



## URBAN DESIGN FOR BIRDS

### Minimizing bird strikes in Hoosier cities

Birds face many obstacles when migrating through our various Hoosier cities and towns. Lights from atop multi-story buildings are fatal attractions to birds as they migrate at night and reflective glass creates false impressions that prove fatal to flying birds. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service has estimated at least 100 million birds die annually in the U.S. due to building collisions. Indiana Audubon provides these recommendations for both city planners and backyard bird enthusiasts.

#### LIGHTING

Eliminating or reducing unnecessary lighting is one of the easiest ways to reduce collisions while also saving energy and reducing costs to building owners. Note that these measures will not eliminate collisions, and their effectiveness is highly dependent on local conditions, including the degree of bird friendly design and practices of neighboring buildings. We encourage building management and the public to support light reduction in downtown areas by turning off all bright display lighting on the top of your building in the downtown area or along the lakefront from 11:00 p.m. until sunrise during spring migration (March 15 to June 15) and fall migration (August 15 to November 15) in Indiana.



- Avoid unnecessary lighting, including perimeter lighting after 11pm.
- Install motion sensors on all lights that activate only when people are present.
- Ensure all exterior lighting is shielded or pointed downward rather than skyward.
- Follow FAA obstruction and marking guidelines regarding strobe lights rather than steady burning lights.
- Draw shades or blinds after dark.
- Eliminate decorative/vanity lighting completely during migration periods.
- Schedule cleaning crews before 11pm so that lights can be turned off earlier.
- “Seek out “Lights Out” programs in Indianapolis and other cities to reduce light pollution.



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## LANDSCAPING AND GLASS

When habitat is next to building or other structures that include glass (windows, bus shelters, glass walkways, etc.) they pose a threat to both feeding and migrating birds. While most people have seen or heard a bird hit a glass window or door, most people believe it's a rare occurrence. Add up the deaths and the number are staggering. While we can never eliminate glass threats, there are many ways to minimize the potential bird tragedies.

- Create “visual noise” to show obstacles in glass, whether they be cut outs, netting, or new and innovative glass that deters bird collision.
- Space bird feeders either far away or within 3 feet of windows.
- Avoid using glass in supplemental structures (guard rails, walkways, etc...).
- If you have indoor plants or shrubs, space them away from the window when possible.
- Avoid creating an effect where landscaping funnels birds towards glass panes (e.g., walkways, passageways, edges) or where approaches to a building (vehicles or people) flush birds towards windows
- Consider applying UV reflecting patterns that only the birds can see.
- Promote laws and regulations for bird-safe structures in your city or town.

## Support local bird effort with Bird Town Indiana

Modeled after the “Tree City USA” program and the highly successful Bird City Wisconsin, Indiana Audubon Society is pleased to support **Bird Town Indiana**. If your community meets at least seven criteria, it can apply for Bird Town Indiana recognition. Indiana Bird Towns are those that both the public officials and citizens demonstrate an active and ongoing commitment to the protection and conservation of bird populations and their habitats. Learn more at [indianaudubon.org/bird-town-indiana](http://indianaudubon.org/bird-town-indiana).



### Resources:

Bird Collisions: [abcbirds.org/program/glass-collisions](http://abcbirds.org/program/glass-collisions)

Lights Out Information: [audubon.org/news/lights-out-turn-birds](http://audubon.org/news/lights-out-turn-birds)

Lights Out Indy: [lightsoutindy.org/dy.org](http://lightsoutindy.org/dy.org)

## FIVE BIRD DETERRENDS THAT DON'T WORK

### 1. Hawk silhouettes:

One window decal in any shape will not frighten birds.

### 2. Single window decals:

Affixing a single decal to a window will not deter birds.

### 3. Plastic owls:

Birds learn quickly that a motionless plastic owl is not a threat.

### 4. Noise deterrents:

Common noise deterrents (high-frequency ultrasound, noise cannons, and recorded distress calls) are ineffective at preventing birds from colliding with windows.

### 5. Magnetic fields:

Magnetic fields are not effective at protecting birds from window collisions.

Source: [\*Fatal Light Awareness Program\*](#)

