BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

# Smart Bird Feeders & Bird ID Apps

Camera feeders, Merlin and backyard birding — explained in plain English, one step at a time

**A plain-English guide for backyard bird lovers and their families**

Take your time — you can't break it

*Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech*

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

*For Birdbuddy, Birdfy, Merlin Bird ID & more · facts current November 2026*

# What's Inside

This is your smart bird feeder manual. Read it in any order and at your own pace — there is no test, and the birds will wait. Whether a camera feeder just arrived as a gift, you're deciding whether one is worth buying, or you simply want your phone to tell you who is singing in the maple tree, every feature comes with what it actually does *for you* and slow step-by-step directions anyone can follow. It covers Birdbuddy and Birdfy camera feeders, the free Merlin Bird ID app, and the bird projects you can join from your kitchen window. If a screen looks a little different on your phone, the idea is still the same.

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PART 1

# Getting to Know Smart Bird Feeders

What a camera feeder actually does, the two big brands — Birdbuddy and Birdfy — and the other choices on the shelf. Start here.

CHAPTER 1

# A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Maybe a smart bird feeder showed up under the tree, or a grandchild set one up on your deck and handed you a phone that keeps chirping. Maybe you've seen the close-up pictures of cardinals and chickadees a friend shares and wondered how they get them. Or maybe you just want to know which bird is singing outside the bedroom window at dawn. Whichever brought you here, this guide is for **you**.

I'm Bill. Helping folks feel at home with their technology is what I do every day, and I wrote this guide the way I'd explain it standing next to you at the back window: patiently, in plain English, with no tech jargon. If I use a word you don't know, I'll stop and explain it right then.

## You truly can't break it by exploring

A smart feeder is a regular bird feeder with a small, weatherproof camera built in. The camera talks to your home Wi-Fi, and an app on your phone shows you the pictures. Tapping around the app won't hurt the feeder, the birds or your phone. If a setting doesn't suit you, you can change it back. The worst that usually happens is a few extra notifications — and Chapter 11 tames those.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### Why this matters

A camera feeder brings the birds right up to your nose — every feather, every visit — even on days when getting outside is hard. It's a gentle, daily reason to look up from the news, and a lovely thing to share with grandchildren who live far away.

## What this guide covers

- What a smart feeder does, and the honest difference between the **Birdbuddy** and **Birdfy** families.
- Choosing one: Wi-Fi reach to the yard, battery versus solar, and subscription costs as of November 2026.
- Setting it up step by step, and where to hang it so birds don't hit your windows.
- Notifications that delight instead of nag, saving favorite clips, and sharing with family.
- Squirrels, weather, keeping the feeder clean, and seed that suits our Northeast Ohio birds.

- The free **Merlin Bird ID** app — identify a bird by its song or a photo — plus eBird, Project FeederWatch and the Audubon Bird Guide.
- Privacy, avoiding scams, and what to do when the feeder goes offline.

## And I'm only a phone call away

This guide will carry you a long way on your own. But if you get stuck — say, the feeder won't find your Wi-Fi from the back of the yard — call me at **(330) 200-8042**. No question is too small, and there's no such thing as a silly one.

So pour a cup of coffee, find the chair with the best view of the yard, and let's get started.

***— Bill***

CHAPTER 2

# What a Smart Bird Feeder Does

Before you spend money or climb a ladder, it helps to know what these feeders really do — and what they don't.

## How a bird feeder camera works

1. A bird lands on the perch to eat.
2. A motion sensor notices it and the camera wakes up.
3. The camera takes photos or a short video clip and sends them over your Wi-Fi to the company's computers on the internet (often called "the cloud").
4. Software there — usually called **AI**, short for artificial intelligence — compares the picture with thousands of others and suggests which species it is.
5. Your phone gets a notification, and the photos land in the feeder's app for you to enjoy, save or share.

## What you can do with a bird camera

| Feature | What it means for you |
|---|---|
| **See visitors up close** | Sharp, close-up photos and short videos of birds eating a few inches from the lens. |
| **Learn their names** | The app suggests the species, so "a little brown bird" becomes a song sparrow. |
| **Watch live** | Most feeders let you open a live view from your phone to see what's happening right now. |
| **Keep a collection** | Save your favorite shots and clips — a growing album of who visits your yard. |
| **Share with family** | Invite children and grandchildren to see the feeder's photos on their own phones. |

## What a bird camera can't do

- It can't work without Wi-Fi at the spot where it hangs. This is the number-one setup problem (Chapter 5).
- It can't identify every bird perfectly. The AI is good, but a blurry back view of a sparrow may get the wrong name. Treat it as a well-informed guess.

- It only sees what lands on its own perch — not the hawk in the tree or the woodpecker on the suet cake across the yard. For those, Merlin Bird ID (Chapter 17) is the tool.
- It doesn't clean itself. Feeders need a scrub every couple of weeks (Chapter 15).

GOOD TO KNOW

### "Smart" just means connected

When a product is called "smart," it simply means it connects to the internet and works with an app. A smart bird feeder is still a feeder: seed in a hopper, a perch, a roof. The camera is the smart part.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

You get to know the birds that share your yard — when they come, which ones are regulars, and who is new this season. Many people find they start noticing birds everywhere once the feeder introduces them.

CHAPTER 3

# Birdbuddy at a Glance

**Birdbuddy** (spelled "Bird Buddy" on older boxes and in many store listings) is the best-known camera feeder. Its app turns each visit into a **postcard** — a little card with the bird's photos and its suggested name — which is a big part of its charm.

## The current models (new in October 2026)

Birdbuddy launched two new feeders on **October 22, 2026**. They were first shown in January under the names Birdbuddy 2 and Birdbuddy 2 Mini and were renamed before going on sale. The new **Home** replaces the older Birdbuddy Pro.

| Model | What it is | Price (Nov. 2026) |
|---|---|---|
| **Birdbuddy Nook** | The compact, lower-cost feeder for balconies and small yards. The basic version has no solar panel; you charge the camera with a USB-C cable. | From $99.00 |
| **Birdbuddy Nook Solar** | The Nook with a solar roof attached. | $159 |
| **Nook Extended Edition** | Nook with solar roof, a larger perch and a Birdbuddy Family Premium membership. | $199.99 |
| **Birdbuddy Home** | The flagship. Two built-in solar panels, more seed, and weatherproofing rated IP67. | $219 |

Both new models use a 2K HDR camera (sharper than regular HD, and better with bright sky behind the bird) with a wide 135-degree view, and both work with either band of home Wi-Fi — 2.4 GHz or 5 GHz. Prices are Birdbuddy's own as of November 2026; stores and holiday sales vary.

