



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

A northern flicker eats seeds from a backyard bird feeder in Pendleton.

# Attracting birds to your yard

Simple strategies can create a backyard bird refuge

By KATHY ANEY  
East Oregonian

**"There are simple things people can do to attract birds. One of the simplest is providing a lot of perches."**

Jack Simons  
Pendleton Bird Club member

Interested in transforming your yard into an oasis for birds and birdwatchers? There are plenty of things you can do to make your yard attractive to our feathered friends.

"There are simple things people can do to attract birds," said Jack Simons. "One of the simplest is providing a lot of perches."

Simons, a member of the Pendleton Bird Club, lives on 12 acres east of Pendleton. As a bird lover, he has been working to attract birds to his property. He planted native plant species to offer berries, seeds and nectar to the birds. The native plants, already adapted to the climate and soil, need no fertilizers or pesticides. Birds feast on local insects which evolved

to feed on native plants.

Some local native varieties include shrubs and trees such as dogwoods, elderberry, serviceberry, Oregon grape, milkweed, chokecherry, currant, honeysuckle, hawthorn, ninebark, snowberry and mock orange.

He placed handy perches all around his property.

"Put them in a secure setting so they can bail out when a hawk comes in," Simon said. "They need bushes and trees to escape to."

Other strategies for attracting birds include:

**Providing water.** Birds

need water and are attracted by birdbaths, fountains, bubblers, water features and small ponds. Edges of the structure should slope gradually. Sitting water should be changed every few days so it is fresh and clean.

**Feeders:** Tempt avian life during times of scarcity with a variety of foods such as seed mixes, suet, peanut butter, cracked corn, fruit and millet. Hummingbird feeders filled with nectar are a magnet for the speedy, bright-colored birds.

**Create havens:** To feel secure and have a way to

escape predators, birds need cover such as shrubs, trees or a brush pile.

**Putting out nesting boxes:** The National Wildlife Federation says the addition of a nesting box will benefit native bird species and give you a front row seat to their nesting activities. Be sure to research the correct design for the species you wish to attract.

**Keeping standing dead trees:** Snags provide cavity-dwelling birds a place to raise young and escape from weather.

**Reducing lawn area:** Except for the occasional robin eating a worm, lawns don't offer much to birds in the way of nutrition or cover.

**Cutting the use of insecticides:** Insects are the power


food for birds and their growing young.

**Keeping the cat indoors:** Birds and cats don't mix.

A few simple changes can transform your yard into a bird-friendly oasis, so sit back and enjoy the sights and sounds.

Contact Kathy Aney at [kaneay@eastoregonian.com](mailto:kaneay@eastoregonian.com) or call 541-966-0810.

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