

# MIGRATION INFORMATION AND CLASSROOM PROJECT IDEAS



Peabody

Many songbirds, like Peabody, the White-throated Sparrow, are at risk of being badly injured or killed by colliding with windows at homes, schools and businesses. Birds see the sky and landscape reflected on windows and mistakenly think that they can fly into this reflected landscape. When they do, they can hit the window hard enough to be injured or killed!

Also, many of our songbirds migrate at night and are attracted to tall, brightly-lit buildings, especially during rainy or foggy weather. Birds then collide with lighted windows or are attracted to and confused by other building lights. They may fly around the lighted buildings to the point of exhaustion; falling to the streets and sidewalks below. There they may be eaten by scavengers or they may collide with reflective windows during the daytime, when they try to fly out of the city.

Many songbird species are already declining due to habitat loss both here and on their wintering grounds in South and Central America, climate change, pollution and improper use of pesticides. We need to do all that we can to make sure migrating birds, like Peabody, have safe passage through our community!

## Birds at Risk

Hundreds of species of birds are at-risk for being injured or killed by window collisions. Some of these are common species that you are probably familiar with like Cardinals and Robins. But others are birds you may not have ever heard of like American Woodcock, Ovenbirds, Scarlet Tanagers, Canada Warblers, Blackburnian Warblers and Brown Creepers. Check your school library to learn more about these birds.

Most birds are at greatest risk of hitting windows during migration. Peak migration times in Wisconsin are late April through early June, and late August through October.



Cardinal



Brown Creeper



American Woodcock

## Is Our School Safe for Birds?

Use this questionnaire to find out.

- Have you ever heard or seen birds hit our school's windows?
- Have you ever found a dead or injured bird near our school's windows?
- Does your school have large windows that reflect the landscape or sky?
- Does our school have windows that line-up so that you can see in one window and out through another window, like a tunnel?
- If you answered "yes" to one or more of these questions, your school is not completely safe for birds.

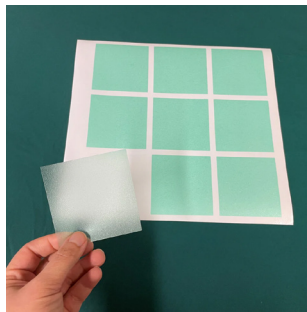
## How Can We Help Make Our Classroom and School Bird-Safe?

Talk to your teacher and principal about making our classroom, and even our entire school, safe for birds.

With their permission, you could:

- Buy or make designs to apply to our classroom or school's windows, such as streamers, strings of old CDs or DVDs, or window decals. These items help create "visual markers" to divert birds away from the glass. Create your own window decals with Cling Vinyl Film (available at craft stores or online) or clear vinyl purchased at a local fabric or craft store. Use stencils to cut shapes out of the vinyl and color them with permanent markers to decorate them.

Once you've completed your decals, ask your teacher to help you place the decals on your classroom windows. To be the most effective at saving birds from hitting the windows, the decals should be spaced no more than about 10 inches apart."



*Bird collision prevention window clings make windows visible to birds.*

If our school's principal or Engineer wants to buy decals or other products to help protect birds from hitting other windows at your school, WindowAlerts and Whispering Windows are available through Wally's Workbench online and at our shelter.

- Close draperies or blinds on some windows to prevent birds from seeing in one window and out through another window.
- If our school has a bird feeder, we can move it either within three feet of our window or move it at least 30 feet away from windows. If a feeder is within three feet of the window and birds visiting the feeder become frightened and try to fly away, they can't build up enough speed to hit the window hard enough to get hurt. If a feeder is at least 30 feet from a window, birds visiting the feeder are less likely to have problems colliding with our windows, because they are so far away from the feeder.

- Help teach other students in our school to protect wild birds by preventing window collisions in their classroom, school and at home.

## Are Your Home's Windows Safe For Birds?

Use this questionnaire to find out.

- Have you ever heard or seen birds hit your home's windows?
- Have you ever found a dead or injured bird near your home's windows?
- Does your home have large windows that reflect the landscape or sky?
- Does your home have windows that line-up so that you can see in one window and out through another window, like a tunnel?

If you answered "yes" to one or more of these questions, your home may not be completely safe for birds.

## How Can I Help Make My Home Bird-Safe?

Talk to your parents about making your home's windows safe for birds. Ask them to visit our web site at [www.wihumane.org/wildlife/wings/](http://www.wihumane.org/wildlife/wings/) to learn more.

With your parents' permission, make designs to apply to your home's windows to help keep birds from hitting the glass. You could make streamers to hang in front of the windows, make stencils for applying shapes to the glass using Window Wax, make strings of old compact disks to hang in front of your windows, or draw designs on your windows using Window Crayons or other NON-permanent markers.

*Suggested Activities:*

- Play The Migration Game with your students to help them understand the many difficulties birds face on migration.
- Help your students learn more about the bird species mentioned.
- Help your students learn more about the threats birds face: climate change, pesticides, pollution, collisions with radio towers, and habitat loss.
- Help your students learn more about bird migration.
- Help the students conduct the school bird-hazard survey.

- Help the students write a letter to the principal, asking him or her to help them take action at school to protect birds from window collisions.
- As a classroom activity, have the students make window appliquéés, stencils, strings of old CDs, streamers, etc. and apply them to your classroom windows.
- Talk about what students can do at home to protect birds from window collisions.
- Help the students communicate the bird collision issue with other students in their own or other schools.
- If you think it appropriate for your students, you can show them one of these images to help them understand what can happen to birds when they collide with windows:



Window collision victims

## How to Help Injured Birds

Spencer, the Swainson's Thrush on the right was injured when it saw the landscape reflected on a window and tried to fly into it. Fortunately, someone found the bird and brought it to the WHS' Wildlife Rehabilitation Center for help. But most birds aren't so lucky. What should you do if you find an injured bird? Read more to find out....

An injured bird is easy to identify. She may hop or fly in small circles and will often sit on the ground or a perch with her feathers fluffed-out. Rapid first aid is extremely important for an injured bird. If you see a bird that you think may be injured, tell your teacher, parent or other adult. They can then call the WHS Wildlife Rehabilitation Center for advice. **DO NOT** try to capture the bird yourself! The best first aid for the bird is to provide her with a dark, quiet place to rest. This helps the bird recover from stress and helps prevent the bird from going into shock. If an adult decides that it is necessary to intervene, they should place something over the bird to capture her, like a cardboard box or a basket. In some cases even a towel or an article of clothing will work. For example, if a small bird has collided with your window and is on the ground, an adult may gently capture her with gloves or drape her with a cloth. They should then place the bird in a box or paper grocery bag that has small, pencil-sized air holes poked through the side. Include a ravel-free cloth with no loose strings or paper towels on the floor inside. Close the container securely and place it in a dark, quiet, warm place where it will be undisturbed for an hour. After an hour, an adult should open the container outdoors. If the bird flies out and takes off, she has recovered. If she does not fly, flies weakly, flies in circles, or otherwise appears to be injured, close the container or recapture the bird and call the Wisconsin Humane Society Wildlife Rehabilitation Center for further advice at (414) 431- 6204.



Spencer, the Swainson's Thrush

In order to minimize stress for the bird during transport, do not play your car radio and keep noise to a minimum. For large injured birds such as owls, hawks, herons and geese, please talk to our staff for safe capture advice and possible assistance from a trained WHS Wildlife Rescue Volunteer.