## Already own an older Birdbuddy?

The original Bird Buddy and the Bird Buddy Pro still work with the same app. One difference matters: Birdbuddy's help center says the older camera module only connects on **2.4 GHz** Wi-Fi and won't connect to a hidden network name. Chapter 5 explains what that means.

## The Birdbuddy app in one minute

- **Postcards** arrive in your Home feed whenever a bird visits. Tap one to see the photos and video.
- Postcards leave the Home feed automatically after **7 days**, so save the ones you love (Chapter 12).

- **Live view** lets you peek at the feeder right now.
- **Members** in the feeder's settings is where you invite family (Chapter 13).
- Birdbuddy says the app works fully without a paid membership; all core features are available to every feeder owner. Premium adds extras (Chapter 7).

TIP

### The camera comes out

On Birdbuddy feeders the camera lifts out of the feeder for charging and cleaning. On the Home and Nook the battery is on the outside of the camera, and Birdbuddy notes the app will show the feeder as offline whenever the camera isn't seated in the feeder. That's normal — not a fault.

CHAPTER 4

# Birdfy and Other Options

**Birdfy** is the bird-watching brand of **Netvue**, a company that also makes home security cameras. Birdfy sells a wide range: wooden and metal feeders, a hummingbird feeder, a smart bird bath and a birdhouse camera. The newest models include the **Birdfy Feeder Vista** and the **Birdfy Feeder Metal 2 4K**.

## The big Birdfy news for November 2026

For years the main complaint about Birdfy was that automatic bird identification needed a separate purchase or subscription on many models. On **November 1–2, 2026**, Birdfy made automatic bird identification **free for life** for new and existing owners, on its current devices, once the device is registered in the Birdfy app. It identifies more than 6,000 species and applies whether you're on the Free, Plus or Pro membership.

HEADS UP

**Free bird ID doesn't mean everything is free**

Birdfy's free bird ID covers naming the birds. Longer cloud storage of clips, longer clip lengths and more devices still come with the paid Plus and Pro memberships. Chapter 7 lays out what's included.

## Wi-Fi: check the box

Birdfy's help center says its cameras connect only to **2.4 GHz** Wi-Fi, with one exception: the Feeder Metal 2 4K, launched in 2026, also works on 5 GHz. If your router shows two network names, pick the one ending in something like "2.4G" during setup.

## Other camera feeders you'll see

Store shelves and websites also carry camera feeders from **Perky-Pet** (a long-time feeder maker with its own app), **Hello Birdie**, **Soliom** and many lesser-known names sold online. Some are good values; some come with apps that are hard to use or that stop being updated. Before buying an unfamiliar brand, look for three things:

- An app with recent updates and decent reviews in the App Store or Google Play.
- A clear statement of what's free and what costs money after the first month.
- A help or support website with a real way to reach the company.

## Birdbuddy or Birdfy?

| | Birdbuddy | Birdfy |
|---|---|---|
| Known for | Friendly app, postcards, family sharing | Many models and styles, flexible cloud storage plans |
| Bird ID | Included; Premium adds extras | Free for life on current devices (Nov. 2026) |
| Wi-Fi | Nook and Home: 2.4 or 5 GHz. Older: 2.4 GHz only | 2.4 GHz only, except Feeder Metal 2 4K |
| Optional membership | Premium (Chapter 7) | Plus or Pro (Chapter 7) |

**FROM BILL**

### My honest take

Both families make feeders that birds use and people enjoy. Pick the one whose app you find easiest, whose model fits your yard, and whose ongoing cost you're comfortable with. The best feeder is the one your Wi-Fi reaches — so read Chapter 5 before you buy.

PART 2

# Choosing the Right Feeder

Three questions settle it: will your Wi-Fi reach the spot, how will it stay charged, and what will it cost after the first month.

CHAPTER 5

# Will Your Wi-Fi Reach the Yard?

A camera feeder hangs outdoors, often 30, 50 or 80 feet from the router inside the house — through walls, windows and sometimes a brick chimney. Weak Wi-Fi at the feeder is the most common reason setup fails or the feeder keeps dropping offline. Five minutes of testing before you buy saves a lot of frustration.

## 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz in plain English

Most home routers send out Wi-Fi on two "bands," a bit like AM and FM radio. **2.4 GHz** travels farther and passes through walls better, but is a little slower. **5 GHz** is faster but fades quickly with distance. For a feeder out in the yard, 2.4 GHz is usually the better match anyway.

| Feeder | Wi-Fi it needs |
|---|---|
| **Birdbuddy Nook and Home** | Work on 2.4 GHz or 5 GHz. |
| **Older Birdbuddy camera module** | 2.4 GHz only; no hidden network names. |
| **Birdfy cameras** | 2.4 GHz only, except the Feeder Metal 2 4K (both bands). |

GOOD TO KNOW

### One name or two?

Many newer routers and mesh systems combine both bands under one Wi-Fi name, and that's usually fine. If yours shows two names (for example "Smith-Home" and "Smith-Home-5G"), choose the one without "5G" for a 2.4 GHz-only feeder. If setup keeps failing on a combined network, your internet provider's app may let you turn on a separate 2.4 GHz name.

## Test the signal where the feeder will hang

1. Walk out to the exact spot with your phone.
2. Turn off cellular data for a moment (on iPhone: **Settings** > **Cellular**; on Android: pull down from the top of the screen and tap **Mobile data**) so the phone has to use Wi-Fi.
3. Look at the Wi-Fi symbol at the top of the screen. Three bars or full arcs is good; one bar is trouble.
4. Open a website or play a short video. If it loads quickly, a feeder will likely be happy there.

5. Turn cellular data back on when you're done.

TIP

### Closer is better

Birdbuddy's help center gives the same first advice for any connection trouble: move closer to the router and try again. If the perfect bird spot is at the far end of the yard, consider a spot a bit closer to the house — the birds will find it.

