

Morning View Kentucky  
19 March 1956

Hello Mr. McCarthy,

My apologies for the length of my letter on our little tornado. Had I known you were going to read it aloud, I would have curtailed it as much as possible. Thank you for the kind things you said about it. Your reading enhanced it considerably -- sounded much better in your reading than it looked in my writing. As to keeping a scrap book -- I couldn't. I never make copies of anything but business letters.

The other morning you were discussing the advisability of continuing to feed the song birds on into spring. Few people realize that laterwinter and early spring are the most difficult time of all for the birds to find sufficient food.

It may be a beautiful day, and the ground bare of snow, but if it is too cold for insects to be hatching or stirring from hibernation, the birds are close to starvation. Through the course of the winter, the little fellows have consumed all the available seeds and berries, have searched out all insect eggs tucked in tree bark wrinkles, have exhausted the supply of hibernating bugs under leaves and in other hiding places, and have robbed every cocoon and chrysalis of its dormant occupant. There is nothing left.

If you will consider the recommendation of a bird-feeder of years' standing, continue to supply food for the birds during the summer. Not much -- just a little in the morning, about noon, and in the late afternoon. The reason is eminently practical. You have supported the birds, more or less, all winter, why allow them to scatter and eat insects for some one else during the summer.

Contrary to general belief, the birds will not confine their eating to the feeder. There seems to be a definite dry food-insect ratio in song bird feeding, whether they be seed-eaters such as the cardinal or meat-eaters such as the chickadee. You will see them eat a bit at the feeder, then abandon it for a lengthy scouring of shrubs, garden, trees, and flowerbeds for insects.

When the female is on the nest and the male taking food to her as so many species do, even the strictly seed-eating cardinal