

### BIRDS AT MY FEEDER:

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### FIVE BASIC ELEMENTS OF THE STOKES SUPER FEEDING STATION continued

bottom to let rain drain through and let the seed dry. Birds that come to mixed seed include many of the doves and sparrows, as well as chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, finches, grosbeaks and woodpeckers.

**4. Suet.** Suet is a special type of beef fat that you can buy in preformed cakes that easily fit into wire mesh containers made for this purpose. Plain suet is very good, but there are also many suet mixtures containing seeds, nuts, berries, fruit, and even insect parts. Hang the suet 5 feet high or attach the wire mesh container to a tree. Squirrels tend not to eat pure suet, but will eat suet containing seeds so protect these cakes from squirrels. In hot weather suet might melt, but there are some cakes formulated not to melt in hot weather. Read the label. Many birds come to suet but woodpeckers especially love it.

**5. Water.** Not all birds eat seeds and suet, but all birds need water for drinking and bathing. If you are in an area where there is little other water in the wild, a bird bath can be one of your most successful feeding station items. Offer water in a shallow bath either hung or placed near the ground. It should have some portion no deeper than 1 inch.

<http://stokesbirdsathome.com/birding/feeding/feedingpages/feeding101.html> page 4

# MY BIRDWATCHING BOOK

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Patrol: \_\_\_\_\_

compiled by S. L. Bird (c) 2001  
 2nd Salmon Arm Guides  
 adapted for Manitoba birds by Linda Lines  
 for the 153<sup>rd</sup> Norwood Brownies

# SUET AND PEANUT BUTTER

During the winter, foods with a high fat content are an important part of the diet of insectivorous birds like woodpeckers, magpies and creepers. In very cold weather carbohydrates cannot provide enough energy for birds to survive cold nights or snowstorms. Only fat provides enough energy. For this reason suet and peanut butter feeders are very popular with a number of birds, including some that aren't likely to come in for other foods.

Suet is the hard fat, but any beef or pork fat can be substituted for it. Cut up suet or fat in a food processor or cut it up. Melt it in the microwave, oven or frying pan, use a colander or sieve lined with cheesecloth to capture any meat or rind.

Some birds that like suet or peanut butter are owls, Northern Flicker, crows, woodpeckers, robins orioles, sparrows, chickadees and jays.

from:

Butler, Elaine. Attracting Birds. Edmonton: Lone Pine publishing. 1991

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## Beginner birdwatching

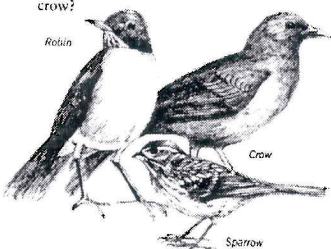
If you were asked to describe yourself, you might say, "Short, brown hair, blue eyes, freckles, skinny with big feet." This physical description would help a stranger identify you. Birdwatchers also use physical descriptions to help them identify birds.

### Name dropping

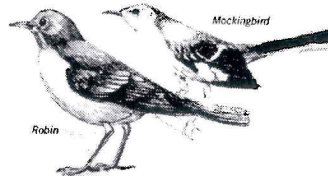
You may like the idea of being able to see a bird and know its name. The more you birdwatch, the more names you will learn and remember. However, knowing a bird's name is not the most important thing in birdwatching. There are many other ways to identify a bird—by the type of habitat it lives in, what it eats, how it looks or what it is doing. For example, if you can see a bird and recognize it as an insect-eater because it has a narrow, pointed beak, then you are well on your way to becoming a birdwatcher.

When you see a bird . . .

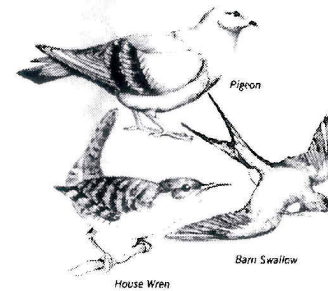
- Try to estimate the size of the bird. Is it closest in size to a sparrow, a robin or a crow?



