

A homeowner's guide to
Protecting Birds of Alberta



How you can help.




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Canada's and Alberta's birds are in trouble; some species have declined by over 90%. Declines can be attributed to habitat destruction and climate change, and an estimated 270 million birds die each year due to human factors such as collisions with windows and buildings, and hunting by cats.

We have a collective responsibility to mitigate loss and protect our birds as they are a key part of a healthy environment.

This booklet features valuable “did you know” and “what you can do” information that makes it easy for everyone to do something to help protect our bird populations.

REFERENCES

Keep Cats Safe and Save Bird Lives catsandbirds.ca



Birds
and Bird Feeders

Did you know?

Putting your bird feeder in the wrong location can be harmful to birds. In fact, incorrectly placed bird feeders can cause bird strikes on windows and increase opportunities for predators.

What can you do?

Here is what you can do to make sure your bird feeder is in the right place:

1. Place your bird feeder either less than one metre from your home or more than 10 metres from your home.
2. Place your bird feeder on a metal pole or in other hard to reach places to prevent predators from reaching it.



REFERENCES


Bird Studies Canada birdscanada.org

Nature Canada naturecanada.ca/initiatives/save-bird-lives



Birds
and Cats

Did you know?

Between 100 and 350 million birds are killed every year by cats in Canada. In fact, predation by domestic cats is the number one direct, human-caused threat to birds. Unfortunately, well-fed cats and cats with collar-bells still kill birds. 

What can you do?

Here are three things you can do to ensure your cats don't have an opportunity to harm birds:

1. Keep your cats inside.
2. Spay or neuter your cats.
3. When outdoors, keep cats on leashes or consider creating an outdoor enclosure in your yard for your pets.

REFERENCES

American Bird Conservancy's "Cats Indoors" program abcbirds.org/program/cats-indoors/cats-and-birds/
Cats and Birds catsandbirds.ca
Nature Canada naturecanada.ca/initiatives/save-bird-lives



Birds
and Pesticides

Did you know?



Pesticides kill more than pests. In fact, between 1 and 4 million birds are killed each year as a result of pesticide use. Using herbicides to kill weeds and other vegetation is also harmful as they eliminate much needed food for birds.

What can you do?

Here are two ways you can reduce the risk to birds on your property:

1. Avoid using pesticides in and around your yard.
2. Maintain a healthy population of native plants to prevent the spread of invasive plants on your yard and reduce the need for pesticides.

REFERENCES

Nature Canada naturecanada.ca/initiatives/save-bird-lives



Birds
and Windows

Did you know?

The most common causes of birds striking windows are vivid reflections of trees on windows, birds seeing through one window and out another or when lights are left on at night. In fact, between 16 and 30 million birds are killed each year in Canada as the result of window strikes.



What can you do?

These four simple things can help prevent birds from striking windows:

1. Place visual markers (e.g., screens, films, decals and other easy to use products) on windows.
2. Place feeders either less than one metre or greater than 10 metres away from windows.
3. Turn indoor lights off at night as much as possible.
4. Leave drapes closed or partially closed.

REFERENCES

Birds and Windows Project (University of Alberta) birdswindows.biology.ualberta.ca

Fatal Light Awareness Program flap.org

Nature Canada naturecanada.ca/initiatives/save-bird-lives



Birds
and Your Backyard

Did you know?

There are many ways to make your backyard more bird friendly. In fact, planting native vegetation and having bird feeders with the correct seed can attract more birds to your property.

What can you do?

Here are several things you can do to make your backyard more bird-friendly:

1. Plant native shrubs and trees such as saskatoons, chokecherries, blueberries, dogwood, honeysuckle, spruce, birch and aspen.
2. Reduce your lawn by 25% and allow grasses to grow taller; tall grasses provide nesting areas for birds.
3. Fallen leaves that are left under shrubs will attract worms and insects that provide food for birds.
4. Select a bird feeder and bird seed based on the type of birds you'd like to attract.
5. Install a bird bath that is shallow, gently sloped, and with water no deeper than two inches for birds to wade in and drink from.
6. Install nest boxes on trees to attract birds that would normally nest in old woodpecker holes.
7. Keep your cats indoors.



REFERENCES

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology allaboutbirds.org

Nature Canada naturecanada.ca/initiatives/save-bird-lives



Birds
and You

Did you know?

Getting too close to birds and their nests can disrupt and negatively affect their behaviour and habitat, and cause serious problems that contribute to declining bird populations.



What can you do?

Here are a few easy things you can do to enjoy the birds without causing adverse effects:

1. Stay at least 5 meters away from nests.
2. Never pick up a young bird or remove one from its nest.
3. Use binoculars or a camera with a telephoto lens.
4. Join a birding or nature group to learn from experienced birders.

REFERENCES

Ethical Birding Guidelines mindfulbirding.org/existing-guidelines

Nature Canada naturecanada.ca/initiatives/save-bird-lives



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