

# Make Fat Balls for Feeding Birds

***Scouts make seed balls and then place them in their garden and watch what birds feed on them.***

**Section:** All  
**Time:** 30 minutes  
**Where:** Home, Den



## PLAN

Making the balls from seeds and fat is the fun/messy part of this activity. The benefit to the scouts comes from the act of consciously engaging with nature and enjoying watching the birds feeding. This can be done in the den, or have the scouts make them from home (where their parents get to do the cleanup instead!).

### Materials

Lard, oats, seeds, raisins, sultanas, bird feed mix, string and scissors.

## DO

Place whatever bird feed you have into a mixing bowl with plenty of space for the ingredients to slosh around. Use whatever is to hand – the birds will be just as happy if you use what you have available in the house rather than going out to buy new ingredients! Add about 1 part lard to 2 parts seed mix and roll up your sleeves! Mix it all together, using the lard to bind the rest of the mix together. If the plan is to hang the balls from a tree, cut lengths of string and tie a large stopper knot at the end. Then, form the lard mix into balls in cupped hands, forming them around the knot of the string if using it.

The mix could also be packed into paper cups with a string through the base, which can then be hung upside down. Once the food balls are made, the scouts should hang them outside, preferably in an open space so that cats cannot sneak up on feeding birds. If the feeders can be hung near a window, it's easier for the scouts to keep an eye to see what birds come and visit.

## REVIEW

Follow up with the scouts to see how they got on. There is a good chance that some of them will have innovated and come up with new ingredients, ways of making them, or hanging them. How many different types of birds were the scouts able to identify? Were there some that they did not recognise? Maybe other scouts can help with the identification. Explore with the scouts if they noticed anything more about the birds, just to see if they got something deeper out of the experience. Were they impressed with the acrobatics of some of the smaller birds, or did they notice certain individuals coming back a few times. Could they imagine the birds being extra happy to find energy-rich food so easily in very cold weather?



### In a nutshell...

- Scouts make bird-food-balls using lard, seeds, oats, dried fruit, and anything else that birds might like.
- They hang them up for the birds, preferably where they can watch from a window.
- The scouts chat about what they saw and learn more about the birds who visited the feeders.



### Follow-on

If scouts might like to experiment with other ways of feeding birds. Maybe next time the scouts are out hiking or camping they might take a bit more notice of the birdlife around them, which could be helped by a tick-sheet. They might also like to visit areas known for having lots of birds; maybe a local birdwatching group have a hide set up or could provide a guide or speaker.



### SDG 15 Life on Land

SDG 15 calls on everyone to take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species. Every time that scouts engage with nature they build an empathy with the natural world, aligning them with this important objective.



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