- Describe the bird's body shape. Is it plump like a robin or slender?



- Sometimes different body parts stand out as easy identification features. Ask yourself the following questions:
  - Does the bird have a crest on its head?
  - Are its legs long or short?
  - Is its tail forked, squared, pointed or cocked up?



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## FIVE BASIC ELEMENTS OF THE STOKES SUPER FEEDING STATION

When you first start out feeding birds there are certain basic types of foods and feeders that you should have in order to have the greatest success attracting birds. Here are our recommendations for the five elements that make up a good basic feeding station.

**1. Sunflower seed.** This can be either hulled or with the hulls. It should be in a tubular feeder, a wire mesh feeder, or a hopper feeder and hung or mounted about 5 feet high on a pole. This is the basic seed for common feeder birds such as chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, cardinals, grosbeaks, jays and others.

**2. Thistle seed.** Thistle seed is small and has to have special feeders with tiny holes that keep the seed from spilling out. It is sometimes called "Nyjer" seed. There are plastic tubular feeders, wooden feeders with wire mesh, and even just mesh bags that are made for thistle seed. Thistle seed is eaten mainly by finches such as goldfinches, House Finches, Purple Finches, and occasionally by chickadees.

**3. Mixed seed.** Mixed seed can contain a variety of seeds including small seeds such as millet, peanut hearts, and cracked corn and it should also contain some sunflower seeds. This seed should be offered in a hopper feeder or tray feeder, or on a platform close to the ground. The tray should have wire on the

## Improve Your Bird ID Skills

**Clue 1.** Describe what you see. This is the best way to really SEE a bird. Take the time to go over the bird, being patient to notice every part of it. What color is it? What does its bill look like? Does it have long legs or short ones? A great way to make yourself notice all the details about a bird is to say them out loud. If there is someone with you, tell them what you see: "Well, it's blue and has a long bill in relation to its head..." Even if there isn't anyone there, quietly tell yourself, "OK, light brown head with a black stripe across the eyes..." Writing down what you have noticed definitely solidifies the clues in your head, so take the time to jot down a few words in your notebook.

**Clue 2.** What is it doing? Noticing behavior is the untapped gem of bird identifying! Most good ID guides will not only show you what the bird looks like, but tell you what kind of behaviors the bird exhibits. Some birds do things that are dead giveaways, like tail bobbing, and you should learn to notice and remember these clues just as much as noticing the colors of undertail coverts.

**Clue 3.** What kind of sounds is it making? Learning songs and calls is another great way to help you identify a bird. Being able to walk outside and recognize birds by their sounds is a definite thrill, especially when it's unexpected. Develop an ear for bird sounds by listening to recordings of them.

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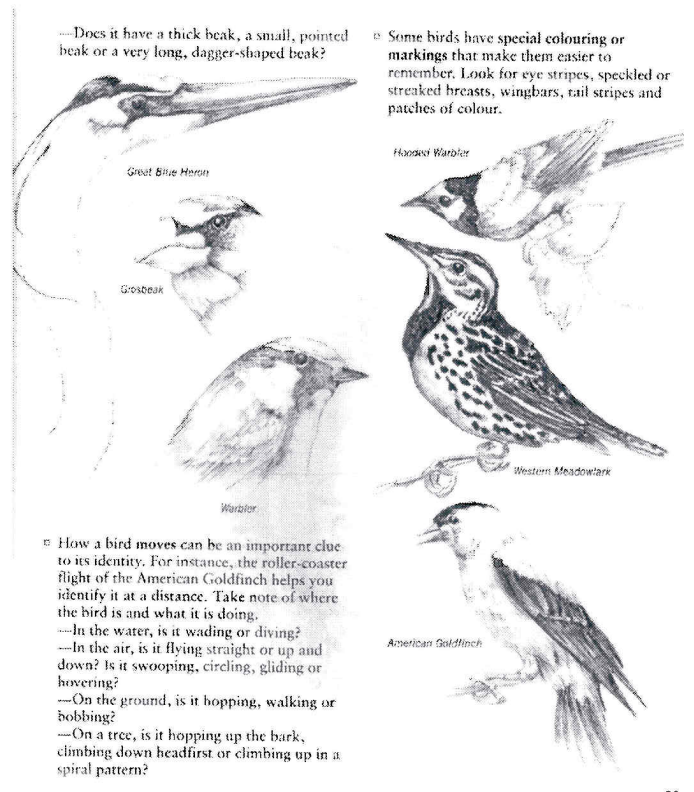
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Hickman, Pamela. for Federation of Ontario Naturalists. Bird Wise. Toronto: Kids Can Press. 1988

