

Be a Bird-Watcher

Bird-watching is fun. It gives you a chance to be outdoors and to get close to nature. It also provides you with an opportunity to learn more about how birds look, where they live, what they eat, and how they sound. The best times of day to watch birds are either in the early morning, just before sunrise, or in the early evening, just after sunset.

When you go bird watching, take along a pair of binoculars, a pocket-sized notebook, and a pencil. The binoculars should have a sturdy nylon or leather strap. Place the strap around your neck so the binoculars will not fall to the ground even if they slip out of your hand and so your hands will be free to take notes when you are not using the binoculars. In your notebook, make sketches of the birds you see. Note their sizes, colors, and markings. You may also wish to describe their songs, their flight and feeding patterns, and any other interesting behavior you observe.



EARTHWORDS

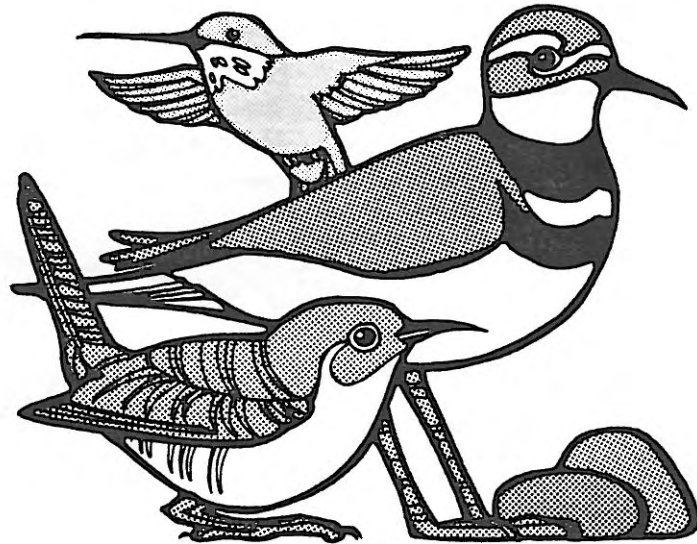
The song rules the cloudy dawn, the waiting ranges of hills and their woods full of shadows yet crested with gold, their lawns of light, the soft distended gray clouds all over the sky through which the white sun looks on the world and is glad.

—Edward Thomas

The Song of the Nightingale

Tips

1. Stand still or move slowly and quietly. Loud noises and rapid movements will frighten away the birds you are trying to watch.
2. To observe, find a comfortable position in which you can stand or sit very still for a long time, and be patient.
3. While observing, notice the size, shape, color, and songs of the birds you see.
4. Buy or borrow a field guide or other book to help you identify the birds you see and learn more about them.



Milk Carton Bird Feeder

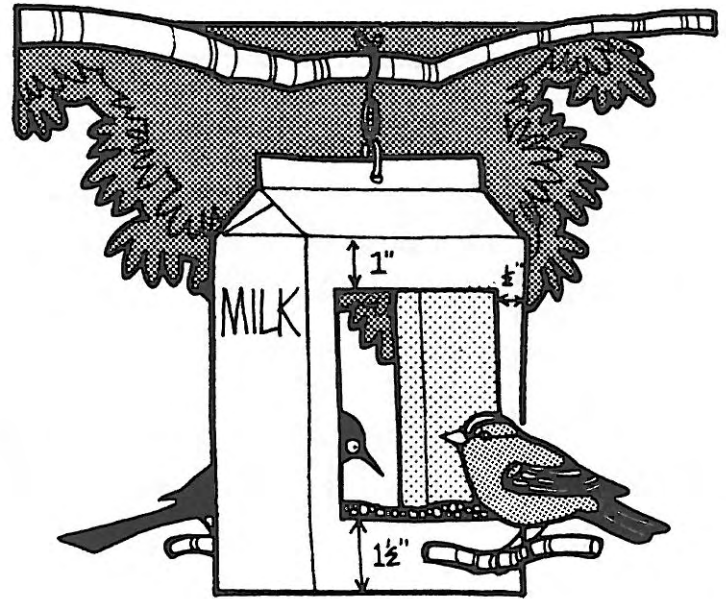
Make a bird feeder from an empty milk carton.

WHAT YOU NEED

- an empty half-gallon milk carton
- a pair of sharp scissors
- a stick 9 to 12 inches long
- a large paper clip
- some birdseed

WHAT YOU DO

1. Wash and dry the milk carton.
2. Using the scissors, cut windows in two sides of the carton, leaving margins as shown.
3. Carefully cut a small hole in each of the same sides near the bottom of the feeder.
4. Run the stick through both of these holes to create a perch.
5. Unbend the paper clip to make a hook.
6. Insert this hook through the top of the milk carton as shown.
7. Put some birdseed on the bottom of the feeder.
8. Hang the feeder outside. Choose a spot where feeding birds will be safe from cats and other predators.



EARTHWORDS

There was a strange stillness. . . . The feeding stations in backyards were deserted. . . . It was a spring without voices. On the morning that had once throbbed with the dawn chorus of robins, catbirds, doves, jays, wrens, and scores of other bird voices there was now no sound; only silence lay over the fields and woods and marsh.

—Rachel Carson
Silent Spring

