



# How to...

**HA HA!**

A northern flicker woodpecker makes a call that sounds similar to human laughter.



## Create a safe habitat for birds

**Find out how you can help the feathered friends in your neighborhood.**

**B**irds need our help. Nearly 3 billion of them have disappeared from North America over the past five decades due to issues like habitat loss, pollution, and climate change. Some of the most affected species are common birds—the species that many people see every day—which include sparrows, blackbirds, warblers, and finches. With a few simple changes, you can help create a safe haven for birds near your home. Here's how to get started.

### Offer safe shelter

To give birds a place to live, you can build or buy a nest box or birdhouse made of untreated, natural wood. Other materials, like plastic, can get too hot for birds and their young. To protect bird families from the rain, provide a roof that extends over the entrance. Carefully place the birdhouse where predators can't jump or climb onto it, such as on a smooth metal pole or safely under an eave.

### Take care with bird feeders

If you provide bird seed in your yard, be sure to keep it dry. Seed can get damp in warm and humid conditions and can pass on harmful toxins to birds if it turns moldy. Consider filling your feeder no more

than halfway so the seed isn't sitting out too long. Also sweep up old seeds and hulls from under the feeder frequently. And clean your feeder in the dishwasher or with hot water and a bottle brush (but no soap) at least once every two weeks. Let it thoroughly dry before refilling it with seed.

### Protect insects

In the spring and summer breeding months, songbirds rely on insects to feed their young. But many people spray chemicals on their lawns and shrubs to kill insects, and this can harm the birds. Talk to your family about avoiding the use of chemicals around your yard.

### Make windows visible

Every year, millions of birds accidentally fly into windows. That's because a bird flying through the air and looking at a window sees a reflection of the sky or trees instead of the glass. You can help prevent collisions with windows by making the glass more visible to birds. Talk to your family about keeping bug screens on windows year-round. With an adult's permission, you can also attach tape strips or adhesive decals to windows.



**Don't overfill your feeder!**

### Bird nest facts



Nests can reveal fascinating facts about the birds that build them. Here are a few.

**Signature styles** Nesting habits vary by species. For example, hummingbirds build tiny nests of moss and spider silk. Robins arrange sticks into a cup shape. Orioles weave plant fibers into nests that dangle from trees.

**New tricks** Research shows that some birds, like zebra finches, will watch other birds to learn nest-building methods.

**No place like home** Some birds, like bald eagles, return to the same nest every year, adding new materials to expand the nest each season.