

Cats & Birds

Tips to keep birds safe from outdoor cats



Indoor cat

Willow
(formerly
Kebab)

adopted as a
kitten in 2021
gets her bird
fix safely
inside!

Each year, cats kill 2.4 billion US birds. In fact, cats--in particular feral cats--are the single biggest human-related threat to bird populations.

We recommend cats be kept indoors for their own safety (the life expectancy of an indoor cat is from 10 – 20 years, and only 5 years for the average cat allowed to roam outdoors) but obviously keeping cats indoors is better for songbirds, too.

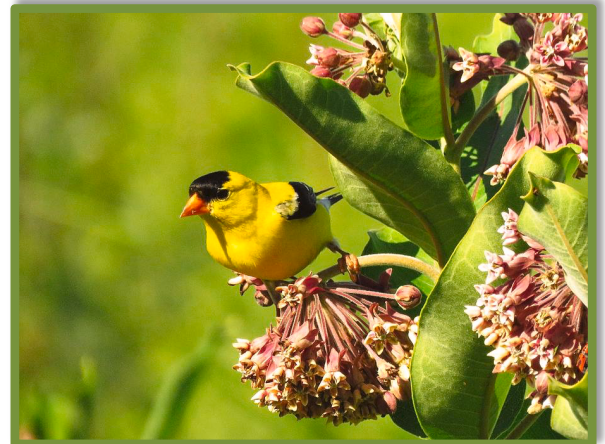
What to do if you have an outdoor cat, or your neighbor does? Some tips:

Provide cover for birds: Bare lawns mean birds have few places to hide. When landscaping, be sure to add in dense plantings, shrubs and evergreens.

But, keep feeders away from hiding spaces: Feeders and bird baths should be placed either very close to a window (within 3 feet) or farther away (10 feet minimum) to prevent deadly bird collisions with your windows. But they also need to be placed where there is open space all around so birds can see potential predators. Experts recommend feeders & baths placed 10-12 feet from spots where cats could hide.

Feed birds naturally: Choose plants that feed birds with their seeds and berries throughout your lawn. This will prevent birds from congregating in just one area,

attracting cats. Great plants to consider: sunflowers, swamp milkweed (shown above) and coneflowers.



Moth balls as a deterrent are NEVER recommended as they are very toxic for cats, birds and other wildlife.

The right collar: Collars with bells *may* be helpful, but are not a true solution: birds did not evolve to equate a bell with danger. Bright colored collars may be the most effective. For the cat's safety, they must be made for cats (not dogs) and feature a quick release clasp.