

Project Ideas for Avian Wildlife

by K. Lynn Goode
Delaware, Ohio

Winter can be a true time of hardship for many species of birds. Establishing a feeder for the seasons and constructing birdhouses in your own backyard can be a precious gift. The ideas presented here are designed for personal enjoyment, a hobby, or even projects with educational value.

Diet, Feeding Designs, Keeping Notes

It is important to provide a side selection of natural foods for the various species you may wish to attract. Table 1 is constructed to give you a brief overview of the variety of food items consumed by different species. Providing easily accessible feeding and watering locations can be a special enticement in attracting the specific species which you desire. If you have a watering area on or close to the ground be sure you do not create an ambush smorgasbord with foliage concealing potential predators. Perhaps you have put in a large garden pond. If there is ample space it may help some birds if a branch is placed protruding from the center of the pond in order to help eliminate this ambush trap.

Take time to plan ahead to attract the species which are most interesting to you and fit in best with the habitat your unique location has to offer. If you are unsure of which types of birds inhabit your area, I encourage you to take a trip to a good public or university library to do some independent research. This can be fun as well as educational.

Consider keeping notes on the birds and their habits which come to your area. These notes may include, but not be limited to, the common and scientific names of all species seen, identifying features of individuals, the type of trees these birds eat or roost in, preferred habitat (wooded, meadow, shoreline, etc.), migration, breeding seasons, the total range of a species in your county or country, seasonal food items consumed and so forth. Many

private records kept by people like yourself can be valuable information resources to researchers, natural museum personnel, wildlife protection officials and others. Birds can also be excellent indicators of air, water, and soil pollution levels in your area.

TABLE 1
DIET SOURCE CHART

Species	Diet Sources (C = Carnivore I = Insectivore G = Grainivore F = Frugivore O = Omnivore, and special items)
Bluebird	F, I, worms, weevils, grasshoppers
Flicker	F, I, worms, seeds, ants, beetles
Purple martin	I, bees, ants
Black-capped chickadee	F, I, worms, nut meats
Sparrow hawk	C, I, worms
House sparrow	F, I, worms
Screech owl	I, C (frogs, sm. birds, fish, rodents, worms)
Tufted titmouse	F, I, nut meats, ants, worms
Downey woodpecker	F, I, nut meats, ants, boring insects, spiders, some seed, snails
Pileated woodpecker	F, I, nut meats, worms
Carolina wren	I, worms, nut meats
House wren	I, worms, beetles, caterpillars

*Letter indicates major diet sources

Consider designing your own informational format to keep notes on your observations.

Birdhouse Construction and Locations

The cold and wet seasons are a good time for indoor projects. Think about landscaping your yard for the enjoyment of the wildlife you would like to attract. This can include anything from constructing a special feeder or birdhouse to creating a garden pond for the appreciation of the true web of nature.

Tables two and three present a compilation of several kinds of birds and the housing dimensions they require. Figures 1, 2 and 3 are sample designs you may wish to utilize. Although lumber stores will usually stock all the materials you will need to build a simple new bird dwelling, remember that scrap lumber is also an inexpensive and excellent resource for supplies. Many useful materials can be found in scrap piles, at building sites, residential or commercial. Retail stores may throw away wooden crates and other useful items. However, before removing anything from someone else's property — even if

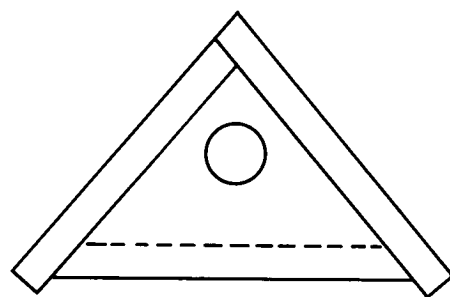


Figure 1

A-FRAME HOUSE

*Figure drawing by John Rutledge

NOTES:

Floors should be 1/4" - 1/2" above sides.
Roof should overhang 1/4" - 1/2" beyond sides.
These features help prevent weather leakage into a dwelling.

The First Complete Line of Bird Care Products



Ornacyn®

Handy, safe, non-toxic broad spectrum antibiotic for respiratory infections in cage birds.

Ornacyn-Two™

Treatment for respiratory diseases of pet birds. Controls diarrhea, corrects vitamin deficiencies, relieves stress.

Ornacycline™

Treatment for respiratory and intestinal diseases of pet birds. Fruit flavored, fast dissolving tablets.

Furazite™

Nitrofurazone for birds: broad spectrum Gram-negative antibiotic for treatment of intestinal disorders.

Ornalyte™

Special electrolytes-trace mineral formula (fortified with high potency vitamin complex), for birds under stress.

Quell™

Anesthetic spray relieves skin irritation. Bitter taste discourages picking, promotes healing.

OrnaMite™

Safe, fast-acting formula controls stress-causing mite infestations. Handy tube applicator; contains no hydrocarbons.

VitaFlight®

13 essential vitamins for pet birds. Fruit flavored powder to add to the drinking water.

Ornabac™

Natural food additive for pet birds. Keeps digestive tract healthy, controls diarrhea, relieves stress.

