

## Songbirds

### **Issue - Hitting windows**

**Note** - They may be hitting the window due to being chased by a predatory bird or because they see a reflection of the sky and think they can fly through the clear area.

#### **Suggestions-**

- ▶ Put Window Alerts or similar products on windows where birds often strike. These are almost invisible to the human eye but highly visible to birds.
- ▶ Create a bird barrier using netting stretched over the outside of the window.
- ▶ Break up the reflection by hanging plants or mobiles in the window.
- ▶ If birds hit your windows only at a certain time of year, leave windows a little dusty or draw patterns on the window using soap to cut down on the reflection and make the window more visible. This can be cleaned off after a few weeks.
- ▶ Place feeders and bird baths either less than 3 feet or more than 15 feet away from windows.

### **Issue – birds attacking windows**

**Note** - During nesting season some male birds may deliberately attack their reflection in a window because they think it is a rival male. This is common in robins.

#### **Suggestion –**

- ▶ Hang a sheet to cover the outside of the window for a few days until the bird thinks his rival has left.

### **Issue - Sick birds at feeders**

**Note** - Bird feeders encourage birds to gather in large groups, which makes it easier for diseases to pass from bird to bird via direct contact, or contact with the droppings of a sick bird.

#### **Suggestions:-**

- ▶ Take down feeders, empty and thoroughly clean and disinfect. Keep feeders down for a week or more to reduce the concentration of birds gathering and therefore the chances of spreading the infection.

#### **Five diseases most commonly seen in birds at feeders:-**

**Salmonella** - most common (especially in Pine Siskins), caused by a bacterium. Infected birds can appear tame, sit quietly, have their feathers puffed out, or have heads tucked.

**Avian Conjunctivitis** - Common in House Finches. Birds often have red, swollen, watery, or crusty eyes. Even though the birds eyes appear infected, it is primarily a respiratory infection.

**Avian pox virus** - Birds have wart-like growths on face, legs, feet, and unfeathered skin. It is

spread through direct contact with infected birds, ingestion of food and water contaminated by a sick bird, or contact with contaminated surfaces (feeders, birdbaths, perches).

**Trichomoniasis** - This is a protozoan that affects a wide variety of animals, but doves and pigeons are most commonly affected. It causes sores in the mouth and throat making it difficult for the bird to eat or drink.

**Aspergillosis** – Caused by *Aspergillus* fungus that grows on damp food and in debris beneath feeders. This will cause bronchitis and pneumonia symptoms in birds.

**Suggestions to reduce spreading of disease among birds coming to feeders -**

- ▶ Spread feeders out to reduce crowding,
- ▶ Clean up waste frequently.
- ▶ Rake under the feeder to removing droppings and old, moldy seed. Preferably mount feeders over concrete or wood so it can be swept and hosed down regularly.
- ▶ Move the feeders around periodically.
- ▶ Keep feeders in good repair, clean and dry.
- ▶ Clean feeders regularly by a) washing with dilute dish soap in very hot water, b) rinsing thoroughly to remove residue c) soaking in very dilute bleach solution d) rinsing thoroughly e) allowing to dry completely, before re-hanging.
- ▶ Use fresh food; do not serve moldy or damp food.
- ▶ Reduce the amount of seeds that fall to the ground by offering seed in a tube style feeder.

