



ALL ABOUT WINDOW STRIKES

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Safeguarding Your Windows For Birds

Window strikes are something you should be aware of and try to prevent, especially if you feed wild birds in your backyard. Start by identifying which window is the problem—large picture windows are usually the worst culprits. Go outside near your feeders and look at your windows from a bird's point of view. If you see branches or sky reflected in the glass when you look at your window, the birds can as well. Can you see through the window into the house? If so, the birds can too. Is there another window on the opposite wall of the house? It may give birds the illusion of a fly-through passage to the habitat outside.

Try some of these ideas to make your windows safer:

Relocate feeders and other attractants.

You can start by simply moving your feeders and birdbaths to new locations. Bird strikes usually occur at particular windows, so moving feeders farther away from them may solve the problem entirely. You can also try placing your feeders much closer to the glass—if a feeder is just a foot or two from a window, birds may still fly into it, but not with enough force to injure themselves.

Avoid apparent visual tunnels.

Bright windows on the opposite wall from your picture window may give the illusion of a visual tunnel through which birds may try to fly. Try making one window less transparent by keeping a shade drawn or a door closed, or by altering the lighting inside the house. You can also make the glass less transparent by taping paper or cardboard on the inside of the panes—unslightly, but a good temporary measure until you can find a better solution.

Break up external reflections with stickers or plastic wrap.

Break up window reflections by sticking objects to the outside of the glass. Black plastic silhouettes of a falcon, hawk, or owl sometimes work, not because they look like predators but because they disrupt the window's reflectivity. Semi-transparent stickers can also do the job—some have decorative bird shapes, or look like spider webs. Sheets of plastic food wrap may work too.

Disrupt reflections with spray-on materials or soap.

Try spraying fake Christmas snow on the outside of the window, or drawing streaks across it with bar soap. Again, the goal is to break up external reflections.

Attach branches in front of windows.

For a more natural look, attach dead tree branches in front of your window. They may cause the birds to slow down and avoid the window as they fly toward it. You can arrange the branches so they don't obscure your view.

Attach hanging objects to deter birds.

Hang lightweight, shiny items in front of the window so they move in the breeze and dissuade birds from approaching. Try strips of shiny, reflective plastic (hung a few inches apart), old aluminum pie plates, or unwanted compact discs.

Cover windows with netting.

Place netting over the window. It provides a physical barrier to birds flying into the glass, yet won't obstruct your view. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology installed crop netting—the kind used to keep birds away from fruit trees—in front of a large picture window next to our bird-feeding garden in our original building. The result? No more dead and injured birds. Small-mesh netting is best—ours was 5/8" (1.6 cm) in diameter—so if birds do fly into it they won't get their heads or bodies entangled but will bounce off unharmed. You can mount the netting on a frame, such as a storm-window frame, for easy installation and removal. You could also try insect screening material.