

The "Hummys" are back !

Every Spring they return and add to the "show" . There are 330 species of Humming Birds with 115 Genera, about half of which live in the Southern Hemisphere . Almost everyone has been either a part of a family tradition of hummingbird feeders or, at least has seen the feeders which are on display everywhere. It's also probably true that most every one has their own way of preparing their feeder...maybe the way Mom always did it or whatever. With that in mind, here are a few basic things we suggest you to take into consideration:

1. It's fascinating to see how they hover but these little guys, whose wings work at an average of 53 beats a second, could always use some rest, so giver them a perch.
2. No need to buy expensive pre-prep feed (usually dyed with red food coloring). Stick with the aged old 4/1 water to sugar feed. 1 part sugar, 4 parts water. Heat water to help the sugar to dissolve and let it cool before filling the feeder. Don't use extra sugar. It's not good for them.
3. Don't use a feeder with any yellow colors. It attracts Wasps. In addition to being a nuisance, they also can clog up the feeder..

A few comments about our Spring Families



Tree Swallow

Eats mostly flying insects in flight. Also some berries and fruits.
Usually found near water
Likes nest in open areas
Breeding season early Spring through June.
May do 2 broods



Black Capped Chickadee

Eats mainly seeds berries, nuts and some Insects.
Nests near or nestled in trees
Breeding season same as Swallows

The Biggest Jerks at the Feeder

The interactions between birds at your home feeder may look like chaos, but they are actually following the subtle rules of a hidden avian social order. This was determined through a recent study conducted by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Armed with a database of almost 100,000 bird interactions, Ornithologists have decoded the secret pecking order & created a continentwide power ranking of almost 200 species that illuminates an elaborate hidden hierarchy. Many of the birds we see here in Colorado are listed, including, but not limited to the Grackle, Blackbirds, Starling, American Crow and more. The title of their study, with a slight tongue in cheek is "*The biggest jerks at the feeder*". A full review can be seen at ...

www.washingtonpost.com/business/2021/11/28/birdfeeder-pecking-order/

Unfortunately it shows that two of the birds affected are the Swallows, who are territorial, and the lowly little Wrens and Black-Capped Chickadees, which are the most timid.

A Few Observations And Suggestions About Feeding

We all are happy to see birds feeding, especially in the winter months when their sources are very limited or, often, not even available. That's when our help is most beneficial. No one would argue that. A problem arises, however, when we fail to follow a few simple things:

1. Give special attention to the food that will attract those you want to see at your feeder. There are several published lists available on line re: the best foods for each type)...and ,
2. Use "caged" designed feeders that will permit only smaller birds access instead of the more unfavorable large predatory or bully varieties.

Finally, a warning re: the open uncontrolled feeding or "come one, come all" method. This type of thoughtless feeding has some serious eventual side effects. What starts out as a "funfest" of color, size, chatter and aerial acrobatics will eventually bring some unwanted guests: The dreadful Pigeons (Rock Doves) and the subsequent Mice & Voles. Trust me, this is the mess you DO NOT WANT. In addition to being obnoxious, they bring a prodigious amount of "droppings" everywhere including the deck & walk areas. We've even see some serious roof damage here at SoP. The Mice and Voles will also make their way to the bountiful harvest on the ground, leaving a yard in serious need of complete rejuvenation. I was told by an expert "If you don't want pigeons and the resulting havoc remember two things: **1.** don't feed them and **2.** don't give them a place to roost".