

## Bait Bans and Bird Feeding

Under an Ann Arbor [baiting and deer feeding ban](#) as well as a [Michigan deer feeding ban](#) that will be implemented on January 31, 2019 across the lower peninsula, **it is illegal to put out any substance composed of grains, minerals, salt, fruit, vegetables, hay or any other food material, whether natural or manufactured, which may lure, entice or attract deer.** Removing bird feeders entirely is the only way to guarantee they will not act as bait for deer, however such drastic action is not required with the right planning. With a little care and effort, you can significantly reduce the likelihood that your feeders will attract deer and still enjoy legally feeding birds or squirrels.

Start by using feeders whose structure makes it difficult or impossible for deer to access the feed. **Tube feeders, hopper style feeders, and cage style suet feeders** all provide poor access to deer. Platform and fly through feeders provide easy access to deer and other large animals, so avoid using these styles of feeders. Fill the recommended feeders with feed that is less attractive to deer. **Thistle seed, suet, and hummingbird nectar** are much less likely to attract deer than whole or cracked corn or black oil sunflower seeds. Black oil sunflower seeds have been found to be the choice bird feed for many species however, so using a combination of feeder type and correct height is crucial if one decides to use this type of feed.



Try not to overfeed your bird visitors: **only put out the amount of feed birds will eat in one day.** Empty feeders are less attractive to deer. If all the seed is not eaten in your feeders, bring them in at night. **Be sure to also place feed and feeders in locations that are less accessible to deer.** Deer can access feeders up to five feet off the ground or a packed snow surface. Place feeders at least six feet off the ground or snow surface to prevent deer from stretching up to feed. You can also securely install **four foot or taller woven wire fencing** around all of your feeders to prevent deer from reaching over or through to feed.



Being tidy will also help discourage non-bird visitors. **Keep the area around your feeders clean** as scattered seed on the ground under bird feeders can attract deer and other mammals. Place a platform, at least five feet off the ground, under the hanging feeder to catch all spilled feed. **Clean this platform daily.** If you have an outside dog, feed birds above where the dog is. Birds will quickly become accustomed to the dog, yet deer will not have access to the feeder.



While using these strategies will reduce the chances that your bird feeding will violate the feeding ban, it does not guarantee it. If you follow these precautions and deer are still attracted in by your feeder, you need to either take further action to deter the deer or take your feeders down to be in compliance with the ban. Information on how to deter deer can be found at [www.a2gov.org/deermanagement](http://www.a2gov.org/deermanagement).

Comments, questions or concerns? Please contact personnel at [DeerManagement@a2gov.org](mailto:DeerManagement@a2gov.org) or 734.794.6295