



Photo credit: Dori Eldridge, Macaulay Library

# MAKE YOUR HOME MIGRATION-FRIENDLY

## The Issue

Every spring and fall, billions of birds migrate between their breeding and wintering grounds, and most migrate at night. Along the way, they encounter numerous threats. Many of these are man-made.

Artificial lighting can attract and disorient birds, causing them to collide with buildings. And its byproduct, “sky glow,” often obscures the moon and stars, which act as birds’ natural navigation aids.

Additionally, birds cannot distinguish the difference between open flyways and solid glass—that is, windows or buildings with glass exteriors—because glass reflects light, both day and night. Any time birds take to the air, they risk fatal collisions with these reflective surfaces. This threat is amplified during migration periods, but collisions also can occur at any time of day or year.

Commercial buildings are only part of the issue—residential neighborhoods also pose a

threat. For homeowners, brightly lit windows with open curtains or raised shades may look welcoming, but they can prove deadly to migrating birds.

## The Impact

A recent [study](#) suggests, in the U.S. alone, window collisions kill 1.92 to 5.19 billion birds each year, with potentially billions more worldwide.

The good news: Some of the most important solutions are also some of the easiest. Dousing unnecessary lights and closing shades, blinds, and curtains after sundown—especially during peak migration—go a long way toward preventing or minimizing the window strikes that cause injury and death for birds.

## Benefits

- Minimize unnecessary bird injuries and death.
- Cut your energy costs.
- Demonstrate your commitment to sustainability and conservation.
- Preserve night sky views.
- Lower your carbon footprint.

## Solutions

- Turn off decorative and unnecessary lighting, both indoors and out.
- Down-shield exterior lighting to eliminate all light directed upward as well as horizontal glare.
- Install motion sensors for outdoor lighting.
- Install external screens on windows.
- Close blinds or curtains after dusk to reduce “sky glow.”
- Move plants away from windows.
- Place bird feeders directly on windows or sills.
- Create patterns on reflective glass surfaces to alert birds to the presence of glass. (Quantity and spacing matter; multiple markings 2 to 4 inches apart are recommended).

## Timing

Bird-window collisions increase during migration and when young birds start flying. Crucial times for action: spring and fall migration and the breeding season for our area (generally spring through early summer).

**WHEN TO GO  
LIGHTS OUT IN LOUISVILLE:**  
Peak migration months:  
April through May | September through October  
Peak migration times: 11 p.m. to 6 a.m.