

*Eco-Tip of the Week for 5-28-17*

### **Local Bird Museum Warns About Cats and Windows**

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The Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, also called the “Bird Museum of Camarillo,” displays a collection of over one million birds’ eggs, nests, and preserved birds. Since 1992, they have been a local scientific institution, focusing on research and educating the public, researchers, educators, and students

Amid their current displays is an explanation about declines in bird populations. Two of the most common causes of premature bird deaths are cats and window strikes. Both can be greatly reduced by human diligence.

Ventura County is currently in nesting season for many birds, and during this time, people should not let their pet cats outdoors. Baby birds falling from nests will still be cared for by their parents, but cats kill birds on the ground. Putting a bell on your cat’s collar is insufficient to prevent these deaths, according to bird experts.

If you do let your cat out, you can reduce the risk to birds by bringing the cat back inside as soon as possible.

Window strikes are another preventable threat to birds. The museum sells decals with silhouettes of birds. Flying birds avoid these decals to avoid traveling into the flight path of another bird. These decals are also available on line, as are transparent decals reflecting ultra-violet light. Birds can see these decals, but humans see only the outline of the decal (often in the shape of a leaf).

According to the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute in Washington DC, over 1.3 billion birds per year in the U.S. are killed by cats and window strikes. Both of these causes are preventable.

The museum is open Monday through Friday for “Walk-Through” appointments. It takes about an hour to walk around the museum on your own. The cost for a walk through is \$5 per person, but museum members and children 5 and under can enter free. A public tour will be offered the second Wednesday of each month at 3:30 p.m. and the last Friday of each month at 3 p.m. The museum is at 439 Calle San Pablo, in Camarillo. Call in advance to make an appointment: 805/388-9944.