



HOME > LOCAL NEWS

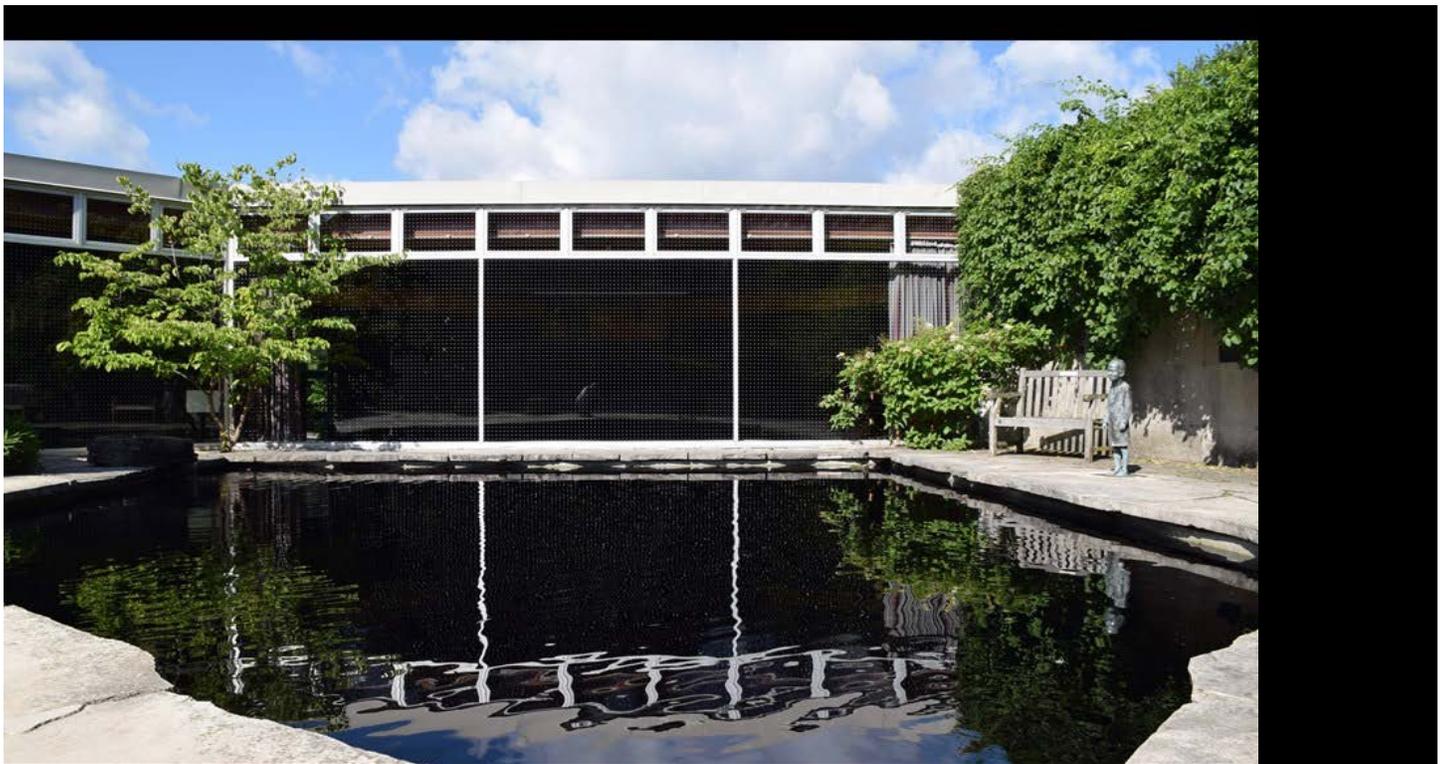
# Arboretum Centre gets bird-friendly treatment

Windows kill millions of birds every year, but there is a solution.

13

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Jul 19, 2016 9:00 AM by: Rob O'Flanagan



1 / 2 Chris Earley, interpretative biologist and education coordinator of the University of Guelph Arboretum, is reflected in the FeatherFriendly windows. (Rob O'Flanagan/GuelphToday)



An astonishing number of birds are killed each year in North America by immovable panes of glass. Glass is like a mirror that reflects sky and natural greenery. Birds hit windows without knowing they are there.

The University of Guelph Arboretum wants to set an example for other U of G buildings, and for businesses, institutions, and high-rises everywhere. The Arboretum Centre has installed FeatherFriendly treatments on ten large plate glass windows to prevent fatal bird collisions.

The application involves the use of 3M architectural and window film that makes windows visible to birds.

The Arboretum is a bird-friendly environment, home to many species. But the centre's windows are not bird-friendly. Rather, they have proven deadly, taking the lives of countless birds in the past.

Chris Earley, the Arboretum's interpretative biologist and education coordinator, said kingfisher, Cooper's hawk, warbler, and hermit thrush are among the species that have been found dead on the ground below the windows. Something had to be done.

The windows now have hundreds of symmetrically spaced dots that are highly visible on the outside, less so from the inside. Birds can easily see them and more readily avoid collisions. The dots interfere with reflections that can make the windows look like safe flying space.

"Lots of buildings have problems when it comes to birds hitting windows," said Earley. "We want to showcase that this is a problem, and that something can be done."

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Glass kills hundreds of millions of birds annually in North America, and as many as a billion birds by some estimates. By becoming a demonstration site for the simple FeatherFriendly application, the Arboretum hopes to encourage others to use the same approach to save the lives of birds.

Nature Guelph and TD Friends of the Environment, along with the Gosling Foundation and Grand River Conservation Authority contributed funds for the protective window project.

Earley explained that the FeatherFriendly film comes in large rolls that are applied to the windows, sticky side down. Birds see the tightly spaced dots and quickly realize they can not fly through them. Earley said the window treatment is costly, but not out of reach.

"It is just a good thing to do, because millions of birds are killed every year, especially during the migration season," he said. "We hope that by showcasing the technology, and showing that it does not affect the aesthetics of a building, that others will do it in places that are particularly bad for bird strikes."

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