

Feathered Flights

Does it snow at your house in the winter? If it does, then you probably know people who like to go to Florida or other warm places in the winter. Maybe you and your family have done that. But imagine if you had to pack up everything you own and move to a different state or province because there was not

enough food at your house. That's what some birds do every winter!

Many birds *migrate* to warm places in the fall. (*Migrate* is a fancy word that means to travel to another place.) They fly south to look for food to eat and places to nest. It's not just a vacation!



ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT HOLLADAY

Out-of-Towners

Look out your window. What kinds of birds do you see? If you live in the southern United States—including Texas, California, Louisiana, Arkansas, or the Carolinas—the birds in your back yard might be visitors from out of town! Birds that go to warmer places for the winter are called *migrant* birds. Many kinds of ducks, geese, tree warblers, gray catbirds, and brown thrashers fly south for the winter. These birds usually come from Canada, the Arctic, or northern states.



We never go anywhere! Every year the Redstarts go to the Caribbean. But do we? Nooooo... "Let's stay in Michigan," you say; "It's such a long trip!" you say...

Tropical Travelers

People aren't the only ones who visit beautiful islands during the winter months. Blue warblers and American redstarts migrate to Caribbean islands—including Jamaica, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. These amazing birds don't need an airplane to fly south. Some birds can fly for days over open water! Other birds like Western tangers, hummingbirds, and orioles fly to Mexico and Central America. The scarlet tanager, Eastern kingbird, and some kinds of hawks travel from North America to places like Argentina and Brazil in South America.



Brrrrrr: Birds on Stay-cation

If you live in Canada or the northern United States, the birds you see through your window might be *resident birds*. A resident bird is a bird that does not migrate to warmer places. These birds can survive in very cold weather. They include pigeons, doves, bluejays, cardinals, sparrows, woodpeckers, finches, mockingbirds, crows, blackbirds, and bluebirds. How do these feathered friends live in such cold places? They usually eat seeds or find sleeping insects and spiders under tree bark. Their bodies grow thick layers of feathers to keep them warm during snowy winter months.

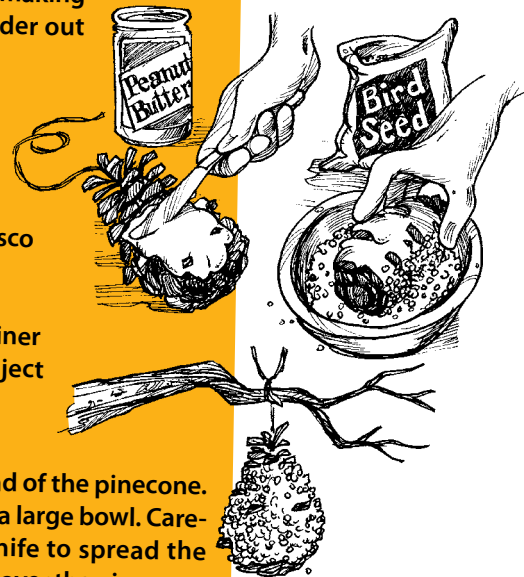


Feed the Birds!

You can keep the birds in your backyard well fed this winter by making a homemade bird feeder out of pinecones.

What you need:

- Pinecone collected from outside
- Yarn or string
- Peanut butter or Crisco
- Birdseed
- Plastic knife
- Large bowl or container
- Newspaper (this project can get a bit messy!)



What to do:

Tie the string to one end of the pinecone. Pour the birdseed into a large bowl. Carefully use the plastic knife to spread the peanut butter or Crisco over the pinecone. Try to cover the whole pinecone. Then dip the pinecone in the birdseed and use your hands to gently press the seeds onto the pinecone. Hang the pinecone on a low branch in your yard.

If you can't find a pinecone, use a piece of toast or stale bread. Poke a hole near the top of the bread and string the yarn through the hole. Spread peanut butter or Crisco on the toast and coat it with seeds—now you have an edible bird feeder!

Birds in the Bible

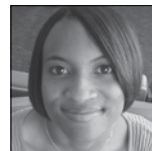
There are lots of stories in the Bible that talk about traveling birds!

- Noah sent a raven and later a dove from the ark to see if the flood waters had gone down (Genesis 8:6-12). These birds flew a long way to look for new land to live on.
- God sent the Israelites quail to eat in the desert (Exodus 16:13).
- God sent ravens to feed his prophet Elijah (1 Kings 17:4).
- Jesus talks about how God takes care of even the smallest sparrow: "... not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care" (Matthew 10:29). If God takes care of the smallest birds, he will definitely take care of you!

Look up the following verses and draw a line from each bird to the verse that talks about it.

OSTRICH
HEN
EAGLE
FALCON

ISAIAH 40:31
JOB 28:7
JOB 39:13
MATTHEW 23:37



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