## If the signal is weak

- Move the router (or a mesh unit) to a window on the yard side of the house.
- Add a mesh point or Wi-Fi extender near that side of the house. Bill's separate guide, **Wi-Fi Extenders & Dead Zones**, walks through the choices.
- Choose a feeder spot closer to the house or on the deck.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

Good Wi-Fi at the feeder means instant notifications, smooth live video and far fewer "offline" messages. It's the single best investment in enjoying a camera feeder.

CHAPTER 6

# Battery, Solar & Power

Camera feeders run on a rechargeable battery. The question is how that battery gets charged: by you, with a cable, or by the sun, with a small solar panel on the roof.

## Your choices

| Option | How it charges | Good for |
|---|---|---|
| Battery only | Bring the camera in and charge it with a USB-C cable now and then. | Lower price; feeders within easy reach |
| Solar roof or panel | A small panel tops up the battery during the day. | Feeders up on a pole or hard to reach |
| Built-in solar (Birdbuddy Home) | Two panels built into the feeder. | Set it and mostly forget it |

## Solar in a Northeast Ohio winter

Solar panels need daylight, and our winters are short and gray. On a run of cloudy days, or when snow covers the panel, a solar feeder may still need an occasional charge with the cable. Brushing snow off the panel helps. Busy feeders also use more battery, because every visit wakes the camera.

TIP

### Give the panel the sun

Hang a solar feeder where the panel faces open sky — south-facing is usually best here — and isn't shaded by the house or evergreens for most of the day.

## Checking and charging the battery

1. Open the feeder's app. The battery level usually shows on the feeder's main screen or in its settings.
2. When it's getting low, lift the camera out (most brands let you remove it without taking the feeder down).
3. Bring it inside and plug it into a USB charger with the cable that came in the box.
4. When it's full, put it back. On Birdbuddy, the app shows the feeder online again once the camera is seated.

HEADS UP

### Cold batteries

Rechargeable batteries don't like deep cold. On very cold days the battery may drain faster than usual. That's normal, and it recovers when the weather warms.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

Picking the right power option means fewer trips up a ladder and fewer missed visits. If climbing or reaching is hard, solar is worth the extra cost.

CHAPTER 7

# Subscription Costs, Honestly (November 2026)

Both big brands work without a subscription. Both also sell an optional membership that adds extras. Here's what's free and what costs money, as of November 2026, so you can decide on purpose.

## Birdbuddy Premium

| Plan | What you get |
|---|---|
| **Free with every feeder** | Postcards, bird identification, live view, saving photos, inviting family guests. Birdbuddy says all core features are available to every feeder owner. |
| **Individual Premium** | $69.99 a year. Adds extras such as **Name That Bird** (name your regular visitors), an ignored-species list to keep certain birds out of your feed, an AI chat about nature, early access to new features and a 20% product discount. |
| **Family Premium** | $98.99 a year. Everything in Individual, and your invited guests get Premium features too — including watching the feeder's livestream and reacting to postcards together. |

## Birdfy memberships

| Plan | What you get |
|---|---|
| **Free** | Automatic bird ID free for life (from November 2026). Video "Moments" kept in the cloud for 30 days, clips up to 20 seconds, and 5 GB of storage for the Collection you save. |
| **Plus** | Moments kept 60 days, clips up to 30 seconds, up to 2 devices, 20 GB Collection storage and a 15% product discount. |
| **Pro** | Moments kept 90 days, clips up to 60 seconds, up to 10 devices, 100 GB Collection storage and a 20% product discount. |

Birdfy's own pages list different prices for the same plan in different places — Plus has been shown at around $70 to $80 a year, and Pro is higher. Before paying, open the Birdfy app and look at the price it shows you, which is the one that counts.

## Questions to ask before you subscribe

- Try the free version for a few weeks first. Many people find it's all they want.
- Will you actually use the extras? Longer clips matter more to some people than others.
- Will the grandchildren want the live view? On Birdbuddy that's what Family Premium adds for guests.
- Is it set to renew automatically? Note the renewal date on the cheat-sheet in Chapter 24.

TIP

### Where to cancel

If you subscribed inside the app on an iPhone, you manage it in **Settings** > your name > **Subscriptions**. On Android, open the **Play Store**, tap your profile picture, then **Payments & subscriptions** > **Subscriptions**. If you paid on the company's website, cancel in your account there.

FROM BILL

### Watch out for bundles

Some boxes include a year of membership — the Nook Extended Edition includes Birdbuddy Family Premium, and Birdfy sells feeders bundled with a year of Plus. That's a fine deal, but put a reminder on your calendar for the month before it renews so the charge doesn't surprise you.

PART 3

# Setting It Up

Getting the app and account ready, connecting the camera to Wi-Fi, and hanging the feeder where birds are safe and the camera sees them well.

CHAPTER 8

# Before You Start: Phone, App & Account

A little preparation at the kitchen table makes the outdoor part quick. Do these steps inside, near your router, before the feeder goes anywhere near a tree.

## What you'll need

- Your smartphone (iPhone or Android), charged, with Bluetooth turned on — most feeders use Bluetooth to introduce themselves to the phone during setup.
- Your **Wi-Fi network name and password**, written down. Capital letters matter.
- An email address you check, for the new account.
- The camera, charged. Plug it in with the included USB-C cable when it comes out of the box and let it charge fully.

## Get the right app

1. On iPhone, open the **App Store**; on Android, open the **Google Play Store**.
2. Search for **Birdbuddy** or **Birdfy**, whichever matches your feeder.
3. Check that the developer listed under the app's name matches the brand (Birdfy's app is made by its parent company). Copycat apps with similar names exist.
4. Tap **Get** or **Install**.
5. Open the app and choose to create an account. Use a password you don't use anywhere else, and write it on the cheat-sheet in Chapter 24.

HEADS UP

### Only the official app

The setup card in the box usually has a QR code that leads straight to the right app. Use that, or the app store search above. Never install a "helper" app or pay a website that offers to set up your feeder — the official app is free.

