**NORTHERN CARDINAL - NOCA**  
*Cardinalis cardinalis*

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| **Average Adult Weight:** 45g (42-48g) **Diet Proportion:** Summer: 65% Plant 35% Insect / Winter: 90% Plant 10% Insect. Increased fruit in fall.  **Misc:** Hatchlings, nestlings, and young fledglings eat nearly entirely insects. Adults and independent juveniles need extra fruit during fall to help develop plumage color. Songs learned—recordings must be played as nestlings through rearing process. House young birds together when possible. Adults should never be housed together during breeding season. Adults may be able to be housed together during the wintertime (especially females) but observe interactions. Healthy adults may be able to be housed with juveniles but observe interactions carefully. |
| **WARNING:** Wear gloves while cleaning cage. Wear gloves while handling: bird can bite very hard. Capturing in a blue towel can minimize bite-risk/stress. |

**HATCHLINGS/NESTLINGS**

THIS SPECIES TENDS TO CONTINUE TO GAPE EVEN IF THEIR CROP IS FULL—DO NOT CONTINUTE TO HAND FEED IF CROP APPEARS FULL. THIS APPLIES TO ALL YOUNG LIFE STAGES OF THIS BIRD.

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| **Approved Foods:** Harrison’s, soaked insects (mealworms, fly larva/maggots, flies, crickets), Zupreem **Special Cage Considerations:** Standard cup nest can be used until fledged. |

**FLEDGLINGS**

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| A broader range of insects should be fed to this species in addition to in-cage food. Items may be soaked or unsoaked depending on preparation needs. Varied insects should be provided daily or every other day. |

**IN CAGE FOR FLEDGLINGS**

Feed fledglings from plates **(EXCEPT FOR SEED)**, refill as needed.

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| FOOD  95% Insect 5% Plants, (introduce fruits with age) | WATER | MISC |
| **1 Insectivore Plate:**   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **# Birds** | **1-2** | **3-4** | **5+** | | **Size** | M | L | XL |   **In separate dishes:**  **(PER ONE BIRD, MULTIPLY AS NEEDED)**  - 1.5 TBS mealworms  - 1 tsp other insects if available  - 1 tsp additional fruit, especially likes all berries and cherry  - 1 tsp seed/other    **Vitamins:** Sprinkle pinch of Di-cal, Avi-vera, and Brewer’s Yeast (and/or Wheat Germ) over foods most likely to be eaten.  **Sprinkle pinch of fine grit over seeds** or provide pinch of fine grit in a small dish ------------------------------------------------------ **Approved fruits:** grapes, apple, all store-bought berries, cherry **Approved insects:** mealworms, waxworms (1-2 a day), crickets **Approved seeds:** millet, cracked corn, sunflower seed (especially black oil), safflower, crushed rolled oats, crushed peanuts, other nutmeats, pumpkin/squash/watermelon/cantaloupe seeds **Approved other:** hardboiled egg yolk, suet, nuts and bugs mix  \*\*See Native Food List for additions\*\* | - Small water dish with water less than an inch deep.  - Include separate shallow bath about four inches in diameter if birds do not have bandages, injuries, or illness. | - Cage should be set to have maximum horizontal space.  - A mirror is needed for juveniles if alone and/or not with same species.  - Provide horizontal perches.  - Provide branches, logs, and/or other hard surfaces to sharpen beak on.  - If healthy, provide small dirt pan  - If available, “berry branches” or clippings from wild fruiting plants should be provided. See Caging Examples. |

**IN CAGE FOR ADULTS**

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| FOOD  Summer: 65% Plants 35% Insects  Winter: 90% Plant 10% Insects | WATER | MISC |
| **- 1 Omnivore/Frugivore Plate:**   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **# Birds** | **1-2** | **3-4** | **5+** | | **Size** | S | M | L |   **(PER ONE BIRD, MULTIPLY AS NEEDED)** **In separate dishes. See “Diet Proportion” section and give greater amount depending on time of year:**  - 1-2 TBS insects   - 1-2 TBS seeds/other  - during fall, provide any native fruits and 1 tsp extra fruit  **Sprinkle pinch of fine grit over seeds** or provide pinch of fine grit in a small dish ------------------------------------------------------ **Approved fruits:** grapes, apple, all store-bought berries, cherry **Approved insects:** mealworms, waxworms (1-2 a day), crickets **Approved seeds:** millet, cracked corn, sunflower seed (especially black oil), safflower, crushed rolled oats, crushed peanuts, other nutmeats, pumpkin/squash/watermelon/cantaloupe seeds **Approved other:** hardboiled egg yolk, suet, nuts and bugs mix  \*\*See Native Food List for additions\*\* | - Small water dish with water less than an inch deep.  - Include separate shallow bath about four inches in diameter if birds do not have bandages or other injuries/illness. | - Cage should be set to have maximum horizontal space.  - Provide horizontal perches.  - Provide branches, logs, and/or other hard surfaces to sharpen beak on.  - If healthy, provide dirt pan |

**Natural History:**

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| **Release Information:** Adults are very loyal to home range and should be released as close to rescue site as possible. Found in areas with shrubs, small trees, forest edges, and residential areas with lots of trees and dense foliage. Also found in second-growth forests, grasslands with shrubs, hedgerows in agricultural fields, and marsh edges. In wintering flocks associated with DEJU WTSP SOSP AMGO TUTI EATO and other NOCAs. Generally thought of as non-migratory although some individuals are known to wander locally. |
| **Native Foods:**   **Insects:** beetles (including Japanese beetles, June beetles, potato beetles, ground beetles, click beetles, wood borers, snout beetles, bark beetles, weevils, fireflies, and billbugs), caterpillars (including cutworms, cankerworms, linden loopers), grasshoppers, crickets, locusts, cicadas, leafhoppers, treehoppers, scale insects, ants, termites, sawflies, dragonflies, mayflies, katydids, sawflies, lacewings, flies, codling moths, spiders, spider eggs, centipedes, millipedes, snails, slugs, bivalves  **Plants (Fruit, Seeds, and Other):** smartweed, weed seeds (including ragweed, nightshade, bristle grass, switchgrass, plantain, knotweed, sedge), weigela, 4 o’clock, bachelor’s button, phlox, cosmos, bellflower, okra, marigold, columbine, geranium, jewelweed, corn, oats, serviceberry, ash, greenbrier, elm blossoms/seeds/buds, raspberry, elderberry, wild cherry, dogwood, mulberry, sumac, vervain, tuliptree, viburnum, rose hips, bittersweet, hawthorn, blueberry, hornbeam, spicebush, birch, holly, red cedar, maple, hickory, walnut, beech, oak, sweetgum, pine, grape, crabapple, coralberry, bayberry, yew, raspberry, autumn olive, firethorn, aralia, witch hazel, honeysuckle, blossoms, barberry, sweet bay, maple sap |