

Why it happens

Birds hit windows for two main reasons: reflections and “see-through” effects.



Reflections

Birds see the things they know and need – habitat and open sky – reflected on our windows. Almost any kind of glass can create a perfect mirror in certain light. Birds fly to the reflected habitat or sky and hit the glass in their path.



See-through effects

When birds see habitat or sky through one or more panes of glass they may attempt to fly through, not realizing there is a solid barrier in their path. A sun porch, gazebo, linkway or two windows on a corner of your home can create this dangerous effect.

What we’re doing

Audubon Minnesota is working to reduce hazards to birds by reducing window collisions.



Black and white warbler | Laura Erickson


“**Lights Out**” is an ongoing program working with building managers to reduce lighting that can draw night migrating birds off course.

Monitoring existing buildings helps us to learn more about the numbers and species of birds that are victims of window collisions locally.

Research helps us understand what design changes will help birds avoid collisions.

Bird-safe Design is the key to future solutions. While we can retrofit our homes and existing buildings we must look towards a future where building design takes bird-safety into account. We are working with the architecture and design communities to increase understanding of the problem and encourage solutions.

Project BirdSafe Partners: DNR Nongame Wildlife Program • The Bell Museum of Natural History • Wildlife Rehabilitation Center • National Park Service • Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis • Zumbro Valley Audubon • BOMA Greater Minneapolis • BOMA St. Paul • Funding from the Katherine B. Anderson fund of the St. Paul Foundation • Printing funded by The Donald Veesner Foundation.

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BirdSafe Homes

Making Your Windows Safer for Birds



A Tennessee Warbler is stunned after colliding with a glass window.
Stephanie Beard
Background photo | Judd Brink

The problem

Windows in our homes kill hundreds of millions of birds each year in the U.S.



The solution

First, learn about what causes window collisions and then assess your own home. Identify your most problematic windows and find appropriate solutions for each.

Did you know?

- For every collision victim you find outside your windows, three more typically go unseen (falling out of sight or being carried away by predators).
- Of those you see fly away after a collision, 50% die later as a result of their injuries or because they are easy prey for cats and other predators.
- There are simple, economical ways for you to protect birds from your windows.

A Mourning Dove left a dramatic image (above) after hitting a picture window. The feathers of most birds leave no trace. Joanna Eckles

What you can do

There are easy, economical ways to help birds see your windows. Try a few of the suggestions provided below.



Pileated Woodpecker | Laura Erickson

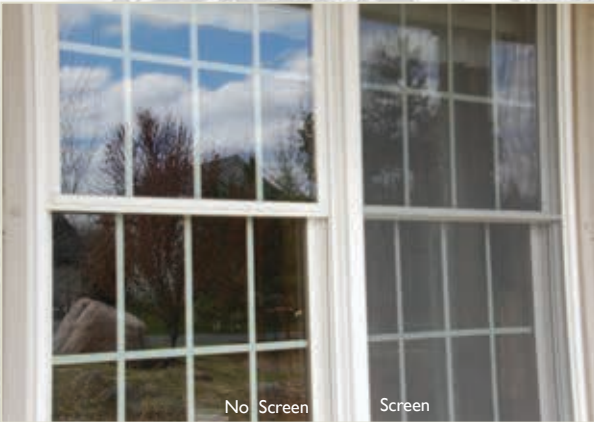
Feeders

One of the simplest things you can do at a picture window is to place a feeder directly on the glass. This brings birds delightfully close – generally too close to cause harm if they are startled. As a rule, feeders very close or quite far from glass is best.



Blinds

Light colored interior blinds can be helpful when you have a see-through effect like a sun porch or glass linkway. They can also help break up exterior reflections. If blinds aren't enough to stop collisions, consider an exterior treatment.



Screens

When building a new home or replacing windows, the best thing you can do is to opt for exterior screens. Screens greatly reduce reflections. Also, if a bird does fly towards the glass, a screen creates a protective barrier, decreasing the likelihood of injury.



For existing windows – you can add exterior screens using a product like Bird Screen (left), by making your own screen frames (below), or by otherwise attaching screen or netting outside your windows.



>> Find more information, product links and examples at mn.audubon.org/birdsafe-homes



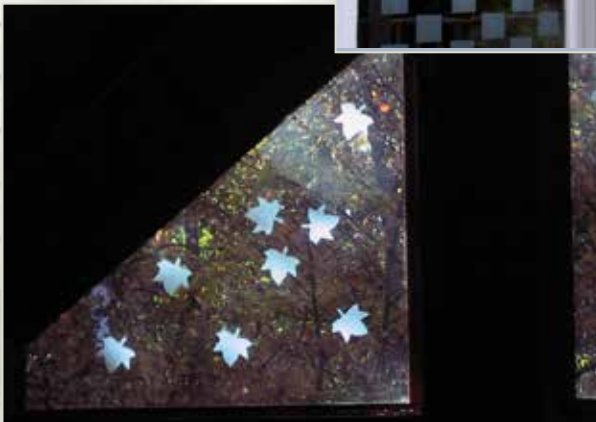
ABC Bird Tape (Squares/Stripes) | Dariusz Zdzienkowski



Acopian BirdSavers | Peter Saenger

Dangling Decor

Hanging cords, strings or ribbons in front of your windows can be effective and unobtrusive, even pleasant. Make them yourself or order a product like “Acopian BirdSavers” (above) which are custom-made based on the size of your window(s).



Stephanie Foster

Surface Treatments

Many exterior surface applications can make glass more visible to birds. Treatment can be permanent (an etched pattern) or it can be temporary (markers, tape, decals). Spacing matters – about 4” apart is recommended.

Bear in mind...

- Habitat plays a role.** Backyard habitat is a valuable gift to wildlife. Just remember the need to protect the birds you attract from the dangers your windows pose.
- Outside is best.** In general, modifications to your windows are best made to the outside surface where reflections are most prominent.
- Migration peaks.** Collisions can occur at any window, any time of day and year. Problems peak during spring and fall migration. Temporary solutions may be all you need.
- You need cues too.** Glass is invisible to us just as it is to birds. But people understand glass in context. We need far fewer “cues” to warn us of a glass barrier.
- Glass attack.** Some birds attack their own reflection repeatedly, usually from the sill. This is a different problem – territoriality – best subdued using screen, tape, or film.

Background photo | Judd Brink