for a day or two means the seed stays fresh and you can quickly adapt to whatever is most popular in your yard.



#516060

Hopper or "House" Feeders

The quintessential backyard feeder, the hopper or "house" feeder is the most versatile feeder in any backyard. Styles vary from simple design/aesthetic changes to feeder port sizes, easy-fill designs, additional attached feeders, and more. The concept is simple – fill the feeder from the top, and let gravity pull seeds through the port or open slot at the bottom as birds eat from a perch at the base. The sheer number of styles with endless options proves this style is a winner with the most colorful and desirable backyard birds – fill a few in your backyard and you'll see why.



#005845

Thistle (Nyjer) Feeder

Although primarily designed to attract goldfinches and others from the finch family, the thistle feeder is another classic feeder with many variations despite the overall simplicity. The blueprint design is either a vertical tube or a mesh "sock" designed with very small holes or ports to keep tiny thistle seeds contained. Solid wall tubes have perches next to small ports, and mesh (wire or cloth) feeders are easily gripped by goldfinches using their feet – sometimes even hanging upside down to eat! The brilliant goldfinch colors and the amount that can flock to feeding at once makes this one of the most entertaining and rewarding feeders to have in your backyard.



What's in the background? Do you live near a natural wooded area? Is your house a striking colorful background? Keep in mind that birds have a great deal of intricacy to their feathering and coloration. Busy natural backgrounds may overcomplicate your shot. A few branches and leaves may be a nice effect, but often blue sky gets the most detail.



Tube Feeders (Non-Thistle)

A simple but very common variation of gravity feeder for traditional blends and straight ingredients like black oil sunflower. Tube feeders are versatile by allowing both hard plastic and mesh walls to be used, allowing birds like woodpeckers, grosbeaks, chickadees, finches and more to hang from the mesh or perches to feed. Some tube feeders even have perches above the seed ports to allow only select small birds to hang upside down and feed while keeping out larger and more aggressive birds.



#009485

Hummingbird and Oriole Feeders

Although this is a Winter guide, no bird feeder lineup would be complete without mentioning the amazing hummingbird and orioles and their feeders. While the season lasts only the warm months, there may be as many hummingbird/oriole feeder designs as all of the other feeders combined. Most feeders are for liquid nectar, but more options are appearing regularly for fruit and even insects.



#355399

Suet and Seed Cake Feeders

Suet and seed cakes cannot be fed in a traditional gravity feeder – they need a special feeder that can be attached to other feeders or stand alone. Suet/cake feeders are usually wire “cages” with large openings designed to be reached by larger birds while also allowing them a solid grip either on the cage or as part of the feeder design. These versatile feeders also sport many variations, allowing backyard bird feeders an endless array of combinations to add these high energy, high protein snacks to their offering.



#298357

Squirrel-Proof Feeders

Without a doubt, the most popular category for bird feeders can be summed up in one blanket term...“squirrel proof”! Hopper feeders, tube feeders, platform feeders, suet/cake feeders, and more – almost every type of feeder also has a sub-set of feeders for squirrel proofing those style feeders. We go in-depth on pages 16-17.



Capturing Wild Birds with Your Camera Phone

Meet Grant Taylor

Award-Winning Professional Nature Photographer

GrantTaylorPhoto.com

Instagram: [granttaylorphoto](https://www.instagram.com/granttaylorphoto)



Q: How did you get so deeply into nature photography?

A: Growing up in Vermont, I was always outdoors hiking, hunting and fishing. My love of backyard birds came from my grandparents. My grandmother gave me the book *Birds of North America* when I was 7. We'd sit together by the window feeder and talk about each one.

Our family also believed in the spirituality of cardinals – lost loved ones coming to say hello.

Q: As a professional, you have lots of equipment, but what's the one thing you'd recommend for people using a camera phone to capture bird photos?

A: Patience! No matter how much equipment you have, if you don't wait quietly for wildlife, you never fully experience it. Another key with birds at the feeder is getting as close as possible. That may be a matter of having a feeder near the window. Or finding a lens for your camera phone. There are some amazing, affordable telephoto lenses out there.

Q: Tell us about the “picture that got away.”

A: Two come to mind.

Once I was in my canoe, backed into the cattails, being still, watching for deer, when a Blue Heron landed on a log nearby. Spectacular! Then a Green Heron passed just a couple of paddle-lengths away, looking for frogs and fish.

