



# Naturally

*A Special Bird Safe Philly Edition of the Wyncote Audubon Society Newsletter*

*“Connecting People With Birds for Over 100 Years!”*

Wyncote Audubon Society  
1212 Edge Hill Road  
Abington, PA 19001  
[wyncoteaudubon.org](http://wyncoteaudubon.org)

The Wyncote Audubon Society is a Chapter of the National Audubon Society serving over 2000 Audubon members and friends who reside in Chestnut Hill, East Falls, Manayunk, Mt. Airy, Roxborough and North, Northeast, and Northwest Philadelphia. Wyncote Audubon also serves major portions of Montgomery County including communities located in the Pennypack, Poquessing, Perkiomen, Tookany/Tacony/Frankford, and Wissahickon Watersheds.

## Bird Safe Philly!

### An Important Initiative is Launched

Triggered by a catastrophic bird collision event in Philadelphia on October 2, 2020, that received international publicity, the Wyncote Audubon Society convened a meeting of a group of key conservation partners on October 14, 2020 to actively address the bird collision problem in Philadelphia. As a result, the Bird Safe Philly Coalition was formed. The Bird Safe Philly Leadership Group is comprised of representatives from the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, Audubon MidAtlantic, the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, the Valley Forge Audubon Society, and the Wyncote Audubon Society. The work of the group was catapulted by the publication of an Op Ed in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* later in October. This attention further inspired the Bird Safe Philly Leadership Group to formulate a plan to respond to make Philadelphia and the region “bird safe.”



The mission of Bird Safe Philly is to address the protection of birds and their conservation through the pursuit of bird friendly programs in the greater Philadelphia region. These programs include a “Lights Out” Program aimed to enroll the major buildings in center city Philadelphia and beyond to darken their lights during the spring and fall migration periods each year.

## In This Issue

- Bird Safe Philly!** A Coalition Responds to the Catastrophic Event that Occurred on October 2, 2020.
- Lights Out Philly!** Learn About the Amazing Response of Building Owners in Center City Philadelphia!
- A Call for Volunteers** Volunteers are Needed to Help Bird Safe Philly
- Monitor in Your Community** There are Ways You Can Help Right in Your Own Neighborhood!
- Prevent Bird Collisions at Home and Work!** There are Simple Measures You can Employ to Make your Windows Bird Safe!
- Engage, Educate, Advocate** Spread the Word to Make Our Regions Bird Safe!

## Keep in Touch with Wyncote Audubon!

Check our Website and Facebook Pages and Sign Up to Receive our Monthly Wyncote Audubon “UPDATES” and the special editions of the “ADVOCATE”

visit: [wyncoteaudubon.org](http://wyncoteaudubon.org)

# Bird Safe Philly!

## An Important Initiative is Launched

(Continued from Page 1)



Stephen Maciejewski took this photo of two Wood Thrush killed from a building collision. He picked them up during the fall 2020 migration. Stephen covers a routine monitoring route in center city Philadelphia.

Bird Safe Philly will expand existing monitoring efforts. There is an initiative efforts to recruit, train, and deploy new volunteers. The monitoring effort helps to document and study bird mortality that results from collisions with buildings. There are also plans to engage, educate, and advocate for bird safe actions. Bird Safe Philly seeks to encourage the governing bodies of Philadelphia, surrounding counties, and local municipalities to adopt proclamations, resolutions, and ordinances aimed to reduce hazards to birds. We seek to engage residents to make the buildings, homes, and open spaces in our neighborhoods more bird friendly. This includes efforts to protect, restore, and enhance habitats for birds. Efforts to educate and engage citizens will encourage action for birds and their conservation; foster youth environmental education, and increase widespread awareness of the value of native birds and their habitats. We need our communities to recognize the intrinsic, ecological, recreational, and economic significance of birds in our communities.

Incredible work has taken place by many members of the team in the four months since the coalition was formed. The official public launch of Bird Safe Philly took place during a press conference on March 11, 2021. The Lights Out Campaign anchored the press conference. It reflected the months long work led by the Academy of Natural Sciences. ANS staff gathered representatives from Bird Safe Philly, city government, and the building industry to design and implement a Lights Out initiative. The press conference announced the participation of the major building owners in Philadelphia who have stepped up to pledge participation in the Bird Safe Philly Lights Out Campaign.

