

BIRD-WINDOW COLLISION PROTOCOL

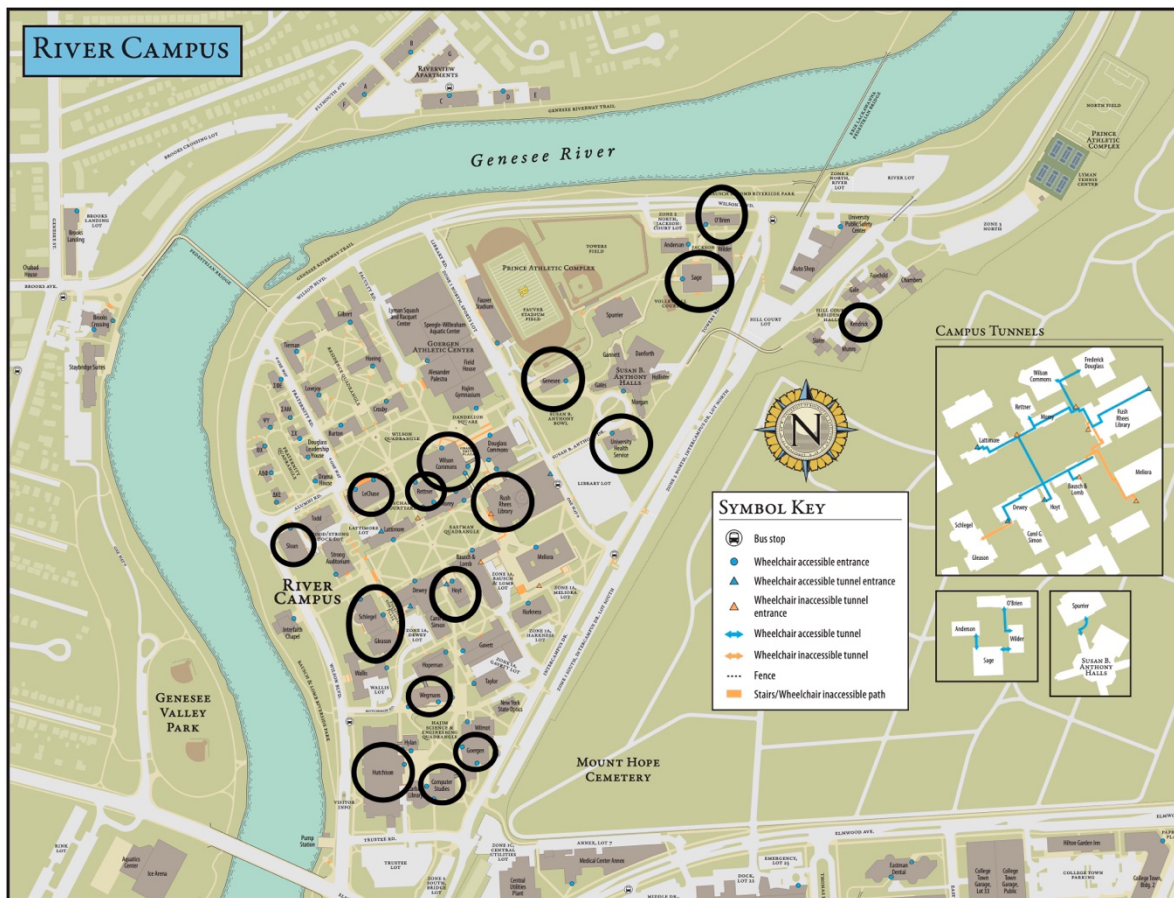
University of Rochester | Spring 2025

OVERVIEW

The second phase of this bird-window collision study will commence on Monday, April 14th, and continue through Friday, May 31st. During that time, researchers will survey a sample of sixteen buildings on campus for signs of window collisions, including whole and partial carcasses. Surveys will occur three times per week in the late afternoon. Data will be collected on the location of collision and the species of bird discovered. At the end of the survey, we will use our data to grasp the extent of the bird collision problem at the University of Rochester and recommend bird-safe treatments that will help our leaders protect bird populations on campus.

SURVEY PROTOCOL

For this study, we will survey sixteen buildings on campus that anecdotal reports, preliminary data on iNaturalist, assessment from two independent bird-safe design consultants, and data from our fall migration study have identified as most lethal to birds. They are mapped, named, and coded below.



INFORMATION CURRENT AS OF 8/3/2021

UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS

BIRD-WINDOW COLLISION PROTOCOL

University of Rochester | Spring 2025

Rush Rhees Library	RRL
Wilson Commons	WC
Rettner Hall	RH
Sloan Performing Arts Center	SPAC
LeChase Hall	LH
Wegman's Hall	WH
Goergen Hall	GH
Computer Studies Building	CSB
Hutchinson Hall	HH
University Health Services	UHS
Sage Art Center	SAC
Hoyt Hall	HoH
Kendrick Hall	KH
Genessee Hall	GeH
O'Brien Hall	OH
Schlegel/Gleason	SGH

The north façade of each building should be coded N, the south S, the east E, and the west W. The north façade of Rush Rhees Library would thus be coded as RRL-N.

