



How Do Birds Drink Water In The Winter

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How Do Birds Drink Water In The Winter? Birds Advice

By [AL Jaber](#)

Frozen, snow-capped waters are beautiful, but birds face a lot of challenges in drinking water and preening with it. Yes, birds need to drink water in the winter to maintain a healthy metabolism. Water keeps them warm and hydrated in harsh weather conditions.

When it's freezing outside, how do birds drink water in the winter? **Most birds expense their invaluable body calories to warm the snow up to body temperature. When the snow turns into liquid, they drink the water. Not only that, but many backyard bird enthusiasts put fresh water out in birdbaths, which helps birds satisfy their thirst.**

Apart from that, some other questions might be lingering in your mind; for example, how you offer winter birds water, where you should place a winter birdbath, and how you keep your birdbath water unfrozen. In this article, we're going to talk about all that.

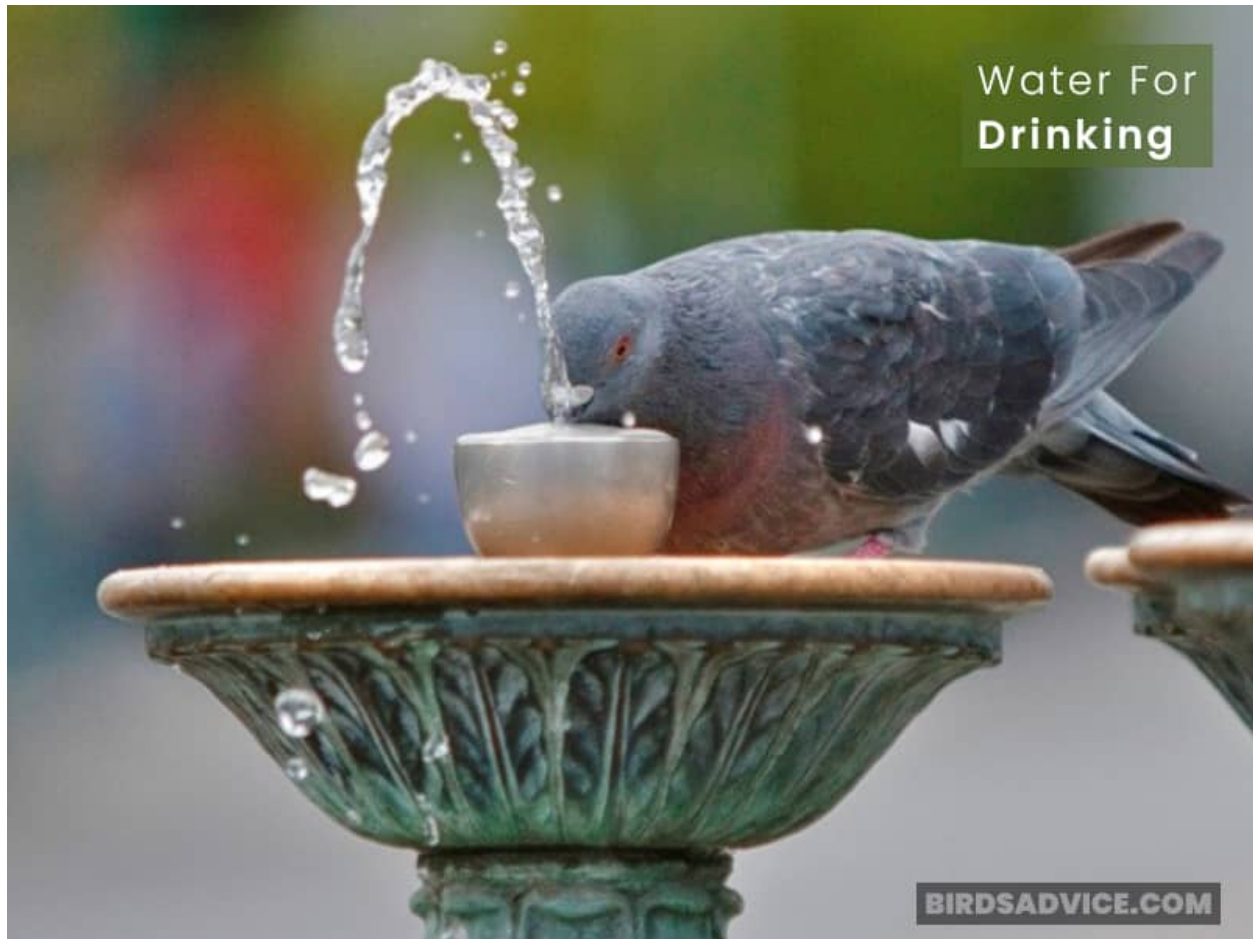
Why Do Birds Need Water in Winter?

Typically, birds need water in winter for a couple of reasons. **They include:**

- Drinking
- Bathing

1. Water For Drinking

As birds need to drink water during dry, hot summer months, they require water even in winter when natural water sources are frozen. In general, birds get most of their water from the food they eat. However, seed-eating birds have a dry diet and therefore need to drink more.



