

A FIELD GUIDE TO



# COMMON BIRDS OF TORONTO

FLAP.ORG

ILLUSTRATED BY BARRY KENT MACKAY

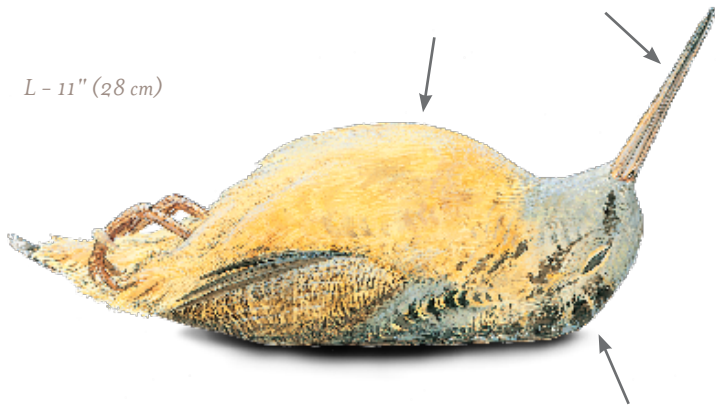
# American Woodcock

(*Scolopax minor*)



Very chunky, short-necked and short-legged, with long bill. Barred crown, large eyes set high in large head. Wings are rounded. Nocturnal and secretive, the American Woodcock is seldom seen until flushed out or killed by high-speed impacts with buildings. Common injuries incurred include beak and eye damage and head trauma.

L - 11" (28 cm)



Brain hemorrhaging is usually the cause of death. Of all species of birds that die this way, its high-speed flight style makes its mortality rate the highest.

**When most likely to collide:** Nighttime

**Estimated collisions for the GTA:** 12,400 annually

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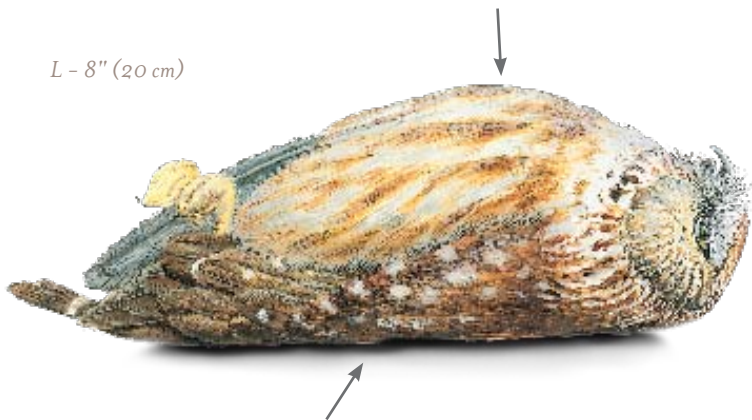
# Northern Saw-whet Owl

(*Aegolius acadicus*)



Reddish Brown above; white below with reddish streaks; bill dark; facial disks reddish without dark border. Juvenile strongly reddish above, tawny rust below. Its colours stand out more in urban areas when it's lying lifeless on the concrete after a fatal collision with buildings. Since it's strictly nocturnal, it roosts during the day and

L - 8" (20 cm)



usually dies during the night due to window collisions that result in brain hemorrhaging. Once found, Saw-whets can be closely approached – especially when found dead or injured as a result of severe head trauma and eye injuries.

**When most likely to collide:** Nighttime

**Estimated collisions for the GTA:** 800 annually

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# Ruby-throated Hummingbird

(*Archilochus colubris*)



Metallic green above. In good light, male shows violet band at lower border of red throat. Underparts are whitish; side and flanks dusky-green. Female's throat is whitish; underparts grayish-white, with buffy wash on sides. The only species of hummingbird found in all of Eastern Canada, Ruby-throats are commonly found deceased

L -  $3\frac{3}{4}$ " (10 cm)



at the bottom of buildings due to high-impact collisions. Injuries incurred as a result of these incidents include beak damage and head trauma, which, in most cases, cause brain hemorrhaging, death or euthanasia, if the injuries are too profound to opt for rehabilitation.

