



the flower pot. A light socket is then connected to the cord inside the pot. Insulation is then placed inside the bottom of the pot.

Next, an aluminum pie plate with a slit so the wire can go through it, is placed over the insulation. The 20 watt light bulb is placed on top of the pie plate, so it reflects the light and the heat up. The dish that pot normally sits in, is put on top of the pot, and is filled with water. The warmth of the 20 watt light bulb keeps the water from freezing, at temperatures as cold as -25°C , and of course, the birds who come there to drink, then go to the feeder to eat.

♦ *Improve the shot*

"Birds and animals have a comfort zone and as long as you are outside of that zone your presence won't bother them," said Mr. Krug. "Once you move inside that zone, they'll fly away."

Photographers should be sure to locate the camera outside the comfort zone.

"I did photograph a female Baltimore oriole that was coming to my oriole feeder in the spring and she was very timid, so what I did was, I hung two blankets in front of the window and stuck the camera lens between them. Therefore, she didn't see me and that's how I got the photograph of that particular bird."

The combination of choosing an "action" (high speed) setting, using a long lens, and being close to the birds, will yield a very shallow depth of field.

"In my opinion, you don't want details in your background. The clearer you can keep the background the better, and the more out-of-focus it is, will have that same effect."

For a more natural setting, he suggests photo-

graphing the birds before they fly to the feeder. By observing a bird's habitual route, a photographer can anticipate the best locations for positioning a perch. This offers the bird a pleasant stop en route to the feeder, while allowing photographers the opportunity to actually move their subject into better lighting conditions and more natural settings with less background distraction.

If photographing birds is a hobby of learning from mistakes, then shooting from behind a window pane is a major source of educational experience.

Besides the obvious advice of keeping windows clean and not attempting to shoot through a screen, Mr. Krug urges bird photographers to angle the lens close to and flush with the window to reduce glare.

"You want to avoid reflections. The closer the lens is to the glass, the less chance there is of getting the glare or reflection back – as long as you are dead on to the glass, not at an angle, and your lens is as close as you can get it to the glass."

Often the photographer's own shadow can eliminate glare and reflections on the glass from items in the home.

Of course, simply opening the window and braving the cold, will avoid the window pane issue.

For ideal lighting, photographers should have the sun directly behind them when planning shots of birds or animals.

"But when we're feeding birds from a house, we don't always have that privilege," said Mr. Krug. "Sometimes we have to use adverse lighting conditions because that's where the sun, that's where your tree is and that's where your feeder is."

So, when the feeder or perches can't be moved – and that long anticipated species has arrived in the yard – photographers must learn how to think technically and adjust settings, which in this case, entails overexposing shots that have to be taken through the window against a bright sky. Histograms on digital cameras are particularly helpful in improving this technique.



♦ *Practise patience*

Now that winter's deep freeze has settled in, and the bird seed has been set out in a brimming feeder, novice and advanced bird photographers can relax and be patient. The camera is poised at the window, technically good to go, while they get comfy in a nearby easy chair, immerse themselves in a good book, occasionally glancing out at the lightly falling snow, waiting for feathered guests to arrive. ❁

