

The Guidebook

Now that a feeding station has been installed in the community it is necessary to maintain it.

Squirrels tend to mimic the actions of birds so it makes sense they would enjoy congregating around the foundation of the station. In fact, they sometimes get so carried away with flights of fancy that they have been known to raid even the feeder itself.

Multiple options exist to deal with this contingency.

From a more laissez-faire approach to the situation one could simply allow the squirrels to run amok and hope for them to eventually tire of the novelty. Such a strategy may work.

For the more daring of birders one can always apply vegetable oil to the shepherd's crook and watch them fly off the rails when they attempt to scale the unscalable. Expect a messy situation regardless.

Flash forward a few years and wisdom arrives in the form of throwing them protection money in the form of unsalted peanuts in the shell. Of course they will tackle the feeder to protest a short supply on any given day so compassion and understanding for these flying acrobats goes a very long way indeed.



Life lesson: squirrels are a force of nature and cannot be controlled by mere humans.

(To be continued)

(Enter the wren)



Pro tip: wrens are truly nature's diplomat.

When in doubt the wrens are without a doubt the most gifted and agile negotiators in the entire world.

Known to enjoy hard-boiled eggs and filets of fish alike, this versatile bird shares food with the hawks.

In order to preserve peace in the community be sure to feed them mealworms at the feeder too.

Of course this assumes you decide to intervene in the natural order of things.

By taking an interest you necessarily have not chosen option 1.

The installation of the feeder in and of itself was the correct decision.

Assuming that the wren does not take a laissez-faire approach then options 2 and 3 unfold.

Take for instance the following situation involving squirrels, cowbirds and doves at the feeding station:



Guided by doves on the left and right goalposts the center cowbirds are upstaged by the wily squirrels. This naturally upsets the balance of the congregation and such a disturbance cannot go unanswered. Ultimately a question arises as to the methodology to undo the doings of these squirrely squirrels.

What sayeth the mockingbird?

Mockingbird sits on the old railing - watching all the cowbirds it can see.



The mockingbird laughs at the situation and signals to the starlings at the suet hanger.



Communication travels at the speed of light as the hanger birds flap for reinforcements.

The starling ground units assemble at the tree of wisdom and consider next steps.



Mealworms (or lack thereof) determine the fate of the squirrels at this point.

It should be noted that the doves were the ones guiding them all this time.

And that in and of itself should explain the complex dynamics at play.

Ultimately the hawk needs to take something.

So it has a choice:

Either it can take from the doves or squirrels.

But when you involve mealworms you add a third option.

When the hawk ultimately gets wind of the activity at the feeding station the wren decides.

The existence of the mealworms and the subsequent sharing with the hawk remedies the situation.



The rabbit relays the information to the robin.

The robin and blue jay consult momentarily about the situation.



The blue jay takes flight with the nut.



This in turn signals the hawk.

The hawk appears!



The cowbirds take center stage again.

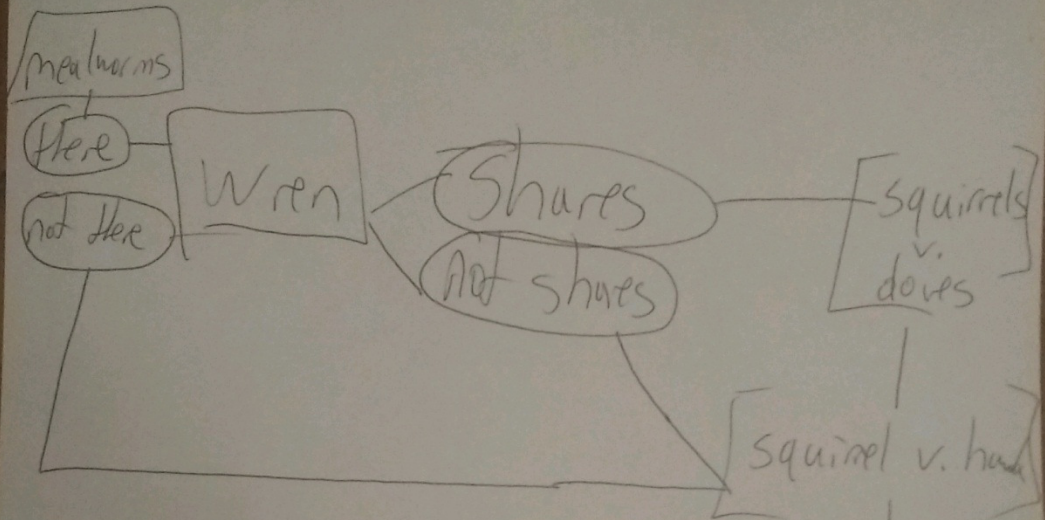


The doves offer the cowbirds protection money in the form of wren-approved mealworm vouchers.

Of course the cowbirds offer the hawks protection money in the form of doves and squirrels.

It's all part of the plan:

[The Great Bird Conspiracy]



(SO nothing
humans
do matter
it's just
how you get
to the mountable)

Squirrels prevail
but reduced
from feeder
regardless
so balance is
restored

Conducts round
them up for
hunks

vice
versa

Does
&
Squines
are each
other's
protector money

And the squirrels prevail!



Even the cardinals too!



But birder beware . . .

You never know what the squirrels might do . . .

Given enough time they are bound to do anything so don't be surprised . . .



A bird feeder support chain can only absorb so much impact from the squirrels jumping on the platform.

And if you doubt the power of the squirrels - ask yourself: how did that stick get there in the first place?