

## Backyard Habitats: Additional information from National Wildlife Federation

### HOW TO LIVE RESPONSIBLY WITH WILDLIFE

1. **Hang bird feeders 3 feet or less from windows to prevent collision.**

Why? Window collision is the leading cause of bird mortality – there has been an estimated 100 million to 1 billion bird deaths per year. This often happens when birds are flying to and from feeders and bird baths. We can prevent this by positioning bird feeders and baths 3 feet or less from windows. When feeders are close to windows, birds cannot build enough momentum to injure themselves if they do happen to hit your window. It also provides great bird-watching...right outside your window!

2. **Keep trash and food sources out of reach of Wildlife.**

Animals are attracted to garbage for potential food sources. This can be prevented by storing waste in wildlife-proof containers (metal, sturdy lid). If this is not enough to deter wildlife, try adding motion lights, bungee cords, or a twist on the lid. Finally, put your trash out the morning of a collection instead of at night to avoid a night-time raid.

3. **Supervise your pet cats and dogs.**

A large number of birds and small mammals are injured by off-leash dogs and especially free-roaming cats. The only solution to prevent pets from injuring or even killing wildlife is to prevent your dogs and cats from chasing, attacking or playing with wildlife. If you are unable to watch your pets outside, consider keeping your cats indoors or dogs on a leash. Cats can be put on leashes too.

4. **Keep dead trees and plant new ones.**

Dead trees (logs and snags) are crawling with life, so consider keeping them. They provide important habitats for over 1,000 species in the US. If you must remove dead trees, please be respectful of any species living inside. You should consider planting new trees as well.

5. **Respect the “wild” in wildlife.**

It’s easy to forget that even if animals aren’t deep in the woods, they are still wild. Please never approach, touch, feed or make a pet out of a wild animal. This is considered harassment of wildlife and tends to be illegal, even when it’s not. Letting wildlife stay wild gives the animals the space they need to continue their typical behaviors, such as feeding, nesting, and breeding. It also keeps you safe!

6. **Don’t litter or spit out gum.**

7. **Plant Native.**

Using native plants avoids negative impacts of non-native species. Planting native milkweed is a critical way to help declining monarch populations.

For more information regarding statistics and more tips on living responsibly with wildlife, visit this link: <http://blog.nwf.org/2015/03/how-to-live-responsibly-alongside-our-wild-neighbors/>

## **DEAD TREES ARE ANYTHING BUT DEAD**

Dead trees provide vital habitat for more than 1000 species of wildlife nationwide. The two most common types of dead wood you'll find are snags (upright) and logs (on the ground). If you look closely enough, you can find these "dead" trees teeming with life.

### **Atop**

Summer is a great time to find reptiles (lizards and turtles) and amphibians (toads and frogs) warming themselves in the sun. You can also find ants, snails, and other insects and invertebrates crawling on the log. Squirrels and chipmunks find fallen logs a fantastic place to rest.

### **Inside**

Logs also provide excellent cover for small mammals such as fox, rabbits, skunks and raccoons. Foxes may use logs as den sites, while for other small mammals it could provide protection from predators.

### **Under**

Beetles, worms, spiders, salamanders, newts, and centipedes all can be found under a log. What you find usually depends on the time of year, weather, moisture, as well as other factors. It is suggested that you roll the log towards you to use it as a barrier and allow critters a chance to get away. To find out more about factors that could affect what you see under a log, please visit this link:

<http://www.coastalplainsreptiles.com/articles/FieldHerping/flipping.htm>

### **Beside**

Snakes will often use the space next to a log to rest or look for food. Logs are excellent places for snakes to find food since they are already crawling with prey. Snakes can also curl up against or inside a log to rest and stay hidden from predators.

### **Attached to**

Moss, fungi, and lichen are a few organisms that can be found growing on logs. These special organisms are able to grow where no other plants are able to grow.

For more information, please visit this link: <http://blog.nwf.org/2014/07/dead-logs-are-anything-but-dead/>

## **PROTECTING BIRDS FROM CATS**

Domestic cats are expert hunters with strong prey drives. They pose a major threat to birds, killing an estimated 2.4 billion birds each year in the US.

There is one simple solution: keep cats indoors. It not only protects wildlife, but it also protects your cats as well (prevents vehicle incidents, does not allow them to interact with potentially dangerous wildlife, and they are unable to get into harmful substances).

### **Set up a bird-watching station for cats.**

It's very easy to set up a wildlife viewing station for cats – all you need is to provide 3 essentials of any successful backyard bird habitat: food, cover, and water right outside the cat's viewing area.

1. Install some small trees or shrubs (in the ground or in pots) for natural cover
2. Place several bird feeders containing a variety of bird food (seeds, suet, and sugar water) in the area along with a small birdbath.

For more excellent and detailed information, please visit this site:

<https://blog.nwf.org/2017/09/keeping-birds-safe-from-outdoor-cats/>