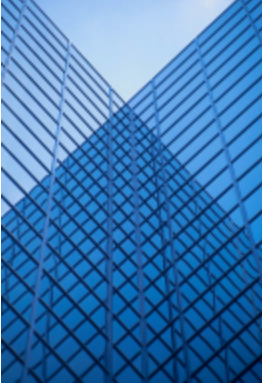


## Windows: A Human Hazard for Birds

### The problem:



Clear and reflective window panes in homes or commercial buildings are a passive killer of wild birds worldwide.

Fatal or harmful collisions occur when birds do not see the window, or see sky or habitat reflected in the glass. Collisions also occur when a bird sees its own reflection, mistaking it for a territorial threat from another bird.

Intensive studies at single homes reveal that one out of every two strikes results in a fatality. Birds may be killed instantly, are injured and die subsequently, or are taken by predators while recovering from the collision. Many people are unaware that birds are being killed at their windows because the victims are small, frequently fall behind shrubbery, and more often than not are eaten by predators or scavengers.

Among the dead are rare, threatened, and endangered species as well as the abundant. Investigators have gathered extensive evidence documenting window glass as a growing source of avian mortality, and a suspected contributor to overall bird population declines.

### The Facts:

Approximately 225 species of birds in the United States and Canada have been documented striking windows. Strikes occur at windows of various sizes, heights, and orientation in urban, suburban, and rural environments. Strikes are more frequent during winter when large groups of birds are attracted to feeders than at any other time of the year, including the spring and fall migratory periods, when casualties may attract more human attention because the birds are often more visible on sidewalks or around workplaces.



Researchers differ in their evaluations of the magnitude that glass exacts on individual species and bird populations overall. In the 1970s, before studies were conducted, annual deaths attributable to windows were hypothesized to be 3.5 million individuals. Since then, with extensive studies over the past two decades the estimate of the annual toll has been increased to between 97 million to 975 million birds in the U.S. alone.

This estimated toll is based on the assumption that between one and ten birds are killed at each building in the U.S. each year. Another independent study produced similar results, examining data collected by 5,500 volunteers who recorded bird strikes at windows while they counted visitors to feeding stations at their homes.

Some researchers suggest that, given the number of windows, the overall avian mortality attributable to glass could be even greater than that caused by cats.

### Making Homes and Workplaces Safe for Birds:

Currently, there are many solutions that effectively reduce or eliminate bird strikes, but none is universally applicable or readily acceptable for all human structures. Protective measures range from physical barriers that keep birds from striking the glass to making a window more visible.

- \* Placement of bird feeders within three feet of a window eliminates the hazard for birds visiting a feeder.
- \* Vertical exterior tape strips not more than 4 inches apart are a good deterrent.
- \* Interior vertical blinds with the slats half open can cut down on some casualties.
- \* Windows can be “soaped” to cut down on reflection.
- \* Shade trees planted outside the window can aid in breaking up or completely eliminating reflection of large areas of open sky.
- \* Mesh window screens are a great deterrent though sometimes not practical for large picture windows.
- \* Decals, including cut-outs of raptors, and leaded glass decorations are only moderately successful.