**“Up to 1,500 birds flew into some of Philly’s tallest skyscrapers one day last week. The slaughter shook bird-watchers.”**

October 2, 2020. It triggered the broad response from the birding community and the urgency to establish the Bird Safe Philly Coalition. The Coalition includes representatives from the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, Audubon MidAtlantic, the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, and the Valley Forge and Wyncote Audubon Societies (the two local National Audubon Society chapters that combine to include Philadelphia in their respective chapter territories.)

<https://www.inquirer.com/news/birds-center-city-philadelphia-audubon-october-2-2020-20201007.html>



These represent a sampling of the many birds discovered by Stephen Maciejewski on October 2, 2020. News coverage that resulted from this massive bird mortality event helped to trigger the formation of the Bird Safe Philly Coalition!

# Lights Out Philly!

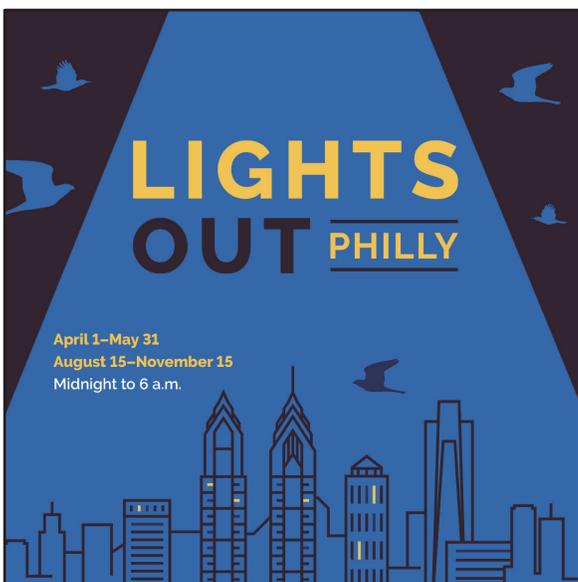
## A Bird Safe Philly Milestone!

Up to one billion birds die each year across the United States when they collide with buildings and windows attracted by their bright artificial lights at night. The most common species to meet their demise by Philly buildings are Ovenbirds, Common Yellowthroats, White-throated Sparrows, and Gray Catbirds, to name a few species. Bird Safe Philly, a coalition of nonprofits, has joined forces with the City of Philadelphia and the building industry to help mitigate the problem in Philadelphia — situated in a migration corridor for birds along the Atlantic Flyway.

Philadelphia is joining the national Lights Out initiative. This voluntary program involves turning off or blocking as many external and internal building lights as possible at night during migration seasons when birds pass through the city by the millions. Lights Out Philly launches April 1<sup>st</sup>, at the start of peak spring migration and runs through May 31<sup>st</sup>, when most winged migrants will have passed through Philadelphia. In the fall, as birds travel south, Lights Out Philly will take place between August 15th and November 15th. During the spring and fall migration periods, property managers and their tenants will be asked to voluntarily switch off unnecessary lights between midnight and 6 a.m., especially in a building's upper levels, lobby and atrium, and turn off or dim external lighting.

Lights Out Philly is the result of a collaborative effort led by the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, Audubon Mid-Atlantic, and two local Audubon Society chapters: the Valley Forge Audubon Society and the Wyncote Audubon Society. In addition to the City of Philadelphia's Office of Sustainability, the Bird Safe Philly initiative is endorsed by the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA), Philadelphia and the Building Industry Association of Philadelphia.

Comcast, which owns the two tallest buildings in the city, Brandywine Realty Trust, the city's largest landlord, and a dozen other building operators/owners also have pledged their support of this effort. Early adopters of Lights Out Philly include: BNY Mellon Center, Comcast Technology Center and Comcast Center, Jefferson Center, One South Broad, One Liberty Place, Two Liberty Place, and 1515 Market Street. Philadelphia joins 33 other cities with Lights Out programs including New York, Boston, Chicago, Atlanta, Baltimore, Wilmington, Del., and Washington, D.C. The National Audubon Society, along with partners, established the first Lights Out program in 1999 in Chicago.



### Philly can save thousands of birds that crash into our buildings and die | Opinion

*We could save tens of thousands of birds a year if building owners would turn off or reduce their nonessential building lights.*

This Op-ed., coauthored by Robert Peck and Keith Russell, appeared in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* on October 21, 2020. It resulted in the response, by the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, to take the lead for the Bird Safe Philly Coalition to establish the Lights Out Program that was successfully launched on March 11, 2021 and followed by a “Lights Out” Resolution adopted by Philadelphia City Council. The resolution was introduced through the leadership of Council Members Katherine Gilmore Richardson and Kenyatta Johnson.