Stay™

Non-stinging, non-toxic coagulant cream stops bleeding fast after clipping bird nails or beak.

Brite N'Shine™

Spray sheen for dull plumage; relieves dry skin. Purcellin oil encourages preening.

WaterGuard™

Safe, non-toxic ingestible disinfectant for the bird's water supply. Effective against bacteria, fungi and yeast growth.

CageGuard™

Controls growth of bacteria, viruses and fungi on cages and perches, including wood and plastic.



Mardel—
when you
care for pets.®



M Mardel
Laboratories, Inc.

1958 Brandon Court
Glendale Heights, IL 60139
312/351-0606

TABLE 2
HOUSING GUIDE

Species	Entrance Dia. (inches)	Entrance From Floor (inches)	Ground to Floor (feet)	Continue...
Bluebird	1½	6 - 7	5 - 10	
Flicker	3	14 - 16	6 - 20	
Purple martin	2½	1	15 - 20	
Black capped chickadee	1⅛	6 - 8	5 - 15	
Sparrow hawk	3	9 - 12	10 - 30	
Screech owl	3	9 - 12	10 - 30	
House sparrow	1½	6 - 8	4 - 12	
Tufted titmouse	1¼	6 - 8	5 - 10	
Downy woodpecker	1¼	6 - 8	6 - 20	
Pileated woodpecker	3 - 4	10 - 12	12 - 60	
Carolina wren	1¼ x 2½	4 - 6	5 - 10	
House wren	1 x 2½	4 - 65	5 - 10	

Species	Floor Space (inches)	Box Depth (inches)	Days of Incubation	Days to Fledging*
Bluebird	5 x 5	8 - 9	13 - 15	15 - 18
Flicker	7 x 7	16 - 20	11 - 16	25 - 28
Purple martin	6 x 6	6	12 - 16	28 - 36
Black capped chickadee	4 x 4	8 - 10	11 - 13	
Sparrow hawk	8 x 8	12 - 15	29 - 30	21
Screech owl	8 x 8	12 - 15	21 - 25	25 - 30
House sparrow	4 x 4	8 - 10	12 - 14	14 - 16
Tufted Titmouse	4 x 4	8 - 10	12	16
Downy woodpecker	4 x 4	8 - 10	12	21
Pileated woodpecker	8 x 8	12 - 30	18	26
Carolina wren	4 x 4	6 - 8	12	12 - 14
House wren	4 x 4	6 - 8	11 - 13	12 - 18

*Fledging = days from hatching date.

it is in a trash bin — *always ask* the owner if you may take pieces away. Be creative: custom design a birdhouse (and any project) to suit yourself, the wildlife which will use it, and the special features of the area. If you decide to build a garden pond remember that stagnant water tends to draw insects. This may be beneficial if you want to attract insectivores (insect-eaters) and want to add a few frogs, but can be miserable if the pond is located too close to your house entrance or an outdoor eating area. This is an example of why it is essential to think ahead!

• Tables two and three are provided as a guide for birdhouse dimensions. The dimensions are for calculating the inner space which includes room for nesting material as well as family “living”

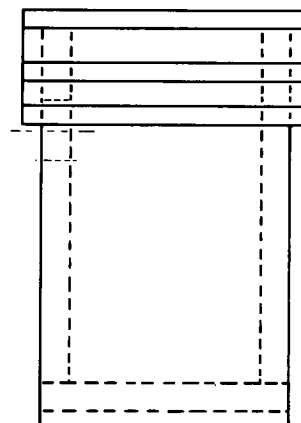
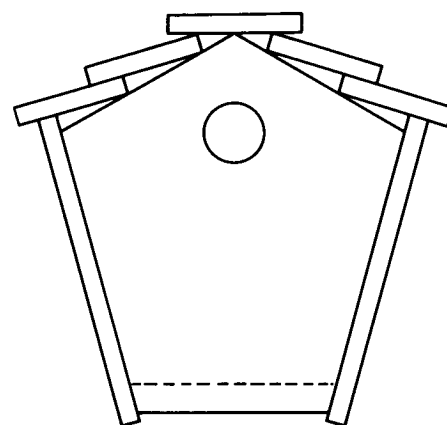


Figure 2
SHINGLE HOUSE

*Figure drawings by John Rutledge

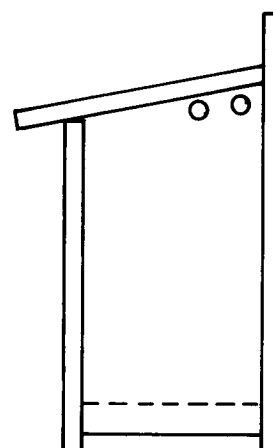
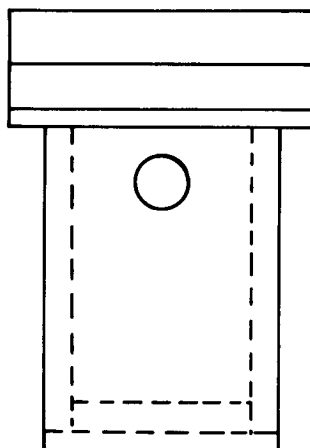


Figure 3
FIELD HOUSE

Figure drawings by John Rutledge

space. Keep in mind the location for your creation. For example, is there water nearby, will the home be placed in full shade, filtered sunlight, or direct sunlight, will the dwelling be hung or attached to a tree or post, what type of tree will be most acceptable, and how many feet from the ground will be required?

