

Citizens' Guide to Preventing Bird Collisions, from KCC's Biodiversity Committee

Why did a bird hit our window? Answer: Birds cannot see glass.

Do you notice frequent collisions in a particular window? Chances are that birds are being attracted or deceived by reflective patterns, especially birds that may be migrating and unfamiliar with an area. This window may need marking to make it safer.

What can you do?

Windows: Mark your windows if possible, with any pattern, careful to avoid leaving large expanses of reflective glass. Use decals or patterned film on the outside.

During seasonal migrations, give birds extra warning with tape or ribbons, if you have identified particularly dangerous windows.

Outside screens, shutters, awnings and many other devices can cut down strikes.

Interior blinds and curtains can be helpful, but, remember, outside glass acts like a mirror if the interior is darker.

Some bird experts have suggested that leaving the windows slightly dirty is a good way to lessen strikes. A slight film can cue birds to the presence of glass.

Feeders: It may seem contradictory, but placing feeders very close to windows, prevents birds from getting enough momentum upon take off to cause injury. Or place feeders a good distance away from window, keeping them out of harm's way.

Lights at night: Turn outside lights off at night, whenever possible. Avoid lighted atriums that may appear to be open. Plants inside may appear to be suitable for resting, but are in fact behind glass.

New buildings: Ask your builder or architect to create a bird safe design and to use newer fogged, patterned or fritted glass with markings. Numerous guides are now available that provide detailed information.

Locally: Support measures to educate the public. Speak to public officials and to architects who may be working in your community. Support local ordinances for better building guidelines for glass safety and "lights out" programs, during migration season. Urge renovation of structures that are clearly a risk to wildlife.

Nationally: Support federal legislation to insure that all new government buildings adhere to bird safe practices and materials. Support legislation calling for safer glass.