## Say yes to the permissions it needs

During setup the app will ask for a few permissions. Here's what each one is for:

| Permission | Why the app asks |
|---|---|
| **Bluetooth** | Lets the phone find the camera during setup. Allow it. |

| Permission | Why the app asks |
|---|---|
| **Location** | Phones require it to search for nearby devices and Wi-Fi. Some apps also use it to suggest birds found in your area. Allow it, at least while using the app. |
| **Notifications** | How the app tells you a bird is visiting. Allow it — Chapter 11 shows how to tone them down. |
| **Photos** | Needed only when you save a picture to your phone's photo album. |

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

Ten minutes inside at the table, with the router nearby and the camera charged, means the outdoor part takes only as long as hanging the feeder.

CHAPTER 9

# Connecting the Feeder Step by Step

Every brand's app walks you through pairing with pictures, and the screens change from time to time. The general order below is the same for Birdbuddy, Birdfy and most others. Do it indoors, within a few steps of the router, then move the feeder outside.

## The usual order

1. Open the app and sign in.
2. Tap the option to add a new feeder or device (often a **+** sign). Choose your model from the list.
3. Wake the camera. The app will tell you how — usually by pressing its button or seating it in the feeder. A light or a chirp tells you it's ready.
4. Keep the phone close to the camera while the app finds it over Bluetooth.
5. When asked, choose your home Wi-Fi network from the list and type the password carefully.
6. Wait. Connecting and checking for updates can take a few minutes. Don't close the app.
7. When the app says the feeder is connected, give it a name — "Back Deck" or "Kitchen Window" helps if you ever add a second one.
8. Let it finish any software update while it's still inside, charged and close to the router.

## If your Wi-Fi network doesn't appear

- On a 2.4 GHz-only feeder, a 5 GHz-only network won't show up in the list. Look for the other name.
- A **hidden** network (one that doesn't broadcast its name) won't work with Birdbuddy's older camera.
- Move closer to the router and try again.
- Restart the router: unplug it, wait 30 seconds, plug it back in, and wait for its lights to settle.

TIP

### Typing the Wi-Fi password

Most failed setups are a mistyped password. Many apps have a small eye icon next to the password box — tap it to show what you typed. Check capitals, zeros versus the letter O, and ones versus a lowercase L.

HEADS UP

### Set it up before the gift is wrapped?

Pairing ties the feeder to one person's account. If it's a gift, it's usually best to let the person who will own it create the account, or set it up together on their phone. Moving a feeder to a different account later is possible but takes extra steps.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

Setting up close to the router lets you know the camera works before you climb a ladder. If something goes wrong later outside, you know the problem is distance, not the feeder.

CHAPTER 10

# Where to Hang It: Height, Placement & Windows

Where you put the feeder affects three things: whether birds feel safe enough to visit, whether the camera gets a good picture, and whether birds fly into your windows. A few simple rules cover all three.

## Keep birds safe from windows: the 3-or-30 rule

Birds see reflections of sky and trees in glass and can fly straight into it. Audubon's advice is to place feeders either **within 3 feet of a window** or **more than 30 feet away**. Up close, a bird leaving the feeder can't build up enough speed to hurt itself if it bumps the glass. Far away, it has room to see the house and turn. The in-between distances are the riskiest.

> TIP
> **Make big windows visible**
> If you have a large picture window near the feeder, decals, screens, or strings hung on the outside of the glass break up the reflection so birds see a barrier. Spacing marks close together works better than a single sticker.

## Picking the spot

- **Near cover, not in it.** Birds like a shrub or tree within a short hop for safety, but not so close that a cat can hide underneath and pounce.
- **In Wi-Fi range.** Test the signal first (Chapter 5).
- **Mind the sun.** A camera pointed straight into the morning or evening sun gets dark silhouettes. With the sun behind or beside the camera, colors look their best.
- **Within reach.** You'll be refilling seed, cleaning, and maybe charging. A spot you can reach from the deck or with a short step stool is much easier than one 10 feet up.
- **Away from squirrel launch pads.** See Chapter 14.

## Height and mounting

Most people hang a camera feeder about eye level to a little above it — high enough to discourage cats, low enough to reach safely. Every brand includes mounting options; most can hang from a hook, attach to a pole, or screw to a post or wall. Follow the instructions in your box for the hardware.

1. Decide the spot using the list above, and check the Wi-Fi there.
2. Mount the hook, pole or bracket firmly. A feeder that swings in the wind gives blurry pictures and frightens birds.
3. Fill the feeder with seed before you hang it — it's easier on the ground.
4. Seat the charged camera in the feeder and hang it up.
5. Open the live view in the app to check the picture. Adjust the angle so the perch fills the view.
6. Be patient. It can take birds a few days to a couple of weeks to trust a new feeder.

STAY SAFE

### Ladders and ice

Please don't climb a ladder alone or on icy ground to reach a feeder. Choose a spot you can reach from the ground or the deck, or use a pole with a hook you can lower. A feeder is never worth a fall.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

A well-placed feeder gets more visitors, better pictures and fewer window strikes — and it's easy for you to look after, which means you'll keep enjoying it.

PART 4

# Everyday Enjoyment

Notifications that delight instead of nag, keeping your favorite photos and clips, and sharing the show with children and grandchildren.

CHAPTER 11

# Notifications Without Overload

The first week with a camera feeder can feel like a phone that won't stop chirping — every sparrow, every visit. The good news: you're in charge of how often it speaks up. Turn it down to a pleasant level and it becomes a happy little surprise a few times a day.

## Two places to adjust

| Where | What it controls |
|---|---|
| **In the feeder app** | Choose *which* visits notify you — for example, only new species or only certain birds — and set quiet hours. Look in the app's **Settings** or in the feeder's own settings for **Notifications**. |
| **On the phone** | Decide *how* the app may notify you: sound, banner, or silent delivery to the notification list. |

## On an iPhone

1. Open **Settings** and tap **Notifications** (or **Apps** > your bird app > **Notifications** on newer iPhones).
2. Find your bird app and tap it.
3. Turn **Sounds** off if the chirp is too much, but leave notifications allowed.
4. To gather them into one quiet summary, choose **Scheduled Summary** if your iPhone offers it.

## On an Android phone

1. Open **Settings** > **Notifications** > **App notifications** (wording varies by phone).
2. Find your bird app and tap it.
3. Turn off categories you don't want, or set them to **Silent**.