**When most likely to collide:** Daytime

**Estimated collisions for the GTA:** 26,800 annually

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# Northern Flicker

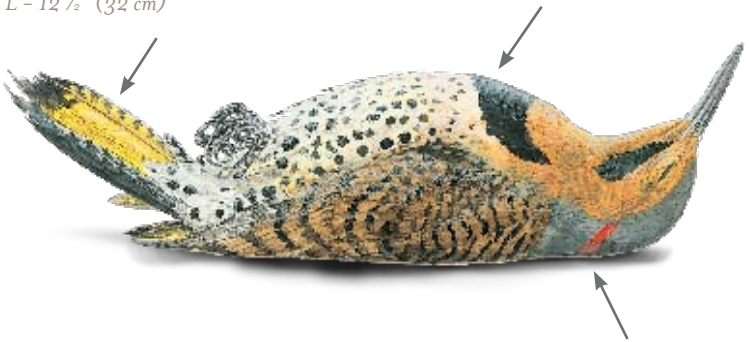
(*Colaptes auratus*)



*"Yellow-shafted"*

Brown barred back; spotted underparts, with black crescent bib. White rump conspicuous in flight; lacks white wing patches. Females lack red or black moustachial stripe. Large and active, flickers are common in open woodlands and suburban areas – most notably when found dead or severely injured at the base of office buildings.

L - 12 ½" (32 cm)



Repeated blows to its sturdy beak cause injuries such as head trauma, and ruptured air sacks and lungs. In most cases, brain and respiratory hemorrhaging lead to its death.

**When most likely to collide:** Daytime

**Estimated collisions for the GTA:** 8,400 annually

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# Red-breasted Nuthatch

(*Sitta canadensis*)



Black cap and eye line, white eyebrow, rust-coloured underparts; females and juveniles have duller head, paler underparts. A common visitor to birdfeeders, North American numbers vary based on fatal collisions with residential windows. Commonly found dead due to head trauma, its high-pitched, nasal call is often heard

L - 5 ½" (11 cm)



moments before its demise. When not succumbing to brain hemorrhaging or severe head trauma, it is a common resident in northern conifers.

**When most likely to collide:** Daytime

**Estimated collisions for the GTA:** 7,500 annually

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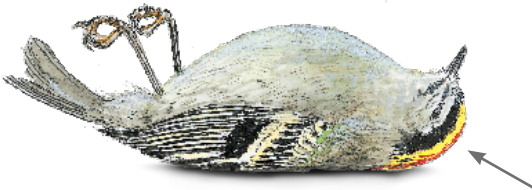
# Golden-crowned Kinglet

(*Regulus satrapa*)



Tiny and plump. Orange crown patch of male is bordered in yellow and black; female's crown is yellow with black borders. Known for its friendly disposition and small stature, the Golden-crowned Kinglet is, sadly, the most vulnerable to daytime collisions. Its almost inaudibly high-pitched song, which is usually given in threes, is often the last sound heard before it meets its untimely death. Of

L - 4" (10 cm)



all species collected, it holds the record for number of injuries/deaths recorded in one day. The common cause of death is head trauma resulting in brain hemorrhaging.

**When most likely to collide:** Daytime

**Estimated collisions for the GTA:** 132,100 annually

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# Canada Warbler

(*Wilsonia canadensis*)



Black necklace on bright yellow breast identifies male. In female, necklace is dusky and indistinct. Male is blue-gray above, female duller. The Canada Warbler is commonly found in dense woodlands, or dead or severely injured below buildings in urban areas. Its recognizable song begins with one or more short, sharp chirp notes and ceases

L - 5 1/4" (13 cm)



upon fatal impact with buildings, which usually results in head trauma and/or brain hemorrhaging. As of now, the population of this species is threatened.

**When most likely to collide:** Daytime and nighttime

**Estimated collisions for the GTA:** 3,700 annually

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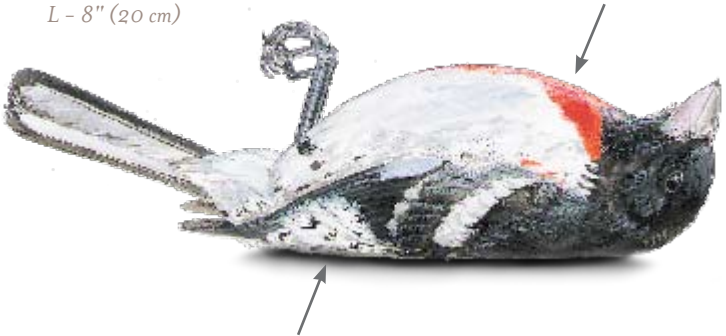
# Rose-breasted Grosbeak

(*Pheucticus ludovicianus*)



Large finch with a very large, triangular bill. Male has a black head and back; rose-red breast (commonly mistaken for blood at the site of fatal collisions); white underparts; white wing bars and white rump. Brown-tipped winter plumage is acquired before migration. The female's streaked plumage and yellow wing linings

L - 8" (20 cm)



resemble female Black-headed Grosbeak. Unfortunately, its large size and bill is no match for a high-speed impact with office windows. Head trauma leading to brain hemorrhaging is the common cause of death.

