

BEFRIENDING BIRDS

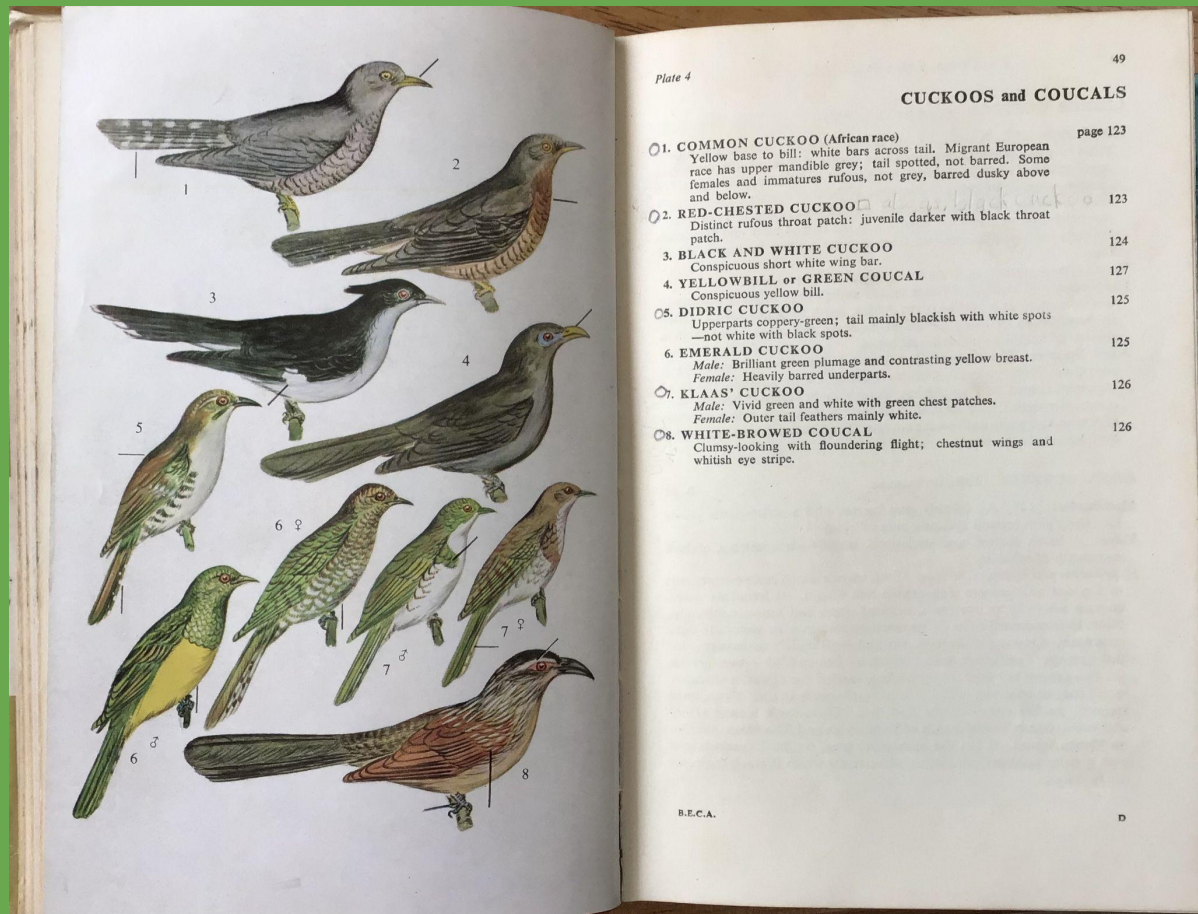
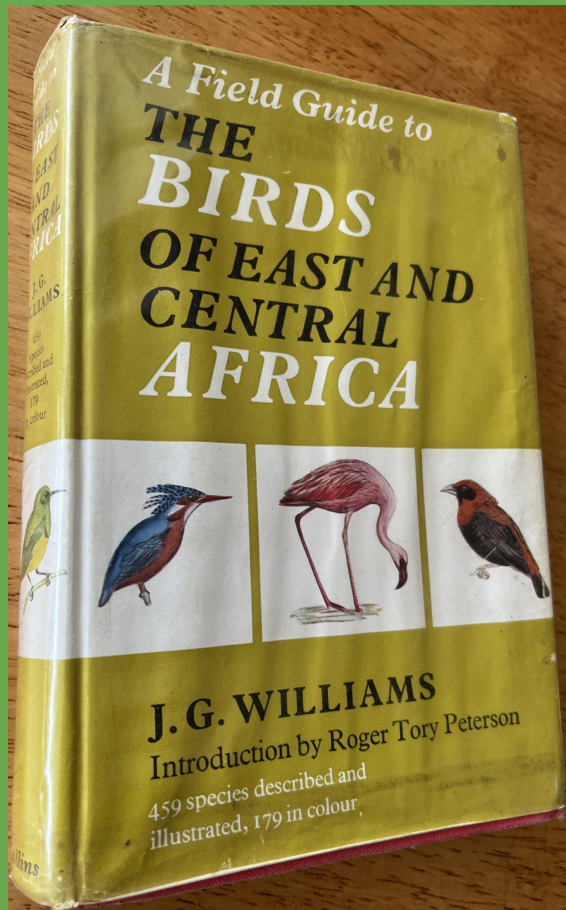
IN YOUR YARD

with Ian Shelburne, PhD

Texas Master Naturalist

* Welcome a World of Wonderful Neighbors *

My first bird field guide, © 1963



WHY WOULD YOU
WANT
BIRDS
IN YOUR YARD?