# Bird Safe Philly Monitoring Call for Volunteers

## Have You Seen a Dead Bird?

If you spend any time in and around Center City Philadelphia, it is possible you have already encountered a bird that unfortunately collided with a building. Much of what we know about bird-window collisions has come from the discovery of dead or injured birds at the base of the buildings they've struck. These observations teach us many things, such as which bird species are more prone to collisions, or which overnight conditions are likely to pose the biggest threat. Every incident documented is a data point that broadens our understanding of the problem and informs us as we develop solutions.

## What can I do to help?

Whether you are completely new to observing birds or a PhD of Ornithology, there's a role for you in the Bird Safe Philly monitoring program. Bird Safe Philly is piloting a tiered volunteer monitoring approach. This includes an intensive focus in Center City Philadelphia. This is an option for volunteers able to commit to an early morning patrol route. Another option is community level monitoring in neighborhoods throughout the region. For folks who can only commit time periodically, there is an incidental monitoring option. This is especially for folks who just happen across a dead or injured bird and want to "report" it with iNaturalist. Folks interested in incidental or community monitoring will employ the free iNaturalist app available for smart phones. Monitors need not be an expert at identifying birds. In addition to the expertise of the researchers and birders organizing Bird Safe Philly, the monitoring program also utilizes the robust network of individuals already using the online iNaturalist platform.



## Center City Monitoring

The core of Bird Safe Philly monitoring began when a few dedicated volunteers took early morning routes around Center City, revisiting the same sites several times a week and documenting every dead or injured bird encountered at the bases of the buildings on their monitoring routes. This intensive monitoring is typically conducted during the annual spring and fall migration, (April-May and September-November) when migrating birds are traveling great distances, mostly overnight, to and from wintering grounds. Found birds are photographed and detailed notes are taken regarding the species of bird, where and when it was found and which face of the building it seems to have collided with. Dead birds are collected and delivered to the Academy of Natural Sciences and injured birds are taken to wildlife rehabilitation clinics when possible.

## Community and Incidental Monitoring

You can help by monitoring window collisions near you! Take some time to look for birds that have flown into windows around your own neighborhood, workplace, and anywhere else you pass near buildings. You can do this by yourself, or recruit your friends and classmates to help. Report your information about any dead or injured bird you find to Bird Safe Philly via our [Bird Safe Philly iNaturalist Project](#).

## How it works:

iNaturalist is a free community science platform, accessible via desktop or mobile app, that allows users to take photos of wildlife all around them and upload those as observations to an online database. An iNaturalist project is a handy way to collect all of these window-strike observations in one place. By using the app or website and joining the Bird Safe Philly project, you can view all of the observations in the project as they come in and contribute your own. Participation only requires a cell phone or tablet equipped with the iNaturalist app or a camera and notepad for taking notes and submitting later at home using the iNaturalist website.

**What to do:**

**Step 1:** Download the iNaturalist app or visit iNaturalist.org to create a free account. Search for and join the Bird Safe Philly Bird Strikes project.

**Step 2:** Spend some time seeking out window collision victims. Search around the base of buildings, typically below the windows, though birds striking taller buildings may drift farther from its base than you'd expect. Though commonly associated with the massive glass structures of large cities, window strikes can just as easily happen on smaller scale buildings like your home.

**Step 3:** Upon finding a bird, take a photo and upload it to iNaturalist, being sure to add the observation to the Bird Safe Philly project. You'll want to note the time, date and location of the observation, and if you know it, identify the species of bird. This is less critical, as iNaturalist relies on a large community of nature enthusiasts to help in identification. If you don't know what it is, it's likely someone else will chime in with an ID. If you're uncertain, simply ID your observation as Birds (*Class Aves.*) Hit Submit Observation and your bird will have been successfully submitted to Bird Safe Philly.

## What To Do if You've Found a Dead Bird...



The Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia accepts dead bird specimens you discover. Wild birds are protected and it is illegal to possess dead birds or any parts, however, you are allowed to be in possession of a dead bird if your intent is to transfer this bird to ANS, who has all the 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.

Place individual birds in their own ziplock bag. Include inside the bag a label with the date, time, address (including city, etc. where found), side of building if known, species if known, cause of injury (window collision,) iNaturalist observation number. Transport the dead

bird specimens to the Academy of Natural Sciences, 1900 Benjamin Franklin Pkwy, Philadelphia PA, 19103. During spring or fall migration period you can drop birds off at the Academy of Natural Sciences' 19th street entrance, between the hours of 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM any day of the week or weekend.

