

Bird Safe Bucks County: A Community Monitoring for Bird Collisions

Millions of birds die annually from window collisions. We need your help to make Bucks County safer for birds, and that starts with learning more about where birds are colliding with windows in our area.

The first step to fixing the problem is learning more about what kinds of birds fly into windows, where they do it, and when they do it. You can help by

(1) looking for birds that have flown into windows around your neighborhood, around your workplace, and anywhere else you walk near buildings, and

(2) then reporting information about those birds to Bird Safe Bucks County & Bird Safe Doylestown.

Instructions

THIS COMMUNITY-BASED BIRD COLLISION MONITORING IS ONLY FOR THE BIRDS DIE OFF OF WINDOW COLLISIONS. IF YOU SUSPECT ANY OTHER CAUSES OF DEATH, PARTICULARLY AVIAN FLU SYMPTOMS, PLEASE DO NOT HANDLE THE BIRDS AND CALL PA GAME COMMISSION.

We are using iNaturalist, a free app and online community of nature lovers, to collect data from community volunteers like you. Sign up for an iNaturalist account on their website. It's a lot like signing up for any other social network, and once you've signed up you can submit observations of plants, animals, fungi, slime molds, etc. and then take part in identifying what other users submit. Step two is signing up for the Bird Safe Bucks County project in iNaturalist.

A "project" in iNaturalist is a way of pulling together observations. When you sign up for the Bird Safe Bucks County project and submit your observations to it, it makes it easy for Bird Safe Bucks County to find and pull your data for analysis.

Equipment and Supplies ----

Devices: You can use your smartphone or other device to upload observations directly to iNaturalist. You can also use a camera and upload photos later. In that case bring whatever you'll need to take notes about the time, date, and location where you find each bird.

Pencil or pen: You will need a pencil or pen to keep notes on a number of things while monitoring the study route. Clip board: A clipboard is not necessary but having one may facilitate your ability to record information in situations where no convenient writing surface is available.

For Injured/Stunned Birds (see "What to Do with Injured/Stunned Birds " below)

For Salvage of Dead Birds (see "What to Do with Dead Birds " below)

When to Look: Most window strikes happen in the spring and the fall. They also tend to happen overnight or early in the morning, making the morning the best time to search. Start as early as you can manage, even before dawn.

Where to look: You can search around buildings near your home, where you work, or anywhere in between. Please look very carefully all along the edges of buildings as well as on the sidewalk and street edge for birds. As you search around buildings over time you will quickly become familiar with various nooks and crannies into which bird carcasses may have fallen that are not in plain sight. If you have access to above-ground surfaces such as balconies and roofs next to taller portions of buildings, these can also be important to search. Last, talk with building maintenance staff about where they find dead birds to learn about hotspots.

Take Pictures: Take at least three pictures from different sides or angles (feel free to turn dead birds over) to make sure you include any features of the bird that will help in identification. Please also include photos showing the building next to or behind the bird. Knowing where exactly birds are dying will help identify specific lethal building features.

Upload the Observation: If you're using your phone or other mobile device to upload the observation to [iNaturalist](#), you can do it right there where you find it. iNaturalist will use the location and time and date information from your device to help fill out the observation. If you think you know what kind of bird it is, go ahead and enter the species. iNaturalist will offer a suggestion for the identification if you don't, and you can accept that suggestion or reject it. That's up to you. We'll take a look at the photos later and confirm the species either way. If you plan to take the photo home and use your computer to upload the observation, be sure to note when you found the bird and the exact location. You might need to mark that on a satellite image in iNaturalist. (If you are using your phone to take the photo, it might include location and time data in the photo images file, and you'll see iNaturalist automatically add that information to your observation.) However you upload your observation, please be sure to select the option to add it to the Bird Safe Bucks County project - <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/bird-safe-bucks-county-bird-collisions-reporting-project>.

There are a lot of resources on iNaturalist about how to upload observations. It's a good idea to review those and practice uploading observations of other things, say of weeds growing out of the sidewalk or bugs you find in your garden. That way you'll be comfortable using iNaturalist when you do find a bird.

What to do with the birds?

If the bird is alive, please call one of our local wildlife rescues (see list below). They will give you instructions on what to do based on the specific situation.

