

BIRD BATH "SOG-A"

by Evelyn Meader

Through the years we have discovered that a feeder creates bird-watching-made-easy. Only this summer have we experienced the fun of spying on the bird bathers as well as the bird munchers. On May 27 while walking through Towers, during a grocery run, what did I see, on the highest shelf, but a bird bath for only \$7? In with the apples, oranges and French bread went the avian plumbing fixture. That evening it was parked in our family room till morning when I could see to fill up the hollow base with stones and earth for stability. By the time I arose, later than the birds, there perched in the bath were a small brass owl, a wooden penguin and a wooly rooster - a gaggle of dry humour!

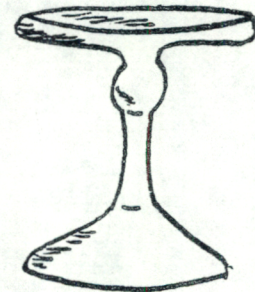
I soon had the new purchase filled and placed near the feeder. We watched like perpetual peeping Toms. Not a feather was dipped. Birds were under, around, and above it but not in it. We concluded that we were surrounded by dirty birds! Geoff Hogan suggested adding a rock. My daughter nailed a diving board to run from a nearby feeding stump right up to the waters edge. My husband suggested soap and towel. With a June like we had what bird needed a bath? Mother Nature provided free showers daily.

Seeds were lined up along the board, on the rock and on the edge of the bath. Birds came close, took the seeds and flew away, unwashed. A cry of "There's a bird on the birdbath!" brought everyone in the house to the window. The first big breakthrough came when the guzzling grackle took a drink. Finally, the slumming sparrow's favorite puddle by the car dried up. In late July, 2 months after bath installation, a sparrow hopped in and had a great time, pipping, spraying, shaking and drinking. We enjoyed the big splash as much as she did (ladies first).

Sometimes on sunny days we notice a line up - one in the tub, one on the stump and one on the grass. The bath is at last a popular spot - could be the "seedside" landscaping. A well-filled sunflower and fringed barley were planted from feeder fallout and watered with bath splashdown.

Just as I pulled the plug on this "sog-a" I looked out toward our ornithological tableau and beheld a song sparrow, feathers all fluffed out and wings spread, immersed in an invigorating dip at 10 degrees C. Another came after, stood on the rock and took a couple of feather flavoured swigs - no polar bear plunge for him!

Finally, the same day, as if to throw cold water on my bird bath braggadoccio there in the puddles by our side door were 2 frivolously splashing sparrows - a mud puddle "fuddle duddle" to our \$7 splendor.



COLOUR MARKED SNOW BUNTINGS

(from Nature Alert, September, 1985)

The Canadian Wildlife Service would like to be notified if anyone sees colour marked snow buntings (dye markings of red, blue, green, yellow, orange or purple, marking outer wing and tail feathers). Take note of date, location, colour of dye and send the information to the Bird Banding Office, Canadian Wildlife Service, Ottawa K1A 0E7.