

From: diana lejins <dianalejins@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, May 15, 2017 10:30 PM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Ann Cantrell; Diana Lejins
Subject: Thousands of birds die hitting tall structure in Texas

ARE YOU WILLING TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATHS OF THOUSANDS OF BIRDS??

GALVESTON – Thousands of birds were approaching the Texas Gulf Coast after a long, exhausting flight across the Gulf of Mexico when a storm forced them lower, on a collision course with the tallest building in Galveston.

The lights on the 23-story American National Building may have disoriented them and they likely tried to circle it, but the high winds sent hundreds into the structure late Wednesday. Some likely crashed into mirrored or clear windows that looked like a place to escape the storm. By Thursday morning, the animal control supervisor for the Galveston police had counted 395 dead birds.

"This is the largest event like this I have ever been a part of in over 10 years," said the supervisor, Josh Henderson.

Houston Audubon posted on Twitter a photo taken by Henderson of a pile of hundreds of dead birds, calling the incident "a tough reminder for bird-friendly lighting and design."

Up to a billion birds die each year from collisions with glass windows, according to the American Bird Conservancy.

The bird deaths in Galveston may have been different from most such collisions, which often happen during the day when a bird tries to fly through a closed or mirrored window.

Gibbons said the birds fly at night to take advantage of the cooler air, get bearings by the north star and avoid predators. The birds normally fly at 1,000 feet to 5,000 feet.

Sarah Flournoy, bird-friendly communities program manager for Houston Audubon, said the birds were migrating from Central and South America to nesting grounds farther north. The Houston area is a good place for migratory flocks to stop and rest.

Flournoy believes lights on the building may have confused the birds. "They will end up circling confused and not know how to get out of it," Gibbons said. "Maybe they were attracted to it, maybe trying to get around it, but were slammed back into it by those winds."

"What we need to do as a bird conservation organization is try to set up an alert system," he said. When bad weather strikes during the spring migration, an alert could be sent asking building owners to turn off their lights, Gibbons said.

The biggest threat to night-migrating birds is communication towers, which kill about 7 million birds a year that fly into their lights, according to the conservancy. The problem can be remedied by replacing steady-burning lights with flashing lights, the conservancy says.

Homeowners who notice bird strikes can put materials on windows to help birds avoid a crash, Flournoy said.

High-rise buildings can also be designed with birds in mind, using less reflective materials or angling windows to alleviate bird injuries, Flournoy said.

Henderson arrived at the American National Building in downtown Galveston shortly after receiving a call at 7:20 p.m. He was surprised at the high number of bird deaths as he retrieved dozens blown into nooks at the base of the building. He was unprepared for the hundreds of dead birds collected by the building maintenance staff and dumped into a trash barrel to keep them out of view of employees arriving for work.

He counted 25 species of birds, including 90 Nashville Warblers, 41 Ovenbirds and 21 American Redstart.

Henderson said typical window strikes involve a handful of birds, maybe five or a dozen. "To see numbers fall in the hundreds is abnormal," he said.

Henderson and Flournoy said half the dead birds will be sent to Louisiana State University and half to Texas A&M University at College Station, where DNA and genetic samples will be taken.

"This dark cloud does have a silver lining as the birds collected are a great representation of the migratory birds in our area at this time and they will not be simply disposed of," Henderson said.

"These birds will be assessed and examined through the Audubon Society to determine the health of the birds prior to their demise as there are countless streams of data that will help conservation efforts for these species," he said.

Three birds that survived Wednesday were taken to the Wildlife Center of Texas in Houston for rehabilitation. Henderson said he understood they were doing well.

Working to make the World a better place,
diana



Simply stated: WE CANNOT AFFORD THIS MONSTROSITY....PERIOD

On so many levels and for so many reasons, it would be inequitable and irresponsible for this Council to proceed with this project.

Diana Lejins