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How you can Reduce the Risk of
Bird-Window Collisions

Window Pain[1,2]

Collisions occur when birds fly towards the reflection of an open sky or vegetated space. Nocturnal migrants often fly into windows following a light source.

One estimate suggests the number of window collisions in Canada could be as high as ~25 million birds/yr.

Collisions represent an important conservation issue for birds, especially for vulnerable species where the loss of even a few individuals could have serious impacts to the population.

Fatal Attractions[2-5]

Collisions typically occur when birds fly off in a panic in response to predators, loud noises, etc.

Window collisions are not random events; time of day, season, weather, and abundance of birds are not good predictors of collisions.

Presence of environmental factors such as tall vegetation, or bird attractants (e.g. feeders/baths/houses) on the property increase the risk of collisions.

Prevention[5-8]

You can help prevent window strikes by using deterrents that can easily be applied to your windows.

Visual Deterrents

Visually identify windows by marking on the outside of your windows using soap or tempera paint, and/or by applying adhesives such as decals, bird tape, etc.

You must cover much of the window for these to be effective. The width of visual markers should not be smaller than 0.3 cm. Spaces between markers should not be larger than 10cm x 5cm to help prevent collisions by larger birds and no larger than 5cm x 5cm to prevent collisions of any sized bird.

Alternatively, you can apply one-way transparent film to windows. This makes your windows opaque from the outside while remaining transparent from the inside.

Physical Barriers

The installation of physical barriers such as outside screens or netting, hanging ribbons or ropes, or shutters can be used to visually and/or physically deter window collisions. The distance between hanging ribbons/ropes should be 10cm or less.

Other Methods

Moving bird attractants to within 1m of windows keeps birds from gaining sufficient momentum to be injured; placing them beyond 10m allow birds to identify images in windows as reflections and avoid them.

Injured Birds

Examine bird for inuries (e.g. bleeding, unable to hold wing properly, beak injuries). If a bird appears injured, take it to a wildlife rehabilitator as quickly as possible.

If no injuries are apparent, place the bird into a safe, dark, quiet place, such as a shoe box to recover. Do not provide food or water, and avoid handling the bird as much as possible. If it is extremely cold outdoors the bird should be brought indoors, but take caution not to allow the bird to become too warm and do not to allow the bird to get loose indoors. Allow the bird the opportunity to fly away outdoors every 15 minutes. If the bird does not fly away after a few hours take the bird to a wildlife rehabilitator.

Contact Us

The CWHC relies on reports from the public and our partners to assist our surveillance efforts. Please report any sick or dead animals to the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative. Find your closest regional centre at:
http://www.cwhc-rcsf.ca/contact.php

References

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