

# Promoting Biodiversity & Creating Safe Environment for Birds in Urban Environments

Ashley Bramwell, Toronto Wildlife Centre

Presentation to the Riverdale Horticultural Society, October 12, 2022

## 3 Tips on Promoting Biodiversity in Our Gardens

- ✓ Native plants and shrubs provide nutrition and shelter for wildlife
- ✓ Leave stems, stalks, and seed heads as they are home for valuable insects
- ✓ If safe, leave decaying tree, they are full of nutrients for insects that are a valuable part of the ecosystem

Learn more at Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests

<https://www.yourleaf.org/>

## “Should I have a bird feeder?”

Bird feeders should be placed and cared for properly or they harbor disease and leave the birds vulnerable to prey.

- If feeders are not cleaned weekly, and there are many birds that congregate, diseases like conjunctivitis (pink eye for birds) can spread quickly and leave birds fully or partially blind
- Since birds congregate at bird feeders, they are easy targets for prey like cats and hawks
- Bird feeders attract other species like rats, foxes, and raccoons

## 5 Tips on Creating Safe Bird Feeders & Baths

- ✓ Clean your bird feeder with hot, soapy water once a week
- ✓ Clean up fallen seeds weekly
- ✓ Don't use human food, especially greasy food like peanut butter. The birds can't get it off their feathers and it damages their ability to stay waterproof, dry, and warm
- ✓ Place the bird feeder between 0.5 to 1.5 feet from your window. This might seem counter intuitive but if prey comes to the bird feeder and scare the birds, they will try to fly away. If the window is further from the bird feeder, they are ability to get some speed, will crash into your window, and potentially be hurt from their crash and/or the prey
- ✓ Clean your bird bath regularly, once a week

**Toronto Wildlife Centre Hotline**

**416-631-0662**

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## Birds and Windows

There are several factors that place birds in harms way in an urban environment.

1. Some birds migrate at night because there are fewer prey but the moon, and bright starts confuse and stress birds. City lights not only confuse and stress birds, but they draw them in, leaving them vulnerable to crashing into reflective glass.
2. Houses and buildings with windows on both sides of a corner look like a shortcut to birds and increase the likelihood of them crashing into a window.
3. Hanging plants near a window appear like a natural environment and increase the likelihood of a bird try to fly 'between' the plant and an object, resulting in a crash into your window.
4. If you can see a reflection in your window so can birds. They try to fly between trees and objects in your window but end up crashing into the glass.

## 3 Tips on Creating Bird-Friendly Windows

- ✓ Apply window decals like dots *feather friendly* and no more than 2" apart or small birds will try to fly between the
- ✓ Create a design on your window with a bar of soap! It is pretty and easy to wash!
- ✓ Apply decals or soap designs on the *outside* of your window

## Outdoor Cats and Wildlife

Feral and outdoor cats are responsible for thousands of bird deaths in the Toronto area. Most are not reported so the exact number is unknown.

Cats not only harm or kill birds, they also attack other species, most are babies who are vulnerable.

A cat attack is an emergency for a bird. Don't hesitate to contact the Toronto Wildlife Centre if you find an injured bird from a cat attack.

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### **Useful Resources to Learn More and Advocate for Wildlife and Biodiversity**

**Toronto Wildlife Centre**

<https://www.torontowildlifecentre.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/torontowildlifecentre/>

Twitter: <https://www.facebook.com/torontowildlifecentre/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/TWCWildlife/featured>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/torontowildlifecentre/>

Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.ca/torontowildlife/>

**Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests**

<https://www.yourleaf.org/>

**Flap Canada – Protecting Birds**

<https://flap.org/>

**Adhesive bird-friendly window dots**

<https://www.featherfriendly.com/>

(also check [Lee Valley](#))

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