Most of the species I have listed will require filtered sunlight locations because they are cavity nesters (nest in tree hollows). Generally, if the birdhouse is to be located in direct sunlight it is best to use white paint or light material with a clear sealer. The light color allows the summer heat to be reflected, thereby keeping the interior

cooler. All dwellings are best coated with a weather protecting sealer, such as two or more coats of polyurethane. Shaded housing is best stained or painted and sealed with natural colors to fit into the surrounding.

Remember that wildlife are sensitive creatures and it may take time to become accustomed to a new "fixture" in their habitat. It may take up to several months for the chemical odors to dissipate before a bird will move into a new home. You may want to place your project in its permanent location during this airing out period. This method will also give potential occupants a chance to get used to becoming familiar with the birdhouse as a possible nesting location.

Most nesting seasons last from May through September. Some species will fly directly into the entrance hole while others prefer a landing perch at the entrance. I recommend utilizing natural tree branches as entrance perches rather than a perch attached to the dwelling. When placing your birdhouse in its special location, keep in mind various weather conditions, especially wind direction and rain protection. By tipping the house slightly forward and away from the direct wind this will aid in reducing the effects of adverse climatic conditions on the home's interior.

The unique wildlife in your area is priceless. I hope you will be inspired to share your special concerns and appreciation for the precious gifts nature offers to us freely.

Reference Readings

Bird Homes, by A. Radclyffe Dugmore. New York, Doubleday & McClure Co., 1900.

Bird Houses, by Walter E. Schultz. Milwaukee, Bruce [1955].

The Habitat Guide to Birding, by Thomas P. McElroy, Jr., published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1974.

Migration of Birds, by Fredrick C. Lincoln. Fish and Wildlife Service / United States Department of the Interior. Circular 16, Revised edition, 1979.

Song and Garden Birds of North America, by Alexander Wetmore. Prepared by National Geographic Book Service. National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C., 1964.

Welcome the Birds to Your Home: how one family created a thriving bird habitat, by Jane and Will Curtis. The Stephen Greene Press, Brattleboro, Vermont, 1980.

*Personal notes, by Karen Lynn Goode, 1978-1987.

TABLE 3

EGG INFORMATION GUIDE

Species	Size (in inches), Number, Coloration
Bluebird	.9 x .7, 4 - 6 eggs, pale blue, rarely white, unmarked
Flicker	1.1 x .9, 5 - 9 eggs, glossy white, unmarked
Purple martin	1.0 x .7, 4 - 5 eggs, white, unmarked
Sparrow hawk	1.3 x 1.2, 4 - 7 eggs, white or tinted buff, spotted or speckled brown
Black capped chickadee	.6 x .5, 5 - 8 eggs, white, finely spotted with brown
Screech owl	1.4 x 1.3, 3 - 5 eggs, white, unmarked
House sparrow	.9 x .6, 4 - 7 eggs, white to dull brown, speckled with brown
Tufted titmouse	.7 x .6, 5 - 8 eggs, white to buff, speckled with grayish brown
Downy woodpecker	.8 x .6, 4 - 6 eggs, white, unmarked
Pileated woodpecker	3 - 5 eggs
Carolina wren	4 - 6 eggs
House wren	.7 x .5, 5 - 10 eggs, buff white, some with brown spots

Teach Your Bird Fast



First speech
training cas-
settes recorded
entirely by a
PARROT.

You'll be amazed at the total attention your pet devotes to "Mande's" clear and enthusiastic voice. Your bird will love his lessons as he learns the phrases:

VOL. 1: - 60 min. Stereo -

Side A: 1) "What you doing?" 2) "Where you going?" 3) "Wake up."
Side B: 1) "Hi pretty lady." 2) "Hello, what you doing?" 3) "I love you." 4) "Hi Mary."

VOL. 2 also available. These cas-
settes have been proven to be the
best speech training method com-
mercially available.



Included with each order is a 5"X7" **Master Of Speech Degree** for your bird. This beautiful diploma is in full color on a heavy parchment-like paper with our Double Yellowhead teacher parrot "Mande" vividly pictured.

When your pet learns the phrases in **VOL. 1** you can give your bird a graduation party. Fill in the diploma with his name, date, your signature, and frame it proudly over his cage. **TEACHER'S GUIDELINES** are also included with each order.

Help your bird be all he can be.

One year written guarantee.
Specify your choice. Send \$11.98
(+ \$1 P&H) for one or \$22.95
(+ \$1.50 P&H) for both to:

PARROT CLASSROOM
1430 Willamette, Suite 544
Eugene, OR 97401
(503) 484-5889

Diploma & Guidelines for \$2 (+\$1 P&H)
All orders sent 1st Class mail. Dealer inquiries invited.