We will survey each building three times per week between Monday, April 14th and Friday, May 31st. This will allow us to develop a reasonable estimate of the number of birds that collide into windows during spring migration, the second largest period of bird-window collisions annually. Although species move at different times, birds in the *Passeri* suborder, or songbirds, are known to be most vulnerable to window collisions, and a large proportion of songbird migration will take place in this span of time.

Before the start of the survey, the survey coordinator will conduct a clean-up day on Sunday, April 13th to remove any pre-existing carcasses around these buildings.

Surveys will occur every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday in the early afternoon, preferably between 2 and 3 PM. Studies have shown that the majority of collisions occur between the hours of 7 and 11 AM and that scavengers (e.g., cats, squirrels, dogs, groundhogs, and birds of prey) tend to avoid taking carcasses until later in the evening.

Working in pairs, researchers will walk the perimeter of each building, one researcher moving clockwise and the other counterclockwise. Independent passes will help minimize false negatives. Prepare to spend at least thirty minutes for each building. The schedule with research pairings and building assignments is available [here](#).

BIRD-WINDOW COLLISION PROTOCOL

University of Rochester | Spring 2025

During the walk, you will scan for evidence of window collisions. The most obvious sign will be a carcass, but you might also find powder down, feather piles, or bodily fluids on the ground or on nearby windows. Scanning of the building should extend six feet from the walls. Pay close attention to shrubbery and look carefully through ground cover, especially as leaves fall in the coming weeks.

We will not be collecting carcasses. Instead, you will take photos of the bird from three angles: ventral, dorsal, and lateral. You should use gloves to position the bird. This will help with species identification. Field guides (e.g., the *Field Guide to Eastern Birds* or National Geographic's *Field Guide to the Birds of North America*) can aid with this. You could also use Merlin ID, iNaturalist, or Google Image. If you are uncertain, please contact the survey coordinator. When you are done with your photographs, you should leave the carcass where you found it. Leaving it intact will help us avoid duplicate counts.

You will record the following in the event that you find evidence of a collision: the location (using the building and façade code), the day and time of observation, your name, and the species. You will upload these data using the Survey123 link. These should be labeled sequentially based on your name and the angle of the photograph. For instance, Jane Doe's first carcass would be labeled like JD001V (for the ventral perspective).

On occasion, you might find an injured bird or witness a collision yourself. If this happens, please follow FLAP Canada's [protocol](#) for handling injured birds and call one of the two wildlife rehabilitators listed below. Do NOT handle birds of prey. If you are uncomfortable handling a live bird, please contact the survey coordinator.

Charlotte "Charli" Rohack	409.974.1840
Kris Forsythe-King	315.374.4542

In the event that you do not find any evidence on your patrol, please mark that in the [shared spreadsheet](#). All other circumstantial observations should be recorded here as well (e.g., weather conditions, uncertain findings, etc.).

PRIVACY, SAFETY, & OTHER CONCERNS

Please respect the privacy of building occupants. We have sought permission from facilities to conduct our survey, but it is important that you remain quiet and do not peer into the windows.

Do not use your cell phones except to take photos and upload data. This will not only distract from the survey but also potentially disrupt building occupants. If you

BIRD-WINDOW COLLISION PROTOCOL

University of Rochester | Spring 2025

have to use your phone for a call or text, please pause and resume the survey when you have finished.

As you monitor the buildings for evidence of collisions, you might get odd looks or curious inquiries. Consider this an opportunity to educate others about the problem. You can always direct someone to the website or to the study coordinator if you do not have an answer. If anyone harasses you, call the study coordinator immediately. Campus security will also be aware of our study if you wish to contact them for help in the event of harassment.

Handling live or dead birds for the purpose of photographs or rehabilitation entails a degree of risk around zoonotic disease transmission. Always wear gloves, particularly if you have any open wounds. Wash your hands with sanitizer after.

It is possible that you might find a bat during your survey, either on the ground or low on a building. Bats might carry rabies, so it is important that you leave it alone and contact the survey coordinator for assistance.

Be aware of inclement weather and other adverse environmental conditions. If bad weather is predicted during the scheduled time, please go earlier, or later, and note this in your report.

SUPPLIES

Please bring the following: 1) a smart phone or digital camera (a smart phone is preferred so that you can upload your data immediately); 2) disposable gloves; 3) brown paper bags; and 4) hand sanitizer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document was adapted from the protocol developed by Hager and Cosentino (2014) and later developed further by the [Duke University Bird Collision Project](#). It also draws on protocols made by [FLAP Canada](#) and the [American Bird Conservancy](#) for building monitoring.