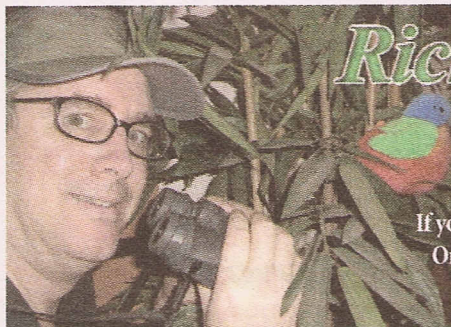


# Rich's Backyard Birds

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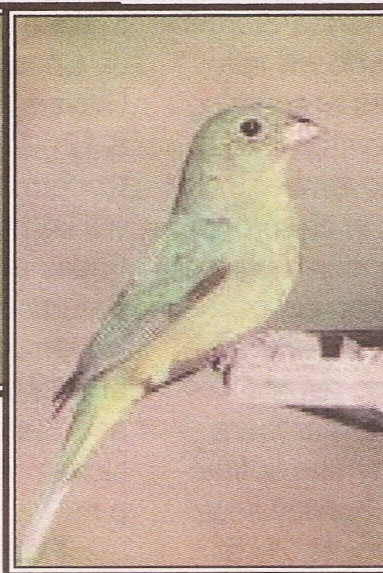
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# WATCH

If you have a question for the Bird Man, his email is: [Rich@RichsBackyardBirds.com](mailto:Rich@RichsBackyardBirds.com)  
Or stop by the store in the FishHawk Publix strip center at 5670 Fishhawk Crossing Blvd.

Or call 813-657-BIRD(2473) ...Or try telepathy (results vary)

*Rich Crete is the owner of Rich's Backyard Birds and has been a birder for over 30 years.*



TOP: MALE PAINTED BUNTING.  
RIGHT: FEMALE PAINTED BUNTING

*Hey Bird Man! When I was in your store I saw pictures of Painted Buntings. I've never had one at my feeder before. How do I attract them? N. G. Valrico*

They certainly are well named birds, don't you think, N. G.? Looks like a kid got to pick his favorite colors and go to town. As matter of fact, I recently talked to a local kindergarten class and afterward they made some thank you notes for me. I think one of the young crayon wielders almost nailed the Painted, albeit by accident, but almost nonetheless. I think of it as his abstract period.

Painted Buntings are easily the most magnificently colored feeder/song birds in North America. Attracting them to your backyard is possible. First off, they are only here during the colder months. They usually arrive in October and stick around into April.

One of the keys to attracting them is the type of seed you use. Buntings like millet. They will also eat sunflower chips and safflower. Some will even eat nyjer,

but millet is their favorite, so make sure there is some in your seed blend. The wintering sparrows also really like the millet.

Another key to attracting these fabulous birds is reducing the competition at that feeder. They are sparrow-sized birds.

Remember that in the world of bird feeding, bigger birds can keep

smaller birds away from feeders if they choose to do so. I suggest putting out small tube feeder, without a tray, with millet in the blend. This is perfect for the buntings, finches and sparrows and tougher for larger birds to use like jays, grackles and doves.

Since Painted Buntings are so brightly colored, they like to eat close to good cover for a quick escape if needed. If you have some dense shrubbery close by, it's better for the birds.

Also, don't forget to look for their cousins, the Indigo Buntings. They are here at the same time of year and eat the same seeds.

Since they are wild birds, N.G., I can't promise you'll be able to attract them, but these suggestions will help increase your odds. If they don't work, I'll look into getting you a picture from this young abstract artist I have an in with.