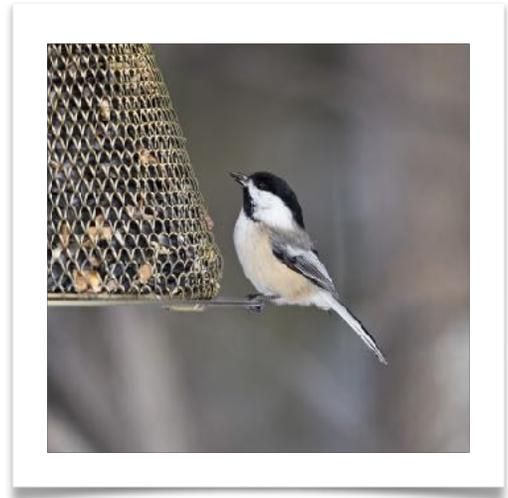




Proper Use and Cleaning of Wild Bird Feeders

To keep feeders safe for birds, homeowners should treat their windows to prevent bird collisions and practice regular cleaning of feeders and the ground around them to minimize the spread of disease. The risk of avian influenza among songbirds and other feeder birds is low, so it is safe to continue feeding birds unless there are poultry or waterfowl on your property. Keep cats indoors because they are also susceptible to avian influenza and to protect birds from cats. These recommendations will ensure that the birds using your feeder stay healthy and that you are protected from disease:

- Choose a feeder that protects seeds from moisture, limits the accumulation of feces, and easily comes apart for cleaning.
- If seed in your feeder becomes wet, discard it and clean your feeder before returning to use.
- Replace the sugar solution in nectar feeders daily in hot weather or every 2-3 days in cooler weather.
- Clean seed feeders at least once a month and nectar feeders once a week:
 - If feeders are cleaned often or have light debris visible, scrub with soap and water OR soak in 10% bleach for 10 minutes.
 - If feeders have not been cleaned regularly or have heavy visible debris and feces, scrub with soap and water AND use a 10% bleach soak.
- Wash feeders away from food prep areas (outside or in a utility sink) and wear latex/nitrile gloves.
- Rake up and dispose of seed debris below feeders (or cover with mulch) at least once a month.
- Monitor birds at your feeder for signs of health:
 - If birds show signs of disease, consider taking down feeders and pausing feeding for a couple weeks.
 - If a major disease outbreak occurs in your area, follow the recommendations of state and federal agencies regarding feeding practices.
- Always practice proper personal hygiene and wash your hands thoroughly after conducting any feeder maintenance or cleaning.



Download the full fact sheet, along with a full list of references, at www.birdnet.org.