

Ontario Tech Bird Safe Campus Monitoring Program

About

Every year in Canada, between 16 and 42 million birds die due to collisions with windows, making buildings one of the top sources of human-caused bird mortality. In certain conditions, glass reflects the surrounding landscape and sky which birds think they can fly through. Upon impact, most birds die instantly but even those that survive the initial blow may have concussions, internal bleeding, broken bones, or brain damage which would ultimately cause them to perish.

Ontario Tech University shares its campus with a confirmed 36 species of birds as observed in the [Campus Biodiversity Inventory](#). The true number of species is continuously being updated through community science initiatives such as nature walks and campus farm tours. With a vision to embrace technology with a conscience to advance knowledge and promote sustainability, establishing a bird safe campus monitoring program is imperative to mitigating bird-window collisions.

Objective

The objective of the Bird Safe Campus Monitoring Program is to collect data on how many birds suffer collisions with windows on the Ontario Tech North and Downtown campuses in a given year.

Scope

The scope of the Bird Safe Campus Monitoring Program is to safely and effectively survey campus buildings for bird-window collisions. The pilot program will run during Spring (April - June) and Fall (August - November) migration of 2025. Volunteers will be recruited through campus communications channels and students, staff, and faculty will be considered.

All volunteers will be trained on the proper monitoring safety precautions before going out to do surveys. Volunteers are able to go out on their own time between the recommended window of 6 AM to 12 PM.

North Campus buildings involved in monitoring are:

- Software and Informatics Research Centre (SIRC)
- Shawenjigenwing Hall
- Energy and Research Centre (ERC)
- Business and Information Technology Building (BIT)
- Science Building (UA)
- Library
- Automotive Centre of Excellence (ACE)
- Ontario Power Generation Engineering Building

Downtown Campus buildings involved in monitoring are:

- Charles Hall
- Bordessa Hall
- Baagwating Indigenous Student Centre
- Regent Theatre

Every time a volunteer goes out to do a survey, they will fill out a [Google form](#) indicating which of the following things occurred: no evidence of bird-window collision was observed, evidence was observed but no birds were found, a deceased bird was found, or a bird was seen or heard hitting a window.

Safety Considerations

In order to ensure safety during surveying, volunteers are asked to keep a distance of at least 1 metre away from the found bird. Volunteers are also told not to pick up or handle deceased birds. Volunteers are asked to put in service tickets to clean up deceased birds by emailing servicedesk@dc-ot.ca. If an injured bird is found, volunteers are told to contact project coordinator, Isabel Savransky, and are welcome to contact a local wildlife centre at their own discretion.

Some other safety considerations during surveying include letting volunteers know to watch their step when surveying and advising them not to go out in inclement weather when it may impede their ability to see or walk on campus safely.

Monitoring Protocol

Volunteers will be required to bring their phone and the volunteer kit with them during surveying. The volunteer kit includes a clipboard with paper, a condensed set of instructions, a set of gloves, a suggested route map, paper bag and clips in case injured birds are found.

Once volunteers have completed their training and are equipped with the required tools for surveying, they are ready to survey the campus buildings.