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## Buildings Using Bird-Friendly Design Now Eligible for LEED Credit

*Credit currently being tested through the LEED Pilot Credit Library*

### MEDIA RELEASE

Contact: Robert Johns, 202-234-7181 ext.210, [Email click here](#)



The GSA Field Office in Houston, Texas is a LEED-Certified building that is also bird-friendly. Photo by Timothy Hursley

(Washington, D.C., October 31, 2011) American Bird Conservancy (ABC), the nation's leading bird conservation organization, in cooperation with the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), and Bird-safe Glass Foundation, have enabled architects, designers, developers, and building owners pursuing LEED green building certification to earn credit for incorporating design strategies that reduce bird collisions.

USGBC's LEED (Leadership in Environment and Energy Design) green building rating system is the preeminent program for the design, construction, and operation of high-performance green buildings worldwide.

"Building collision is among the leading causes of bird mortality in the United States, so it is exciting to see the foundation being laid to reduce the threats that buildings pose to avian populations. We are delighted that, with the creation of this pilot credit, architects across the country will now have the chance to be recognized for making buildings truly green," said ABC Bird Collisions Program Director Dr. Christine Sheppard.

"Incorporating design strategies that reduce the impact our built environment has on wildlife is a logical extension of the philosophy upon which we've built the LEED rating system for the past decade," said Brendan Owens, Vice President, LEED Technical Development, USGBC. "The LEED Pilot Credit Library allows us to expand the range of issues LEED addresses while staying true to our mission."

The credit was developed by USGBC committees and working group members, and is currently being tested in the LEED Pilot Credit Library—a rating system development tool designed to encourage testing of new and revised LEED credit language, alternative compliance paths, and new or innovative green building technologies and concepts.

Up to one billion birds die each year from building collisions in the United States alone. During the day birds are at risk from collisions with reflective and transparent windows, which they cannot see. At night, birds become attracted to lighted areas and may become diverted from natural migration paths toward city environments. Massive collision threats await them there, and take a huge toll on birds, both in the evening and during the daylight hours. Additionally, under some conditions, such as when especially bright lights (e.g., industrial spotlights) are in use, birds may fly in circles within these "light fields" until they collide with each other or the building, or fall to the ground from exhaustion.

However, there are solutions. Some newer, high-performance green buildings still use large expanses of glass, but are also bird friendly because they incorporate additional architectural elements. The technologies and strategies described in the Bird Collision Deterrence Pilot Credit address such issues as indoor and outdoor lighting design and operation, building façade requirements, performance monitoring, and threat factors. The credit emphasizes creating "visual noise," that birds can perceive and thereby avoid hitting glass. This means modifying glass reflectivity, color (including UV), texture, or opacity.

"We hope to integrate bird safety into the very definition of a green building. We want to encourage innovative designs by architects, and stimulate market-driven solutions by increasing demand for new products, such as glass that is visible to birds but not to people—perhaps the ultimate high-tech solution to bird collisions with windows," Sheppard said.

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The U.S. Green Building Council's LEED green building rating system is the foremost program for the design, construction and operation of green buildings. Over 42,000 projects are currently participating in the commercial and institutional LEED rating systems, comprising more than 8.6 billion square feet of construction space in all 50 states and 120 countries. In addition, more than 13,400 homes have been certified under the LEED for Homes rating system, with nearly 62,000 more homes registered. By using less energy, LEED-certified buildings save money for families, businesses and taxpayers; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and contribute to a healthier environment for residents, workers and the larger community. For more information, visit [usgbc.org](#), Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.