

Bird feeding tips in areas with deer baiting and feeding bans:

Under a baiting and feeding ban, 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”. The only way to guarantee that your birdfeeders won’t act as bait or feed is to not fill them. However, with a little care, you can significantly reduce the likelihood that your feeders will attract deer and still enjoy legally feeding birds or squirrels.

1. Use 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 minimal access to deer. Platform and fly through feeders provide easy access to deer and other large animals.

2. Use feeds that are less attractive to deer. Thistle seed, suet, and hummingbird nectar are much less likely to attract deer than whole or cracked corn, black oil sunflower seeds, and other seeds usually found in commonly available bird seed mixes.

3. Only put out the amount of feed birds will eat in one day. Empty feeders are less attractive to deer.



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4. Place feed and feeders in locations that are less accessible to deer. Deer can access feeds up to about 5 feet off the ground or a packed snow surface. Place feeders at least 6 feet off the ground or snow surface to prevent deer from stretching up to feed.



5. Securely install 4 foot or taller woven wire fencing around all of your feeders to prevent deer from reaching over or through to feed, or fence your yard with a woven wire fencing that is at least 10 feet tall to prevent deer from entering. Fence height requirements will vary depending on the depth of the snow in your area.

6. Keep the area around your feeders clean. Scattered seed on the ground under bird feeders can attract deer and other mammals. Place a platform, at least 5 feet off the ground, under the hanging feeder to catch all spilled feed. Clean this platform daily (if not more often, depending upon the spilled feed).

7. If you have an outside dog, feed birds above where the dog is. Birds will become accustomed to the dog, yet deer will not have access to the feeder.

While following these guidelines will reduce the chances that your bird feeding will violate the baiting and 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.

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