

Save the birds! Preventing bird strike deaths at the U!

Spring 2020 ENVST 5000, FCS 5950, work study or other options



Did you know that up to a billion birds die annually in the U.S. from window strikes because they see clear or reflective windows as open space (Loss et al., 2014)? Fortunately we found that a window treatment—the application of external window dots (Feather Friendly®) can reduce bird deaths, especially for Cedar Waxwings (Brown et al., 2019; <https://peerj.com/articles/7620/>). In Winter 2020 we would like to continue research-based advocacy for birds on campus.

Here are activities that a research project could explore:

1. Collaborate on a SCIF grant proposal to apply the effective window treatment to the remaining dangerous window surfaces on AEB and JTB (<https://sustainability.utah.edu/scif/>)
2. Help inspect the 8 buildings we are evaluating for high risk of bird death. Last year these inspections lasted until end of January, when bird deaths declined. We are not sure of this year's pattern, given that Cedar Waxwings have not yet arrived to feed on the President's Circle pear trees.
3. Develop skills to upload bird photos to our University of Utah Bird Window Collision Project on iNaturalist (see <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/university-of-utah-bird-window-collision-project>)
4. Develop skills to encourage campus awareness and reporting of bird deaths. This could include flyers that create messages that involve campus users, media or social media outreach, or efforts to propose and support the adoption of bird-friendly building designs on campus.

This project could serve several types of classes, including undergraduate research in Environmental Studies 5000 (<https://envst.utah.edu/forms/undergraduate-research-application.php>) or Family and Consumer Studies 5950, work study, or other options that could be negotiated with other departments, or even work-study. We will collect field data and develop the SCIF grant proposal but other components of the project can be developed in response to student interests.

If you are interested, contact Dr. Barbara Brown, 246 AEB, Barbara.brown@fcs.utah.edu (801-581-7111)