Unlike mammals, birds don't have sweat glands. That's why they need less water than mammals do. Actually, birds lose water through their droppings and respiration. Most of them drink at least twice a day to fill their dehydration.

2. Water For Bathing

Apart from drinking, birds need water to bathe in order to keep their feathers clean and in good condition. Once a bird gets a bath, the feathers loosen the dirt. Therefore, the bird can easily preen its feathers. Most importantly, preening keeps feathers aligned.



What happens if birds cannot preen their feathers properly? When birds cannot preen their feathers, they lose body heat much faster than usual. This is a negative effect on birds, especially in winter weather when body heat helps birds survive.

Where Do Birds Get Water to Drink in Winter?

During winter, birds usually get water to drink from three sources. **They include:**

- Having juicy wild fruits and insects
- Melting snow into liquid water with their body heat
- Drinking freshwater from the birdbaths in many bird enthusiasts' backyards

1. Juicy Wild Fruits and Insects

When it's freezing outside in winter, birds get most water from juicy wild fruits and insects. The juicy wild fruits include apples, oranges, guavas, grapes, cherries, pumpkins, and different types of berries. Besides, many small birds forage hidden insects in tree bark.



2. Snow To Liquid

As we already know, birds use body energy to turn snow into liquid. This process requires birds to lose a lot of energy. In some areas, there might be unfrozen parts of streams and ponds. However, birds have to spend a lot of energy to get there.



3. Birdbath Freshwater

Another reliable source is backyard birdbaths. Since birds love to drink water from open source, birdbaths can be what they're really looking for in harsh winter weather. This is a great opportunity for backyard bird enthusiasts.



How Do You Offer Winter Birds Water?

Many people are out there who cover up birdbaths, fountains, and other water sources for birds before winter, assuming that birds won't come to these water sources until spring. According to experts, that's not true. Here's how you can offer winter birds water.

1. Offer A Birdbath With Freshwater in Your Backyard

Filling birdbaths in winter is as important as filling them in summer. If you're an enthusiastic bird watcher, you should offer your backyard birds a birdbath with freshwater. Therefore, the birds won't need to cost their precious energy to melt snow.



Don't have a birdbath? We recommend the [Lightweight Traditional Pattern Birdbath](#) from Amazon.

2. Place a Heated Birdbath in the Coldest Period

If you're living in one of the coldest areas in North America, you will need to place a fully heated birdbath or a regular birdbath with heating equipment. A heater like the GESAIL Birdbath De-icer Heater helps keep the water liquid on snowy nights.



Looking for one of the best heated birdbaths? The [GESAIL Bird Habitat UV and Frost Resistant Heated Bird Bath](#) on **Amazon** is our recommendation.

