



The Birds and the Bears –We Can Have Both

Throughout New Hampshire human-bear interactions are frequently associated with bird feeders. These encounters may be perceived as a threat to people's safety or property. Current NH Fish and Game legislation prohibits the purposeful feeding of bears and may include the ability to intervene on a case by case basis when persistent wildlife feeding creates a nuisance or property damage situation in an entire neighborhood. The following recommendations provide opportunities to enjoy watching birds without the conflicts with bears that feeders often produce, resulting in bears losing their natural fear of humans and sometimes the unnecessary destruction of a bear.



In early spring, provide natural nesting materials such as human or animal hair, wool, cotton, feathers, and even dryer lint. Fill small mesh onion or lemon bags with these materials and hang them in trees and bushes around your property.



Make a dust bath in a sunny spot close to a window. Mix equal parts of fine sand and wood ash together in a bird bath or a wooden planter tub. Small songbirds will flutter around in it and throw the dust all over their bodies to get rid of their insect parasites.



Landscape for wildlife by planting fruiting shrubs and trees for natural bird food, thick conifers to provide shelter from the wind, a variety of tall and short vegetation in patches and leave some areas of bare ground to provide the diversity that insects and birds need.



During the heat of the summer, provide water not only in the traditional bird bath, but also use a soaker hose or set a hose to spray softly upward in a leafy bush to make a shower the birds will flock to.

Watching a single pair of birds nest and fledge their young on your property can be more satisfying than watching dozens of birds squabble at a feeder. Natural attractants keep our bears out of trouble and are healthier for birds than feeders, which can concentrate numbers of birds in one spot and facilitate the spread of disease and parasites among them.

