



Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue Inc.

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THE EAGLE

2001

Feather Guard

By Stiles Thomas

An innovative solution to the vexing problem of window-killed birds.

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My wife, Lilly, and I were married in 1946, right after the war and started feeding birds when we returned from our honeymoon. Since then hundreds of birds have smashed into the windows of our home. Some recover and fly off, but many don't.

A hawk-watching friend told me that a Cooper's hawk had crashed into a window and he was going to have it mounted, which was not legal at the time. When he proudly showed me the finished product, it was necessary to inform him that it was a ruffled grouse. Actually, the wing and overall measurements of these birds is approximately the same, so it's an understandable, if stupid, mistake. Grouse seem to have a penchant for committing suicide: I'm aware of five such cases. One hit our bedroom window, and glass was projected 20 feet into the adjoining room! Fortunately no one was home, and luckily the bird ricocheted off and flew away. Identification was made from feathers left behind. Today it would be done through DNA.

Many birds striking windows, and living to tell the tale, leave an identifiable oil and dust contour

of their bodies, much like the chalk outline of a murder victim. I've identified hawks by merely measuring the wing print. Mourning doves leave a recognizable silhouette, as do cardinals, who sometimes leave red feathers on the glass. Sometimes a bird's brief last meal is deposited on the window as a petri dish specimen for the ornithologist.

Glass is the single largest unnatural killer of birds in the United States according to Daniel Klem, a biologist at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania. He estimates that up to 1 billion birds die this way each year in North America. Most of us know horror stories about window kills and people who have found dead birds next to their house feel the guilt. Could we have done something to prevent it? Was it our fault because the feeder was too close to the house? To try to end the slaughter you may have attached hawk silhouettes to your windows. But did it work? Probably not. Some people have pasted on phony plastic spider webs with the whatchamacallit in the middle that spiders are suppose to

weave so birds won't fly into the web and destroy it (a white-throated sparrow scored a bull's-eye on ours the day we put it up.) Pulling the drapes doesn't help either. We've all tried that one.

One friend has even kept a death list. During the 34 years he's lived in his home members of 26 different species have met their ends by flying into his windows. Although he's not kept a record of the total kill, he believes that mourning doves are more prone to striking windows than other birds. That's my impression, too. Perhaps it's because of their rocketing take-off. Three kinds of woodpeckers – downy, pileated, and northern flicker – have met their demise flying into his house. An astounding six thrush species have met a similar fate – the wood thrush, hermit, Swainson's, gray-cheeked, American robin, and veery. Five kinds of warblers, having migrated thousands of miles to or from Central and South America, have met their end at his doorstep. Professor Klem isn't exaggerating.

My household had a similar

avian mortality problem. Our most active bird feeder is 10 feet away from our three living room windows. When we would erect it in the fall, birds hit the glass immediately. My solution was *Feather Guard*, my unpatented method of deterring birds from flying into windows. I'm not sure what the principle is, but it works. The first year I performed a double-blind test by placing my clever invention on just two of the three windows – birds only struck the control window. This year I placed it on all three panes, and not one window has even been grazed by a bird.

Feather Guard is easy to make, and costs little. It is attractive, but not to birds. Furthermore, *Feather Guard* is an attention getter. When you have it in place, you'll be the envy of your birding friends. I make them in less than 10 minutes per window, and you can, too. Start right now. Try it on windows that get hit the most. Materials required are monofilament fishing line and feathers. You can buy a bag of feathers at a local crafts store – medium-sized feathers (about six to eight

(Continued on page 3)

*** CDWR DIRECTORY ***
www.whc.net/cdwr

Whom can you call in the El Paso/Las Cruces area when you find an injured/orphaned wild bird/animal?

EL PASO AREA

CDWR CHIEF DISPATCHER

Helen Bigelow505-882-2910

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Gloria Villaverde..... 577-9505

