

Some Questions on Birds Are Answered

1. Does the grey squirrel, such as we have in this section, keep away the birds? Even if the grey squirrel does not do much harm to the birds in their nests, my impression is that the birds do not like them, especially since they know that squirrels of another color, namely the red squirrel, are enemies to birds.

2. Where should feeding stations for birds on golf courses be placed? and how constructed?

3. What shrubbery would you recommend for nesting sites and for protection in summer and winter storms?

4. What berry bearing bushes and trees would you recommend?—A. W. McAllister.

The Answers

1. The grey squirrel is not nearly as universal a nest robber as the red squirrel. In some sections of the country, observers report that the native birds ignore entirely the presence of the grey squirrel, which is a good indication that they do not fear it. In other sections, like your own, let but a solitary squirrel, whether red or grey, appear in the vicinity and every bird within hearing will set up an outcry. It can hardly be doubted that in such regions, the birds look upon the squirrel as an enemy and as such, it probably had better be eliminated from your grounds. As shooting is the only practical method of accomplishing this, do not start your warfare on the squirrel until you have checked up on your state game-laws and, if necessary, obtained the permission of the state game-warden to go ahead.

There is one other point. Whether the squirrel is an enemy of our song birds or not, remember that it is a natural enemy and not man-introduced as are the cat and the "English" sparrow. As long as a single cat or "English" sparrow exists on your property, leave the squirrels alone. After these two major enemies of birds have been abolished, it is time enough to turn your attention to the squirrels.

2. A feeding station can be of any character from merely a cleared open space on your grounds to an elaborate, glass-enclosed house erected on a pole and cat-

proofed. The important thing is to have specific spots where the birds know food will be found at all times.

The most simple practical feeding station is a platform some three feet square with shallow sides to prevent such food as bread-crumbs and grain from being blown off. This platform should be erected on a five- or six-foot post in a spot reasonably removed from trees and shrubbery so that bird enemies cannot creep upon them as they feed. If you desire, the platform may be roofed and only the side away from your prevailing winds left open.

Many commercially built feeding-shelters are available on the market and most of them are mounted on a pivot so that their open side swings away from the wind. These shelters are not unduly expensive and form attractive additions to your landscaping. We will gladly refer you to the manufacturers on request.

Erect at least one feeding-station in front of your club house porches for the entertainment of your members, and distribute the others over your grounds where in your opinion they will do the most good.

Appropriate foods are wheat, crushed corn, stale bread-crumbs and spoiled fruit, and in winter, suet.

3. Local landscape gardeners and florists can advise on the types of bushes and shrubs that will grow successfully in your climate. What you want are heavy, tangled, patches of bushes and low shrubs thick enough to shield the birds from the summer sun and the cold winter winds, and afford them a retreat from their enemies.

4. The mulberry appears to be the favorite fruiting tree for luring birds, over fifty species being known to eat the fruit. The trees fruit early, bear nearly all summer, and are ornamental enough for the most formal landscape gardening. Any mulberry is good, but some varieties are more palatable for human consumption and should be used. You may as well please the members of your club while you are luring the birds to it.

Next in importance to the mulberry are those shrubs and trees that hold their fruit through the late autumn and winter. These are the months when the birds must struggle for their food and a liberal planting of dogwood, virginia-creeper, privet, and the non-poisonous varieties of sumac will assure the birds of an adequate food supply all winter. Your bird population should increase many fold.