

# Song Bird Sanctuary



# Common Songbirds...



We have over 400 bird species that call Alabama home at some point during the year. Around 100 of these are small, perching songbirds called passerines.

Visit the Wildlife Identification section of AWF's website at [alabamawildlife.org](http://alabamawildlife.org) or the Watchable Wildlife section of [alabamaoutdoors.gov](http://alabamaoutdoors.gov) for more details.



# What do birds need to survive?

➤ Food

➤ Water

➤ Shelter & Travel Corridors

➤ Places to Raise Young



# FOOD

- **Plant Natives!** Native trees, shrubs, & forbs is the easiest and cheapest way to provide the berries, acorns, and seeds that many bird species like to eat.
- **Plan for Every Season!** The types of food eaten vary from season to season and between young and adults.



# Native Trees that Provide Food

Dogwood



Hackberry



Red Mulberry



Red Cedar



Wild Black Cherry



Viburnum



# Native Bushes that Provide Food

Blueberry



Elderberry



Spicebush

American Beautyberry



American Holly



# Native Grasses, Forbs & Vines



Bluestem

Black-eyed Susan



Purple  
Coneflower



Virginia Creeper

# Avoid Invasive, Non-native Plants

- Non-natives can become invasive and degrade naturally diverse ecosystems
- Some got here accidentally, but most were brought here by us – mostly for landscaping purposes
- They often provide inferior quality of food sources
- They can harbor diseases that kill natives
- They require a higher demand for water and maintenance than natives





# Common Invasive Species



Kudzu



Mimosa



Privet

*This group of plants is one of the most serious threats facing native plants and wildlife.*



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# Supplemental Feeding

- Bird Feeders...





# Best Supplemental Bird Food

- Black-oil Sunflower Seeds
- Safflower Seeds
- Niger Thistle
- Suet Cakes
- Cracked Corn
- Raw Peanuts
- Meal Worms
- Apples, Oranges, Grapes & Bananas
- Sugar Water





# Food Sources for Carnivores...

- Fallen leaves on the ground provide food & shelter for insects, earthworms and other creatures that in turn are food for birds
- Sometimes the birds you attract to your outdoor classroom site become food sources for other birds
- Be prepared to teach a Food Chain lesson



# WATER



- ❖ Birds need clean water for drinking and bathing.
- ❖ Small fountains, bird baths, backyard ponds and streams can provide water for local birds.
- ❖ Include a moving water feature if possible as this seems to attract birds and other wildlife.
- ❖ Place water source near cover (10-12 feet) but not so close that predators are able to ambush it.



# SHELTER or COVER

- Birds need shelter for inclement weather and cover from predators.
- When selecting native plants, try to mimic the natural structure that native plants form in nature:
  - Canopy – Tall trees (above 40 ft tall)
  - Midstory – Bushes & small trees
  - Forest Floor - Low-lying wild flowers, grasses & vines





# Additional Sources of Cover

- Brush piles provide a source of shelter for some bird species along with other wildlife...



# Additional Cover Sources...

- Snags (old, dead trees) provide cover for birds that need cavities for roosting and/or nesting, while also providing food (insects)





# PLACES TO RAISE YOUNG

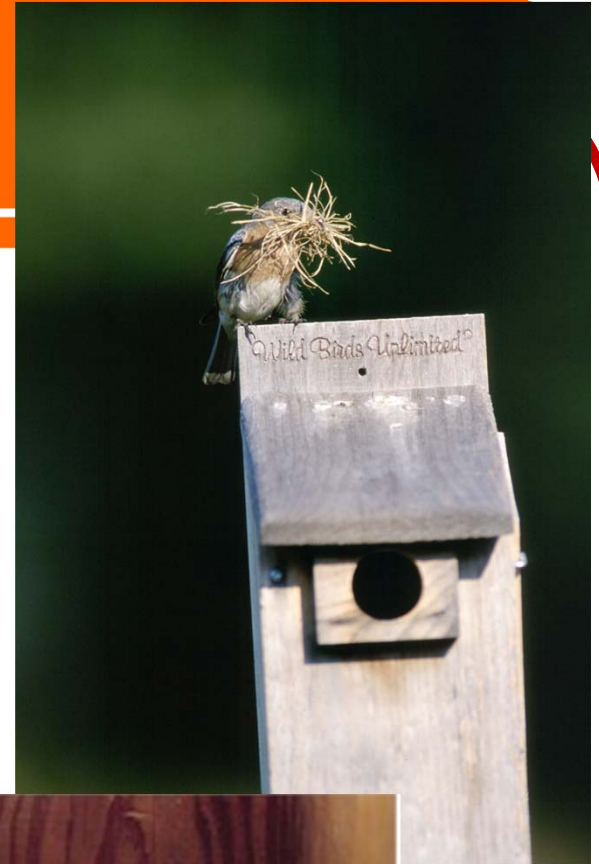
- Trees & Bushes
- Snags  
(for some songbirds, woodpeckers & owls)