BIODIVERSITY -
A VARIEGATED,
FLOURISHING
COMMUNITY OF
PLANTS,
ANIMALS,
FUNGI, AND
MICROBES.



A CONVENTIONAL,
LAWN-BASED YARD
DOES HARDLY ANY OF
THESE THINGS. LOOKS
NICE, BUT FAIRLY
LABOR-INTENSIVE FOR
WHAT YOU GET.



FutureDirections

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FOR LESS YARD
MAINTENANCE,
CONSIDER
REPLACING SOME
AREAS OF
TRADITIONAL LAWN
GRASS WITH
MULTIPURPOSE
PERENNIALS.



NO MOWING, LESS WATER NEEDED,
WELCOMING HABITAT





HORSEHERB/STRAGGLER DAISY (*CALYPTOCARPUS VIALIS*), A NATIVE GROUND COVER

FROGFRUIT (PHYLA NODIFLORA), A NATIVE GROUNDCOVER



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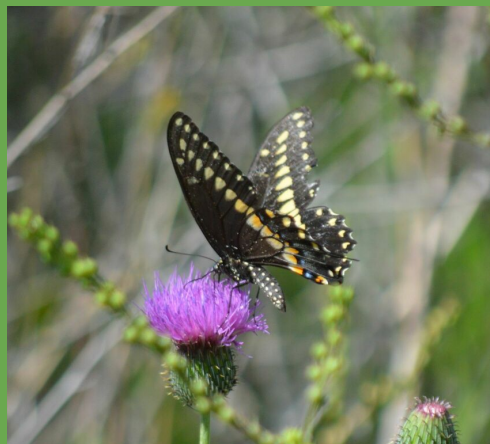
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If you want to attract birds, start by thinking about their needs like **they** would.

So....***INSECTS!***



Over 90% of land birds need insects (both larval and adult forms) as food, particularly for their nestlings, which require a diet high in fat and protein in order to maintain proper growth pace. Insects depend mainly on the native plants with which they have co-evolved. This is why exotic plants do not support a large bird population.



- Aim for 70% native plants by mass in a yard. Native trees and woody shrubs are especially important to maintain a large insect variety and population.
- “Keystone” plant species support especially large numbers of insect species ([info here](#)).

Cenizo / Texas Sage



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Shumard Red Oak, a native species



NATIVE PLANTS THAT SUPPORT INSECTS (& THEREBY BIRDS)

Hackberry tree species (Sugar & Netleaf Hackberries, *Celtis laevigata* & *reticulata*) are larval hosts for several butterfly and moth species. Moreover, their berries are an important food source for birds in the fall and winter.

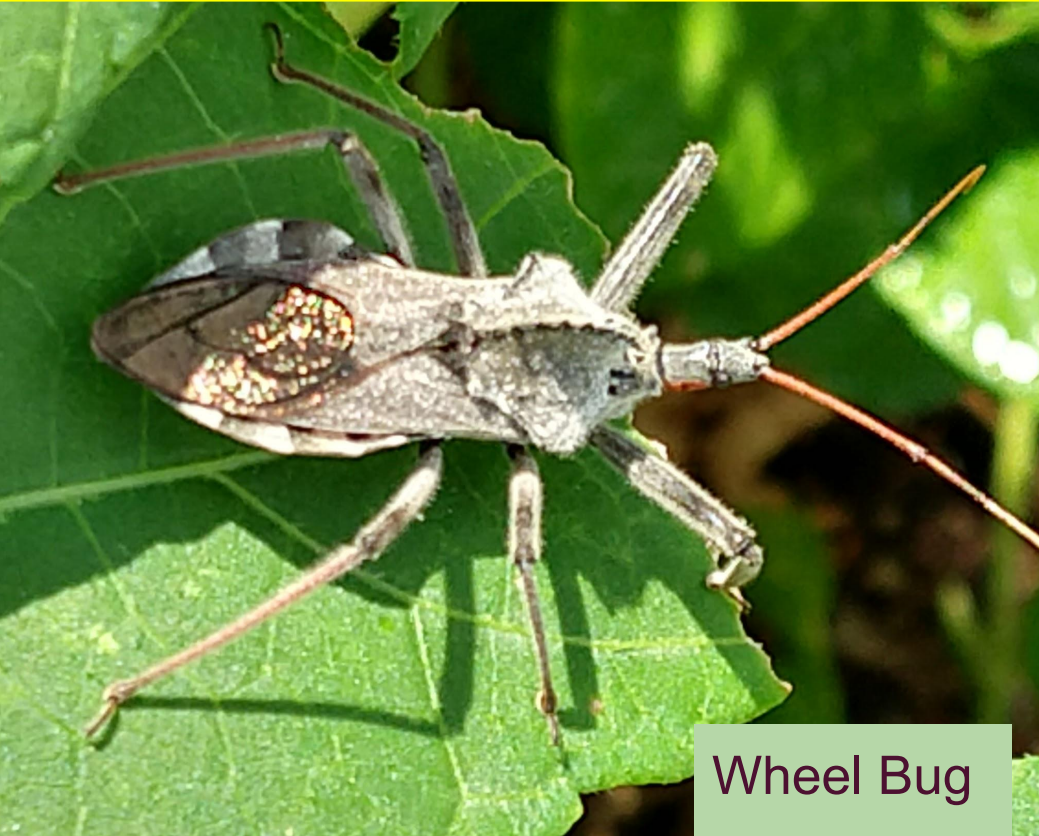
Sorrelvine (*Cissus trifoliata*) is larval host to 4 moth species.



