



Urban Bird Treaty City Glass and Building Bird Collision Information

Bird Collisions

The Problem:

Birds do not seem to be able to perceive the glass as a barrier. Birds attempt to fly through the windows, causing injuries and death. This is especially true with highly reflective glass. Birds can also see the reflection of trees or sky and because they don't perceive the glass, fly into the window probably thinking they will continue to fly or land in the foliage.



While birds can hit glass and building structures during any season, migration is a time that collisions tend to increase. Nocturnal migrants have been known to hit illuminated structures in all kinds of weather, including heavy rain. Foggy nights and strong winds are extremely dangerous. A sudden increase in temperature in spring or a sudden drop in temperature in fall may result in a larger number of birds coming through at the same time. Cloud cover often forces the birds to fly lower than they might otherwise, bringing them closer to the dangerous light. On occasion, collisions can occur shortly after dusk due to the sudden arrival of inclement weather. When the birds are near the ground, the glass windows can present an ongoing hazard throughout the day.

Buildings with highly reflective glass, dark glass, and clear glass with plants visible on the inside seem to be more of a problem for birds. Vegetation near windows encourages birds to stay in the area. An area surrounded by buildings, such as a courtyard, increases chances that birds will also have a hard time finding their way out.

According to the Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP), a single tall building in Chicago checked daily during spring and fall migration caused an average of 1,478 bird deaths annually and over a period of 14 consecutive years, the cumulative kill amounted to 20,697 birds.



Some Simple Solutions:

Windows – Breaking up the image birds see is key to alerting them to an object in their way. Cover windows with a pattern every four inches. Patterns can be applied on the inside or outside of glass, but are more effective when applied on the outside of the window when possible, especially on reflective glass. Curtains and shades can be closed so the glass is not so see-through. Blinds should be down and slightly slanted so there is the perception that something is in the window and therefore not passable by the birds.



Bird feeders should be placed at least 30 ft. from building glass or as close as possible. A closer distance decreases the possible buildup of momentum when a bird flees a feeder and helps to reduce the impact of a collision.

Plants in windows - If you have indoor plants move them away from clear glass windows far enough that they cannot be seen from outside or break up the image with non-plant objects.



If **spot lighting** or outdoor lighting is used, extinguish exterior vanity lighting and spot lighting by a certain time each night especially during bird migration and periods of inclement weather. When possible, avoid exterior vanity and spot lighting altogether.

The key is to reduce the total light emitted from the building from 11pm until sunrise during migratory seasons (mid-March to early June and late August to mid-November). In addition to saving migratory birds, building owners have realized direct benefits, including decreased energy and maintenance costs. Extinguish or dim exterior or decorative lighting on any multi-story building. This includes spotlights, logos, lighted clock faces, greenhouses, antennae lighting, etc.

Some resources:

Fatal Light Awareness Program - <http://www.flap.org/toronto-lights-out.php>

American Bird Conservancy - http://www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports/stories/080225_collisions.html
http://www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/collisions/pdf/collisions_flyer.pdf

Students research bird-window collision solutions -
<http://www.mtu.edu/news/stories/2014/november/students-researching-how-prevent-bird-window-collisions.html>

Window patterns - To create a pattern on windows, tempera paint can be applied freehand with a brush or a sponge, or by using a stencil. Tempera is long-lasting, even in rain, and non-toxic, but comes off with a damp rag or sponge. Stencils can be purchased at crafts or fabric stores.

CollidEscape (www.collidescape.org) designed for external use, see-through inside, opaque outside

Lightweight netting, screen, or other material over the window (attached with suction cups or hooks.) The netting applied several inches in front of the window, so birds don't hit the glass after hitting the net. Companies that have screens include: www.birdscreen.com and www.birdsavers.com.



Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds, a program working with cities and partners to conserve migratory birds through education, hazard reductions, citizen science, conservation actions, and conservation and habitat improvement strategies in urban/suburban areas.

www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/Partnerships/UrbanTreaty/urbantreaty.html