## Inside the app

- **Birdbuddy:** look in the app's settings for notification choices. Premium members can also keep certain species out of the feed entirely with an ignored-species list.
- **Birdfy:** open the device's settings and look for notification and motion-detection options. Lowering motion sensitivity can cut alerts from swaying branches.

TIP

### A good starting point

Many people are happiest with the sound off and notifications left on. The pictures wait patiently in the app, and you can enjoy them all at once over morning coffee.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

Quiet, well-chosen notifications keep the feeder a pleasure rather than a pest — and mean you'll still notice the exciting ones, like the first rose-breasted grosbeak of spring.

CHAPTER 12

# Postcards, Clips & Saving Your Favorites

Every visit produces photos and often a short video. Most of them are lovely for a day and then can go. The few that make you smile are worth keeping — and it's important to know how long each brand keeps things before they disappear.

## How long things stay

| Item | How long it lasts |
|---|---|
| **Birdbuddy postcards** | Leave the Home feed automatically after **7 days**. Save the ones you want to keep before then. |
| **Birdfy Moments (free)** | Kept in the cloud for 30 days. Plus keeps them 60 days, Pro 90 days. |
| **Birdfy Collection** | Items you save to your Collection stay there; free accounts get 5 GB of space. |

## Keeping a favorite

1. Open the postcard or clip in the app.
2. Look for a **save**, **heart**, or **collect** button to keep it in the app's collection.
3. To keep a copy on your own phone, look for a **download** or **share** button (often a square with an arrow pointing up on iPhone, or three connected dots on Android).
4. Choose **Save Image** or **Save Video**. It lands in your phone's Photos or Gallery app.
5. The first time, the phone asks permission to add to your photos. Allow it.

> TIP
>
> **Your phone is the long-term home**
>
> Anything you save to your phone's Photos app is backed up with the rest of your pictures (if you use iCloud Photos or Google Photos) and stays even if you stop paying for a membership or change feeders.

## Sending a picture to someone

1. Open the photo or clip and tap the share button.
2. Choose **Messages**, **Mail** or another app the person uses.
3. Pick the person and send. They don't need the bird app to see it.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

## What this does for you

A few saved favorites become a seasonal album of your yard — the first goldfinch turning yellow in spring, the juncos arriving with the snow. That's a story worth sharing.

CHAPTER 13

# Sharing with Family & Grandkids

One of the nicest things about a camera feeder is that the people you love can watch it too — from across town or across the country. Each brand lets you invite family members so the feeder's photos show up in their own app, on their own phone.

## Birdbuddy: invite a guest

1. Open the Birdbuddy app and go to your feeder's **settings**.
2. Scroll to **Manage Members**.
3. Tap **+ Invite a guest**. The app creates a special link.
4. Send the link to your family member by text message or email.
5. They tap the link, install the Birdbuddy app if they don't have it, and join your feeder.

- Guests don't need a Birdbuddy feeder of their own.
- You can invite up to **10 guests**, and they receive your feeder's postcards in their app.
- Sharing postcards doesn't need a paid membership. With **Family Premium**, your guests also get the Premium features, can watch the feeder's livestream, and can react to and comment on postcards together.

## Birdfy: share the device

1. Open the Birdfy app and tap the **settings** icon on the feeder you want to share.
2. Tap **Share Device**, then the **+** icon. A QR code appears.
3. Your family member installs the Birdfy app, creates an account, and scans the code.
4. Confirm the share on your phone.

Shared family members can see the live view and recorded clips, but they can't change settings or delete your videos — so a curious grandchild can't undo your setup.

TIP

### Sharing when they're far away

Scanning a QR code is easiest in person. If your family lives far away, text them a screenshot of the code and they can scan it from another screen — or ask them to call you while you do it together.

STAY SAFE

### Only people you know

Invite family and close friends only. A share link or QR code gives access to a camera at your home, so never post one on social media. If you change your mind, you can remove a member in the same settings screen.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

"Grandma, you got a woodpecker!" A shared feeder gives far-away grandchildren a daily reason to check in, and gives you something cheerful to talk about together.

PART 5

# Caring for the Feeder & the Birds

Squirrels, Ohio weather, keeping the feeder clean so birds stay healthy, and choosing seed for the birds that live here.

CHAPTER 14

# Squirrels & Weather

If you've fed birds before, you already know the squirrels will find the feeder. And Northeast Ohio weather — lake-effect snow, freezing rain, summer storms — gives any outdoor gadget a workout. Here's how to keep both in check.

## Outsmarting squirrels

- **Placement is your best tool.** Squirrels can leap a surprising distance from trees, fences, roofs and deck railings. Put the feeder on a pole well away from anything they can jump from.
- **Add a baffle.** A baffle is a dome or cylinder on the pole (or above a hanging feeder) that squirrels can't climb past. It's the classic, proven fix.
- **Choose a squirrel-resistant model.** Some camera feeders have metal parts that resist chewing — Birdfy, for example, sells a metal feeder billed as squirrel-proof.
- **Try safflower seed.** Many squirrels (and grackles) care less for it, while cardinals and chickadees eat it happily.
- **Enjoy the show.** Some people give up and just enjoy squirrel photos. That's allowed too.

HEADS UP

### No hot pepper sprays on the camera

Some seed blends are coated with hot pepper to deter squirrels. Those are made for feeding. Don't spray anything homemade on the feeder or camera — it can damage the lens and the seals that keep water out.

## Weather

- Camera feeders are built for the outdoors, and the Birdbuddy Home is rated **IP67** — a rating that means it's sealed against dust and can handle being briefly underwater.
- Brush snow off the roof and solar panel after a storm, and knock ice off the perch gently.
- Wet seed spoils and clumps. After heavy rain, check the seed and replace any that's soggy or moldy.
- In high winds, a hanging feeder can swing hard. Shorten the hanger or move it to a pole.
- Very cold weather drains batteries faster (Chapter 6).

TIP

### A raindrop on the lens

Blurry pictures after rain usually just mean a drop or smudge on the lens. Wipe it gently with a soft, clean microfiber cloth — the kind that comes with eyeglasses.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

A few minutes of squirrel-proofing and storm cleanup keep the seed going to birds and the camera taking clear pictures all year.