## What To Do if You've Found an Injured Live Bird...

Though some birds may fly off after a while, most dazed birds found below buildings have suffered internal injuries and will likely die elsewhere if not treated. Place your bird in a box with air holes and contact:

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

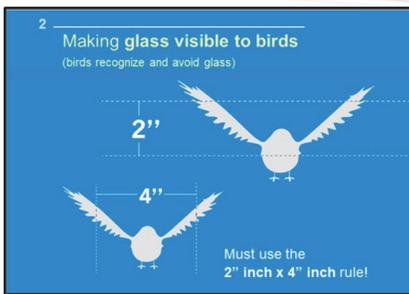
**In Montgomery County:** Philadelphia Metro Wildlife Center,  
<https://www.phillywildlife.org/> (267) 416-9453

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



# TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT BIRD COLLISIONS AT HOME

As members of Wyncote Audubon, not only do many of us appreciate viewing birds from our homes, we actually go out of our way to make our homes inviting havens for our avian visitors. As we go about stocking our bird feeders, topping off our bird baths and planting native plants to create habitat, we must also consider the importance of reducing threats that birds face when they pass through your yard. After outdoor cats, the leading causes of death for birds around our homes are window collisions. Fortunately there are a few steps you can take as a homeowner to greatly reduce the risks for birds visiting your yard.



window.

Applying adhesive sticker products such as [Feather Friendly](#) or ABC Tape, observing the 2” by 4” rule, can be a very effective remedy to mitigate bird collision. Again, it is important that these remedies are placed on the outside surface of the window. As a general guide, windows should be clean and temperatures must generally be 50 degrees Fahrenheit or warmer for installation. Collidescape is the brand name of a perforated vinyl product with multiple ways it can effectively be used. Note that there are many products sold, such as raptor silhouettes or other kinds of decals, but they are not effective unless placed on the outside surface of the window using the 2”x4” rule!



Acopian Bird Savers are a simple and low cost remedy to mitigate bird collisions. It requires lengths of cordage strung up roughly 4” apart to create a visual barrier in front of the glass. The birds “see” the cords as a barrier and they will avoid the windows. Visit [birdsavers.com](http://birdsavers.com) to learn more and find DIY instructions. This method is broadly applied at the windows at the Discovery Center, 3401 Reservoir Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19121. You can visit the Center to see an example of this method. Other methods that employ the same principle are the installation of screening in front of the window to serve as a barrier to birds that would otherwise strike the glass. Windows that have full length exterior window screens can be effective!

## Reduce evening lighting

Interior lights left on give birds a view beyond the window that they may attempt to fly through. Consider turning lights off when not needed, and install curtains to dim their effect. Outdoor landscape lighting can also contribute to disorienting migrating birds. Consider installing timers or turning off all unnecessary lights. If the lighting is essential for safety, consider fixtures that are designed to direct the light downward.

Additional information on reducing threats to wild birds can be found at: <https://pa.audubon.org/conservation/protecting-birds-striking-glass-windows>

# ENGAGEMENT, EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

Bird Safe Philly organizations are working to engage residents, businesses, schools, and other organizations in learning more about the issue of bird collisions and the variety of ways we can prevent them. Bird collisions happen any time of day and year, whether with high-rises in Center City or low-rise windows in suburban areas in and around the City. These collisions can be prevented with a variety of solutions, including some simple and inexpensive ones. Whether you are a homeowner, tenant, student, business leader, advocate or decision maker, you can take part in creating solutions to help birds.

**Bird-Window Collisions**  
**Bird-Window Collision Working Group (BCWG)**  
 A collaboration between The Acopian Center for Ornithology, Muhlenberg College, Lehigh Valley Audubon Society, Wyncote Audubon Society, and Audubon Pennsylvania.

Three years ago, Wyncote Audubon Society worked with Lehigh Valley Audubon Society, the Acopian Center for Ornithology at Muhlenberg College, and Audubon Pennsylvania to establish the Bird Collision Working Group to address the issue of bird collision with buildings of four stories or less. The “Bird Collision Working Group” created a PowerPoint program designed to be delivered to audiences throughout the community. It explains the issues that glass presents for birds and simple actions individuals can take to address their windows to mitigate collisions. Visit the “Bird Safe Homes” Facebook Page to find multiple photos of installed window treatments. Contact [birdsafephilly@gmail.com](mailto:birdsafephilly@gmail.com) to request this program.

