



First published July 15, 2016... Contact Hart at hartrufe@gmail.com



Mother Brown Thrasher finds the suet block is a great source of nutrition for her brood.

BREAKING THE RULES, AGAIN!

"There you go, breaking that cardinal rule of bird photography again: **THOU SHALT NOT PHOTOGRAPH BIRDS ON ANY MAN MADE OBJECT!**"

"Don't start that with me again, I told you the last time (stlucieaudubon.org/hartBeat/hb2014/hb141201rules.html), I only photographed those birds on the processed suet block feeder to show that unbelieving woman at the bird feed store that many birds do indeed feed on those blocks. In fact the suet blocks are probably our most popular year round feeders. In addition, now in the summer, many mother birds are coming to the suet blocks to grab a quick, easy, rich meal for their young. It's now time to show that lady from the feed store some more of the birds that feed on them."

The Brown Thrasher mother is our most steady customer, as she has her four young offspring stationed immediately under the feeder, while she grabs a mouthful from the suet blocks, drops to the ground below, and crams it into the gaping young mouth, and proceeds right back up to the suet block to again repeat the process for the next one of the babies. And the young birds quickly learn how to feed on the blocks by themselves, like this juvenile Red-bellied Woodpecker (photo 2) and this juvenile Common Grackle. (photo 3)

Often, there are two or three birds on the suet at the same time, such as this Gray Catbird and White-breasted Nuthatch, (photo 4) and the pair of Downy Woodpeckers, with a hidden Gray Catbird eating in the back. (photo 5)

Last time, the featured birds were the Gray Catbird, Baltimore Oriole, Brown Thrasher, Common Grackle, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Red-winged Blackbird, and Northern Flicker. Every one of those species continues to feed on the blocks.

In this column the additional featured birds are the Chipping Sparrow, (photo 6) House Sparrow, (photo 7) House Finch, (photo 8) White-breasted Nuthatch, (photo 9) Eastern Bluebird, (photo 10) Northern Mockingbird, (photo 11) and Blue Jay. (photo 12) Another bird, that I chose not to photograph, frequently found feeding on the suet blocks except when discouraged, is the European Starling.

And so, Little Conscience Man, sitting on my shoulder, there's my justification for violating the **Cardinal Rule of Bird Photography**. I have never seen the unbelieving woman at the feed store again, and I'm not sure I would recognize her if I did. But if any readers of this column encounter her, or any other doubters of the desirability of the suet blocks for feeding birds, just tell them about this column and the birds you have seen here.

While all these birds were photographed at our summer Pennsylvania home, I am confident the suet blocks will work just as well summer or winter in Florida. Since the blocks are so popular with Blue Jays, it would be an interesting experiment to see if Florida Scrub Jays were attracted to them as well.

And finally, Dear Readers, I promise you: No more birds photographed on feeders; unless they turn out to be something spectacular, like a Blue-footed Booby, or a Whooping Crane, or, God forbid, a repeat performance by another Black Bear.



Red-bellied Woodpecker



Common Grackle



White-breasted Nuthatch (top) & Gray Catbird



Downy Woodpeckers



Chipping Sparrow



White-breasted Nuthatch



Eastern Bluebird



House Sparrow



Northern Mockingbird



Blue Jay



House Finch

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