



Sister Cities Café | Philadelphia, PA



City Conservation Efforts a Win for the Birds



The Challenge

The Sister Cities Café, located in Sister Cities Park, Philadelphia, is a great spot for locals and a hotspot for birds and other wildlife. The nearby nature is drawn in by the tree canopy, the artificial stream, the green roof, and the pollinator garden surrounding the building, signalling a safe and welcoming place to find shelter, water, and food.

However, once drawn in, the birds face an all-too-common danger of colliding with the abundance of glass used in the building's architectural design. The combination of hazards presented by the glass makes the locale particularly dangerous to birds. "It's essentially a glass cube with three sides that are full windows top to bottom," says Bird Safe Philly (BSP), a collaborative of five organizations working to prevent the dangers of light pollution and glass collisions for birds. "The problem with the glass is twofold: it is transparent, so the birds can see habitat through the surface, and it is also reflective, mirroring trees and sky giving the illusion of habitat that is not actually there."

BSP has monitored this site since 2021, collecting vital data on bird collisions during spring

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Bird Safe Philly

and fall migration, and documented many collisions, both dead and injured birds. "The reported cases are likely an underestimate of the total number of collisions as birds can strike at any time of the year outside of our formal monitoring", says BSP. The Philadelphia area has over 300 species of migratory and residential birds, and at least 120 species have been documented as collisions with human structures (buildings, transit shelters, and outdoor glass walls) in downtown Philadelphia since 2008. Some of the species that have collided at the Café include: White-throated Sparrows, Common Yellowthroats, Ovenbirds, Gray Catbirds, Black-and-white Warblers, Scarlet Tanagers, and Yellow-bellied sapsuckers, among many others.



The Solution

This Sister Cities Café project was conceived as a means to demonstrate what can be done - an important milestone for Bird Safe Philly to promote positive actions that property owners can adapt to their own buildings to make them bird safe. "It only made sense to protect birds from colliding with the glass at the Café while they use the surrounding habitat," says BSP. BSP approached Center City District (CCD), who manages and maintains Sister Cities Park, in the spring of 2023 to discuss solutions for the Café.

Thanks to the partnership with CCD, Feather Friendly® Bird Collision Deterrent Markers were quickly selected to treat the Café and installation was completed by Street Media in September of 2023. "We are thankful that our organizations could come together and partner on this project to make it happen. We will continue to monitor this site for a minimum of one year to compare the number of collisions pre and post Feather Friendly treatment. "We are optimistic and happy that the Café can serve as a poster child for the City, proving we can coexist with birds, protecting them as much as possible from window collisions, and it looks great."



The Café can serve as a poster child for the city, proving we can coexist with birds

Bird Safe Philly



BIRD SAFE PHILLY

Bird Safe Philly is a collaborative led by the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, National Audubon Society, Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, Valley Forge Audubon Society, and Wyncote Audubon Society. Bird Safe Philly was formed as a response to the catastrophic mass bird collision event that took place just three years ago on October 2, 2020, killing at least 1,500 birds.

Bird Safe Philly aims to create safe spaces for birds by developing awareness of the issue of bird collisions and implementing solutions, working in partnership with the Greater Philadelphia community. Through Lights Out, Collision Monitoring, and Taking Action, Bird Safe Philly strives to engage individuals, organizations, and the community in better understanding bird collisions and the solutions that can be implemented to help prevent these collisions.

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Feather Friendly® Bird Collision Deterrent Technologies is the trusted, scientifically-proven solution for preventing bird-glass collisions. We are tested and approved by the American Bird Conservancy, Dr. Daniel Klem Jr., and many other partners and supporters.

Since 2006, over 7 million sq. ft. of product has been installed worldwide, with a durability and longevity of 15+ years.

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