Flying the unfriendly skies: Assessing building dynamics and window strikes to reduce bird mortalities

Introduction

• An estimated 1 billion birds die from colliding with buildings in the United States each year (1).
• Some newer buildings on the UWSP campus are designed with large glass panels and another one is being built.
• Are there building features that cause more bird strikes than others? If so, how can this information be used to mitigate bird mortalities (see Fig. 1) from new structures?

Methods

• Carcasses surveyed in 2m strip around CBB, TNR, NFAC, DUC, and ALB (Fig. 2).
• Surveyed twice daily for 5-6 weeks; occurred September–October in fall, April–May in spring. Data collected in fall 2021, 2022, 2023 and spring 2022.
• Collected data on species, location, time, temperature, cloud cover, and precipitation.

Results

• 65 recorded collisions over 4 survey seasons (Table 1).
• 40% of collisions attributed to CBB.
• Warblers compose 38.5% of recorded collisions; next highest are sparrows at 12.3% (Fig. 3).
• No clear correlation of environmental factors and collision rates.

Discussion

• Mitigating future bird collisions on the new Albertson Hall will be important; bird-safe glass and window treatments are effective solutions (2).
• Highest frequency of collisions are in areas where buildings have large windows.
• Neotropical migrants (e.g. warblers) are negatively impacted by habitat fragmentation (3) – window collisions may add to survival pressures.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to all the survey volunteers that made the project possible. Photos in Fig. 1 courtesy of Yekaterina Veselovsky (robin), Dalton Zingsheim (kinglet), and Spring 2022 volunteers (Ovenbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler).

References