Why do people feed wild birds?
The future is urban

The urban and rural population of the world, 1950-2030

World, total population
World, urban population
World, rural population

27 May 2007
Urbanisation transforms landscapes
Urbanization disconnects people from nature

Direct impact of Urbanisation → Reduced Flora and Fauna → Reduced interaction between people and nature → Reduced desire to conserve nature
Does bird feeding have a role to play?
Just how popular is bird feeding?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feed wild birds</td>
<td>12 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observe</td>
<td>36 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photograph</td>
<td>43 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feed other wildlife</td>
<td>59 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit parks or natural areas</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain plantings</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain natural areas</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who?

The graph shows the proportion of households across different age groups of householder:

- **16-24**
- **25-34**
- **35-44**
- **45-54**
- **55-64**
- **65+**

The age groups are ordered by increasing proportion of households.
Percent of U.S. Population Who Participated Around-The-Home by Household Income

- Less than $20,000: 25%
- $20,000 to $24,999: 24%
- $25,000 to $29,999: 23%
- $30,000 to $34,999: 34%
- $35,000 to $39,999: 18%
- $40,000 to $49,999: 39%
- $50,000 to $74,999: 30%
- $75,000 to $99,999: 39%
- $100,000 to $149,999: 40%
- $150,000 or more: 37%

Financial status?
American Backyard Feeders May Do Harm to Wild Birds
Feeding Wild Birds Lures Pests, Predators, Causing Illness and Distorting Populations

By JAMES P. STERBA
Staff Reporter
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
December 27, 2002.
## Genuine concerns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proponents</th>
<th>Opponents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependency</td>
<td>Dependency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>Disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predation</td>
<td>Population changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disease</td>
<td>Predation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Too trusting”</td>
<td>Nutrition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do birds become dependent on our food?  
No evidence (excluding range expansion species)

Is nutrition an issue?  
Not for most commercial products (though bread and ducks is of concern)

Should we be concerned about disease?  
A very serious concern
How do we value birds?

Stephen Kellert’s Wildlife Values

Naturalistic: Values the experience of nature
Ecologistic-Scientific: Knowledge and learning
Humanistic: Affection, attachment, connection
Moralistic: Care and responsibility

Utilitarian: Practical use and purpose
What are feeders’ Values?

**Moralistic** and **Naturalistic** dominate

1 Atonement and pleasure

2 Care and knowledge

Renee Chapman (2016) PhD
People who feed do more and know more

People who feed care
Time in nature is really good for your wellbring

Bird feeding is the most intimate form of interaction with wildlife.
Can feeding birds be good for people?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological benefits</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don't feed birds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregularly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Feeding birds is one of the most direct ways to connect with nature.
We think our feeders are for the birds. Our feeders are actually for us. But the birds don’t seem to mind. They continue to willingly bring their lives into ours, and so offer hope, knowledge and pleasure.