



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: 12/30/08
Contact: John Schaust
Phone: 888-302-2473 ext. 121

Birds Implement Multiple Techniques to Survive Winter

Carmel, Indiana— Just as many people are making resolutions to stay away from food, birds are using food and other, sometimes odd, techniques to stay warm and [survive winter](#).

“Birds employ a number of methods to survive the adversity of winter,” said John Schaust, Chief Naturalist with Wild Birds Unlimited Nature Shop.

Food is the most essential element, providing birds with the energy, stamina and nutrition they need. To stay warm, birds will expend energy very quickly, some losing up to 10% of their body weight on extremely cold nights. An ample supply of high-calorie foods such as black oil sunflower, peanuts and suet is crucial to a bird’s survival.

“We can play a vital role when feeding the birds becomes critical during extremely cold conditions.” stated Schaust. “At these times, a supply of food can mean the difference between life and death for a bird.”

Most birds adjust their feathers to create air pockets to help them keep warm.

“You will often notice the birds look fatter or ‘puffed up’ during cold weather,” explained Schaust. “This is because the birds are fluffing up their feathers; the more air space, the better the insulation.”

Staying warm is not all about food and feathers though. Some birds perch on one leg at a time, drawing the free leg to their breast for warmth. Most birds will shiver for short-term adjustments to the cold. Shivering converts muscular energy into heat for the short term, but the energy must be replenished shortly thereafter.

While birds are equipped to withstand most winter weather, survival can be made easier by providing food, a heated, open source of water and protection from the elements with natural plant cover or a roosting box.

Wild Birds Unlimited is part of the original and largest franchise system of backyard bird feeding and nature specialty stores with more than 275 locations throughout the United States and Canada. Wild Birds Unlimited specializes in bringing people and nature together with bird feeding and nature products, expert advice and educational events. Visit our Web site, and shop online at www.wbu.com.

###