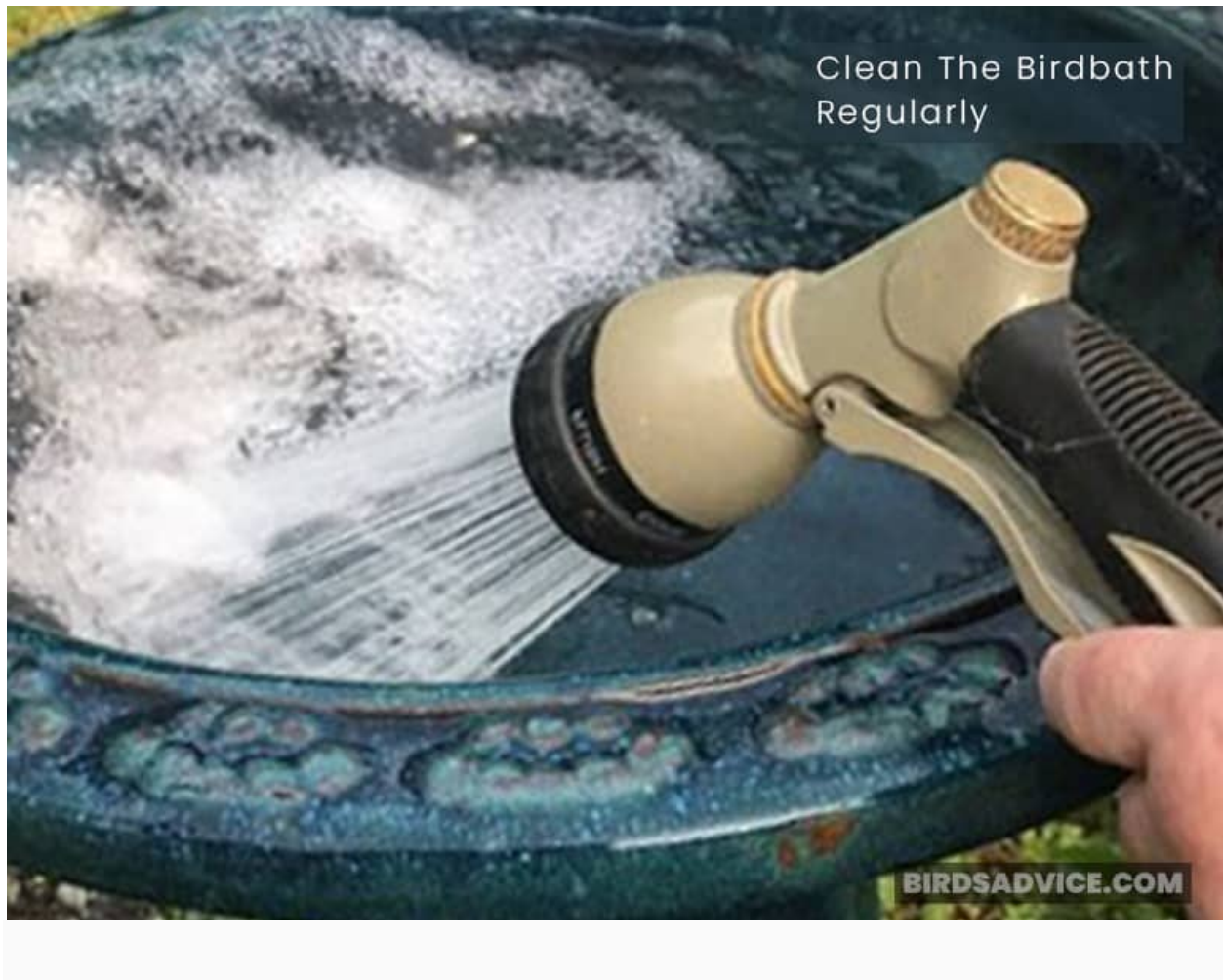
3. Place The Birdbath in a Sunny Area

In order to keep the birdbath water liquid, make sure to place it in a sunny area. If your backyard doesn't have any sunlight in winter, you have to use a heater. Place a few sticks on top of the birdbath so that the birds can use them as perches.



4. Clean The Birdbath Regularly

You'll need to clean the birdbath regularly, even during the winter months. Make sure to clean the birdbath once a month in winter. Use a pressure hose to rinse out the debris. Once thoroughly washed, fill the birdbath with freshwater.



5. Avoid Chemicals

When you're going to offer winter birds freshwater, don't add salt, anti-freeze, or any chemicals, like glycerine, to the water. If birds ingest them too much, their blood sugar levels increase, leading them to unwanted death.



Where Should You Place A Winter Birdbath?

When it comes to placing a winter birdbath in your yard, make sure not to place it under the feeders. Seeds and bird droppings quickly spoil the water. So, where to place a winter birdbath? Here are a few recommendations for you.

1. Places That Have An Escape Route

You should install a winter birdbath in a place that has an escape route so that birds can react immediately after getting attacked by predators. Place the birdbath under some branches (ensuring a gap of 2 to 3 feet between the birdbath and the branches).



2. Where Cats Cannot Hide

Cats are one of the main predators of birds. They usually lie beneath shrubbery to pounce on the wet birds that cannot fly well. To keep your birds protected from cats, install your birdbath at least 5 to 10 away from cats' hiding places.



3. Near An Electric Outlet

If your birdbath freezes in harsh winter weather, birds won't feel comfortable in your birdbath. You're going to miss a lot of fun. So, you have to set a heated birdbath or a normal birdbath with a heater. Make sure to place it within the reach of an electric outlet.



4. On A Pedestal

For a birdbath, a pedestal is not necessary. But, it has some advantages. A pedestal helps protect birds from predators. It also allows us to see from our house. Besides, it enables us to clean it quite easily. However, you can use ground-level birdbaths if there is no potential predator.



5. Easy To Refill

Most importantly, you have to choose a place that allows you to refill the birdbath easily. Make sure to place the birdbath where the hose reaches. You can use the hose for cleaning and refilling the birdbath whenever needed.



6. Can Be Seen From Your Window

If you're a birdwatcher, you may want to place the birdbath in a place that can be seen from your desk, kitchen sink, or dining room. Are you willing to capture the beauties? Take the pictures of the winter birds with [Canon PowerShot HS Digital Camera](#).



How Do You Keep Your Birdbath Water Unfrozen?

In the coldest winter, the water in the birdbath can be frozen. How do you keep your birdbath unfrozen? **Here are some techniques you can follow.**



- Place the birdbath in a sunny area so that the water in the bath can be liquid for longer. In the meantime, position the birdbath near a windbreak for protection.
- Since darker surfaces absorb more heat, add a sheet of black plastic or a few black river rocks under the bath's basin.
- In the basin, float a small ball that prevents water to form ice and keep the water liquid. A dark ball will be more effective since it can be a better heat absorber.
- To keep the water temperature warm enough, use an outdoor-rated immersion heater in the bath, which needs an electric outlet nearby.
- Always keep the birdbath full with water. The less water is available in the bath, the more quickly it will freeze. If there is not enough water in the birdbath, heaters won't work properly.
- Change the water every day. Put out fresh water in the morning. In the evening, change it with a new batch of water. Follow this instruction throughout the winter season.

Wrapping Up

Now that you know how birds drink water in the winter, you should help them get freshwater in your backyard. Don't install concrete birdbaths. Otherwise, they might crack on the coldest winter nights. Place your birdbath in an appropriate spot.