

The Environment and Conservation

December is the start of bird feeding season; Learn how to make your own recipe to help bird residents

From The Outdoor Wire

Winter bird feeding is a great way to observe and learn about our year-round bird residents such as black capped chickadees, nuthatches and blue jays. This winter is also predicted to be a great year for seeing birds that visit Vermont in the winter, including evening and pine grosbeaks, and red polls. “Currently, limited food resources north of us will pull more birds south in search of cone seeds and berries,” said Jillian Kilborn, Vermont Fish and Wildlife’s bird project leader.

Here are some basic bird feeding tips from Vermont Fish and Wildlife:

- Make your own feeding mixture to maximize the number of species visiting your yard. Black oil sunflower seed is a favorite of many birds, but when mixed with “thistle” (or “nyjer”) or cracked corn you will be sure to attract a wide variety of species. Don’t forget the suet to attract woodpeckers and even chickadees.
- Mix up the type of feeders you



use. Hopper feeders are great for large birds such as blue jays, while tube feeders are best for smaller birds. Elevated tray feeders will attract birds that usually feed on the ground including juncos and larger bodied winter visitors such as evening grosbeaks.

- Place your feeders near natural habitat, or even add a habitat for birds to hide. A Christmas tree is a great addition to a snow-

bank next to your feeder to provide quick cover.

- Keep your feeders clean. Only put out enough food for a day, and wash feeders every couple of weeks in a 10 percent bleach solution and let dry to prevent the spread of bacteria and disease. If you decide to feed birds, remember:
- Feeding can expose birds to hazards they might otherwise avoid. The risks of predation are

higher close to people, especially from domestic cats -- the leading cause of bird deaths in North America. Keep cats inside and take feeders down if predators become frequent visitors. Also, we recommend placing feeders either within 3 feet of windows, or greater than 30 feet from windows. This has been shown to minimize high speed window strikes.

- Don’t feed birds when bears

are active. Most bears are in dens from December 1 to April 1, but some will delay hibernation or re-emerge to feed during periods of warmer weather. Remove bird feeders immediately if you see signs of bears or know a bear is active in your community. Bears that learn to associate food with a house, even only once, will continue to return, potentially leading to property damage and dangerous encounters with people. Also, it is illegal to feed bears in Vermont.

- Once you’ve started feeding the birds, keep your feeders stocked. Although wild birds are not entirely dependent on bird feeders, they can become accustomed to this easy food source. If you wish to stop feeding during winter months, gradually taper off the amount of food you provide rather than stopping abruptly, giving the birds a chance to find other food sources. This is especially important when food is scarce in late winter or during periods of extreme weather.
- Immediately remove feeders if there are reports of HPAI

(Avian Influenza) or even a bacterial infection outbreak. Concentrating birds at a feeder only contributes to the spread of diseases. If you find a dead bird visit the Avian Influenza Wildlife Health Bulletin on the Vermont Fish and Wildlife website for more information on when to report, and what to do.

- – Report your observations! While watching your bird feeders, you can participate in one or more bird monitoring projects by looking up the Great Backyard Bird Count and Project Feeder Watch and eBird -- all collect important information for understanding bird populations. As winter sets in, find a comfortable spot inside where you can watch the birds visiting your feeders. Figure out what birds they are, observe how they interact with each other, and see what they prefer to eat. It’s an easy way to learn more about the lives of the birds around you. “With the extra visitors we anticipate in Vermont coming from the north this winter, you have a chance of seeing see some new, colorful surprises,” says Kilborn.

... More Military and Law News from Sports-Military page 2

Main Line Armory garners NSSF’s Five-Star range rating; Armory founded by veterans eager to serve their community from sports-military page 2

1,000 members across four membership levels. All membership plans include free 25-yard range time, discounts on training and services and invitation to private/member-only events — as well as access to the opulent Valley Forge Member Lounge. The Lounge has a walk-in humidor, cigar-smoking area, large fireplace, leather sofa seating and a kitchen area. To bolster connections in the community and among members, Main Line Armory regularly hosts themed events — such as Star Wars Night, Ladies Shoot & Sip, Bourbon & Barrel, Zombie Shoot and more.

In addition to its exceptional range facility, Main Line Armory has an expansive 4,000-square-foot retail space offering a robust selection of firearms and accessories. In addition, the Lady Knox Boutique — named after Lucy Knox, who concealed her husband’s firearm while joining Washington’s army at Valley Forge — features a wide range of concealed carry products for

“As a veteran-owned business, Main Line Armory takes great effort to honor our country’s veterans and war heroes. An example of this is the Dog Tag Chandelier Veterans War Memorial, which hangs in the main waiting area. The chandelier includes the dog tag of every service member killed in action in Iraq and Afghanistan, numbering 5,261, personally strung by Main Line Armory owners and their children.”

women and is the only showroom of its kind in the firearms industry.

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Main Line Armory’s focus on training and safe storage underscores its position as a trusted, authoritative resource for gun owners in its community. The Main Line Armory Firearms Training Academy offers an expansive assortment of courses to appeal to students of all skill and interest levels, hosting both classroom and range sessions. Another way Main Line Armory serves its customers is by offering on-site storage options, such as locker and gun safe rentals.

