

## 6. Protect Our Planet from Plastic

**The challenge:** About 4,900 million metric tons of plastic have accumulated worldwide, harming wildlife including seabirds that mistakenly eat plastic, or become entangled in it.

**The cause:** Plastic takes over 400 years to degrade, and 91% of plastics are not recycled. At least 80 seabird species ingest plastic, mistaking it for food. By 2050, scientists estimate that 99% of seabird species will have eaten plastic.

**Reduce your plastics:** Avoid single-use plastics. Recycle any plastic to keep it out of landfills and the ocean.



A Laysan Albatross with a stomach full of plastic. Photo by Chris Jordan via U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Headquarters.

## 7. Watch Birds—Share What You See

**The challenge:** Monitoring birds is essential to help protect them, but tracking the world's 10,000 bird species is an immense challenge.

**The cause:** Scientists need people to report what they see in backyards and wild places around the world to have enough data to show where and when birds are declining.

**Enjoy birds while helping conservation.** Join Cornell Lab's eBird or Project FeederWatch to record your bird observations. You'll provide valuable information to show where birds are thriving and where they need our help.



Photo by Sybil Collins/ GBBC.



The Cornell Lab of Ornithology works on behalf of birds every day of the year. Take your impact farther by supporting the Cornell Lab with a year-end gift. Go to: [birds.cornell.edu/yearend](https://birds.cornell.edu/yearend) or return the enclosed envelope.

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Front: Wood Thrush © John Petruzzi/Macaulay Library  
Above: Baltimore Oriole © Joel Trick/Macaulay Library

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# 7

## SIMPLE ACTIONS TO HELP BIRDS



Use Less Plastic



Make Windows Safer



Keep Cats Indoors



Do Citizen Science



Use Native Plants



Avoid Pesticides



Drink Shade-Grown Coffee

# Simple Ways to Live a Bird-Friendly Life...



Make Windows Safer

Many window collisions happen when birds see reflections of trees and fly toward them. *Photo by Damian Pollet via Creative Commons.*

## 1. Make Windows Safer

**The challenge:** Up to 1 billion birds are estimated to die each year after hitting windows in the U.S and Canada.

**The cause:** By day, birds perceive reflections in glass as habitat they can fly through. At night, migratory birds are drawn by city lights and can collide with buildings.

**These simple steps save birds.** Install window screens, or break up reflections on windows using film, paint, or string spaced no more than 2 inches apart.



Keep Cats Indoors

Keep your cat indoors and save cats and birds. *Photo by Gadio Sevilla via Creative Commons.*

## 2. Keep Cats Indoors

**The challenge:** Each year, outdoor cats kill about 2.4 billion birds in the U.S. and Canada—many of which are young birds that are still in, or just out of, the nest. It's the top human-caused reason for the loss of birds, after habitat destruction.

**A solution that's good for cats and birds:**

Outdoor cats live 2–5 years on average while indoor cats may live for more than 15. Save birds and keep cats healthy by keeping cats indoors.



Use Native Plants

Ruby-throated Hummingbird feeds from a native blossom. *Photo by Lisa Vazquez/Macaulay Library.*

## 3. Reduce Lawn, Plant Natives

**The challenge:** Birds have fewer places to survive their migrations and raise their young.

**The cause:** Lawns and pavement don't offer enough food or shelter for many birds. With more than 63,000 square miles of lawn in the U.S. alone, there's huge potential to support wildlife by replacing lawns with native plantings.

**Add native plants, watch birds come in.**

Native plants add beauty to your yard and provide shelter and nesting areas for birds. The nectar, seeds, berries, and insects sustain hungry birds and other wildlife.



*Photo by plant4wildlife.*

## 4. Avoid Pesticides

**The challenge:** More than 1 billion pounds of pesticides are used in the U.S. each year. Common weed killers used around homes can be toxic to wildlife.

**The cause:** Birds are harmed by pesticides through direct contact, or by eating contaminated seeds or prey. Pesticides also reduce the number of insects that birds need to survive and raise their young.

**A healthy choice for you, your family, and birds:**

Purchase organic food and reduce pesticide use around your home.



Avoid Pesticides

Ladybug hunting an insect pest. *Photo by Irene Mei via Creative Commons.*

## 5. Drink Shade-Grown Coffee

**The challenge:** Three-quarters of the world's coffee farms destroy forest habitat to grow coffee in the sun—forests that birds and other wildlife need for food and shelter.

**The cause:** Shade-grown coffee preserves a forest canopy for migratory birds to survive the winter, but consumers must create a bigger demand for it.

**Enjoy shade-grown coffee:** Shade-grown helps more than 40 species of North American migratory songbirds that winter in coffee plantations.



Drink Shade-Grown Coffee

Blackburnian Warbler in coffee bush. *Photo by Guillermo Santos.*