

# Living With Wildlife: SONGBIRDS



## ISSUE - SICK BIRDS AT FEEDERS

Bird feeders encourage birds to gather in large groups, which increases disease transmission through direct contact or contact with the droppings of a sick birds.



### Suggestions:

- Take feeders down for a week or more to reduce the concentration of birds and, therefore, the risk of spreading infection.
- Spread feeders out to reduce crowding.
- Rake under the feeders to remove 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.
- Clean feeders thoroughly by washing them with diluted dish soap in very hot water, rinsing thoroughly to remove residue, or soaking them in a very diluted bleach solution. Allow it to dry completely before re-hanging.
- Use fresh food and do not serve moldy or damp seed.
- Reduce the amount of seeds that fall to the ground by using a tube-style feeder.

### Most common diseases seen in birds at feeders:

- **Salmonella:** Most common. Infected birds may appear tame, sit quietly, puff their feathers, or tuck their heads.
- **Avian Conjunctivitis:** Common in House Finches. Birds often exhibit red, swollen, watery, or crusty eyes. Though eyes appear infected, this is primarily a respiratory infection.
- **Avian pox virus:** Wart-like growths on face, legs, feet, and unfeathered skin. It spreads through direct contact and contaminated areas/objects.
- **Trichomoniasis:** Most common in doves and pigeons. Causes sores in the mouth, making it difficult for birds to eat or drink.
- **Aspergillosis:** Caused by *Aspergillus* fungus, which grows on damp food and debris. This will cause bronchitis and pneumonia symptoms in birds.

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## ISSUE - HITTING WINDOWS

**Note:** *Birds may be hitting windows either because they are 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:

- Apply 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 barrier by stretching netting over the outside of the window. Make sure the netting is stretched tight so birds don't get tangled if they fly into it.
- Break up the reflection by hanging plants in the window.
- If birds hit your windows only at a certain time of year, leave windows slightly dusty or draw patterns using soap to reduce 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 the windows.



## ISSUE - ATTACKING WINDOWS

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 with robins. Hang a sheet to cover the outside of the window for a few days until the bird thinks their rival has left.

