

DIY - Bird Saver Window Treatments

by Denice Wilkins

Over the course of just one month this Fall we heard the heartbreaking thud of six birds hitting our windows. Fortunately all these birds were well enough to fly off. Unfortunately however, that's not a guarantee they didn't die of their injuries later.

Then there are the birds that hit our windows when we aren't within earshot, drop dead below and get carried away by scavengers. We never see them so we might be lulled into thinking that our windows don't kill. Well, I know mine do. I have found the lifeless bodies of woodpeckers, chickadees and others lying below my windows. Remorse and guilt don't help. It's about time I did something.

Across NA, it is estimated that from 100 million to 1 billion birds are killed annually in collisions with windows. According to the Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP) Canada, years of research and data have shown that collectively, residential homes kill or injure more songbirds than all other buildings combined. Maybe my windows only kill or injure a few birds a year but multiply that by all of us and the number is staggering. I care about birds. If I'm not motivated to do something, who will?

So, what to do? FLAP describes a number of ways to make your windows safe for birds - from DIY projects to manufactured products. The objective is to break-up the reflection in the window so birds aren't deceived into thinking they can fly right through. Unfortunately, those hawk silhouettes some of us have tried, are not remotely adequate. After looking at the options, I decided to go with a

simple, inexpensive, homemade window treatment -
Acopian BirdSavers.

The people that designed Acopian BirdSavers aren't out to make a ton of money. They are a "family of engineers and naturalists" who just want to save birds. So, right there on their website (www.birdsavers.com) you can click on "Order Bird Savers" or "Make Bird Savers", where they provide a "quick guide" to DIY. The idea is that if you hang cords at regular intervals along the width of your window and down to the bottom of the glass, you will achieve 90-100% reduction in bird window collisions. A study published by the Wilson Ornithological Society tested the idea and proved just that.

Using the short summary of how to make what Acopian calls "zen wind curtains" I decided to make my own. They have been hanging for several weeks now and nary a bird has hit our windows. When looking out, I focus on the view beyond the cords and feel good knowing that some beautiful bird that has just managed to survive a harsh winter, or who has just arrived after migrating thousands of miles, will not meet its death at my windows. And I have this great conversation piece when friends stop by!



Looking out my window from inside.



Looking at my window from outside. The small windows on either side of the picture window have screens so no cords are necessary.

How do you know if your windows are a danger for bird strikes? Look at them from the outside. If they look like mirrors reflecting the sky or surrounding vegetation, or if you can see your houseplants inside, they have the potential to be deadly.

In making my bird saver window treatments I wrote



detailed plans complete with photos to make it easier for others to make their own. I would be happy to e-mail the plans to you, for free, of course. Please contact me at denicejohn@live.ca. Nearly every species of songbird is declining in numbers. You can make a difference!