CHAPTER 15

# Cleaning the Feeder

This is the chapter that matters most for the birds themselves. Feeders bring birds close together, and dirty feeders can spread diseases between them. Cleaning regularly is part of feeding birds responsibly.

## How often

Project FeederWatch — run by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Birds Canada — recommends cleaning seed feeders about **every two weeks**, and more often in wet weather or if you notice sick birds.

## Step by step

1. **Take the camera out first.** The camera is electronic; it never goes in the soak. Set it aside indoors.
2. Empty the old seed and throw it away, along with any clumps or moldy bits.
3. Scrub off any visible dirt and droppings with a brush and soapy water. Cleaning off the debris first lets the next step work.
4. Mix a soak of **one part household bleach to nine parts water** in a bucket or utility sink.
5. Soak the feeder parts (not the camera) for about **10 minutes**.
6. Rinse very well with clean water.
7. Let everything **dry completely** before refilling — damp seed molds quickly.
8. Refill with fresh seed, seat the camera, and hang it back up.

STAY SAFE

### Bleach safety

Wear rubber gloves, work outside or with a window open, and never mix bleach with other cleaners — especially ammonia or vinegar, which can release harmful fumes. Vinegar alone isn't a substitute: it doesn't reliably kill bacteria or mold.

## Cleaning the camera

- Wipe the camera's outside with a slightly damp cloth.
- Clean the lens with a dry microfiber cloth. No paper towels — they can scratch.
- Follow your brand's instructions in the app or on its help site for anything more.

## Rake up under the feeder

Old seed hulls and droppings pile up under feeders. Raking or sweeping them up every so often keeps the ground clean for birds that feed there, like juncos and doves.

HEADS UP

### If you see sick birds

A bird that's puffed up, sluggish, or has crusty, swollen eyes may be sick. Wildlife agencies sometimes ask people to take feeders down for a while during outbreaks. If you see this, take the feeder down for a couple of weeks, clean it thoroughly, and check the Ohio Division of Wildlife for current advice.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

A clean feeder keeps your visitors healthy — and healthy birds keep coming back. Your camera gets clearer pictures through a clean feeder, too.

CHAPTER 16

# Seed Choices for Northeast Ohio Birds

What you put in the feeder decides who comes to dinner. Here's a simple, general guide for our part of Ohio. You don't need fancy blends; a couple of good basics bring in most of the familiar backyard birds.

## The basics

| Food | Who it tends to attract | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| Black-oil sunflower seed | Cardinals, chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, finches | The best all-around choice for one-feeder households. |
| Sunflower hearts (chips) | The same birds, plus goldfinches | No shells to clean up below the feeder. Costs more. |
| Safflower | Cardinals, chickadees, doves | Squirrels and grackles tend to like it less. |
| Nyjer (thistle) | Goldfinches, house finches | Needs a feeder with tiny holes. |
| Suet | Woodpeckers, nuthatches | Best in cold months. Needs a suet cage. |

TIP

### Check what your feeder takes

Many camera feeders are designed for seed or seed mixes and may not suit very small seed like Nyjer or messy foods like suet. Check your brand's instructions — some sell accessories for suet or other food.

## Skip the cheap filler

Bargain mixes are often heavy on red millet, milo and wheat. Many of our feeder birds pick through it and throw it on the ground. A smaller bag of better seed is usually the better buy.

## Birds you're likely to meet

Around Portage County, familiar feeder visitors include the Northern cardinal, black-capped chickadee, tufted titmouse, white-breasted nuthatch, American goldfinch, house finch, downy woodpecker, dark-eyed junco (mostly in winter) and mourning dove. Your feeder app — and Merlin (Chapter 17) — will introduce you to more.

GOOD TO KNOW

### Keep the seed fresh

Store seed in a sealed metal or heavy plastic container in a cool, dry place. It keeps mice out and keeps the seed from going moldy or stale.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

The right seed brings more kinds of birds — and more kinds of birds make for a more interesting feed of photos on your phone.

PART 6

# Bird ID Apps & Backyard Science

The free Merlin Bird ID app, identifying birds by their songs, and simple ways to share what you see with scientists through eBird and Project FeederWatch.

CHAPTER 17

# Merlin Bird ID: Your Free Pocket Bird Expert

You don't need a camera feeder to put names to the birds around you. **Merlin Bird ID** is a free app from the **Cornell Lab of Ornithology**, the bird-research center at Cornell University. It can identify a bird from a photo, from its song, or from a few simple questions about what you saw.

## Getting Merlin

1. Open the **App Store** (iPhone) or **Google Play Store** (Android).
2. Search for **Merlin Bird ID**. The developer is the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.
3. Tap **Get** or **Install**, then open it.
4. Follow the welcome screens. Merlin will suggest a **Bird Pack** for your region — tap to download it (choose the one that covers the eastern United States or all of North America). Do this on Wi-Fi; packs are large.
5. Allow location so Merlin can suggest the birds likely in your area at this time of year.

## The ways Merlin can help

| Feature | What it does |
|---|---|
| **Sound ID** | Listens to the birds singing around you and shows their names as they sing. Chapter 18 walks through it. |
| **Photo ID** | Snap a photo or choose one from your phone — even one from your camera feeder — and Merlin suggests what it is. |
| **Step-by-Step** | Answer a few questions — where, when, how big, what colors, what it was doing — and get a short list of likely birds. |
| **Save My Bird** | Tap **This is my bird!** when you've identified one, and Merlin adds it to your growing life list. |
| **Explore** | A field guide of the birds in your downloaded pack, with photos, sounds and range maps. |

## Works without internet

Once a Bird Pack is downloaded, Sound ID and Photo ID work offline — handy at a park, on a trail, or at the cabin with no signal. Merlin is free: no purchase or subscription is needed.

## Identify a bird from a feeder photo

1. Save the feeder photo to your phone (Chapter 12).
2. Open Merlin and tap **Photo ID**.
3. Choose the option to pick a photo from your library, and select the picture.
4. Zoom or crop so the bird fills the box, and confirm when and where the photo was taken if asked.
5. Look through Merlin's suggestions, with photos to compare. Tap **This is my bird!** on the match.