REHABILITATORS

Central -

Bill Howe (turtles/snakes/lizards/small exotics)..... 772-0695

Debbie Lofton (birds/water birds)..... 772-6011

Amy Rembold (small birds/small mammals)..... 566-8682

Mickey Rupperecht (small birds)..... 774-9997

Gloria Villaverde (reptiles)..... 577-9505

East -

Debbie Lofton—Area Dispatcher 772-6011

Northeast -

Charles/Carrol Bella (raptors/reptiles/mammals)..... 751-4711

Sheila Barnes (birds/small mammals) 566-5719

Holly Sanchez (small birds/small mammals)..... 822-1902

Danika Seidel (birds/reptiles/exotics work 833-4883

West -

Peggy Kirk (birds)..... 584-5553

Carol Miller (water birds) 584-7088

Josie Karam (small mammals/pigeons)....581-1510, work 584-1212

COOPERATING VETERINARIANS

Central -

El Paso Veterinary Hospital, 4101 Montana 566-7887

Montana Animal Clinic, 1015 Chelsea 778-9588

El Paso Animal Emergency Center, 2101 Texas 545-1148

Dog, Cat, Bird Hospital, 3233 N. Mesa 533-9070

East -

Johnsen Animal Hospital, 1851 N. Lee Trevino..... 592-6200

Desert East Animal Hospital, 11635 Pelicano 855-4100

Eastwood Animal Clinic, 9509 Montana..... 593-0713

Americas Animal Clinic 858-1971

Animal Clinic, 7184 Alameda 778-5355

Northeast -

Skyline Veterinary Hospital, 4424 Titanic 755-7647

Northeast Veterinary Clinic, 9405 Dyer 755-2231

Bridges Animal Hospital, 3410 Hondo Pass 755-8314

Fairbanks Animal Hospital, 5320-C Fairbanks..... 757-8387

Harwood Veterinary Clinic, 4404-A Edgar Park..... 755-5653

West -

Crossroads Animal Hospital, 4910 Crossroads..... 584-3459

Country Club Animal Clinic, 5470 Doniphan 833-0645

Anthony Animal Clinic, 901 Franklin, Anthony TX..... 886-4558

TRANSPORTERS/TROUBLESHOOTERS

Northeast -

Joe/Inga Groff 755-2957

Charlene Ruddock..... 755-5575

West -

John/Jane White.....505-589-3320

Phyllis McCarthy..... 581-1063

Susie Jensen 877-4036

East -

Phyllis/Jim Harris

Alan Phelps 598-2103

Chaparral, NM -

Jochen Lange..... 824-3090

LAS CRUCES AREA
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Gerri Tillett522-4966

REHABILITATORS

Gerri Tillett (birds)522-4966

Belinda Dayley (mammals, bats, turtles, iguanas)382-3736

Las Cruces Reptile Rescue.....373-1486

ELEPHANT BUTTE

Roberta Hirschhorn (birds, etc.).....505-894-9420

SILVER CITY

Margaret Cejka (birds, excluding raptors).....505-537-6624

COOPERATING VETERINARIANS

Calista Animal Hospital, 162 Wyatt Drive525-1000

Jornada Vet Clinic, 2399 Saturn Circle382-1710

East Lohman Vet. Clinic, 1700 E. Lohman523-5654

TRANSPORTERS/TROUBLESHOOTERS

David/Sherri Byrd (raptors).....524-2314

CDWR Meeting Announcement

Do you know how many species of butterflies there are in El Paso and Las Cruces? Would you believe you would probably encounter 118!?! Come learn more as we welcome Dr. Carl S. Lieb, Laboratory for Environmental Biology, Centennial Museum, University of Texas at El Paso, as he gives a butterfly presentation during our January meeting.

Tuesday, January 22, 2002

7:00 p.m.

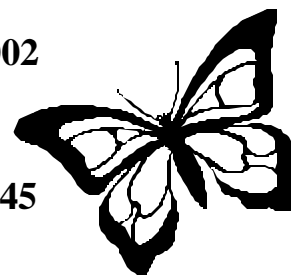
El Paso Community College

Northwest Campus, Room 45

6701 S. Desert Blvd.

Please Join Us!

For information contact Susie Jensen, 877-4036



Visit:

<http://nasa.utep.edu/chih/chklist/butterfly/butterfly.htm>
for more information and a complete list of our areas
butterflies and host plants

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The Purpose of CDWR

Wildlife rehabilitation is the care of injured or orphaned wildlife for return, where possible, to the wild. Successful rehabilitation takes a lot of time, a lot of effort and no small amount of money.

It is challenging work, done by special people. Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue is a nonprofit organization which exists to help the rehabilitators in the El Paso/Las Cruces area. Our purposes are to:

- ◆ provide a volunteer network to assist active rehabilitators in their work
- ◆ support wildlife rehabilitation programs financially
- ◆ provide education and instruction in wildlife rehabilitation
- ◆ educate the public about wildlife conservation problems
- ◆ work for the reduction of pressures on native wildlife from domestic animals and humans

Feather Guard (Continued from front)

inches long) work best.

Step one: measure the window from top to bottom. Add two feet to the measurement to allow for fastening to the house and to allow *Feather Guard* to blow in the wind.

Step two: Drill a 1/16-inch hole (1.5 mm) in the feather shaft at about the center of gravity.

Step three: Thread the feather and slide it to the middle of the line. Then tie a simple knot to keep it in place. Next slide on another feather about seven inches on each side of the first

and tie it in place. Attach the remaining feathers until you've got a feather every seven inches or so. Don't forget to leave a foot or so at each end to fasten the rig to the top and bottom of your window. All measurements are approximate. Nothing is set in stone. (Note: If you do not have a drill, simply tie the feathers to the line.)

