

Help Save Birds: All Day, Every Day!

Did you know that you can save birds at your home or office?

Bird threat #1: During the day, birds can strike buildings when they see their environment reflected in the windows and mirrored exteriors of buildings, or perceive transparent glass on buildings and walkways as clear passage. Birds also strike windows when they see interior plants and trees and try to take refuge in them.

Bird threat #2: During the night, during spring and fall bird migrations when inclement weather events coincide, birds can be attracted to lighted buildings resulting in building collisions, entrapment, energy expenditure, and exhaustion. If they survive until daybreak, birds find themselves trapped in a maze of reflective buildings and collide with the windows and reflective walls trying to escape.

Bird threat #3: During the day and night, cats can kill birds when they're roaming freely outside.

Here's what you can do:

Cover outside of windows with a pattern of any shape following these pattern rules: vertical stripes should be at least ¼ inch wide with a maximum spacing of 4 inches, and horizontal stripes should be at least ¼ inch wide with a maximum spacing of 2 inches. Spacing should be smaller for hummingbirds. When using patterns other than stripes, closer spacing of elements is recommended. Patterns should contrast enough with their background to be seen clearly by birds. Make glass visible to birds on the first two to three stories or the height of the surrounding vegetation. At the very least, treat known problem windows.

If you feed birds, once you have treated your glass using the window pattern rules, be sure to place your bird feeder 3 feet or less from your windows (e.g. suction cup design).



If the lights are on when you're leaving for the evening, turn off office lights, especially in windowed offices.



If you have cats, try to keep them indoors. Otherwise, leash them when they're outside, or keep them in outdoor screened cat porches. Unfortunately, there's no way to save birds from cats. Even bells on collars have proven ineffective. Plus, given the many safety threats to cats while outside (disease, parasites, toxins, predators, etc.), both cats and birds are safer when cats are kept from roaming freely outside.



If you use spot lighting or outdoor lighting, eliminate these lights or turn them off at a specific time each night (e.g. 10pm) during the bird migration seasons, which vary by location (e.g., mid-March through May and mid-August through October).



If you have indoor plants, trees and shrubs, move them away from windows far enough that they can not be seen from outside by birds at window level.



Use blinds, shades or screens. If you don't have blinds, shades or outer insect screens for your windows, consider purchasing them. Outer insect screens are a great collision avoidance mechanisms, even without blinds and shades. If screens are not present, partially closed shades and blinds can reduce reflections and let birds know the window is not clear airspace.