TIP

### A second opinion

If your feeder app and Merlin disagree, look closely at both suggestions. Sparrows and finches fool everyone. Merlin's species pages show the field marks to check.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

Merlin turns any walk, porch sit or drive in the country into a chance to learn something new — for free, with the same knowledge the experts use.

CHAPTER 18

# Identify a Bird by Its Song

You hear a bird far more often than you see it. Merlin's **Sound ID** listens through your phone's microphone and shows the names of the birds singing, live, as each one sings. It feels a little like magic the first time.

## Using Sound ID

1. Open Merlin and tap **Sound ID**.
2. Allow the microphone when asked (only the first time).
3. Tap the microphone button to start recording. Hold the phone steady, pointed toward the singing.
4. Watch the screen. As each bird sings, its name lights up with a picture.
5. Tap the button again to stop. Tap a bird's name to see more and hear its song.
6. If you agree with a suggestion, you can save the bird to your list.

## Tips for good results

- Early morning, when birds sing the most, gives the best results — especially in spring.
- Quiet surroundings help. Traffic, wind, lawn mowers and talking can drown out the birds.
- Treat suggestions as a strong hint. Try to spot the bird, or listen to its song in Merlin to compare.
- Some birds that copy others — like mockingbirds, catbirds and starlings — can confuse anyone.

GOOD TO KNOW

### It isn't eavesdropping

Sound ID only listens while you have the record button on, and it's listening for birds. When you tap stop, it stops.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

For anyone whose eyesight makes spotting small birds hard, Sound ID is a gift: you can enjoy and identify birds by ear from a porch chair or an open window.

CHAPTER 19

# eBird, Project FeederWatch & the Audubon App

Your backyard bird watching can help science. Ordinary people counting birds at their feeders have given researchers decades of information about where birds live and how their numbers are changing.

## Project FeederWatch

**Project FeederWatch** is run by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Birds Canada. Each winter, participants pick a couple of days now and then, count the birds at their feeders, and report the counts online or in an app. It's made for exactly the kind of person who owns a feeder.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Season** | The 40th season runs **November 1, 2026 through April 30, 2027**. You can join partway through. |
| **Cost** | An annual participation fee — $18 for U.S. participants, $15 for Cornell Lab members, as listed for recent seasons. Confirm the current amount at feederwatch.org when you sign up. |
| **What you get** | Simple counting instructions, a place to enter your counts, and the satisfaction of helping real research. |

## eBird

**eBird**, also from the Cornell Lab, is a free website and app where bird watchers anywhere record what they see. It's handy for keeping your own lists and seeing what others have spotted nearby — at local parks and nature preserves, for example. If you enjoy Merlin, eBird is a natural next step.

## The Audubon Bird Guide app

The **Audubon Bird Guide** app, from the National Audubon Society, is a free field guide to more than 800 North American birds, with photos, songs and calls, range maps and descriptions by Kenn Kaufman. Its Bird ID tool narrows the choices by color, size and tail shape for your location and date, and its **Sightings** feature keeps a running life list. It can also show nearby birding hotspots using eBird information.

TIP

### Which app should I start with?

Start with Merlin — it does the identifying. Add the Audubon guide if you like reading about birds, and eBird or FeederWatch if you'd like to keep records and contribute to science.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

Counting birds gives a winter morning a gentle purpose, connects you with a community of bird lovers, and makes your feeder part of something bigger.

PART 7

# Privacy, Safety & Fixes

Being a good neighbor with a camera in the yard, steering clear of scams, and getting an offline feeder back online.

CHAPTER 20

# Privacy: Your Camera and Your Neighbors

A bird feeder camera is pointed at a perch, not a person. Still, it is a camera connected to the internet, and it's worth a few minutes' thought about what it sees and who can see its pictures.

## Point it at the birds

- Aim the camera at the perch and your own yard. Avoid angles that look into a neighbor's windows, patio or pool, even by accident.
- Many feeders also record **sound**. Hanging one right beside a shared fence or a neighbor's porch means it could pick up their conversations.
- If a neighbor asks about it, show them the app. Most people are delighted once they see the cardinal pictures.

GOOD TO KNOW

### Pictures go to the cloud

Photos and clips travel over the internet to the company's servers so the AI can identify the birds and the app can show them to you. That's how these feeders work. Read the brand's privacy settings in the app, and think of the camera like any other picture you'd post: keep it pointed at what you'd be happy for others to see.

## Protect the account

1. Use a strong password that you don't use for anything else.
2. If the app offers two-step verification (a code sent to your phone when you sign in), turn it on.
3. Review your family members list now and then and remove anyone who no longer needs access (Chapter 13).
4. Keep the app updated. Updates often fix security problems as well as adding features.

HEADS UP

### Sharing on social media

Before posting a feeder photo online, glance at the background. A house number, a car's license plate or a view into your home is more than strangers need to see. Crop the picture to just the bird.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

## What this does for you

A few sensible habits let you enjoy the camera with a clear conscience and good relations over the fence.

CHAPTER 21

# Scams & Safe Shopping

Smart feeders are popular gifts, and wherever something is popular, scammers follow. A little caution keeps your money and account safe.

## Too-good-to-be-true sale sites

Ads on social media sometimes show a well-known camera feeder at a startling discount — "closing sale, 80% off" — from a website you've never heard of. Those sites often take the money and send nothing, or something cheap and different. Buy from the brand's own website or a store you know.

SCAM ALERT

### Fake "support" phone numbers

If you search the internet for a feeder company's phone number, the top results may be ads for look-alike "support" lines. They may ask to connect to your computer or ask for payment. Get help only from the brand's official website or from the help section inside its app. Real support will never ask you to pay with gift cards.

SCAM ALERT

### "Your subscription is expiring" emails

An email or text warning that your bird-feeder membership has failed and asking you to click a link and re-enter your card is a common phishing trick. Don't click. Open the app directly and check your membership there.

SCAM ALERT

### Gift cards are always a red flag

No real company asks you to pay for anything — a repair, a subscription, a "refund fix" — with gift cards. If someone asks, it's a scam. Hang up and call someone you trust.

## Copycat apps

Some apps in the app stores use names close to the real ones. Install your feeder's app only from the QR code in its box, or by checking the developer name in the store listing (Chapter 8).

