A (selective) history of wild bird feeding
A global perspective

Darryl Jones
Sincere thanks...
It’s different in Australia

PLEASE DO NOT FEED THE BIRDS
Participation rates:
UK: 30-75%
US: 30-68%
Australia: 38-57%

But also the same......
What do I mean by ‘feeding’?

Spontaneous feeding is probably universal

And in private houseyards

Feeding is: Systematic, Intentional, involving planning and cost
It started simply…
Origins?
Magura Cave, Bulgaria
Egypt 700-500 BC

Temples of Thoth

Saqqara supplied 10,000 ibis per year
Bhutayajna Orthodox Hindu
Continuous practice for 3500 years
Kerith Ravine, Jordon, ca. 550 BC
(Reverse feeding?)

“Ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and in the afternoon”

1 Kings 17: 6
In the course of the winter I threw out half a bushel of sweet corn .... and was amused by watching the motions of the animals [squirrels, blue jays, chickadees]

Walden (1854) page 183
The first feeder?

John Freeman Dovaston (1782-1854)
Stropshire, England

The Ornithotrophe, 1835
The Great Blizzard of March 1890-91
Widespread awareness of the plight of birds despite traditional Victorian frugality

Sir, - I am much obliged for your kindness in reminding your readers of their duties to our friends, the Birds.

Their suffering is far greater than any can realise. I implore One and All to offer any form of sustenance that you are able.

London Evening Standard
30th Dec 1890
The Feeding Tree

Before 1899!

Dried bread, meat, hempseed, poppy flour, white millet, maw, elderberries, sunflower seeds, ant eggs mixed with 2 gallons of beef fat. Apply while still molten.
Female pioneers

Mabel Osgood Wright 1885
Florence A Merriam 1898
Harriet Memenway 1899
Demand for advice

Edward Howe Forbush
1918

Food, Feeding And
Drinking Appliances
And Nesting Material To
Attract Birds (1918)

W L McAtee
1918

Attracting Birds
by
W. L. McAtee

Conservation Bulletin No. 1

Edward Howe Forbush

United States
Department of the Interior
J. A. Kreg, Secretary

For and Wildlife Service
Albert M. Day, Director
Sunflowers Blooming 1966

V S Pustovoit (1886-1972)

Dick Baldwin (1918-2011)
The first wild bird food products

- Kellogg’s Audubon Society Mixture 1953
- Knauf & Tesch’s Wild Birdseed 1955
- Wagner’s Four Seasons 1956
- UK Swoop 1958
The first (commercial) wild bird feeders
Then, proliferation and expansion....

Bird-oriented design
Now, whatever.....

Human aesthetics
Global, really?

Plenty of feeding

Global, really?
Plenty of feeding

Some feeding
Plenty of feeding
Some feeding
Potential feeding
Quality and discernment

Human wellbeing

Beyond seed

What’s next..?

Beyond feeders

New places

Bird communities