

Dale Kristensen -- January 31, 2021



Photos by Jaimie Bortolotti

Sponsor: **Urban Nature Store**



Welcome to:
**“Winter Birds of the
Kingston Region”
online photo event**

- all volunteer
- charity
- protecting 11 properties
- 310 hectares (766 acres)
- permanent **safe havens** for nature



your local land trust

To Feed or Not to Feed!?!?!?



- Feeders are the easiest way to attract wildlife to your backyard (*except perhaps for leaving garbage out!*)
- Food supplementation benefits winter residents and seasonal migrants
- Research shows that winter birds will continue to forage for their own food in the local area and do not become overly reliant on feeders
- Laying down adequate fat stores in early winter increases survivorship during migration and boosts reproductive success

Tips for a successful feeder

- Choose a squirrel-proof feeder (e.g., 'Squirrel Buster')
- Choose a quiet site with some cover (conifers, hardwoods, shrubs) that is not too close to the house and is sheltered from high winds
- Do not place too close to a large window (bird strike potential), **or areas where your evil cat likes to hang out!**



Best Winter Foods for Attracting Birds

- Suet and Seed Cakes (nuthatches, woodpeckers, chickadees)
- Black Oil or Striped Sunflower Seed (above, plus bluejays and cardinals)
- Hulled Peanuts (as above, plus many others)
- Canola Seed (as above)
- Nyjer Seed (finches including goldfinch, redpolls and siskins)
- Avoid blends with fillers e.g., wheat, oats, millet, sorghum and corn
- Avoid cheap or discount birdseeds (old and/or full of fillers)

Seed for Thought

- Several local overwintering birds known for food caching behaviours, e.g., chickadees, nuthatches, red-bellied woodpeckers
- May cache 1000+ seeds in a winter (pilfering by cohorts and others common)
- Studies show seasonally enlarged hippocampus of food caching species relating to spatial memory

Threats to Our Bird Populations

- BirdLife International reports a 40% decline in numbers worldwide corresponding with climate driven declines in insect prey abundance, migration risk from increased droughts and storms, direct mortality, and loss of habitat
- *Science* research paper released last year est. decline of nearly 3 billion adult birds since the 1970s
- Northward range shift may not be rapid enough to overcome global temperature increases
- Local examples: tree swallow nest box mortality, Kingston CBC survey records in last 2 years lowest in 30 years
- Climate change is not leftist political ideology, it's a fully documented scientific fact! We need to act accordingly.

Opportunities for Fledgling Birders

- Kingston Field Naturalists (expert led talks and walks, etc.)
- Christmas Bird Counts (field surveyor or feeder watcher)
- Ibird and Merlin assist with identification
- Ebird and INaturalist apps document your sightings and assist in identification
- Birds Canada provides latest research updates, coordinates surveys, as well as providing opportunities for citizen scientists

Sponsor:

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Draw for \$50 gift card
winners

Thank you for participating
in our online birding event!

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