# Artificial Nesting Areas

- Birds that are cavity nesters are easily attracted to nesting boxes if placed in the right habitat
- Depending on species, the nesting box must meet specific requirements (depth of cavity & hole size) that varies from species to species
- Visit [aces.edu](http://aces.edu) for details.



# Invasive Exotic Species of Birds

These are bird species that are non-indigenous and may adversely affect the habitats they invade.



House Sparrow - Eight pairs were introduced around 1850 in New York. Look at their population today!



European Starling – Also introduced in New York in 1890s...they are responsible for decline in native song birds!

# Greatest Threats to Birds...

- **CATS!!**



- **NON – NATIVE WILDLIFE!**

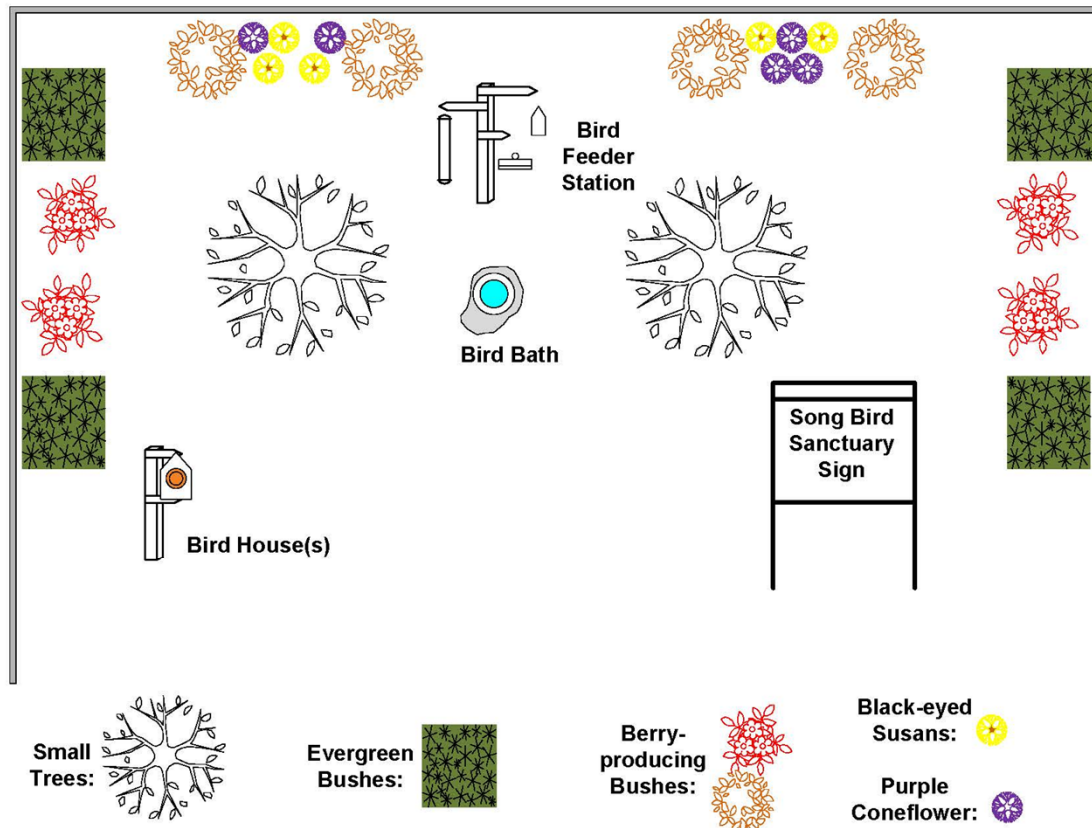




# Example Song Bird Sanctuary...

## Example Outdoor Classroom Song Bird Sanctuary Schematic

By April Lupardus Waltz, Alabama Wildlife Federation



For office use only: 1 sq. = 1 ft. @ 100%

<b>Example Materials &amp; Supplies</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
<b>(2) 30 gallon Small Trees</b> (such as Red Buds or Maples)	<b>\$200 total</b>
<b>(8) Berry-producing Bushes</b> (such as Viburnum)	<b>\$160 total</b>
<b>(4) Evergreen shrubs</b> (such as American Hollies)	<b>\$80 total</b>
<b>(4) Seed Packets</b> (Purple Coneflower & Black-Eyed Susans)	<b>\$10 total</b>
<b>Mulch/ Compost/ Organic Material</b>	<b>\$0 (donated)</b>
<b>Bird Bath</b> (concrete bird baths are the most stable)	<b>\$60</b>
