

CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR 2007 PROJECT SUMMARY

Name(s)

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Project Number

J1910

Project Title

Dining with the Birds: What Type of Seeds Do Birds Prefer to Eat?

Abstract

Objectives/Goals

There are many types of birds which travel long distances to places were there is a lot of food and warmer weather. These are called migratory birds. Other birds typically stay in the same area. These birds risk the chance of not having enough food. In this case, people may want to help the birds by feeding them. Research and data has shown that the supplemental feeding of resident bird populations can help when there is little food supply such as in the winter. By figuring out the birds preferred seed, we can keep the local bird populations healthy and growing. #Dining with the Birds# was done to find out which seeds birds prefer to eat.

Methods/Materials

A bird feeder was built with four different places to eat. Each type of seed (nyjer, millet, sunflower and a commercial mixture) was placed in a bottle feeder in its own section. Sections were identical. The feeder was place in our backyard where birds could feed. Measurements of how much of each seed was consumed were taken and recorded every two days. After readings were recorded, feeding containers were refilled with correct seed. The experiment lasted five recording periods.

Results

The results of my experiment showed that the white millet was the most commonly preferred seed. In almost every period, all of the millet seed was eaten. Sunflower seeds were the second most preferred seed with almost half of the seed eaten during each period. During each period, nyjer and the mixed seed were the least preferred. Usually, little or no seed were missing from these trays.

Conclusions/Discussion

After completing my experiment, I learned that my hypothesis was incorrect. White Millet was the most preferred seed. While doing my research I believed four types of birds would be feeding. They were sparrows, finches, doves, and pigeons. Since all of these birds feed on sunflower seeds, I thought that they would be eaten the most. During the experiment, most birds were sparrows and finches. My research shows these birds prefer millet. I believe this is why millet was the preferred birdseed in this experiment.

Summary Statement

The object of this experiment is to find out what type of seed local birds prefer to eat.

Help Received

Father helped build the bird feeder.