

*The Weekly Wing*  
**By Brandon Jackson (The Birding Expert)**  
**and his go-to contributor Alex Hebeisen (The Typist)**

As you all know, winter is upon us, but we are not the only ones that need things to survive through it. Many people ask, "Should I feed my birds in the winter?" "If I don't will they starve?" The answer is no. The birds will survive on their own but they do enjoy bird food, especially after snowstorms. In this article we will be talking about other things you should do to provide for the birds' basic needs.

A heated birdbath is a good attribute to have in your backyard and can be used in warmer seasons as well. A heated birdbath will keep the water ice-free and often come with a mount for a wall or other flat surface. A water wiggler is also something that will attract birds in the winter and if you don't have a heated birdbath the wiggler will keep your birdbath ice-free. Caution: a heated birdbath may require an extension cord which might take up space and get in the way when shoveling, etc.

A ground feeder is a great way to attract sparrows and juncos in the winter. This is Brandon speaking...last spring we had ducks that started coming into our backyard and eating the fallen seed under our feeders so we bought a ground feeder. Later that spring we had several inches of snowfall and woke up to see the two ducks resting under our trampoline. When I saw this I ran to get my camera, set up my tripod, and started taking pictures. After a few minutes of preening, the ducks waddled up to the ground feeder and started eating from it, through the snow! It was the coolest thing. Later that spring after the snow melted we had a huge puddle in our backyard. This, coupled with our new ground feeder, attracted more and more birds, including warblers.

In the winter birds like to huddle together to keep warm. Keeping some of your nesting boxes up or purchasing roosting boxes will encourage young songbirds to visit your yard.

Last, but not least, berries. This is one of the best foods for birds during the winter. Berries such as red chokeberry, winterberry, hackberry, and serviceberry will attract cedar waxwings, robins, and chickadees.

Please see below pictures taken by Brandon of ducks in his backyard.