Talayote (*Cynanchum racemosum*) is a larval host to Monarch and Soldier Butterflies, and provides nectar to numerous species.



Predatory insects limit the populations of other species that eat desirable plants, and themselves are food sources for birds.



Wheel Bug



Southern Yellowjacket

MORE INSECT PREDATORS

Variegated Meadowhawk



Heteropogon Robber Fly

Natural mulch and leaf litter are excellent habitat for insects, especially during the winter months.



**WHAT ABOUT BIRD
FEEDERS AND BIRD
BATHS?**



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By [GeorgeB2](https://pixabay.com/photos/hummingbird-wildlife-bird-feeder-5065645/)
<https://pixabay.com/photos/hummingbird-wildlife-bird-feeder-5065645/>

Artificial feeders are fine as supplements, but should not be the **primary** sources of food for birds in our yards.

Northern Cardinals

Perched before
visiting birdbath

With Suet Cake



Plants that host insects and produce fruit, seeds, and nectar should be the primary bird- and pollinator-feeding structures in our yards.

House Finch and Common Sunflower



Black-chinned Hummingbird and Autumn Sage





Chinese Pistache



Heath Aster

Sonoran bumblebee on
Golden Crownbeard



Carolina Snailseed



Goosefoot / Lamb's Quarters (*Chenopodium album*)



Remember to leave plants with dry seeds still attached in place through the winter.

Common Sunflower:
low-input, high
production bird feeder





American
Trumpet Vine
(*Campsis
radicans*) and
Desert Willow
(*Chilopsis
linearis*) -
tubular flowers
draw
Hummingbirds



Bird baths - moving water is extra attractive; cover nearby, but not so much as to give predators an advantage



Moderate plant cover near birdbath (not so heavy as to conceal predators nearby); also several perching spots within 3 to 15 feet



A FEW OF THE BIRDS

WE'VE

DOCUMENTED

IN OUR YARD



SPOTTED TOWHEE
(*PIPILO MACULATUS*)



Lincoln's
Sparrow
(*Melospiza
lincolnii*)



Dark-eyed
Junco
(*Junco
hyemalis*)



Black-chinned
Hummingbird
(*Archilochus
alexandri*)



*Yellow-breasted
Chat
(Icteria virens)*



Mississippi Kite
(*Ictinia*
mississippiensis)





Song Sparrow
(*Melospiza*
melodia)



Great Crested
Flycatcher
(*Myiarchus
crinitus*)



Yellow
Warbler
(*Setophaga
petechia*)



American
Robin
(*Turdus
migratorius*)



Field
Sparrow
(*Spizella
pusilla*)



House Finch
(*Haemorhous
mexicanus*)



Blue Jay
(*Cyanocitta
cristata*)

Western Kingbird
(*Tyrannus verticalis*)





Sharp-shinned
Hawk
*(Accipiter
striatus)*



Black-crested Titmouse
(*Baeolophus atricristatus*)





Inca Dove
(*Columbina
inca*)



Painted
Bunting in
our Desert
Willow

TRANSITION ETHIC



- Wisdom of acknowledging limitations even as we work toward change
- Benefits of gradual, incremental changes - take pictures
 - Maximize opportunities for learning and reflection - journal

USEFUL RESOURCES

- Information about keystone plant species by ecoregion
- Wildlife garden information from recent workshops
(Marianne Marugg)
- Various resources related to wildlife-friendly yards
(Marianne Marugg)

Questions, comments?

Thank you for your
interest and attention!