Step four: Tap a long flat-head nail into the window frame above and below the window so the nail protrudes two or three inches from the frame. This will keep the feathers away from the glass. The nail should be perpendicular to the frame so the line doesn't slide. Then secure

the line at the nail head. There should be enough slack to permit the *Feather Guard* to sway from one side of the glass to the other. That's all there is to it. Sorry, but the *Feather Guard* won't deter birds from soiling your car. I'm working on it, though.

A swaying *Feather Guard* is a thing of beauty. People are entranced by it. Staring at a *Feather Guard* in motion gives almost as much pleasure as gazing into the fireplace or watching the birds at your feeder. When you see how it prevents birds from striking your windows, you'll be as pleased as I am.

Sister's Special Visit

looking for something. Robert Fulton, Campground Host and volunteer, put a drop of water

and drank and drank. When it had enough, it rolled up its tongue and flew happily away.



Arizona Sister (Adelpha bredowii), also known as California sister, drinking at Aguirre Springs

A butterfly aimlessly fluttered from place to place, or so it seemed. We were setting up our display on the porch of the Ranch House for the Lone Star Legacy Program and Interpretive Fair at Hueco Tanks State Park.

The beautiful butterfly, later identified as an "Arizona Sister", kept landing on tables, boxes and people. It was October, very dry and not many plants were still green or blooming.

The butterfly landed on my arm and I watched it uncoiling its proboscis (tongue), probing my skin. It was desperately



Curled until this lepidopteron is ready to feed, the long flexible sucking tube, or proboscis, found on almost all butterflies and moths, is clearly pictured above

on my arm and the butterfly drank it, but it resumed its fluttering from one place to another.

Finally we realized that the poor thing must be starving. We dissolved some sugar in a spoonful of water as best we could and offered it to the butterfly. It immediately landed and drank

Needless to say, "butterfly feeding" was the highlight of our day and for many of the park visitors.

The butterfly returned once more for the free handout to the delight of spectators and then prepared to go on with its migratory journey to warmer areas.

By the way, the recommended solution to serve in butterfly feeders is one part sugar and eight parts water. Next summer, you too might become a butterfly patron.

- Inga Groff



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 difference for wildlife!**

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Fox Announces Program to Protect Butterfly Habitat

The Associated Press
 MEXICO CITY—Calling the monarch butterfly “the heritage of humanity,” President Vicente Fox announced a program Wednesday to protect the forests that serve as winter havens to hundreds of millions of butterflies that migrate from Canada and the United States. Through the Monarch Trust, a \$6.1 million fund created by the government and several private foundations, the government will pay local residents to stop cutting trees and preserve and grow additional forests.” With this program , there will no longer be any justification for cutting down one single tree that serves as a refuge for the

butterflies,” Fox said in announcing the program—one of several actions being commemorated as part of Mexico’s National Conservation Week. Each year, from 100 to 140 million of the orange-and-black monarch butterflies complete a journey of as many as 3,000 miles from the United States and Canada to five different sanctuaries nestled in the fir forests of the central states of Mexico and Micheacan. The butterflies leave again in February and March to return to the north in a process scientists still do not fully understand. The national butterfly sanctuaries, which received support from the United States and Can-

ada, occupy about 138,376 acres where about 523 residents live. But in the past 28 years, more than 40 percent of the forests in the area have been lost to illegal logging operations and peasants cutting the trees for firewood. Mexico has one of the highest deforestation rates in the world, losing about 1.5 percent of its forests and jungles—1.7 millions acres—each year. Under the new program, the monarch trust will pay 12,500 residents of communal farms located in the core butterfly habitat for there so-called “cutting rights” and to help preserve and expand the forest.
*Las Cruces Sun-News, Thurs.,
 Nov 29, 2001*

**Skunks got you down?
 (or just need a smile?)**

**Visit www.dragoo.org -
 Dragoo Institute for the
 Betterment of Skunks
 and Skunk
 Reputations.**



As seen in Smithsonian

Don't forget:
CDWR Meeting
Tuesday,
January 22, 2002
7:00 p.m.
 See page 2 for details.
Please join us!

CHIHUAHUAN DESERT WILDLIFE RESCUE, INC.

**P.O. Box 96
 Canutillo, Texas 79835**

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I hereby apply for membership in the Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue as a/an:
INDIVIDUAL.....\$10.00 FAMILY.....\$15.00 CONTRIBUTOR.....\$25.00

Enclosed is my contribution for \$_____ in addition to my membership

NAME _____ **PHONE** _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ **STATE** _____ **ZIP** _____

Membership gives you the opportunity to help orphaned and injured wildlife and to support the efforts of the CDWR volunteer rehabilitators. Membership includes a yearly subscription (4 issues) of the newsletter.