

Discourage Birds from Flying Into Your Windows

You hear a loud thump against one of your windows. Then you look outside and see a dead, dying or stunned bird on the ground. Birds fly into windows because they may not see transparent window glass for what it is – a solid barrier. Or, they may be intoxicated from eating fermented fruit.

In the fall and into winter, birds flock together and may feast on fruit. The fruit they eat – blackberries, pyracantha or juniper berries, crabapples or mountain ash fruits – may be fermented. These birds may be tipsy, inadvertent victims of alcohol consumption. Alcohol aside, predator birds may crash into windows as well. Windows may reflect nearby shrubs and trees, so a bird may think it is just flying into some vegetation. Instead, it crashes into the glass. Or, a bird seeing its own reflection in the window may think it can fly to where the ‘other’ bird is.



With large picture windows, a bird may be able to see all the way through a building and think that it has a clear flight path through open space. Houseplants hanging inside a window are another hazard. These may give a bird the illusion that it can fly into the plants. Instead, it flies into the glass. Here are some techniques to help reduce the hazards from windows to wild birds:

If you have a particular window that seems to be a regular hazard, try attaching black silhouettes of flying hawks or strips of opaque tape or flagging to windows to make the glass visible to birds. You may want to buy special window stickers for this purpose. The stickers are transparent to humans, but reflect ultraviolet light so they are seen by birds.

Install screens or lightweight netting in front of windows to act as a cushion if birds fly into them. Put up an owl or other raptor statue close to the problem-causing window. Close or partially close your blinds or curtains. Keep houseplants away from windows, as these attract birds.

Move bird feeders either away from windows (20 feet or more) or closer to windows (three feet or closer) to help prevent injuries.

If you find a window-injured bird, leave it alone if it is not in danger from cats or other predators. If you feel the bird might be threatened, pick up the bird gently using a towel. Place it in a well-ventilated box. Put the box into a quiet, dark place such as a closet. Do not try to feed or give water to the bird. Do not handle it further. If you hear the bird moving around, open the container outside and let it fly away if it can. The bird may be suffering from a mild concussion and recover if it's left alone out of harm's way to rest for a while. You may be able to release the bird yourself after it has recovered.

This article adapted from Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, USDA. Please contact the Farm Advisor's office at cecalaveras.ucdavis.edu or 754-6477 with your agricultural questions.