



# Ferrum Nature Society

*Dedicated to the appreciation and conservation of our natural world*

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**Happy New Year!!!**



## Nature's Events: Jan. 2006

- It is not too early to think of Spring! Bats can be seen flying in the early evening when temperatures rise above 50°F. Woodcocks will start "peenting" this month. Look for early wildflowers, such as henbit and chickweed.
- On the other hand, mean January snowfall for our area is 4.1". The average is 6.7" in February.

## Sky calendar:

**Full moon** - Jan 14. The "wolf" moon or "cold" moon.

**Planets** - Mars shines brightly in the southern sky. Look for Saturn just to the left of the little dog star, Procyon. Jupiter is visible just before dawn in the southeastern sky. Venus shines brightly on the western horizon at dusk.



## To feed or not to Feed

By Angie Spence

### To Feed or not to Feed

Individuals debate whether to feed or not to feed winter birds. The primary question is does supplemental feeding impair the birds' natural ability to find customary existing foods? The best answer is no, it does not. But an individual who begins feeding the birds must furnish the supplements during the winter period uninterrupted. The three main components of supplemental feeding are: food, shelter, and water. Incorporation of landscape plants within the feeding areas provides the birds with cover and natural foods (i.e. berries). Water is overlooked as an essential requirement through the winter. Birds suffer from the lack of water during winter. Birdbaths should be emptied and refilled daily to prevent diseases and provide unfrozen water for consumption. The preferred food for common winter birds is listed below in Table 1.

Children enjoy having a role in feeding the birds. They can distribute old bread and leftover popcorn in the yard. There are many crafts developed for children to create unique feeding structures. Pine cones spread with peanut butter and rolled in birdseed attached with a string and hung in trees are popular. Stringing popcorn, Cherrios®, raisins, cranberries, and bits of fruits can be used as garland hung on bushes. This allows all family members to view the birds in their natural setting. It also becomes a game as to see which birds return each day to dine on the appetizing offerings.

**Table 1. Preferred Foods of Common Birds.**

American goldfinch	hulled sunflower seeds, niger seeds, and oil-type sunflower seeds.
Blue Jay	peanut kernels, black-stripe, gray-stripe, and oil-type sunflower seeds of all types.
Cardinal	oil-type and black-striped sunflower seeds, peanut kernels.
Chickadees	red proso, white proso millet, canary seed, and fine-cracked corn.
Dark-eyed junco	oil-type sunflower seeds, white prove millet, niger.
Mourning dove	sunflower seeds and kernels.
Purple finch	white and red prove millet.
Song sparrow	peanut kernels, black-striped and oil-type sunflower seeds.
Tufted titmouse	oil and black-striped sunflower seeds, sunflower kernels and pieces, white and red prove millet, and peanut kernels.
White-throated sparrow	

Modified from: <http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/wildlife/420-006/420-006.html>

## Results of Franklin County Winter Bird Count, December 3, 2005

Common loon	1
Pied-billed grebe	1
Canada goose	32
Mallard	68
Muscovy duck	1
Bufflehead	8
Hooded merganser	4
Red-breasted merganser	1
American coot	19
Ring-billed gull	2
Great blue heron	1
Killdeer	3
Wild turkey	16
Ruffed grouse	1
Bald eagle	1
Sharp-shinned hawk	1
Accipter sp.	2
Red-tailed hawk	8
Turkey vulture	101
Black vulture	12
Mourning dove	48
Rock dove	58
Belted kingfisher	2
Pileated woodpecker	4
Northern flicker	2
Red-bellied woodpecker	4
Downy woodpecker	6
Hairy woodpecker	5
Yellow-bellied sapsucker	5
Eastern phoebe	4
American crow	94
Blue jay	33
Horned lark	77

Carolina chickadee	30
Tufted titmouse	27
White-breasted nuthatch	5
Red-breasted nuthatch	1
Brown-headed nuthatch	2
Brown creeper	1
Carolina wren	13
Winter wren	14
Golden-crowned kinglet	25
Ruby-crowned kinglet	1
Northern mockingbird	11
Eastern bluebird	56
American robin	60
Hermit thrush	3
Cedar waxwing	211
Yellow-rumped warbler	13
Unidentified blackbirds	10
Common grackle	1
European starling	264
House sparrow	3
Dark-eyed junco	88
Northern cardinal	33
Eastern towhee	1
House finch	4
Purple finch	10
Pine siskin	4
American goldfinch	19
White-throated sparrow	42
White-crowned sparrow	17
Song sparrow	24
Chipping sparrow	4

**62 confirmed species**  
**1622 individual birds**  
**16 total participants**  
**5 field participants**  
**11 feeder watcher participants (3 locations)**

### Most common birds from the winter bird count



European starling



Cedar waxwing



Turkey vulture



American crow