If the bird is dead, please consider donating it to the Academy of Natural Sciences' research collection. Please see instructions below about how to do this.

What to Do with Injured/Stunned Birds

Most dazed birds found below buildings have suffered internal injuries from which they are unlikely to recover without intervention. Place your bird in a box with air holes and contact:

Bucks County, PA: The Aark, <https://www.aark.org/> (215) 249-1938

Montgomery County, PA: Philadelphia Metro Wildlife Center, <https://www.phillywildlife.org/> (267) 416-9453

Philadelphia County, PA: The Wildlife Center at the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education, <https://www.schuylkillcenter.org/departments/wildlife/> (215) 482-7300

Mercer County, NJ: Mercer County Wildlife Center, <http://www.wildlifecenterfriends.org/> (609) 303-0552

New Castle County, DE: Tri-State Bird Rescue and Research, <https://tristatebird.org/> (302) 737-9543

What to Do with Dead Birds

Thank you for volunteering as a community monitor to help Bird Safe Bucks County track bird collisions during the spring and fall migratory seasons in the Bucks County area! If you can salvage the dead bird specimen with associated data (see directions below), we would like specimens to be donated to the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University (ANS).

You are allowed to be in possession of a dead bird if your intent is to transfer this bird to the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University (ordinarily it is illegal to possess dead birds).

The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University has all appropriate federal and state permits required to accept and retain these specimens for research, documentation, and educational purposes.

You MAY NOT KEEP any salvaged birds or their parts, it is against the law without these permits.

If you are not in a position to donate or transport to Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University by yourself, please contact Bird Safe Bucks County coordinators. They can arrange for freezer storage and transportation of birds to ANS during the migration season.

Collision Data

Please use the following directions to associate critical data with each specimen so that it is optimally useful for the project.

Supplies needed for salvage of dead birds:

- ✓ Your cell phone camera (or other camera) for iNaturalist photos of dead birds
- ✓ Ziplock bags (sandwich, quart, and a few gallon sized for bigger birds such as American Woodcock)
- ✓ Labels (you can print blank data labels from page 2 of this document).
- ✓ Sharpie or other permanent pen for writing on labels.

Procedure:

1. Document for iNaturalist Birds Safe Philly Bird Strikes Project: If you find a dead bird double check that it is in fact dead and not simply stunned. Take pictures of the bird and of the surroundings for upload to iNaturalist.

2. Pick up dead bird for salvage: You can use the ziplock bag turned inside out as a hand covering to pick up the bird without touching it or you can sanitize your hands after handling it. The museum will accept incomplete specimens and can help identify these salvaged parts. (PLEASE PLACE ONE BIRD ONLY IN EACH ZIPLOCK BAG.)

3. Fill out a Data label and place inside the bag with bird: (these data are critical to our data collection for the project). Legibly fill out the salvage label using a sharpie or other permanent pen and provide:

a. Date

b. Time

c. Your Name (Community Monitor Name)

d. Address including city etc. where found

e. Side of Building (N,S, E or W)

f. Species

g. Cause of death or injury (building collision, window collision, roadkill, non-cat predation, predation by cat, fell out of nest, unknown)

h. iNaturalist observation number. You can find this number on your computer by opening the observation and looking at the web address. The observation number will be at the end of the address. For example, for “<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/59614918>” the number is “59614918.” On a mobile device you can find the web address and the number when you click to share the observation.

4. If you can, transport the dead bird specimens to the Academy of Natural Sciences (ANS): During Spring migration (Spring: 15 March – 30 May) any day of the week or weekend you can drop birds off at a no contact drop off at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, 19th street entrance, between the hours of 8:00-9:00 am. There will be a labeled bin inside the sliding glass doors, where you can deposit your bags of specimens. If you cannot drop the specimens off on the day that you salvaged them, you can place the bagged birds in a standard freezer and get them to the museum on another day during the drop off hours. **If you are not dropping off on the day of salvage it is critical that you freeze the specimens.**

4.a) If you can freeze but not transport to ANS, please contact Bucks County Birders at Bucksbirders@gmail.com

4.b) If you cannot freeze, please safely place them out of walkways and building near the bushes.