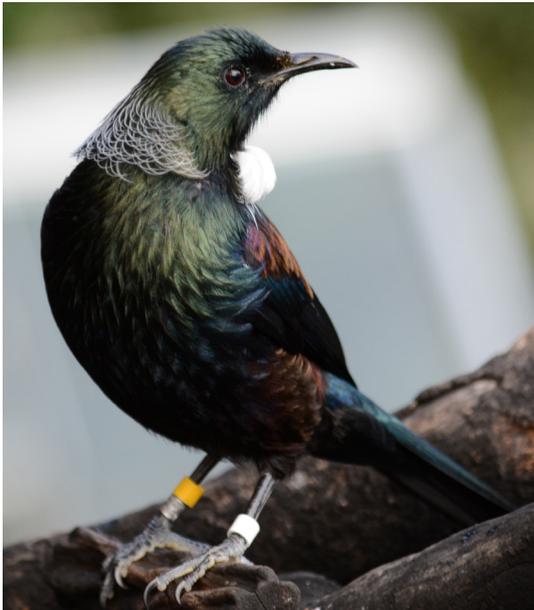


ARE FEEDERS GOOD?

In general, feeders are thought to benefit birds. For example, feeders may help birds raise more offspring and they may help birds to survive extreme weather events. Studies of sugar-water feeders overseas have found that birds using feeders are unlikely to become dependent on feeders or develop malnutrition through overuse; feeders merely supplement their natural diets.



Banding: Left: White, Right: Yellow/Metal
Name: Royal

Questions?

Contact Laura Molles at Lincoln University
Laura.Molles@lincoln.ac.nz | 03 423 0749

FEEDER PLACEMENT

It may take several days or even weeks for birds to discover a feeder, especially when there is a lot of "natural" food available nearby. Once one bird finds a feeder, it will remember the location and its visits will attract the attention of other birds in the area.

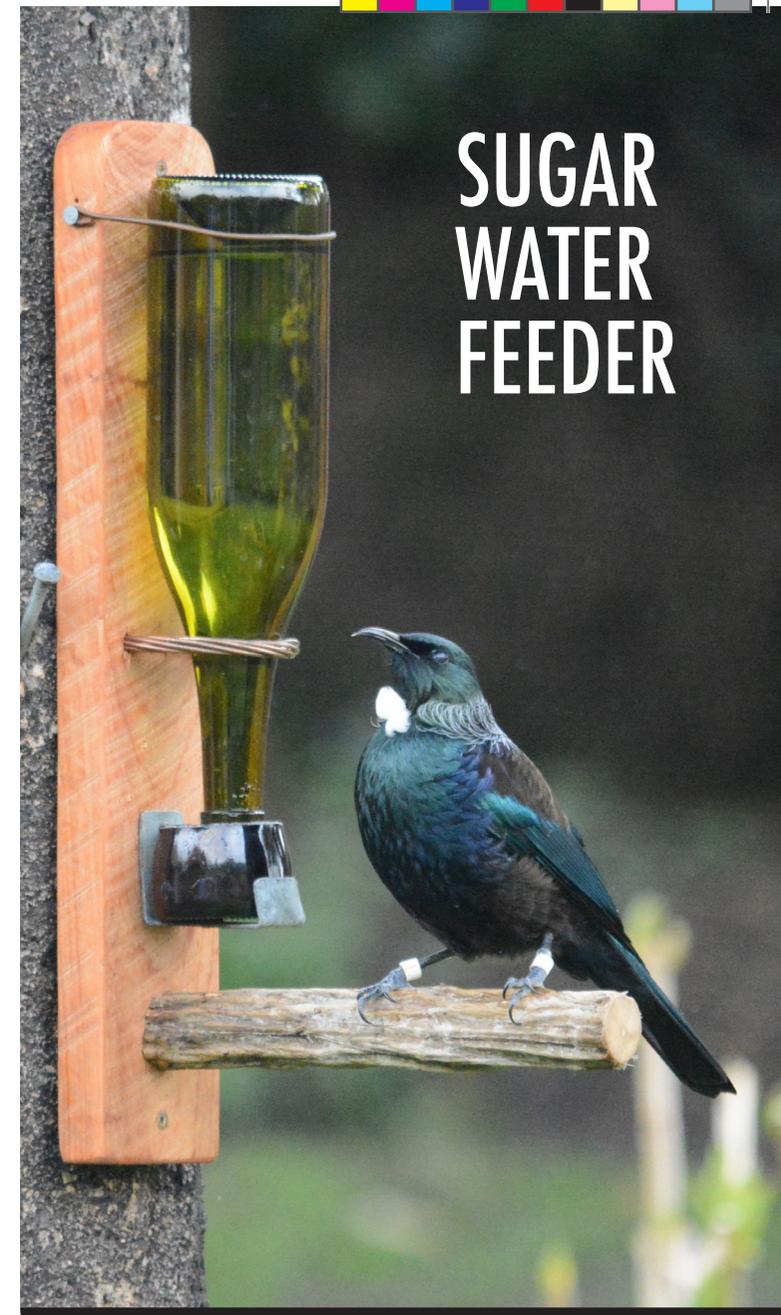
Be aware of the risk of window-strike. Having feeders very close to (<1m) or very far from (>10m) windows is safer for feeder visitors (see www.feederwatch.org/learn/feeding-birds/#safe-feeding-environment).

