



Problems caused by birds attacking windows

June 2003

FF0006

ISSN 1440-2246

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Problem

Attacking reflections in windows, or accidentally flying into windows (many species). Removing putty from window frames (Australian Magpie-lark). Removing wiper blades and windscreen rubber from cars (Little Raven).

Background

Many kinds of birds fly into windows accidentally, often being stunned or killed as a result.

Other birds attack their reflections in windows, the species most often involved being the Laughing Kookaburra, Little Raven, Grey Butcherbird and the Australian Magpie-lark. This problem is particularly prevalent during the breeding season, but can occur at any time. Windows can be marked by this activity and kookaburras have cracked and occasionally broken windows by flying into them. The constant tapping at the window can be very annoying. Birds engaged in this activity are easy prey for predators, and they may be stunned or killed by the impact of hitting a window. Some individual birds become obsessed by "the other bird in the window", and spend much of their time attacking it.

Magpie-larks sometimes remove fresh putty from window frames, making the windowpanes unstable and allowing moisture into the frames. These birds are mud-nest builders and it is thought that putty is used as an alternative to mud for nest building. Dry, hard putty is not accessible to these birds.

Little Ravens occasionally develop the habit of pulling windscreen wiper blades and windscreen rubbers from cars. These articles are then discarded. Some kinds of rubber emit chemicals also found in decaying carcasses, and it is thought that this may be the stimulus that attracts ravens to rubber.

Solutions

- Prevent birds from getting access to the windows by hanging netting from the eaves or window frames. Hanging baskets or pot plants may be equally effective.
- Install anti-glare screens over the windows. These prevent birds getting access to the windows, while reducing glare and heat inside the building, without affecting visibility greatly.
- Destroy reflections by painting windows with Bon Ami, white shoe cleaner or similar preparations, until breeding season is over.
- Apply transfers or stencils to the glass. A hawk shape cut from self adhesive paper can be used. These can be designed from outlines in a bird field guide.
- If a Kookaburra is attacking its reflection in your windows, see if it usually launches itself from the same perch in a nearby tree. If so, removal of this perch could stop this behaviour.
- Place a mirror near a window that is being attacked, but out of reach of cats, to provide an alternative reflection for a bird to attack if other measures have failed to prevent attacks on the windows.
- Cover the putty on newly installed windowpanes with masking tape to prevent access to the putty by Australian Magpie-larks if they start to remove it, until it has hardened.
- Make cloth covers to place over wiper blades or park the car where birds will not have access.
- If you have tried the above and the problem is continuing, contact the DSE Customer Service Centre on 136 186 to seek advice about other alternatives.

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