

Did you notice the change at the PLANTSFORBIRDS page at National Audubon's site? It is very important. Here's the new text.

"And, if you're attracting birds using native plants, you will want to ensure that your space is bird-friendly in every way. Visit our [Reducing Collisions](https://www.audubon.org/PLANTSFORBIRDS) page to learn more about protecting birds from collisions with glass. <https://www.audubon.org/PLANTSFORBIRDS>" In the words of the leaders of our Bird-Friendly Communities program, we must "integrate the native plant and (window) collisions" outreach programs.

Why? Because if we do not protect birds in our yards against window collisions and cats, no amount of native plants will really help birds.

Who says so? Doug Tallamy, the nations' leader on native plant promotion agrees. He has observed, "This is critical strategic analysis." In fact he has posted it on his website at <https://homegrownnationalpark.org/guest-posts/window-strikes-and-native-plants-guest-contributor>

How can this be? We all know native plants are good for birds. Really, it is as simple as $+2-2=0$. Let me explain. The scientific basis of our native plant efforts is research by Denise Narango, Doug Tallamy and Peter Marra. It compared the nesting success of chickadees whose feeding range was more than 70% native trees and shrubs with chickadees whose feeding range was dominated by exotic trees and shrubs. Here's what they found. It is great news. If the yards in the feeding range are over 70% native then two more nestlings survive in each nest. Because of that increase in nestling survival, the population of the chickadees is sustainable - not going down like just about all species have been for the last 50 years. <http://www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.1809259115>

Now for the minus 2. Every year on average each home's windows kill 2 birds. In a birdy yard, it can be a lot more. That's the minus 2.

Bird-building collisions in the United States: Estimates of annual mortality and species vulnerability Scott R. Loss,^{1,a*} Tom Will,² Sara S. Loss,¹ and Peter P. Marra¹ . Volume 116, 2014, pp. 8-23 DOI: 10.1650/CONDOR-13-090.1

+ 2 nestlings from native plants minus two birds killed by windows = no net gain.

This why preventing collisions is critical. It's a zero sum effort if the chickadees are not protected against window collisions.

Window collision prevention is not one good idea on a list of 10 good ideas to help birds. Collision prevention is the required precondition of any successful bird friendly yard program. It's that simple.

In many clubs one person is promoting native plants, another is promoting bird safety. If the programs are not integrated, the native plant program will not work.

"You can't fill the tub unless you plug the drain."

Of course it is a little more complicated than $+2-2=0$. More than a pair of chickadees will nest in the 20,000 sq/ft. feeding range of a pair of chickadees. You can read a fuller analysis

at <https://birdfriendlyyards.net/birdfriendlybirdsaf/>

Before we promote native plants and ask bird lovers to spend a lot of money to buy and plant natives, we must tell them that before they go to the nursery that they have to install window strike prevention on their windows.

Window strike prevention is affordable. The average plant installation landscape cost for a yard is between \$1,400 and \$5,000. Window strike prevention for an entire sunroom can be installed from between \$30 (DIY) and \$160 (commercial product, handyman installed.)

See <https://birdfriendlyyards.net/consumerguide/>

Science Based Solutions Are Available. Fortunately decades of research show us how to “plug the

drain”. <https://www.muhenberg.edu/academics/biology/faculty/klem/aco/Bird-window.html> The available scientifically validated bird window strike prevention systems are described in the “Consumer Guide to Window Strike

prevention.” <https://birdfriendlyyards.net/consumerguide/> The very popular window alert type systems are dangerous for birds because are ineffective if applied as

recommended. <https://birdfriendlyyards.net/2021/06/23/badforbirds/>

This is not, I repeat not, NOT, NOT, NOT an argument against native plant promotion. It is instead a plea to the leaders of the birding community to realize that unless they integrate window strike prevention into our bird friendly yard campaigns, our native plant efforts will very likely fail. The windows in our homes are just as much a part of our ecosystem as the native trees we plant.

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