

# Breakfast treat

Cardinal couple are first to the greet day

By Timothy Nowicki  
special writer



WHEN I was off work for a couple of days during the holidays, I had a chance to have breakfast with our resident cardinals.

Both male and female are the first birds in the morning to breakfast at our feeder. In the evening, they are the last to snack before darkness.

On bright mornings, when the sun has just crested over the horizon, the warm rays of sunshine create a soft glow of red on the male's chest and crest.

Females, too, have a black facial area, but their body color is a diffused brown with gentle hints of red. It's a noticeable contrast compared to the striking male. That subtle coloration will help camouflage her when she sits on the nest.

MOST OF the time, cardinals feed on the ground. Periodically, however, they land on our feeder and select a sunflower seed.

Watching them feed has always fascinated me because they use only their tongue and bill to extract the seed from the sunflower shell. By looking closely, I can see the tongue dexterously manipulate the shell into place so the powerful bill can crack it open. After that, the shell is expelled and the seed swallowed with expert ease.

This pair of cardinals is almost certainly the same pair that brought their young to our feeder earlier this summer. Cardinals are sedentary birds and move only short distances from where they were raised.

During winter they maintain their territory so they can begin breeding at the earliest possible opportunity in spring.

WHEN MY grandfather was a young boy, he

would not have been able to see a cardinal in his backyard in Dearborn. Cardinals were originally a southern bird, found commonly in Virginia, Kentucky and the Old South.

Only within the last 70 to 100 years have they extended their range northward. Today they are very common at Detroit's latitude in the Midwest and northeast. Some individuals have been seen as far north as Sault Ste. Marie.

It probably won't be long before north country bird watchers have breakfast and dinner with cardinals, too.

Timothy Nowicki has a master's degree in biology, is active in local environmental groups, and teaches nature study and bird study.

**nature**

# UAW sues to restore TRA

The UAW and two other unions have filed suit in Federal District Court, seeking an injunction which would require the U.S. Secretary of Labor to resume paying Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA) benefits to thousands of workers whose jobs were lost because of increased imports.

UAW President Owen Bieber said the suit was filed jointly by the UAW, the United Steelworkers of America, and the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union. It was filed in U.S.

The suit seeks an injunction requiring TRA payments to 10,000 to 15,000 workers whose weekly benefits were abruptly cut off on Dec. 19. Many of the workers were in training and retraining programs at the time, he said.

"THE CUT-OFF is causing irreparable injury to the affected workers and their families," Bieber said. "Their jobs were lost because of federal trade policies, they were certified for and were receiving TRA benefits to assist them in coping with the unemployment, resulting from the impact of those trade policies, and the rug was pulled out cruelly from under them."

The suit says the "termination without prior notice or hearing" of TRA benefits "deprives plaintiffs of property without due process of law" and violates the Trade Act of 1974.

The cut-offs came as a result of an interpretation of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) of the Continuing Resolution enacted by Congress on Dec. 19.

# Traffic deaths decline with seat-belt use

Traffic fatalities in Michigan declined by 19 percent in December compared with December 1984, apparently due to the new safety-belt-use law.

A State Police report shows 83 fatalities occurred in December 1985 among vehicle occupants with belts available compared with 102 fatalities in 1984.

In the six months following implementation of the mandatory safety-belt-use law, 495 fatalities occurred in vehicles where safety belts were available. During January through June of the previous year, there were 557 fatalities.

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