Another time, while in a ground blind in Calendonía, NY, a flock of wild turkeys strutted across the field and a giant Tom stopped like a crossing guard, no more than 6 feet in front of me, the sunlight illuminating all his colors. It was a moment that makes you think “always be ready with your camera.”





Say Hello to Hannah

CountryMax Designer and Social Media Specialist



Q: What do you love about photographing birds in your backyard?



A: I love the challenge of trying to capture all the different kinds of species, showing the diversity of our area. It's so fun to watch how they behave and interact – some are timid, some are more assertive. And they're all so colorful and beautiful!



Q: How can customers get great shots with a camera phone?

A: It might sound obvious, but set up a bird feeder close to the window, then you can get comfortable and be still for a while so you don't scare the birds. You may also want to put a phone mount near the feeder to keep your shots stable, especially if you're trying to capture video.



Q: What's the most amazing thing you've seen in your own backyard?

A: Last year, I was able to watch a family of titmice grow up. I knew where the nest was when it had eggs, then mom was bringing food to the little ones, and soon they were flying to the bird feeder on their own. Such an amazing lifecycle right in my yard!



Squirrels... Friend or Foe?

The Eastern gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) is native to northeastern North America, which interestingly enough, contrasts with most songbirds that it competes for food with at feeders – many common bird species are non-native to this region!

Get to know our furry neighbors:

- A natural result of hiding nuts and seeds underground is that inevitably some get left or forgotten and sprout. Surprisingly, squirrels can be called an essential propagator of natural flora.
- Squirrels build nests called “dreys” in tree tops that can be spotted easily in fall and winter after foliage drops. During the colder months, squirrels have been known to allow “outside” squirrels to share their nest for warmth.
- Squirrels will employ deception when hiding food if they know they are being watched – digging false holes and burying non-food items to trick rivals.
- Squirrels are omnivores, primarily feeding on seeds, nuts and plants, but they also feed on insects, eggs, even snakes.
- The amazing acrobatic abilities of squirrels are in part due to double-jointed back legs, which allow them to be one of the few creatures in the world that can descend a tree head-first!
- Squirrels are known for a striking ability to survive falls of over 30 feet – essential for high wire activities with no net!
- A squirrel’s front teeth never stop growing, meaning they constantly need to find a source of food not only for nourishment, but to grind down teeth that would otherwise grow uncontrollably!



- Occasionally, squirrels can turn to nests of wild birds for food including eating eggs and sometimes even baby birds.
- The squirrel family – which includes chipmunks, red squirrels, fox squirrels and more – is extremely territorial. It’s not uncommon to see a smaller chipmunk fighting “tooth and nail” to defend their turf against larger Eastern gray squirrels.
- Fond of building nests in buildings including homes and businesses, squirrels can cause extensive damage to walls, insulation and structures – including exposing wires and causing fires!



Any long-time bird feeder knows you cannot win against squirrels forever – you can simply employ tactics to slow or temporarily stop these pesky rascals from getting your seed before the birds do. However, if you can successfully thwart squirrels for long enough, they will eventually give up. The key is figuring out how to do that, and well... we never said it was going to be easy!

Squirrel-Proof Feeders



#066513



#990998



#4551743

Squirrel Baffles



#005875



#298370



(Feeder sold separately.)

Squirrel Repellent



#118545

Squirrel-Proof Tactics

- Keep feeders away from ledges like deck railings, and away from trees or low hanging roof lines.
- Use a skinny, narrow pole to mount or a thin string to hang feeders – the less to grip the better!
- “Grease” the poles of mounted feeders with petroleum jelly.
- Use feeders designed to stop squirrels – whether with weighted perches, spring loaded baffles, or even battery powered motors to fling squirrels away!
- Use a squirrel baffle above or below the feeder on a pole or the hanging line/cable.
- Use spice! Birds cannot taste spice, but squirrels can. Liberally apply chili powder to ports of feeders, but be careful when you do it – humans and squirrels share the same issues with spice! Mixes with spice are available but typically need a little extra help hitting the right level of spice to permanently deter squirrels.

Bonus fact:

Although rarely seen, a group of squirrels is called a “scurry.”



Capture a Story. Whether you catch squirrels stealing the bird seed or an adorable interaction among multiple wild animal species, a good photo or series of photos tells a story. Watch for the moments when there's more to the picture than just pretty colors.

Why Bird Seed Prices are So High

And why they'll continue to rise

Worst Drought in
20
Years



First, as you are most likely aware, the western US has been facing a drought situation for more than two decades. Without reliable sources of water, the cost of growing keeps, uh, growing.