<b>3 Hook Scroll Shepherd Hook</b> (for bird feeders)	<b>\$50</b>
<b>Bird Feeders</b> – Tube Feeder, Suet Cage, Hopper, etc	<b>\$50</b>
<b>Bird Seed</b> – Safflower Seeds, Black Oil Sunflower, etc	<b>\$50</b>
<b>Bird Houses</b> (for blue birds, chickadees, etc)	<b>\$50</b>
<b>(12) Metal Sign Stands</b> (for Tree, Bush & Plant ID Signs)	<b>\$50 total</b>
<b>Sign to Identify &amp; Explain the Learning Station</b>	<b>\$40</b>
<b>(4) 2 CF Bags of Mulch</b> (to put around new plantings)	<b>\$20 total</b>
<b>River Rock for Song Bird Sanctuary Border</b>	<b>\$100</b>
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED COST</b>	<b>\$920</b>

# Activities for Song Bird Sanctuaries

## AWF's Nature's Classroom Activities

Watch the Birdie (K-2): Students make pretend binoculars and take a bird watching walk in your outdoor classroom.

Birds are Everywhere (K-5): Students search for evidence of birds visiting your outdoor classroom.

Fill the Bill (3-8): Students learn how different types of beaks help birds eat specific types of food.

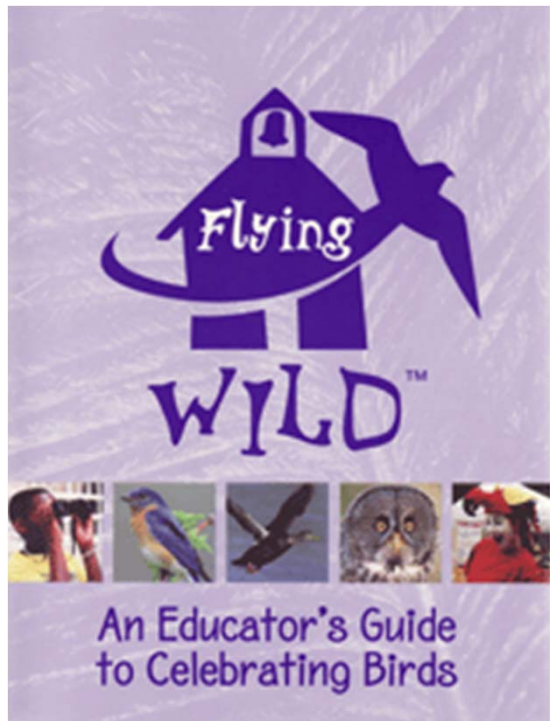
Songbird Survey (9-12): Students use bird-counting techniques to conduct an inventory of bird populations





# Activities for Song Bird Sanctuaries

**Flying WILD:** An Activity Guide filled with teacher-lead, volunteer-lead, and student-lead activities utilizing science, social studies, math, and language arts.



**Visit AWF's Website for links to other Activities:**

<http://alabamawildlife.org/conservation/?pageID=27>