Lights out for flights out

Each year in Canada, an estimated 25 million migratory birds die from collisions with buildings. One of the most common causes of collision is light pollution. As cities become brighter, the need for bird-friendly practices grows.

Kingston's location along Lake Ontario

Birds commonly migrate along Lake Ontario because as it has favourable geography and many resting points. The Great Lakes facilitate nocturnal migration and can concentrate birds along the shorelines and land corridors. Birds act this way to reduce the risk of no place to rest, to look for more opportunities for food, and to be prepared if the weather changes quickly.

How light affects the night

Birds migrate at night due to an instinct influenced by factors such as shifts in temperature, moon phases, daylight availability, and light tail winds. Typically there are fewer predators out at night, too.

On foggy or rainy nights when the cloud cover is low, birds fly at lower altitudes and are more likely to be disoriented by city lights. This can cause them to veer off their migration route, but the bigger threats are building collisions and the energy they use while confused.

How friendly are your outdoor lights?

Before adding another light to your property, consider how it could affect birds by using this assessment from DarkSky International:

- Is it useful?
- Is it targeted downwards, away from the sky?
- Is it low-level and not brighter than necessary?
- Is it only used when needed?
- Is it a warm-coloured light to help reduce light pollution?

How you can make a difference

During spring and fall migration, from **11 p.m. to 6 a.m.**, residents and businesses are encouraged to reduce artificial light. You can help by:

- Turning off the lights when leaving your home or business, and turning off lights in the office (if possible)
- Turning off or shading lights that are in spaces with vegetation behind glass
- Turning off landscape and outdoor lighting. If possible, point the fixture downwards to prevent light spill
- Using blinds, shades or curtains in lit-up rooms to keep light isolated in the room or home
- Installing motion sensors or time-controlled lights to minimize light use in the dark
- Using warm coloured light bulbs that are in the 2100-2200 Kelvin area as well as lower-lumen (lower brightness) bulbs

Not only does this save birds, but it saves energy and money as well!

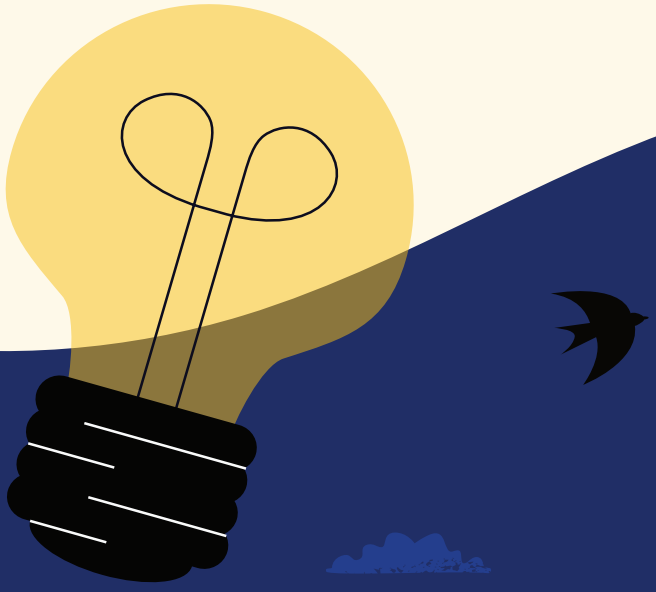
If you see a bird that has collided with a window

Check carefully for signs of life. A bird that hits a window may be stunned and look dead. If it is safe to do so, gently check for movement, such as leg movement, before assuming the bird has died.

Handle the bird gently and safely. If the bird is alive, approach slowly and place it in an unwaxed paper bag or ventilated shoebox. Wear gloves if possible or use clean hands and wash them afterwards. Make sure the gloves are disposed of after use if used.

Keep the bird warm, dark, and quiet. Stunned birds can lose body heat quickly. Keep the bird in a calm, secure place and contact a local wildlife shelter like Sandy Pines Wildlife Centre.

Find more details about how to support the bird population and how the City of Kingston is a Bird-Friendly City at **CityofKingston.ca/BirdFriendly**



KINGSTON