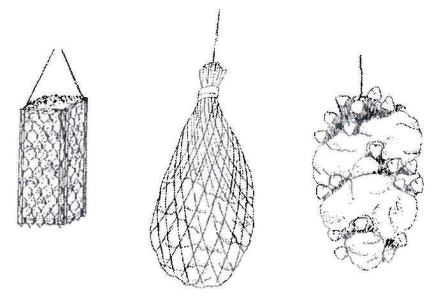
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## SUET RECIPES:

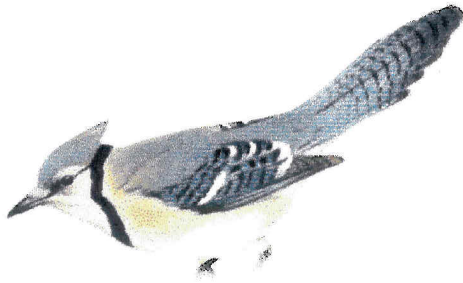
For each recipe, you can form the mix into balls, and either place into an onion bag, or a suet holder. You can also tie a string around a large pinecone, and mush the mix into the openings. Hang from your feeder or a tree branch.

Sweet Suet Boil 1 part sugar to 4 parts water, add this syrup to a mix of suet, peanut butter, flour and cornmeal.  
 Peanut Butter and Suet: mix peanut butter with hot rendered suet. Let cool  
 Year round mix: mix together vegetable shortening, peanut butter, cornmeal and flour.