28%
In Planted Acres



Another factor: China

China is now purchasing massive amounts of all grains as it rebuilds its pig industry, which means growers around the world are dedicating acreage to the grains China wants most. This has led to a 28% drop in planted acres of Black Oil Sunflower, the lowest since 1976.

Many backyard birding fans watched the price of bird seed spike in 2021. That trend appears to be continuing in 2022. Renewable energy and other commodities. As such, they are affected greatly by market trends. Based on a report from Global Harvest, Black Oil Sunflower seed prices are up



69%
Black Oil Sunflower

Why will prices continue to rise?

Meanwhile,

backyard birds continue to count on feeders, a primary source of nutrition. **The good news is, common birds** always count on CountryMax to bring you the best prices. Plus, our Max Rewards members get an even better price. For more information and products you need to

For more about bird seed pricing

Prices are Soaring.

Prices are Soaring. Prices are coming back down.

Bird seed prices have increased significantly throughout 2021. In November, all variations of bird seed are essentially sold out due to global weather and other commodities market fluctuations. From mid-2021, here's a look at why bird seed prices are soaring wherever you go.



We keep hearing about “supply chain issues.”

Consider that there are about 5% fewer truck drivers in the US today, yet demand is up approximately 250%. That, along with increased fuel costs, has boosted transportation pricing by as much as 60%.



Oh, and packaging costs

Cardboard, polyester and poly-woven bags are up 25% to 45%.



Especially during harsh weather, as a reliable source, CountryMax.com prices go up and down over time. You can find the best quality seeds and suet at competitive prices. We have a better deal in-store. See us today for the best deal to enjoy backyard birding all year long.

To learn more about birding trends, visit Audubon.org/news.

Statistical source: Global Harvest Foods, ghfoods.com



Wild Bird Seed Blends

When it comes to feeding and attracting wild birds and wildlife, variety is key. Most backyard birders enjoy attracting a host of different bird species to their feeders, and offering a wide variety of seeds in attractive blends is the best way to do just that. Backyard Seeds™ brand seed blends are the best of both worlds

when it comes to price and selection, with over 30 options of blends and straight ingredients to choose from. Found exclusively at CountryMax Stores, these blends and ingredients have been handpicked to attract birds in western and central New York State while also providing every day value at incredible prices.

Our Most Popular Bird Seed Mixes



Backyard Seeds™ Songbird Blend

Available in 7 lb. or 50 lb. bags

Attracts Cardinals, Chickadees, Doves, Finches, Grosbeaks, Jays, Juncos, Nuthatches, Sparrows, Titmice, Woodpeckers and more!

Ingredients: White Millet, Cracked Corn, Black Oil Sunflower Seed, Mineral Oil

Our most popular blend, this blend has been bringing backyard birds to our customers' yards for over 30 years. A balanced blend of nutritious seeds with black oil sunflower to attract highly desirable cardinals and other colorful birds while offering smaller birds a great selection as well. There's a reason this blend has stood the test of time, and will continue to be a top seller for many years to come.

Backyard Seeds™ Premium Blend

Available in 7 lb. or 40 lb. bags

Attracts Cardinals, Chickadees, Doves, Finches, Grosbeaks, Jays, Juncos, Nuthatches, Sparrows, Titmice, Woodpeckers and more!

Ingredients: Black Oil Sunflower Seed, White Millet, Cracked Corn, Striped Sunflower Seed, Mineral Oil

Our most popular premium blend of seeds with an extra boost of up to 20% more black oil seeds than our Songbird blend. Attract the most popular backyard birds with a premium blend of nutritious seeds that won't break the bank.



PHOTO TIP

The More Pictures You Take, The Better You Get. You don't have to worry about running out of film anymore. So go ahead. Keep your feeders filled and take all the shots you can. You'll soon find out what works best so you can focus on the backyard winners.

Our Premium Bird Seed Mixes

Backyard Seeds™ Berries 'N Nut Blend

Available in 5 lb. or 20 lb. bags

Attracts Cardinals, Chickadees, Doves, Finches, Grosbeaks, Jays, Juncos, Nuthatches, Sparrows, Woodpeckers and more!

