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## What Can You Do To Prevent Fatal Bird Strikes?

Written by Carol Frank Friday, 12 November 2010 00:00

Be aware that birds collide with windows all year long. Spring and fall migration seasons, however, see dramatic increases in fatalities. Extra precautions taken during the migration periods may be very beneficial and well worth the effort. Basically, anything that cuts down on the reflective, see-through qualities of your windows may make your home or business more friendly to migrating birds. Scientists call attention grabbing designs on windows, "visual noise," that cry out, "Watch out!"

### **Retro-fitting At Home and at the Office:**

Assess your situation. Many homeowners find that bird crashes occur at certain windows. Often windows that are installed on opposite sides of the house present to birds a clear passageway. Focusing on the windows where birds run into problems may make the task of preventing strikes less daunting.

Place bird feeders as close to windows as possible or far away from windows. A bird only needs a distance of 3 meters to gather enough speed to fatally crash into a window. Placing a feeder very close to a window limits the bird's ability to attain crashing speed.

Decals can be effective if, and only if, they are placed very close together. Some, specifically marketed for this purpose, are quite attractive and give the appearance of etched glass. But they must uniformly cover the window surface at 2 inch intervals to work well.

Posting post-it notes in bright colors, again placed closely together, on windows during the spring and fall migration seasons has also been found to be effective. The advantage here is that this solution is inexpensive and once the migrating season ends, they can be easily removed. Duct tape may be used to create patterns as well, but it may be more difficult to remove.

Dr. Christine Sheppard from the American Bird Conservancy has found another inexpensive technique for preparing home windows for migration. Non-toxic tempera paint, used to create patterns on the exterior of windows, is according to her "surprisingly durable..it doesn't wash off with rain, but comes off easily with a damp cloth." She encourages parents to get their children to help paint designs on windows within their reach. If you're not up to free form painting, stencils are available at art stores.

Birds screens that can be purchased in various sizes and shapes or customized and attached to exterior windows and sliding doors are also effective as they are a more forgiving surface at impact than glass. Frank Haas in Pennsylvania owns the Bird Screen Company and sells to homeowners online or on the phone. The screen may be attached using screw hooks or with suction cups. The screens are no more than 36 inches wide and therefore do not have a commercial application. ([www.birdscreen.com](http://www.birdscreen.com))

Some buildings have retrofitted using netting to cushion bird collisions. The Ornithology Department at Cornell University has netting on their glass windows. The same product that is manufactured to keep birds out of fruit crops can be used to protect them.

BirdMaster, a firm that provides elegant and unobtrusive netting for protecting historic buildings from infestations of bird pests, pigeons, starlings and sparrows are the experts that can also design netting systems to protect against bird strikes. ([www.birdmaster.com](http://www.birdmaster.com))

In the New York Metropolitan area, the New York City Audubon Society will provide consultation with office building managers to customize a specific approach to address the problem.

Turn off unnecessary lights. Ask your municipality to adopt ordinances that would require shielded, downward pointing

light for new construction.

Share this information with others. Most people are shocked that the problem is such a big one and has garnered so little publicity.

If you find an injured bird, place it in a box lined with soft cotton cloth or a paper towel. Close the lid and place the box in a dark, quiet place for an hour or two. Do not try to feed it or give it water. The less handling, the better. After an hour or two of quiet, move the box to an open area facing trees or bushes. Gently open the lid and step back. If the bird flies away, good. If not, it will need to be taken to a wild bird rehabilitation center. On Long Island, call Volunteers for Wildlife at 631-423-0982 or the STAR Foundation at 631-736-8207. For a state-wide listing of licensed rehab experts, visit [www.nyswrc.org](http://www.nyswrc.org). Be aware that not all wildlife rehabbers are licensed by the state to handle migratory birds.

The above does not represent an exhaustive list of suggestions. For more information visit the following websites:

[www.abcbirds.org](http://www.abcbirds.org)

[www.nycaudubon.org](http://www.nycaudubon.org)

<http://aco.muhlenberg.edu>

[www.flap.org](http://www.flap.org)