

Pets:

An Environment Canada study estimates that cats kill between 100 and 350 million birds each year in Canada alone.

The best ways to prevent your cat from killing birds are:

- keep your cats inside
- in outdoor enclosures
- or on a leash with you

This is also much safer for your cat. According to the Ontario SPCA, outdoor cats have an average life expectancy of 2-5 years while indoor cats live 12.5 years, on average.

The second-best ways to limit a cat's ability to kill outdoors are:

- Make your cat less successful at killing birds by using a bird-safe collar cover or cat bib, available at some pet stores in Victoria and on-line: <https://shop.sPCA.bc.ca/collections/im-a-cat-person/products/cat-bib>, <https://www.birdsbesafe.com>. Studies indicate that these products are safe effective at reducing bird catches. **Collar bells are ineffective.**
- Eliminate bird feeders that spill seeds to the ground where the birds are easy prey.



Off-leash dogs can be very harmful to birds, especially in migration and nesting seasons. The extra energy expended and reduced feeding time from being repeatedly flushed by dogs can be lethal for migrating birds. Ground nests of birds such as many sparrows, nighthawks and killdeer can be destroyed by inquisitive dogs, or the parents scared off, leaving eggs and nestlings vulnerable to weather, predation and unfed.



Common Nighthawk Chick: *The spectacular dives and booming displays of these threatened ground-nesting birds are disappearing in BC due to an 80% decline in this species between 1968 and 2005. The open areas of the Highlands still provide suitable nesting habitats for nighthawks, but they are very vulnerable to increasing disturbance by humans and pets.*

If you find a sick or injured bird:

Call Wild Arc: **250-478-9453** or the BCSPCA phone line: 1-855-622-7722

If they are not available, there is information at: [https://sPCA.bc.ca/programs-services/wildlife-rehabilitation/rescue-wild-animal/?](https://sPCA.bc.ca/programs-services/wildlife-rehabilitation/rescue-wild-animal/?utm_source=sidenav&utm_medium=promo&utm_campaign=wildlife&utm_content=rescue)

[utm_source=sidenav&utm_medium=promo&utm_campaign=wildlife&utm_content=rescue](https://sPCA.bc.ca/programs-services/wildlife-rehabilitation/rescue-wild-animal/?utm_source=sidenav&utm_medium=promo&utm_campaign=wildlife&utm_content=rescue)

IMPORTANT! Many fledglings leave the nest while they are still naive and flightless but, in the vast majority of cases, their parents are still taking good care of them. If you find a young bird that appears uninjured, healthy and not in immediate danger, leave it be until you've spoken to Wild Arc or the BCSPCA. If you watch from a distance, you will probably see a parent return and

How you can help to minimize bird deaths in the Highlands

Highlands Sustainable Land Use Select Committee

A version of this pamphlet with active links is available on the Highlands website:

<https://www.highlands.bc.ca/>



Dark-eyed Junco

Human activities are estimated to kill **269 million** wild birds every year in Canada (Calvert et al. 2013). In the Highlands, we are lucky to have a wide variety of native birds. There are several simple steps we can take, particularly with our **homes** and **pets** to reduce bird mortality.

Building design:

Bird strikes on structures are the second-largest source of human-caused bird mortality in Canada and the United States (Calvert et al., 2013; Loss et al., 2014). Each year, an estimated **16 to 42 million birds are killed across Canada from collisions with buildings** (Machtans et al., 2013). According to one study, residences are responsible for 44% of bird collisions: <https://flap.org/why-do-birds-hit-buildings/>

Buildings can be designed to significantly reduce the risk of bird collisions. Many cities in Canada have published guidelines for new building designs. The City of Ottawa's guidelines are an excellent example. It is available here: https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents/files/birdsafe_designguidelines_en.pdf The document includes design factors such as environmental context, glass transparency and reflectivity, design traps, structural features, landscaping, interior and exterior lighting and quick fixes for existing buildings. For more information see: <https://safewings.ca/ottawa-bird-strategy/> and: <https://flap.org/stop-birds-from-hitting-windows/>

One of the easiest ways to reduce bird deaths in the design of a Highlands home is to avoid **transparent deck railings**. Another little-known serious bird hazard is **open pipes**, such as chimneys, vents and fence posts; birds fly in and then can't back out. Make sure these things are properly capped on your property. Beware of other trapping hazards as well. **Sticky rodent and insect traps** can lead to lingering deaths for birds and other small animals. Even **fake halloween spider webs** can entrap our year-round Anna's Hummingbirds.

Birds and Glass:

The key to preventing collisions is to **make windows and glass railings visible to birds** by applying visual markers in a dense pattern. To reliably prevent collisions, both reflective and clear glass should feature an integrated, printed or applied pattern that meets the following criteria:

- **SPACING:** Separate markers by no more than 5 x 5 cm (2 x 2 inches)
- **SURFACE:** Apply markers to the exterior surface of glass
- **CONTRAST:** Ensure markers stand out in contrast to the transparent or reflective glass surface under varying daylight conditions. Duotone markers are preferred where possible
- **SIZE:** A marker should be no smaller than 6 mm (1/4 inch) in diameter
- **BIRD FEEDER LOCATION IS ALSO IMPORTANT:** Position bird feeders closer than 1m (3 ft) or farther than 10m (33 ft) from glass windows and railings.

Ineffective Measures

- **INTERIOR BLINDS, DRAPES, AND SCREENS:** These do not address reflections on the outside of the window and it is difficult to ensure they will be used properly by occupants.
- **ANGLED GLASS:** Although this may reduce collision injuries, it doesn't reduce the overall number of collisions.
- **AWNINGS AND OVERHANGS:** These do not eliminate outside reflections.
- **TINTED OR COLOURED GLASS**
- **BIRD DETERRENTS:** High-frequency devices, balloons, noise-makers, predator recordings, and plastic owls are ineffective.
- **TREATMENTS APPLIED TO THE INSIDE OF WINDOWS:** Reflections on the outside surface can render them invisible.
- **VISUAL MARKERS THAT ARE SPACED TOO FAR APART:** This leaves most of the glass untreated and deadly.



An effective window treatment

Products such as **Feather Friendly Visual Marker Tape**, adhesive dots applied to the outside of your windows, create a pattern that prevents collisions. It comes on a roll of tape, which peels off to leave behind a grid of subtle white or black dots in a 5 cm grid pattern. Feather Friendly tape is highly recommended for its aesthetic appeal and longevity. Decals are available at pet stores, the Victoria SPCA at <https://sp-ca.bc.ca/news/striking-bird-window-collisions/> and <https://shop.sPCA.bc.ca/collections/wild-arc>, info@safewings.ca), from the manufacturer online (featherfriendly.com), or retail at Lee Valley Tools and other stores. Feather Friendly also has commercial products available in different styles, applied as a sheet of film that's then peeled off. Choose a pattern with 5 cm spacing for maximum effectiveness.

Note that UV-reflecting glass or other products that rely on birds detecting UV patterns are not recommended. Many bird species cannot see UV light, and UV light levels are lowest during the times of day when the risk of collisions is highest.