

Birds – Feeding & Enjoying Migrant and Summer Birds

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Depending on the weather in western Mexico and our spring weather, we could have our migrant birds stopping over for longer periods to build up needed fat reserves for their continued travel. Some of the birds seen in spring in Castle Pines are Evening Grosbeaks, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Western Tanagers and Bullock's Orioles.

Spring is an especially good time to consider feeding migrant birds. Though our resident hummingbirds don't usually arrive until late May, migrants moving north often come through in mid-May. Offer them, as well as our summer hummers, a solution of 1 to 4, sugar to water that has been boiled and then cooled. Red coloring isn't necessary to add if you offer the mixture in a brightly colored feeder. Keep feeders clean, especially in hot weather, and replace the water every three to four days.

Many migrant, as well as summer species, especially non-seed-eaters, appreciate suet and mealworms. You can make your own suet, or buy it on-line or at local birding stores. Mealworms can also be bought locally, or online at sites like grubco.com. From June through August, nesting birds love having mealworms available to supplement the feeding of their young.

Because mealworms can deplete a bird's calcium reserves, consider also offering calcium citrate or carbonate powder mixed into your mealworm dish. You can also offer crushed eggshells, baked first at 350 degrees for about 10 minutes to kill bacteria. Even if your birds aren't eating mealworms, the female birds may also appreciate eggshells to supplement calcium lost in the egg-laying process.