birdsafepgh@gmail.com (412)-353-4848

BirdSafe Pittsburgh Volunteer Protocol

Thank you for taking part in making Pittsburgh a safer place for birds! Below you will find all the information needed to begin volunteering for BirdSafe Pittsburgh. For any questions please email birdsafepgh@gmail.com or call the program coordinator, Jonathan Rice, at 412-353-4848.

Monitoring:

For all routes: Please understand, it is very important to cover the entirety of your route, whether you are walking a route through downtown, your neighborhood main street, or around your home. Completing the route and submitting data even when you don't find birds helps us better understand when and where collisions take place. Only going where you know collisions take place, skipping areas, or not submitting data when no birds are found, can skew our understanding and lead to an incomplete or incorrect understanding of window collisions in the Pittsburgh region.

Choose a route: BirdSafe Pittsburgh has 8 routes throughout the Pittsburgh area including Downtown, Oakland, Bakery Square, North Shore, South Side, The Frick Environmental Center, and Herrs Island. These are locations that have shown to be hotspots for window collisions.

Be prepared: Make sure to have all equipment when you walk a route. If at any point you need more of the equipment stated below you can email birdsafepgh@gmail.com or call the program coordinator, Jonathan Rice, at 412-353-4848 to get more equipment.

Equipment

- Ziploc bags to collect dead birds
- Paper bags to safely collect live, stunned birds
- A net to catch stunned birds
- ID tags for dead birds
- Maps of routes
- A phone and/or camera to photograph the bird
- A guide to identify birds
- Watch (phone works well here too)

During monitoring: We use a Geographic Information System (GIS) app called Survey123 to collect data. This can be downloaded for free from the app store on your phone. You will sign in as a BirdSafe Pittsburgh Volunteer using the following credentials: Username - BirdSafeVolunteer, Password -

birdsafe2018. Make a note of your start time when you begin the route. Walk slow, looking for birds, and minimize distractions during your survey. Look under mailboxes, trash cans, in flower pots and in shrubbery. Always note the time you finish walking your route.

If you find a dead bird, take a photo of the bird, collect the bird and place it inside a ziploc bag with the data slip. You may invert the bag and use it as a glove to pick up the specimen if you do not feel comfortable handling it barehanded. Make sure all data is filled out on the data slip including; the date, time, the species (as close you can identify), the address or gps coordinates where the bird was found, and your name. Make sure to place this inside the bag with the specimen. This is to be taken to the Carnegie Museum of Natural History to be accessioned into the bird collection and used for scientific purposes. Do not feel discouraged if you are not comfortable collecting bird specimens, you do not have to collect the bird if you're not comfortable. If you are not collecting the specimen you absolutely need to take a photo of it.

If you find an injured live bird, make all attempts to catch it and place it in a small paper bag (lunch bag size). Use a clothespin to keep the bag closed. Fill out a specimen ID data slip including; the date, time, species (as close you can identify), the address or gps coordinate where the bird was found, your name, and that the bird was found live. Clip the data slip to the outside of the bag (This data slip will follow the bird through the rehab facility). Injured birds are to be taken to the Humane Animal Rescue Wildlife Center for rehab and release.

Make your own route:

If you find a location that you believe has a lot of window collisions and would like to monitor it regularly you are more than welcome to. We ask that you create a route using Google Maps and submit it to birdsafepgh@gmail.com to be added to our data entry portal. Once your route has been added you may walk the route as described in the above paragraphs.

Entering your data

BirdSafe Pittsburgh uses an application called Survey123 to enter, organize, and keep track of our data. We ask that as a volunteer you download this free app on your phone or computer, signing in with volunteer credentials as follows; Username: BirdSafeVolunteer Password: birdsafe2018

Once signed into Survey123 follow the instructions provided in the Survey123 training documents.

Other ways to volunteer for BirdSafe Pittsburgh

Transporting birds: A lot of birds we find are still alive and need to be taken to a certified rehabber, if you are unable to walk routes but are willing to transport birds from where other volunteers find them to the rehab center in Verona, you would be providing a great service to BirdSafe Pittsburgh.

Data management: A lot of data flows through BirdSafe Pittsburgh, there are volunteer opportunities to help sort and clean data, and accession birds into the bird collection in the Section of Bird office of the Natural History Museum.