“We’re proud to see Main Line Armory reach this milestone,” said Aaron Leisenring, Main Line Armory Operations Consultant. “The NSSF Five-Star evaluation provided a clear blueprint for elevating operations, identifying gaps and enhancing the experience for every guest.

For any indoor range striving for excellence, it’s a must.”

About NSSF

NSSF is the trade association for the firearm industry. Its mission is to promote, protect and preserve hunting and the shooting sports. Formed in 1961, NSSF has a membership of thousands of manufacturers, distributors, firearm retailers, shooting ranges, sportsmen’s organizations and publishers nationwide. For more information, visit nssf.org.

About NSSF’s Star Rating System - To achieve a 4- or 5-star rating, ranges must demonstrate excellence in all aspects of management and operations. Ranges that earn a rating are prominently featured on NSSF’s Find a Range resource at letsgoshooting.org, wheretoshoot.org and on the WhereToShoot mobile app.

Does your shooting range have what it takes? Learn more about the program criteria and apply today to join the family of Star-Rated Ranges.

Armslist Sales renews SAF at the Gold Level Corporate Partnership

BELLEVUE, Wash. — Dec. 1, 2025 — The Second Amendment Foundation (SAF) is pleased to announce that Armslist has renewed their Gold-level corporate partnership.

“We are honored to continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the Second Amendment Foundation in its unwavering defense of the right to keep and bear arms,” said Armslist Sales and Marketing Director Andrew Varney. “Unlike some other organizations, the Second Amendment Foundation actively engages, going beyond mere fundraising and fighting tirelessly for our rights in courtrooms across the country. As a platform dedicated to providing the avenue for the lawful exchange of firearms among responsible citizens, we recognize the critical importance of safeguarding the freedoms enshrined in the Second Amendment. SAF’s relentless efforts — through legal advocacy, education and public outreach — ensure the fundamental principles of individual liberty and self-defense remain protected for future generations.”

grown exponentially, and in 2012 launched the Premium Vendor Program allowing FFL holders to further enrich the thousands of pages of listings, helping the responsible gun owner find the best deals on firearms, ammo and gear from across the United States. Not only a marketplace, Armslist has been at the forefront fighting to defend Second Amendment rights, triumphing over the opposition.

“The community that Armslist has built relies heavily on the ability to exercise their Second Amendment rights, and it’s refreshing the company recognizes the importance of supporting organizations like SAF,” said SAF Senior Vice President Lauren Hill. “We’re excited Armslist has renewed their partnership, and we look forward to working with them throughout the next year as we continue to fight for our right to keep and bear arms across the country.”

For more information about SAF’s corporate partner program, contact Hill at lhill@saf.org.

Armslist.com is America’s Firearms Marketplace. Founded in 2007, Armslist set out to fill a void in the firearms industry — allowing law abiding gun enthusiasts to buy, sell and trade with one another after seeing how other popular internet marketplaces shunned firearms, and the Second Amendment as a whole. Since that time Armslist has

U.S. Army awards Mossberg contract for more 590A 1 pump-action shotguns

From The Outdoor Wire

DECEMBER 2, 2025- O.F. Mossberg & Sons, Inc. announced that it has been awarded a contract for approximately \$11.6 million dollars to supply the U.S. Army with additional Mossberg® 590A1™ pump-action shotguns. First adopted by multiple branches of the U.S. Military in 1987, the Mossberg 590® proved its reliability and durability by successfully completing the rigorous MIL-SPEC 3443E testing protocol. Following its adoption, the U.S. Military requested a purpose-built variant capable of withstanding sustained, high-volume use in the most demanding environments. That requirement led directly to the development of the Mossberg 590A1 — a strengthened, mission-ready evolution of the original 590 platform.

“Mossberg is honored to receive an additional contract from the U.S. Department of Defense for the battle-proven 590A1 shotgun,” said John MacLellan,

“This award reflects our long commitment to supplying rugged, mission-capable firearms built to exacting standards — and reinforces our pledge to provide timely solutions that support the safety and effectiveness of U.S. service members.”

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Mossberg 590A1 shotguns are based upon the time-tested Mossberg 500 pump-action platform, with non-binding twin action bars; positive steel-to-steel lock-up; and an anti-jam elevator for smooth, reliable operation; dual extractors; anodized aluminum receiver for added durability, and

universally-recognized, ambidextrous top-tang mounted safety. The Mossberg 590A1 also features a heavy-walled barrel; metal trigger guard; metal safety selector switch; and parkerized finish.

About O.F. Mossberg & Sons, Inc.

Founded in 1919, O.F. Mossberg & Sons, Inc., is the oldest family-owned firearms manufacturer in America, and is the largest pump-action shotgun manufacturer in the world. Celebrating 100 years of innovation, Mossberg leads the industry with over 100 design and utility patents to its credit and stands as the first ISO 9001 Certified long-gun manufacturer. Complete information on commercial, special purpose, law enforcement, and military shotguns, rifles, handguns, and accessories are available at mossberg.com or by calling 1-800-363-3555. Mossberg can also be found on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube.

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