Ingredients: Sunflower Kernels, Peanuts, Black Oil Sunflower Seed, Safflower Seed, Pistachios, Hulled Pumpkin Seeds, Dried Raisins, Dried Cranberries

Your birds deserve the best, and this blend of delicious berries and nutritious nuts brings the best right to your backyard feeder. Entice the most desired songbirds to your yard time after time with a healthy and nutritious blend of berries and nuts fortified with vitamins and nutrients they need to thrive.

Backyard Seeds™ Berry and Fruit Frenzy

Available in 5 lb. or 20 lb. bags

Attracts Cardinals, Chickadees, Doves, Finches, Grosbeaks, Jays, Juncos, Nuthatches, Sparrows, Titmice, Woodpeckers and more!

Ingredients: Black Oil Sunflower Seed, Sunflower Chips, Split Peanuts, Safflower, Tree Nuts, Dried Cranberries, Raisins, Natural and/or Artificial Flavoring

An ultra-premium blend of berries, fruits and the best seeds for your backyard birds. Fortified with vitamins and nutrients birds need to come back time after time.

Backyard Seeds™ No Waste Fruit Frenzy

Available in 5 lb. or 20 lb. bags

Attracts Cardinals, Chickadees, Doves, Finches, Grosbeaks, Jays, Juncos, Nuthatches, Sparrows, Titmice, Woodpeckers and more!

Ingredients: Sunflower Kernels, Dried Raisins, Pistachios, Peanuts, Hulled Pumpkin Seed, Cranberries

An ultra-premium blend designed for the most desirable backyard birds. Made to be gobbled down to the very last fruit and seed – no fillers, no waste.

Backyard Seeds™ Backyard Frenzy

Available in 5 lb. or 20 lb. bags

Attracts Cardinals, Chickadees, Doves, Finches, Grosbeaks, Jays, Juncos, Nuthatches, Sparrows, Titmice, Woodpeckers and more!

Ingredients: Sunflower Chips, Shelled Peanuts, Hulled Millet

Backyard Frenzy seed blend is an ultra-premium blend jam packed with nutritious nuts and seeds for the most desired backyard birds.





Premium Bird Seed Mixes

Backyard Seeds™ Sunflower Blend

Available in 5 lb. or 20 lb. bags

Attracts Cardinals, Chickadees, Doves, Finches, Grosbeaks, Jays, Juncos, Nuthatches, Sparrows, Titmice, Woodpeckers and more!

Ingredients: Black Oil Sunflower Seed, Striped Sunflower Seed

A high-energy, high-protein, year-round favorite to attract a variety of birds to your feeder with the two most desirable seeds and no fillers.



Backyard Seeds™ Fiery Surprise

Available in 5 lb. or 14 lb. bags

Attracts Cardinals, Chickadees, Doves, Finches, Grosbeaks, Jays, Juncos, Nuthatches, Sparrows, Woodpeckers and more!

Ingredients: Sunflower Chips, Oilseed Sunflower, Peanut Pickouts, Hulled Pistachios, Cayenne Pepper, Mineral Oil

A premium blend made just for birds. This spicy blend gives animals that can taste a spicy pepper surprise. Spice is a deterrent to squirrels but does no harm. Birds love the blend, but can't taste the spice.




PHOTO TIP

Consider a Trail Cam. Automated motion-triggered cameras aren't just for the woods. You can mount almost anywhere in your backyard to capture birds or other animals.

Our Species-Specific Blends



Backyard Seeds™ Finch Frenzy

Available in 5 lb. or 20 lb. bags

Attracts Goldfinches, Chickadees, Doves, Finches, Juncos and more!

Ingredients: Nyjer Seed, Hulled Sunflower, Canary Seed, German (Finch) Millet

Finch Frenzy does exactly what it says – turns your feeder into a frenzy of feeding! Attract finches of all colors and watch them flock to your feeders, bringing color and activity to your yard year-round. Healthy, natural and nutritious – this small seed blend does it all.

Backyard Seeds™ Woodpecker & Friends Blend

Available in 5 lb. or 20 lb. bags

Attracts Cardinals, Chickadees, Doves, Finches, Grosbeaks, Jays, Juncos, Nuthatches, Sparrows, Woodpeckers and more!

Ingredients: Split Peanuts, Medium Cracked Corn, Sunflower Chips, Pumpkin Seeds, Raisins

An ultra-premium blend designed for the most desirable and unique backyard birds.

Made with woodpeckers in mind, but loved by all.

Backyard Seeds™ Squirrel & Friends

Available in 8 lb. or 20 lb. bags

Attracts Chickadees, Jays, Nuthatches, Squirrels, Titmice, Various Wildlife, Woodpeckers and more!

