



NEWS RELEASE

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High-protein Diet Will Help Molting Birds

Carmel, Indiana – Most birds undergo a seasonal transformation in summer, losing and replacing their feathers in a process known as molting. Bird and nature enthusiasts can help birds with the molting process by providing foods rich in protein.

Molting describes when a bird replaces some (partial molt) or all (full molt) of its feathers. Birds will also molt if they have lost feathers that need to be replaced immediately.

Different species of birds molt at different times of the year and for different reasons. Many birds molt twice a year. During spring/summer, birds (especially males) molt to a much brighter, more colorful breeding plumage to be more attractive to potential mates. In the fall/winter, birds return to a less attention-grabbing, non-breeding plumage.

“Molting is a critical part of birds’ lives,” said John Schaust, Chief Naturalist for Wild Birds Unlimited. “It’s a complicated process that takes time and energy, and it takes place as birds carry on with their other daily routines.”

Feathers are more than 90% protein, primarily keratins. Because of the nutritional demands on their bodies to produce feathers and feather pigment, birds must increase the amount of protein and fats in their diets.

Molting can be so physically demanding that many species of birds cannot fly during this time. Some birds such as geese, ducks and swans will molt in seclusion to avoid predators.

Offering bird foods high in protein and fats in backyard bird feeders is helpful during molting seasons. Foods such as Nyjer (thistle), peanuts, mealworms and Jim’s Birdacious Bark Butter aid birds in replacing their feathers and ensure that their pigmentation is bright.

“Having the right food in your feeders isn’t only a wonderful way to see a variety of birds,” added Schaust. “But it’s also a way to provide birds with an easy-to-find food source during a very crucial time of their lives.”

Wild Birds Unlimited is 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.

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