

Bird Window Collisions: A Deadly Toll on our Bird Populations

Millions of birds are killed each year in North America by collisions with window glass. This mortality is in addition to other deaths due to collisions with other man-made structures such as communication towers, power lines, automobiles, and wind turbines. World-wide, more and more buildings, including our modern houses, are made from reflective glass with disastrous consequences for birds of many species both common and rare.

Many of us have heard a thud on the window only to go outside to find a lifeless song bird lying on the ground. Occasionally the bird is just stunned and might revive, if kept warm and protected. However, more typically, the bird is dead. Spring and fall migration times are especially deadly, but window strikes can happen anytime.

Glass is an invisible killer. Birds do not see or understand windows and reflections. When flying, birds focus on their distant objective and are misled into flying through what they perceive to be sky and trees. Some of the most deadly situations are windows with clear views into the inside and picture windows or glass doors with large plants inside. One must go outside and look back at the window to see what the birds actually see.

As homeowners, there are several ways we can reduce this carnage. First, one or two hawk silhouettes pasted on a picture window do not work! Birds do not see these as predators and will simply fly around them, still hitting the window. The black vinyl hawk silhouettes can be effective if several are spaced about 10 inches apart on the same window. Other solutions include:

- Closing blinds and curtains to mute reflections – white blinds or curtains are more effective
- If you feed birds, placing bird feeders no more than 2 feet from your house (so birds will not build up enough speed to hurt themselves, if they fly off alarmed). Bird feeders 8-12 feet out are the most deadly.
- Moving large house plants away from windows
- Hanging wind chimes, bird flashing tape and UV decals sold at bird feed stores on the OUTSIDE of the windows
- Hanging bright window art, decorative flags or banners to overpower the reflections
- Installing awnings or external window screens that mute reflections (old-fashion window screens are great!)
- Installing CollidEscape film, available over the internet on problem windows

For more information, visit www.flap.org

Feel free to e-mail Medina Resident Madeleine Linck with questions at madeleine.linck@gmail.com to help make your home and yard more bird-friendly.

Thanks for thinking of the birds!