



## Sample Answers to Suggested Questions: Birds at a Feeder

The Riverwood Conservancy has several bird feeders located on the property. The videos of birds feeding at a feeder were taken using our main feeder location and are provided for training purposes. You can augment these videos by having your students view the live *Bird Cam* at one of the Bird Cam sites listed previously. Better still the students who live in homes where birds are fed can use that as a resource.

- Which birds come to the feeder? See Appendix VIII copied below for a list.
- Which birds are the most frequent visitors to the feeder? This will depend on your students observations but in general smaller birds (i.e. chickadees) are more frequent visitors than larger birds (i.e. blue jays)
- Which birds are the least frequent visitors to the feeders? See above.
- Make a list of the birds that come to the feeder and classify them as follows: See Appendix VIII for a list that will give you common names and sizes. To measure the length of time I suggest you set some simple guidelines for your class to follow. For example: timing starts when a bird lands on a feeder and ends when it flies off. Frequency of Visit can be calculated by individual species if students can learn to recognize it.

| Species | Size | Length of Time at the Feeder | Frequency of Visit |
|---------|------|------------------------------|--------------------|
|---------|------|------------------------------|--------------------|

- What conclusions can you draw from this chart? Observations should support comments made above. Chickadees should be the most frequent visitors to the feeders. Why? It is a matter of size. Being smaller they lose heat more rapidly than larger birds. Therefore they need to feed more frequently in order to maintain their metabolism. Larger birds have the luxury of feeding less and are therefore not as compelled to come to the feeder as frequently.
- What sort of feeder do the birds go to? Sunflower seeds? Suet? Both? See Appendix VIII.
- What do birds do once they leave the feeder? Some birds such as the nuthatch fly off to eat. Chickadees will often just take the seed to the dead tree by the feeders and eat it there.
- Which birds are more tolerant of people? Chickadees are by far the most tolerant.
- What do the birds when danger is spotted? (You will need to watch the live feed to see this happen as it is fairly rare.) If the attacker is seen in advance they will freeze in place. If it is a human approaching or an attack by a hawk is more imminent they panic and fly off.



### Appendix VIII: Birds at A Feeder

Note: This chart will be updated as new videos are added and as new species are seen at the feeder. Note: Species not seen (yet) in videos are in *italics*.

| Common Name                   | Family            | Seen in Video | Suet | Sunflower | Season             | Size                |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|------|-----------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Downy Woodpecker              | Woodpecker        | X             | X    | X         | Fall-Spring        | Medium              |
| Hairy Woodpecker              | Woodpecker        |               | X    | X         | Winter             | Medium-Large        |
| <i>Red-bellied Woodpecker</i> | <i>Woodpecker</i> |               | X    | X         | <i>Fall-Winter</i> | <i>Medium-Large</i> |
| Blue jay                      | <i>Perching</i>   |               | X    | X         | <i>Fall-Winter</i> | <i>Medium-Large</i> |
| Cardinal                      | <i>Perching</i>   |               |      | X         | <i>Winter</i>      | <i>Medium</i>       |
| American Goldfinch            | Perching          | X             |      | X         | Fall-Spring        | Small               |
| Black-capped Chickadee        | Perching          | X             | X    | X         | Fall-Spring        | Very small          |
| White-breasted Nuthatch       | Perching          | X             | X    | X         | Fall-Winter        | Small               |
| <i>Red-breasted Nuthatch</i>  | <i>Perching</i>   |               | X    | X         | <i>Winter</i>      | <i>Very small</i>   |
| Indigo Bunting                | Perching          | X             |      | X         | Spring             | Medium              |
| Baltimore Oriole              | Perching          | X             | X    |           | Spring-Summer      | Medium              |
| Rose-breasted Grosbeak        | Perching          | X             |      | X         | Spring             | Medium              |
| Purple Finch                  | Perching          | X             |      | X         | Spring             | Small               |

**Other birds that might be added to the list include the following:**

|               |                |                    |                   |
|---------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Mourning Dove | Common Grackle | Red-wing Blackbird | European Starling |
| House Sparrow | Tree Sparrow   | House Finch        | Tufted Titmouse   |

#### Recommended Field Guides:

- **National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America**, Sep 12 2017 by Jon L. Dunn (Author), Jonathan Alderfer (Author)
- **Peterson Field Guide to Birds of North America**, Aug 28 2008 by Roger Tory Peterson (Author), Lee Allen Peterson (Foreword)
- **The Sibley Guide to Birds**, Second Edition Mar 11 2014 by David Allen Sibley (Author)