Ingredients: Whole Corn, Sunflower Medium Striped Sunflowers, Split Peanuts, Peanuts in Shell, Coarse Cracked Corn

A mix that will be enjoyed by wildlife of all shapes and sizes.

The premium mix of ingredients has a unique combination made just for them.

Our Economical Blends

Backyard Seeds™ Value Blend

Available in a 20 lb. bag

Attracts Cardinals, Chickadees, Doves, Finches, Grosbeaks, Jays, Juncos, Nuthatches, Sparrows, Titmice, Woodpeckers and more!

Ingredients: Cracked Corn, Wheat, White Millet, Oil Sunflower, Milo, Mineral Oil

An all-natural, year-round blend. Attracts the greatest variety of birds. Join an enjoyable hobby for the whole family without breaking the bank.

Backyard Seeds™ Classic Berry Blend

Available in a 15 lb. bucket

Attracts Cardinals, Chickadees, Doves, Finches, Grosbeaks, Jays, Juncos, Nuthatches, Sparrows, Woodpeckers and more!

Ingredients: Sunflower Seeds, Millet, Wheat, Cracked Corn, Dried Cherries

Attracts a wide variety of backyard birds! Made with real cherries for an extra punch of berry flavor, this is sure to be a sweet treat your birds will love.

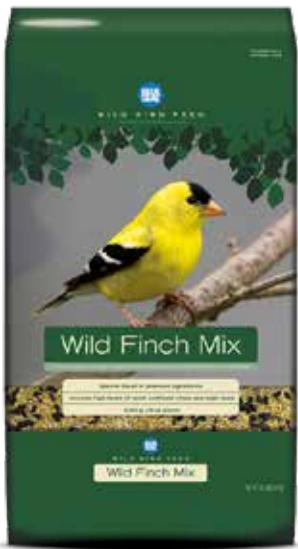




You'll Find the Best of Blue Seal® at CountryMax

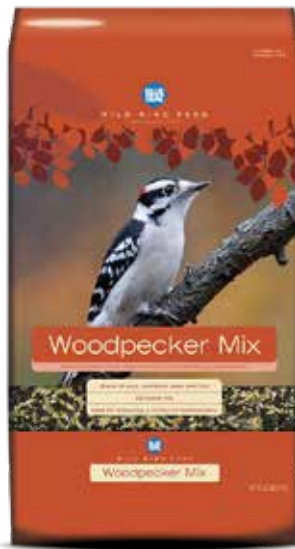
Wild birds can brighten your day!

You can rely on Blue Seal® to bring you specialty wild bird mixes that attract all native bird varieties to your backyard or front porch. Nutritional requirements for wild birds can vary. That's why Blue Seal® offers an extensive line of premium products, and why CountryMax carries so many varieties. Choose the ones that are right for you, your ecosystem, and your local bird population.



Wild Finch Mix

A premium seed blend with high levels of small sunflower chips and nyjer seed — a finch favorite! Wild Finch Mix will attract Goldfinch, Purple Finch, House Finch, Redpolls and Pine Siskins to your feeders.



Woodpecker Mix

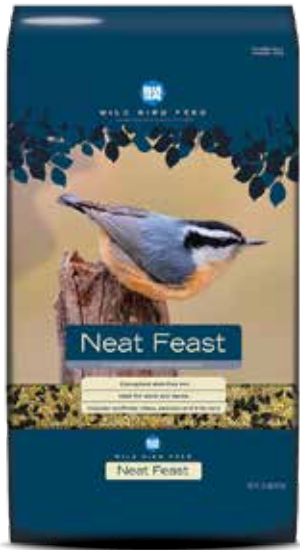
A hearty, coarse-textured blend containing a generous level of shelled peanuts combined with sunflower chips, coarse-cracked corn, pistachios, walnuts, pecans, pumpkin seeds and cranberries. Woodpecker Mix is the perfect combination to provide nutritious variety in the diet of Hairy Woodpeckers, Downey Woodpeckers, Red-bellied Woodpeckers and Northern Flickers.



Cardinal Mix

Cardinals love sunflower and safflower seeds, so Cardinal Mix is the perfect choice to satisfy their appetites. The additional whole buckwheat provides a treat and yet another seed variety.