FROM BILL

### When in doubt, call

If you're not sure whether a website, email or phone call is real, call me at (330) 200-8042 before you click or pay. Two minutes of checking is better than weeks of untangling.

CHAPTER 22

# Feeder Went Offline? Fixes in Order

Sooner or later the app will say your feeder is **offline**. Nearly always, it's something simple: a flat battery, a Wi-Fi hiccup, or the camera not seated properly. Work down this list in order and stop when it's fixed.

## The quick checks

1. **Is the camera in the feeder?** On the Birdbuddy Home and Nook, the app shows offline whenever the camera is out of the feeder. Seat it firmly.
2. **Is the battery charged?** Check the last battery level in the app. If in doubt, bring the camera in and charge it fully.
3. **Is the internet working in the house?** Try a website on your phone over Wi-Fi. If the house is offline, the feeder will be too.
4. **Wait a little.** Birdbuddy notes the camera may lose its link to the router only temporarily; it often reconnects on its own.

## If it's still offline

1. **Restart the router.** Unplug it, wait 30 seconds, plug it back in, and wait a few minutes for its lights to settle.
2. **Restart the camera.** Turn it off and on, or remove it from the feeder and put it back. On a Birdbuddy 2, removing and reinserting the camera should bring a green light and a chirp — if not, the battery may need charging.
3. **Check the distance.** If it worked before but has gotten worse, something may have changed — a new router, new furniture, leaves on the trees. Move the feeder closer or add a mesh point (Chapter 5).
4. **Did the Wi-Fi password or router change?** A new router or password means the feeder must be connected again. Use the app's option to change Wi-Fi or re-pair the camera.
5. **Reset and pair again.** As a last step, both brands' help sites describe resetting the camera and pairing it again from the start, following the app.

TIP

### New internet provider?

When a new provider installs a new router, every smart device in the house — feeder included — needs to be told the new Wi-Fi name and password. Bill's guide **Smart Device Offline? Back on Wi-Fi** covers this for the whole house.

GOOD TO KNOW

### Still stuck?

Birdbuddy's help center and Birdfy's help center (support@birdfy.com) both offer support for hardware problems. Have the model, the app version and what you've already tried ready.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

Knowing the order — camera, battery, internet, router, distance, re-pair — turns a frustrating "offline" message into a five-minute fix most of the time.

PART 8

# When to Call Bill & Your Cheat-Sheet

An honest word about when a hand is worth it, and a one-page summary of the essentials.

CHAPTER 23

# When to Call Bill

I've written this guide so you can handle a smart bird feeder on your own. But part of being helpful is being honest about when a hand saves you time and worry. Here's my straight advice, with no pressure.

## Times it's well worth a call

- **The Wi-Fi won't reach the feeder spot** — I can test the signal in your yard and set up a mesh point or extender so it does.
- **Setup keeps failing** even close to the router, or your router combines both Wi-Fi bands and the feeder won't connect.
- **Setting up a gift** so it's ready to enjoy — the app, the account, notifications toned down, and the grandchildren invited.
- **Learning Merlin together** — Sound ID, Photo ID and saving your birds, at your own pace.
- **A new router or internet provider** knocked the feeder and other smart devices offline.
- **A suspicious email, call or charge** about a feeder membership.
- **You'd simply rather have a patient person set it up** and show you the ropes. That's always reason enough.

## What working with me is like

I work at your pace — no rushing, no talking down, and no jargon. I explain what I'm doing in plain words, and I'll always tell you honestly when a membership or an add-on isn't worth your money. I bring 30+ years of professional experience to every visit, and Bill's Home Tech serves Portage County, Ohio. I can often help over a remote session, or come to your home — handy when the question is whether the Wi-Fi reaches that maple tree.

FROM BILL

### How to reach me

Call or text **(330) 200-8042**, or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**. My help is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. This guide is free to keep and share.

GOOD TO KNOW

### You may meet Sophie first

When you call or visit billshometech.com, you may be greeted by **Sophie**, my AI receptionist. She can answer quick questions and help you book a time with me. A real person — me — does the actual help.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about your feeder and the birds that visit it. I hope it brings you many happy mornings at the window.

***— Bill***

CHAPTER 24

# Your Smart Bird Feeder Cheat-Sheet

Keep this summary handy. The whole guide, boiled down.

## The essentials

| To do this | Do this |
|---|---|
| **Wi-Fi the feeder needs** | Birdbuddy Nook/Home: 2.4 or 5 GHz. Older Birdbuddy and most Birdfy: **2.4 GHz**. |
| **Where to hang it** | Within **3 feet** of a window or more than **30 feet** away. In Wi-Fi range. Reachable. |
| **Clean the feeder** | About every two weeks. Camera out first. 1 part bleach to 9 parts water, soak 10 minutes, rinse, dry. |
| **Keep a favorite** | Save it before it expires (Birdbuddy postcards: 7 days in the feed). |
| **Share with family** | Birdbuddy: feeder settings > **Manage Members** > **+ Invite a guest**. Birdfy: device settings > **Share Device** > **+**. |
| **Too many alerts** | Phone settings: turn off the app's sound. In the app: choose which visits notify you. |
| **Identify by song** | Merlin Bird ID (free) > **Sound ID** > tap the microphone. |
| **Feeder offline** | Camera seated? Charged? House internet OK? Restart router, then camera. |

## Write it down once

| Keep handy | |
|---|---|
| **Feeder brand and model** | _____ |
| **App account email** | _____ |
| **Wi-Fi name the feeder uses** | _____ |
| **Membership plan and renewal date** | _____ |
| **Family members invited** | _____ |
| **Date of last cleaning** | _____ |

## When something's wrong, in order

1. Check that the camera is seated and charged.
2. Check the internet in the house.
3. Restart the router, then the camera.
4. Move the feeder closer to the house, or improve the Wi-Fi.
5. Look up the problem in the brand's help center, inside the app.
6. Call Bill at (330) 200-8042 — that's what I'm here for.

## Bird-friendly and money-smart habits

- Keep feeders clean and seed fresh; take feeders down for a while if you see sick birds.
- Try the free features for a few weeks before buying a membership.
- Know when any membership renews, and decide on purpose.
- Buy only from the brand or a store you know; get support only through the official app or website.
- Never pay anyone with gift cards.