And please, **make sure cats cannot reach your feeder** by climbing or leaping! Even the laziest cat will find a busy bird feeder irresistible.

We do not recommend providing sugar water and bread/seed etc. in the same garden, as this may increase crowding and the risk of spreading disease between species. Bread, seed and food scraps generally attract introduced species rather than native birds.

Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust

PO Box 146, Tai Tapu 7645 | (03) 329 6340
enquiries@bpct.org.nz | www.bpct.org.nz



MAINTAINING YOUR FEEDER

Cleanliness is absolutely essential! Birds can be made ill by bacteria or fungi. Birds can also pass diseases to one another via feeders. The risk of this happening can be reduced by regularly disinfecting feeders, including the perches. *Please do not run a bird feeder if you are unable to keep it clean and freshly stocked, regardless of the type of food you provide.*

- **It is best to change sugar water every day.** Do not leave sugar water out for more than 2-3 days before changing.
- **If you will be away for several days, leave the feeder empty or take it down.** The birds will find something else to eat!
- **Clean the feeder, including any perches, every time you refill it.** Disinfect feeders in a mild bleach solution and rinse well. If you need to use detergent, rinse the feeder very thoroughly. A bottle brush is a great tool for cleaning any type of sugar-water feeder.
- **Maintain the area underneath your feeder** to reduce accumulation of droppings, spilled food, and all of the bacteria and fungi associated with waste. Alternatively, you may want to move your feeders to a new location every now and then.

SUGAR-WATER SOLUTIONS

The sugar water solution does not need to be very strong. **A sugar:water ratio of 1:8 is fine.** Stronger solutions will not necessarily be more attractive to birds, but they will be more attractive to bees and wasps, and will spoil faster.

- **1 tablespoon of sugar to 1 cup of water, or 1 cup of sugar to 2 litres of water** are good, easy-to-remember ratios.
- **Use plain white sugar.** Brown sugar or “raw” sugar are of no extra benefit.
- **Do not add food coloring.**
- **Do not use honey.** Honey water spoils very quickly and can harbor microorganisms that will make the birds very ill. While we think of honey as being more “natural” than white sugar, it’s actually less like flower nectar than is sugar.
- **Solution can be stored in the fridge for a week.**
- **Honeybees and wasps may be attracted to your feeder.** Strong sugar solutions will be more attractive to insects than the weaker solutions recommended for birds. Never use insect repellents or insecticides to discourage bees or wasps from using the feeder, as these may be harmful to the birds.

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR INTERESTING VISITORS OR POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

Your observations can contribute to both monitoring of bird populations and preventing the spread of disease.

- We would love to hear who is visiting your garden! All tui sightings, even of unbanded birds, are useful. You can report sightings directly to BPCT by phone 03 329 6341, txt 027 949 5886 or email enquiries@bpct.org.nz. You can also post (and view) sightings on Nature Watch NZ (naturewatch.org.nz/projects/banks-peninsula-tui-restoration). Many tui, like those in the photos, have unique leg band combinations. If you include a photo or band combination in your report or post, we can give you more information on the bird you’ve seen.
- **Watch out for birds that may be unwell.** Symptoms for different diseases vary, but may include lethargy, strained breathing and/or visible growths/lesions on exposed skin around the eyes and beak. If you suspect you have an ill bird visiting your feeder, shut down your feeder(s) for a few weeks to prevent spread of the disease. If you find a dead tui, please contact us, and refrigerate (rather than freeze) the body if possible.