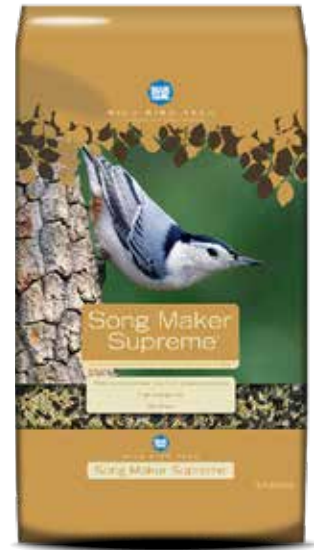
Neat Feast Mix

An ideal mix for patio, deck, or garden feeding stations. All birds enjoy the convenience of shell-free seeds in Neat Feast (sunflower chips, peanuts, coarse cracked corn, pistachios, walnuts, pecans and pumpkin seeds). It is perfect for feeding on decks or in landscaped areas where seed hulls may detract from an otherwise pristine yard. Neat Feast is also a ready source of energy that birds can utilize to generate body heat in the winter months.



Song Maker Mix

Blue Seal's popular combination of striped and black oil sunflower, sunflower chips, peanut hearts, fine cracked corn and white millet developed for birds who inhabit brushy areas. Sparrows, the Gray Catbird, Eastern Towhee, Nuthatches and Tufted Titmouse favor Song Maker.



Song Maker Supreme

An excellent mix for woodland dwelling birds: Chickadees, Nuthatches, the Tufted Titmouse and Sparrows are attracted to the added level of black oil and striped sunflower seeds combined with sunflower chips, peanut hearts, fine cracked corn and white millet.



Just Like CountryMax, the Blue Seal® Brand is Deeply Rooted in the Northeast.

In 1868, Henry K. Webster started the company with one goal: to offer high-quality products made with the best nutritional ingredients. With this quality-first philosophy, the Blue Seal® brand built its reputation throughout the eastern U.S., including central and western New York State. We're proud to stock Blue Seal® products not only for wild birds, but also for equine, poultry and pets!

Seed featured are available in 8 lb., 20 lb. or 40 lb. bags depending on mix.

CountryMax Woodshop Feeders



CountryMax Woodshop Farmington, New York

If you've ever stepped foot into a CountryMax store, you know we are pretty resourceful when it comes to using natural wood in our store design. What you may not know is JUST how resourceful we are! With a constant stream of wooden fixtures and store components being constructed by our woodshop, we decided to take all of the "cut-offs" and leftover wood to make our own line of bird and wildlife houses and feeders! Take a look at a few we wanted to highlight. Most are in stock most of the time. But when you rely on scraps to build them, availability fluctuates. So grab 'em if you see 'em!



#62901

CountryMax Hemlock Bluebird House

Built with Hemlock lumber from recent builds. This home is perfect for beginning birders, creating a convenient and rustic shelter. The roof slopes downward, preventing water from running into the 1.5" diameter entrance hole.



#62912

CountryMax Cedar Wood Duck House

Duck houses are simple yet effective. Mount on a post 4–10 feet high, or on a tree 10–20 feet high, and within 1/4 mile of water. A fun, rewarding house for backyard enthusiasts and sportsmen alike.



#62913

CountryMax Ranch Feeder with Suet Holders

Excellent, simple dual-purpose feeder for all backyards. Hinged roof allows for easy cleaning and filling. Great for feeding cardinals, finches, nuthatches, chickadees and more.



#96290230

CountryMax Cedar Wood Bat House

This house is maintenance free and provides a welcoming habitat that will encourage brown bats to nest. Brown bats can consume 600 mosquitoes in an hour. Constructed of weather-resistant cedar.

CountryMax Picnic Table Squirrel Feeder

Squirrels will love "sitting" at the picnic table as they gobble down cob corn. At 12" x 12" and 8" deep, you don't need to worry about the feeder being too small. Easily mountable to a tree.



#96290209



#62903

Backyard Seeds Squirrel Saloon Feeder

Pull up a stool and watch your furry backyard critters belly up to the bar while they eat corn, nuts and other seeds. The ultimate "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em" feeder. Get a laugh and snap a pic so we can join the fun!



In-Store
Only

Are You a Max Rewards Member Yet?

To get our best price on in-store purchases of seeds and feeds, plus earn rewards points for the bird supplies you purchase in store, sign up today. You can register online at CountryMax.com or visit your nearest CountryMax location.



#BackyardBirdLife

March 1 - April 30

You could win a new bird feeder or a CountryMax gift card!

CountryMax.com/birdlife-photo-contest

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