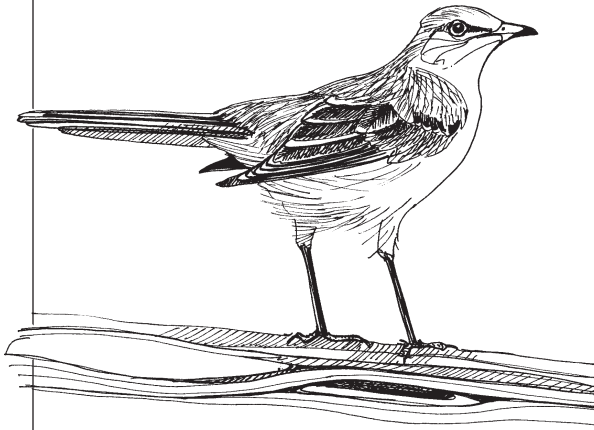


How to Help

Northern Mockingbirds



Melodious, conspicuous songbirds, Northern Mockingbirds are common in suburban and rural neighborhoods across much of the United States from California to New England. They can be attracted to even heavily urbanized areas by planting native shrubs and bushes for nesting, foraging, and roosting sites.

What Northern Mockingbirds Need

Food: Mockingbirds are omnivorous; eating a variety of native and exotic fruits, as well as small invertebrates including insects, spiders and earthworms. They forage on the ground, on lawns, and in low trees, shrubs, and bushes. In winter their diet is predominantly fruit; in summer arthropods. Insects, beetles, ants, bees, wasps, and grasshoppers are among their favorite animal goods, while elderberries, hollies, mulberries, sumacs, hackberries, wild cherries, wild grapes, serviceberries, and green-brier are preferred fruits. Mockingbirds will defend fruit-bearing trees or shrub patches during winter

Nesting: Nests are sited 3 to 9 feet high in bushes, shrubs, or small trees. These birds will also nest in isolated clumps of vegetation especially in suburban areas, where they seem to suffer less predation than rural nests or nests in larger patches of vegetation.

Shelter: Mockingbirds are presumed to roost and sleep on sheltered branches of trees and shrubs.

Other: They will drink and bathe at a birdbath or small pond. Predation from cats and collisions with picture windows pose threats. Low flying mockingbirds also frequently collide with automobiles.

How You Can Help

- Plant fruiting native shrubs and bushes, including elderberries, hollies, mulberries, and wild grapes.
- Remove and avoid planting multiflora rose bushes. Mockingbirds eat the fruit and spread the seeds, facilitating invasion by this exotic invasive plant.
- Provide raisins, grapes, or chopped fruits on a platform feeder.
- May also come to mealworm feeders.
- Avoid using pesticides that may kill insects used as food, or herbicides that destroy shrubby patches used as foraging habitat.
- Plant thick patches or rows of diverse native bushes, shrubs, and low ornamental trees.
- Encourage neighbors to plant bushes and shrubs to provide additional habitat.
- Maintain bushes and shrubs with minimal pruning to provide ample roosting, sleeping, and resting cover.
- Provide a birdbath or small pond for bathing and drinking. Make sure to keep birdbaths clean and free of mosquito larvae.
- Keep cats indoors to keep them safe from outdoor hazards and to protect birds. Remove feral cats from neighborhood.
- Screen windows or make them visible so mockingbirds can avoid colliding with them (www.audubonathome.org/SafeWindows.html).
- Whenever possible, plant patches of shrubs far away from busy roadways.