

Tekst 11

Birds and buildings:

How to stop one flying into the other

CAN modern man pursue his urban ambitions and still coexist with nature? The question seems particularly relevant if you are a bird and you are heading for Chicago, where the annual spring migration is just reaching its peak. Perched on the edge of Lake Michigan, this huge city is directly in the path of some 300 species of avian travellers, many of whom prefer to hug the shoreline rather than cross the huge lake.

That is not always a safe choice, given Chicago's lofty skyline. In the late 1960s, flocks of warblers, thrushes, cuckoos and other species flew headlong into the newly built, 96-storey John Hancock Centre. The birds, which navigate at night using celestial cues, were attracted by the building's lights. Their dead bodies littered the sidewalks below as the sun rose.

Mirrored glass is a growing hazard, even in daylight. Michael Mesure of the Fatal Light Awareness Programme (FLAP), a Toronto-based environmental

group, recalls seeing at least 500 birds hit two mirrored office towers in his city one morning a few years ago. "It was literally hailing birds," he recalls. His group now tries to aid the injured, and rather bizarrely stores masses of dead birds in a freezer until it can photograph them en masse.

On the worst count, some one billion birds a year hit glass in America. Those that die on the spring migration are the fittest of the flock, having already survived thousands of miles in the air. Chicago and Toronto are trying to help. Both cities pursue organised "lights out" programmes during peak migration periods, when tall office buildings are asked to turn out the lights on their upper floors overnight - and death rates have fallen sharply. New York has a similar but smaller programme.

Chicago is trying particularly hard to lure in feathered visitors. The mayor, Richard Daley, has added lakefront parks, bird sanctuaries and nesting grounds, and the result has been dramatic. As many as 7m birds use the city's lakefront parks annually, says Doug Stotz, an ornithologist at the Field Museum, many of them rare. ■

The Economist

Lees bij de volgende opgaven steeds eerst de vraag voordat je de bijbehorende tekst raadpleegt.

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- 1p 40 □ Waaruit bestaat de methode die het artikel noemt om het probleem van "one flying into the other" (kop) te reduceren?