

Birds Frequently Collide with My Windows



If birds frequently hit your windows or if they occasionally collide with your windows but you want to reduce the likelihood that this will happen, there are simple steps you can take. First, understand that birds collide with windows because they don't see glass. It's not that they are stupid or forget about the glass because they are in pursuit of prey but rather the avian eye simply doesn't see glass. So the solutions to reducing window collisions involve three basic things: 1) making the glass more visible, 2) make the objects on the other side of the glass less attractive so the bird won't want to fly to them, and 3) reducing reflectivity so that the glass doesn't look like the beautiful sky, trees and birds whose images the glass reflects.

Making the Glass More Visible and Reducing Reflectivity

How to make the glass more visible depends on whether you are building a new house or trying to solve a problem at your existing house (the same principals discussed in this fact sheet also apply to office buildings). If you are building a new house, consider fritted glass or ORNILUX Bird Protection Glass. Fritted glass has an etched pattern on the glass that is visible to birds, but since the pattern is also visible to humans this may not be a good solution for you. ORNILUX Bird Protection Glass, which only recently became available in the United States, has a patterned UV reflective coating making it visible to birds while maintaining transparency to the human eye. For new building design options visit www.birdsandbuildings.org.

If you have an existing home, you can make the window more visible in a number of ways. You could reduce window visibility by soaping or painting the windows, but this will also eliminate your view from inside the house. Window decals are available but they haven't proven to be very effective because they only cover part of the window and small birds still see enough space in the gaps between the decals to think they can fly through. Our favorite product to date is called CollidEscape. CollidEscape is a window film that applies easily to the outside of the window and appears opaque from outside without significantly altering visibility from the inside. CollidEscape is more effective at reducing window collisions because it provides uniform coverage across the entire window. If you've ever ridden in a public bus that has advertising printed on the windows visible from the outside, it's probably a screen-printed version of this product. Passengers can still see out the windows but the public sees the advertising from outside the bus. The Chicago Park District actually installed this product on the building that houses our downtown Chicago location and it reduced window collisions by over 80%. CollidEscape is only available online at <http://www.collidescape.org/>.

Make the Objects Inside Less Attractive

There are several steps to take in order to make the objects inside less attractive. These things by themselves will not eliminate collisions; however, they should reduce collisions. Additionally, these steps alone will not be as effective if you don't make the glass visible (Making the Glass More Visible section above).

1. If you have mini blinds, leave them partially cracked open. This creates a line pattern across the glass that is more effective than having them completely closed.
2. Dim the lights at night – especially in rooms that have frequent collisions and especially during spring and fall migrations. The timing of spring and fall migrations depends on your part of the county. In Chicago, spring migration is typically March 15th – June 1st or 15th and fall migration is typically August 15th – October 31st).
3. Remove plants from just inside windows and sliding glass doors. Plants create the illusion of a place to land when windows are transparent.

Over a billion birds collide with windows each year. Thanks for doing your part to eliminate hazards in your home!