Butler, Elaine. Attracting Birds. Edmonton: Lone Pine publishing. 1991

## BLUE JAY

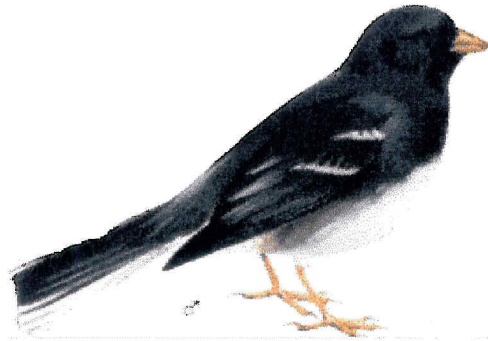


31CM-12IN

- a very loud bird
- blue with a black necklace
- comes easily to feeders

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## DARK EYED JUNCO

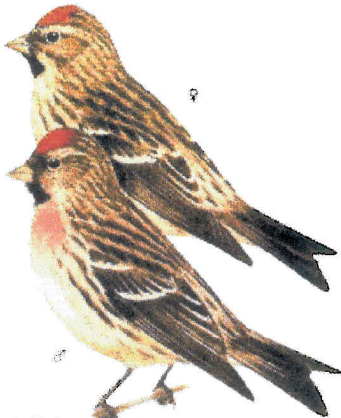


15CM-6IN

- a small grey bird with a white belly
- they like to feed on the ground

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## COMMON REDPOLL

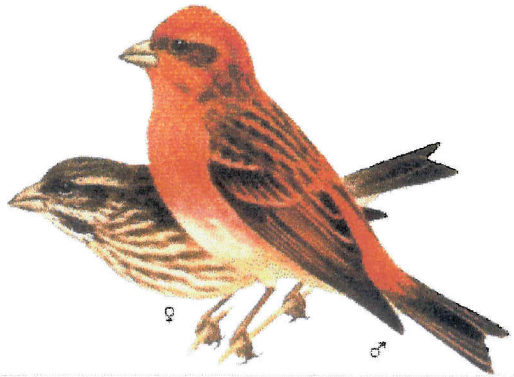


13CM-5IN

- a small bird with a black chin and a red cap
- often in large groups

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## PURPLE FINCH

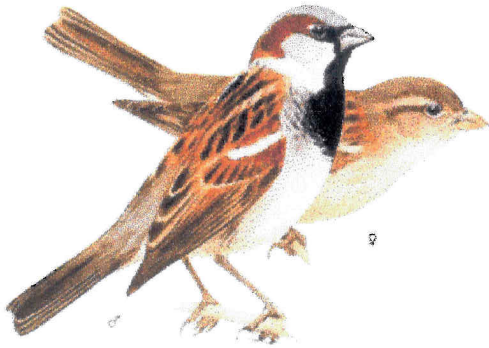


15 CM-6IN

- the male is not really purple but a red colour
- the female is brown with a striped breast
- they easily come to feeders

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## HOUSE SPARROW

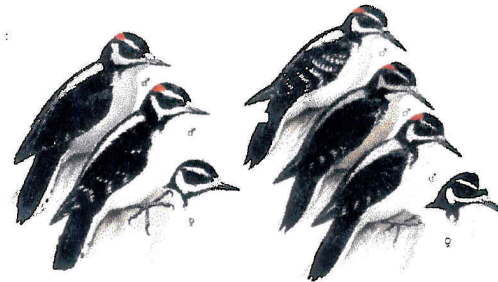


15CM 6IN

- the male is a brown bird with a very black throat
- the female is a brown bird
- they are found throughout the city year round

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## DOWNY AND HAIRY WOODPECKERS



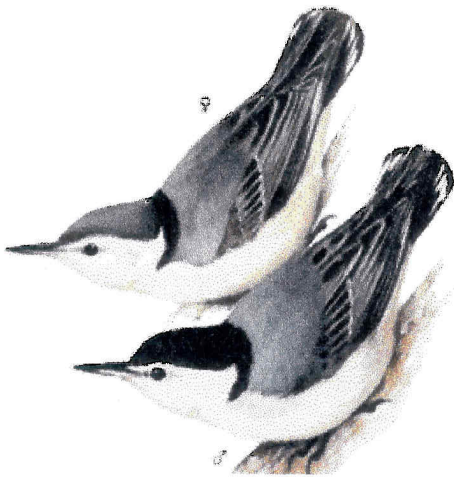
16 CM-6 1/2 IN

24CM-9 1/2 IN

- the downy is the smallest woodpecker in Canada
- they are black and white
- the males have a red head spot
- the downy has a much smaller beak than the hairy woodpecker

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## WHITE BREASTED NUTHATCH

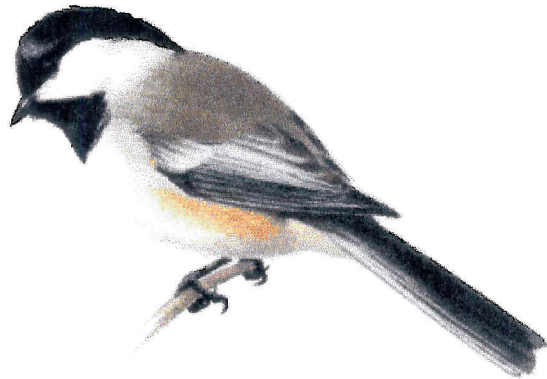


13-15 CM 5-6 IN

- an upside down bird as it walks down trees headfirst.
- it has a black cap and a "beady" black eye on a white face

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## BLACK CAPPED CHICKADEE



12-18 cm 4 3/4 5 3/4 IN

- it has a black cap and bib
- it says its name Chick a dee dee dee
- can get used to people and will feed from hands

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