

BirdStrikesKC

A conservation project to reduce avian window collisions in Kansas City



Spring 2019 Summary ~ BirdStrikesKC's first season

The Problem

» Collisions with windows kill an estimated 365 to 988 million birds each year in the United States¹. Over half of these window strikes occur on low-rise buildings.

» A recent study² by Cornell University indicated that Kansas City is the 7th-most dangerous city in the country for migrating birds based on a combination of geography, avian migration patterns and the city's building configurations and disorienting lights.

» Birdwatchers and other casual observers in Kansas City have supplied numerous accounts of finding window-killed birds at a variety of KC buildings, bridges and walkways.

¹Loss, S.R., T. Will, S.S. Loss and P.P. Marra. 2014. Bird-building collisions in the United States: Estimates of annual mortality and species vulnerability. *The Condor: Ornithological Applications* Vol. 116: 8-23.

²Horton, K.G., C. Nilsson, B.M. Van Doren, F.A. La Sorte, A.M. Dokter and A. Farnsworth. 2019. Bright lights in the big cities: migratory birds' exposure to artificial light. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* Vol. 17(4): 209-214

Solutions

» Start by documenting areas where window strikes are frequent. They do not occur all over a building; typically there is one or just a few windows that are causing bird mortalities. These windows may be highly reflective, transparent, and/or have nearby vegetation that "tricks" birds into flying into the window.

» Once problematic windows are identified by documenting frequent bird strikes, a building owner or manager can choose to implement one of a number of reduction strategies. There are many after-market window treatments designed specifically to deter birds from hitting windows while being decorative or almost invisible to the human eye. In some cases a solution may simply involve partially closing blinds inside the window or placing something decorative in front of it.

» Burroughs Audubon and the Missouri River Bird Observatory have compiled information on strike reduction techniques and products. We are happy to help find the most efficient, inexpensive ways for property managers to save birds.

In **Spring 2019**, Burroughs Audubon Society of Greater Kansas City and the Missouri River Bird Observatory trained and deployed **7 volunteer surveyors**. Volunteers chose the building(s) they wanted to survey and did so on their own schedules. A survey consisted of walking on public sidewalks all around a building and looking for dead birds on the pavement or vegetation within 20 feet of the building. Once a dead bird was located, surveyors noted the window with which it had collided (based on where it had fallen) and took several pictures of the bird and window for identification and record-keeping.

13 were buildings surveyed regularly from late April to the end of May. An additional eight buildings were surveyed once. Data from the latter were not included in the summary on the following page. Three of the buildings that were regularly visited had no bird mortalities! Unfortunately, several buildings were found to have windows that are extremely risky for birds. Those buildings will continue to be surveyed and MRBO and Burroughs staff will be reaching out to the building owners with solutions.

Bird Mortalities at Eleven Buildings in Kansas City April 15th - May 30th, 2019

Species	
Swainson's Thrush	9
Unknown (due to condition)	6
Tennessee Warbler	5
Gray Catbird	4
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	3
American Robin	2
House Wren	2
Mourning Dove	2
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	2
Red-eyed Vireo	2
Warbler spp.	2
American Redstart	1
Black-and-White Warbler	1
Chipping Sparrow	1
Common Yellowthroat	1
Eastern Kingbird	1
European Starling	1
Nashville Warbler	1
Prothonotary Warbler	1
Summer Tanager	1
Thrush spp.	1
Vireo spp.	1
White-throated Sparrow	1
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1
Total	52



Photo by James Gorski.

Above: a Swainson's Thrush during migration.

Below: Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Tennessee Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Swainson's Thrush.
Found and photographed by BirdStrikesKC volunteers during spring 2019 surveys.

