

Birding on a Budget

Think your favorite feathered friend-loving customers have left the nest? Think again: They're nesting more than ever but want ways to keep bird watching for less.

By Jasmina Radjevic

We are all well aware of the current economic state and its effects on retailers. But that doesn't mean your business or your customers have to suffer. So what's a birding enthusiast to do when times are rough? According

to David Mizejewski, the National Wildlife Federation's naturalist and backyard wildlife expert, resourceful bird lovers can continue to attract birds without breaking the bank.

Here are some helpful tips provided by the National Wildlife Federation and Mizejewski you can share with your backyard birding customers on how to continue birding while saving a buck.

Avoid using insecticides. Remind your customers before they use that bug killer that most adult birds rely on insects as a source of protein, and 96 percent of bird species in North America feed insects to their young.

Grow native. Plants that grow naturally in your area provide birds with the foods they've been consuming for centuries that thrive in local soil and weather. Some foreign plants can't provide birds with the seeds and fruits they require to survive.

Birds love water. Even those birders who can't provide food can attract birds to their backyards with a simple bird bath.

Buy in bulk. For those customers who particularly enjoy observing the birds visiting their feeders, advise that they consider buying seed in bulk. Also suggest they store seed in a metal container with a secure lid to keep out moisture.

Plant natural feeders. Birds often use feeders to supplement natural food found in the garden, so your customers should focus on plants that provide birds with seeds, berries, nuts, sap and nectar.

Homemade food. Show your customers they can create their own suet by recycling bacon grease. Simply pour grease into a plastic container and freeze it. Next place the container out in a suet cage or mesh onion bags as a treat for birds. Saving packages from store-bought suet and using them again to make more can save birders even more.

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Birdhouse

The GreenBird single-season birdhouse is made from three-ply laminate of 100 percent recycled paperboard. It is designed for one nesting season and then may be added to a compost bin at season's end. GreenBird, LLC. www.greenbirdhouse.com (513) 241-4300. **Write in 1480**

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