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“One of the greatest hazards to birds is plate glass, with windows in homes and offices killing as many as one billion birds each year. Glass is invisible to birds, and if it reflects the images of trees, bushes, the sky or other natural habitat, a bird may fly directly into it.”

–Dr. Daniel Klem

Millions of birds each year collide into buildings, skyscrapers and even your own home. The biggest cities in the world are home to the biggest bird fatalities. Problems consist of reflection from the glass, mating season and lighted buildings.

Birds collide into windows for a number of reasons. First, birds see differently than most mammals. Bird's eyes are on either side of their head, this is for a wide field of vision giving an overhead look of the world below them. The disadvantage of this is straight on a window reflection can be easily mistaken for another bird or further landscape (trees, sky, clouds) causing a collision.

Due to breeding season, it is most common to see crashes in Spring. Birds defending their territory may mistake a window as an oncoming predator leading to a window strike. Also, during this time of year birds are migrating patterns are northward. The movement increases the likelihood of collisions.

Sometimes, nocturnal collisions occur. Nocturnal migrants who navigate by the stars mix up their flight patterns when they see lighted buildings, this occurs often during bad weather conditions. Even so, birds can also crash into high raised buildings by accident because it's directly in a bird's flight path.

The prevention of bird collisions isn't easy, but you can still safeguard your house to diminish possibility of window collisions. Experts say fake owls and rubber snakes do not prevent collisions. Just as well, closing the drapes does not work either. This is but all a myth because a bird can still see its reflection from outside the glass.

Actions to decreasing bird-window collisions:

- 1.) Consider leaving your windows dirty for weeks at a time, especially during mating season.
- 2.) Decorate your window with silhouettes or stickers to break up the transparency from outside a window.

- 3.) Use netting to cover the outside of windows, thus acting as a vertical trampoline. This is an extremely effective method researched by Cornell University. Thus resulting in no bird deaths or injuries.
- 4.) Install external sunshades or awnings outside windows to block the reflection of sunlight.
- 5.) Relocate birdbaths or birdfeeders. Keep them no more than 3 feet from a window. Bird may still fly into them but without enough force to injure themselves.
- 6.) Place vertical tape strips from outside of the glass, mark the glass with soap or permanent paint.

If you find a window collision victim gently examine it for further injuries. If neither wings are dangling and its eyes look normal see if it can perch itself on a branch. If so, it will recover on its own.

If the bird has a noticeable injury get it to a rehabilitation center as quickly as possible. Broken bones need immediate attention. If not attended to within hours it will need surgery. Place the bird in a shoebox; the darkness will calm the bird while it revives. Every 15 minutes or so, take the bird outside and uncover the box. If the bird does not fly off within a few hours, it must be taken to a rehabilitator. Remember, it is illegal in the United States to keep any migratory bird in captivity, as it is cruel and unethical. If a bird is hurt or healthy, it should never be in the care of one's home.

Furthermore, Dr. Daniel Klem adds, "Intensive studies at single homes reveal one out of every two strikes results in a fatality. Glass is an indiscriminate killer that takes the fit as well as the unfit of a species population." Continuing our part in helping our feathered friends will bring both man and bird closer to harmony.

Resources:

Susan Spear, Cornell Lab of Ornithology

<http://www.allaboutbirds.org/Page.aspx?pid=1184>

EarthSky <http://earthsky.org/earth/why-do-birds-collide-with-windows>

Em Connel MrCarty http://www.ehow.com/about_5417776_do-fly-up-house-windows.html

Greg Seaman <http://eartheasy.com/blog/2010/02/9-ways-to-help-birds-avoid-window-collisions/>