**When most likely to collide:** Daytime and nighttime

**Estimated collisions for the GTA:** 5,800 annually

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# White-throated Sparrow

(*Zonotrichia albicollis*)



Conspicuous and strongly outlined white throat; mostly dark bill; dark crown stripes and eye line. Broad eyebrow is yellow in front of eye; remainder is either white or tan. When found dead under a lighted lobby window, it's not as easy to distinguish the hunched, short-necked posture that separates it from the White-crowned Sparrow.

L -  $6\frac{3}{4}$ " (17 cm)



Its conspicuous and strongly outlined throat is also less vibrant when life is no longer present in its body.

**When most likely to collide:** Nighttime

**Estimated collisions for the GTA:** 151,500 annually

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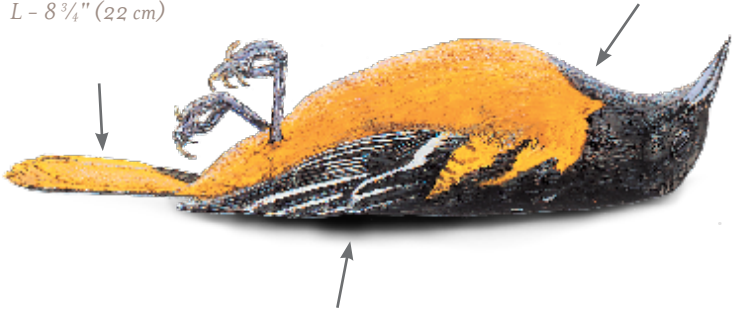
# Northern Oriole

(*Icterus galbula*)



Formerly considered two species: the “Baltimore Oriole” in the east and the “Bullocks Oriole” in the west. Adult males have a black hood and upper back, bright orange rump and underparts. Adult females are brownish-olive above, with blackish head markings. Increasingly common nesters in urban areas, this species is now more

L - 8 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" (22 cm)



susceptible to deaths due to collisions with buildings. When not dying from brain hemorrhaging due to fatal impacts with buildings, it also resides in open woodlands, river groves and suburban shade trees.

**When most likely to collide:** Daytime

**Estimated collisions for the GTA:** 800 annually

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# The Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP)

Many species of birds migrate at night. Guided in part by the constellations, they are attracted to lights in urban areas, causing them to collide with lit towers at night. Conversely, windows confuse migratory birds during the day. Birds do not see the pane of glass – they are focussed on the reflection of trees or sky, or the plant inside the building. The result is an often-fatal collision.

We've all seen or heard a bird hit a window. But it doesn't happen very often, right? Wrong. Windows are everywhere, in our homes, offices, stores, restaurants, vehicles, bus shelters.... Many ornithologists now contend that collisions with human-built structures is the leading cause of mortality in birds.

North America sits beneath four of the world's busiest migratory bird corridors: the Pacific, Central, Mississippi and Atlantic Flyways. The Central Flyway sends birds across and around the Great Lakes. This natural passage offers visual cues for birds to follow and provides major stopover areas where birds rest and feed throughout their journey. Tragically, coastlines that were once unobstructed to migration are now dotted with the tall lighted office towers and reflective buildings of metropolitan areas, a deadly obstacle course for migrating birds.

The Fatal Light Awareness Program was the first organization in the world to address the issue of bird collisions with buildings. Since 1993, FLAP volunteers have picked up over 44,000 birds from 162 species in the Toronto region – 40% have survived and were released back into the wild. It is alarming to note that 64 of these species are in serious population decline.

Bird rescue is only one aspect of the work done by FLAP. Thanks to partnerships with all sectors of society, from building managers and owners to municipal governments, FLAP has developed leading-edge programs and policies that address the issue at the source, protecting birds from the hazards of built environments. FLAP's website and hotline have provided advice and answers to countless horrified individuals who have witnessed a bird hit their window. FLAP's experience in Toronto – and willingness to share their expertise – have inspired bird lovers in New York City, Chicago, Montreal, and Minneapolis/St.Paul to create similar organizations. FLAP's dedication to bird conservation has placed bird collisions with buildings on the wildlife conservation map.

A non-profit, registered charitable organization, FLAP relies for its very survival on your donation. As our built environment continues to grow, safe passage for migrants through urban, and even rural, areas is jeopardized. Please give generously so that generations to come have the opportunity to experience the sheer joy of seeing and hearing our birds.

**For more information or to make a donation\* to FLAP, visit [flap.org](http://flap.org)**

\*FLAP is a registered charitable organization and issues tax receipts for all donations.