Help us spread the word about bird collisions and the solutions that can prevent them from happening. Talk to your community members about the simple steps they can take to reduce light and make their windows bird-friendly. Encourage the adoption of standards that can help create a more bird friendly region. Bird Safe Philly will be looking ahead to recommend bird friendly resolutions and ordinances that municipalities may consider for adoption. The adoption of a “Lights Out” Resolution by Philadelphia City Council is a milestone. The adoption of similar resolutions by other municipalities in the region will serve as an indicator as to how wide spread a “Lights Out” program can become.

The Bird Safe Philly initiative also seeks to encourage architects and builders to design and construct buildings that are “bird friendly.” The adoption of LEED’s bird safe guidelines in new construction is one way to accomplish this. We can also work with the building industry for municipalities to adopt ordinances that incorporate bird friendly principles. New York City and Toronto are two cities that have already adopted just such model ordinances. Chicago is on the threshold of following suit.

City of Philadelphia  
 Council of the City of Philadelphia  
 Office of the Chief Clerk  
 Room 402, City Hall  
 Philadelphia  
 (Resolution No. 210210)

**RESOLUTION**  
 Supporting a City of Philadelphia “Lights Out” Campaign and recognizing and honoring the Bird Safe Philly Coalition, the Building Industry Association of Philadelphia, and the Building Owners and Managers Association Philadelphia in their collaborative effort to protect the migratory bird population.

WHEREAS, Bird-window collisions in the U.S. are estimated to cause as many as one billion bird deaths each year. These deaths are one of the factors most responsible for a 29% decline in North American bird populations since 1970. About 70% of North America’s land birds (350-400 species) are migratory. Of these, more than 80% migrate at night; and

WHEREAS, Most native songbirds live in rural or forested habitats that are light-free at night. During migration, intense lights can cause birds to collide with windows or walls, or cause them to crash in confusion, leaving them weak and exhausted when they land; and

WHEREAS, Each year, 100 million or more birds pass through Philadelphia during spring and fall while migrating between their breeding and wintering grounds. Many never complete their epic journey because they are killed when they slam into buildings and fly into windows, confused by the bright lights and glass; and

WHEREAS, The most common species to meet their demise by Philly buildings are Ovenbirds, Common Yellowthroats, White-throated Sparrows, and Gray Catbirds; and

WHEREAS, In an effort to solve this problem, the Bird Safe Philly Coalition, the City of Philadelphia, and the building industry have partnered to establish a “Lights Out” campaign; and

WHEREAS, Thirty-three cities in the United States already have “Lights Out” programs including New York, Boston, Chicago, Atlanta, Baltimore, Wilmington, and Washington, D.C.; and

City of Philadelphia - 1 -



At the Federal level, Illinois Congressman Mike Quigley and Virginia Congressman Morgan Griffith have reintroduced the Federal Bird Safe Building Act for the consideration of the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress. In addition, New Jersey Senator Cory Booker has introduced a companion version in the Senate. Once adopted, these become a model for private industry to follow. We need to see new buildings, like the European example pictured in the photo, planned, designed and constructed here in Philadelphia, the wider region, and across the United States.



## Wyncote Audubon Society

1212 Edge Hill Road  
Abington, PA 19001

Non-Profit Organization  
US Postage  
PAID  
Ft. Washington, PA 19034  
Permit No. 743

# YOU CAN HELP TO MAKE OUR COMMUNITY BIRD SAFE!

### **Make Your Windows Bird Safe**

Conservative estimates project that one million birds die each day due to collisions with glass. More than half of these deaths occur in buildings that are four stories or less in height. These include apartments, homes, schools, stores, businesses and other properties. Learn about low cost options for several do-it-yourself measures to mitigate bird deaths. (See Page 6 )



**BIRD SAFE PHILLY**

### **Use Less Exterior Lighting**

Many birds migrate during the nighttime hours. This includes warblers, thrushes and many other songbirds. Bright lights can confuse migrating birds and can contribute to collisions with buildings. Individuals can take steps to minimize exterior lights at their homes. (See Page 3)

### **Monitor Bird Collisions Around You**

Bird Safe Philly notes that there are more frequent collisions during spring and fall migrations. Where and when collisions occur is important data to collect. This data can be analyzed to develop and recommend effective interventions. Get involved with Bird Safe Philly monitoring. (See Pages 4 & 5)

### **Support Bird Safe Philly!**

There are many ways to support Bird Safe Philly efforts. Go to [birdsafephilly.org](http://birdsafephilly.org) to learn more ways you can help!