

## Open Water for Winter Wildlife

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If you have a pond, lake, or other wetland that is at least 6 feet deep during the winter months, you can prevent the water from freezing with benefits to some wildlife species. The water at the bottom of a pond is warmer than the top layer that freezes. If you place a weighted plastic tube in the deepest section of the pond attached to an air pump, the air bubbles released at the bottom will carry warmer water to the top and help prevent freezing. The aerator will keep a large area open with temperatures down to 20 degrees Fahrenheit. When temperatures are near zero or below, the open hole will be very small, but still of some benefit.

An aerator to prevent freezing will benefit fish, birds, and some mammals. When ponds freeze and are covered with snow, sunlight cannot penetrate through

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