



## **BirdLife South Africa**

### **Position statement on feeding of birds**

BirdLife South Africa (BLSA) supports the feeding of garden birds, subject to the following guidelines:

- Plant suitable indigenous plants that will provide birds with food in a 'natural' way, and attract:
  - insect-feeding birds: plants that host insects and leaf litter left on the ground floor of the garden will provide suitable habitat for insects;
  - fruit and seed-feeding birds: plants that provide fruit and seed; and
  - nectar-feeding birds: plants producing 'natural' nectar.
- BLSA does not support the use of pesticides in gardens which could be hazardous to birds and insects (see position statement on poisons).
- Supplementing birds with food needs to be done:
  - either irregularly, to avoid the birds becoming dependent on food;
  - or regularly, but then without fail.
- When supplementing, be sure that the food is suitable and healthy. Nectar feeders need only have a 10-20% sucrose (table sugar) solution. Most of the bird-pollinated plants in South Africa have a 10-20% solution of sucrose, glucose and fructose, or a mix of the three. Almost all birds can digest these; only starlings in South Africa cannot digest sucrose, but will avoid feeding on it.

BLSA is opposed to the feeding (luring) of wild birds for the purpose of game bird hunting.

BLSA disapproves of the feeding of wild birds in their natural habitat outside urban and suburban areas.

However, BLSA is not opposed to the feeding and/or provision of water to wild birds in times of extreme drought in order to ensure the survival of natural populations.