



**BIRDS  
CONNECT  
SEATTLE**



**Spring 2025**

# **EARTHCARE NORTHWEST**

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## **A New Kind of Easement:**

**Bold Step for Trees and Wildlife in Seattle**

*by Claire Catania, Executive Director*

At Birds Connect Seattle, we believe that protecting urban habitat is vital for the well-being of both people and birds. This is why we're excited to share that — with the sale of our headquarters at 8050 35th Ave NE — we

have secured a first-of-its-kind conservation easement. The mature Douglas fir trees and native plant garden that adorn the former Nature Shop property are now legally protected for future generations, thanks to this easement and the partnership with the new owner, Roger Tjoelker of blom studio, who plans to repurpose the building into a wellness center.

*(continued on next page)* >>>



**BIRDS CONNECT SEATTLE**

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*This issue of EarthCare Northwest was mailed to member homes on March 20, 2025.*



# Rat Control Reimagined

## Seattle Parks Expand Bird-Friendly Method to 40 Parks

by Carol Roll, Development Director

Seattle's initiative to tackle its rat problem in a way that protects wildlife is gaining momentum. In 2021, a pilot project between Birds Connect Seattle (BCS), Capitol Hill EcoDistrict, and Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) introduced a groundbreaking method for controlling rats that also safeguards birds.

Traditionally, rodent control has relied on anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs), which are highly toxic to rats, but also inadvertently poison birds of prey and other animals that feed on rodents. SGARs pose a significant risk to local wildlife, as toxins spread through the food chain. In response, BCS advocated for safer alternatives, leading to the trial of a carbon dioxide-based treatment which suffocates rats in their burrows, without leaving behind poisoned carcasses that could harm scavengers. This carbon dioxide treatment is precise, affordable, and environmentally friendly compared to traditional poison-based methods.



After a successful pilot program at Cal Anderson Park, the carbon dioxide method expanded to over 40 parks across Seattle by the end of 2024. The method has been particularly effective in high-traffic parks with large rat populations. In areas where it isn't feasible because of proximity to buildings, SPR uses other bird-friendly strategies, such as snap traps and improved waste management.

This collaboration between BCS and SPR is setting new standards for urban rodent control. The success of this initiative demonstrates the power of collaboration between environmental organizations, city agencies, and local communities. Together, we are creating safer spaces for both people and wildlife, one park at a time.

## »»» A New Kind of Easement (cont.)

This accomplishment is a reflection of our values-driven approach to decision-making, where the “best use” of land is about more than financial returns and is a perfect example of our mission in action. The process of protecting this land and vegetation was been a true team effort involving our arborist, real estate broker, legal team, and dedicated volunteers. It's the first success of our strategic plan, “Spreading Our Wings,” and it's just the beginning.

While this is a major achievement, BCS is committed to ensuring that not just the trees on this property are protected, but that stronger tree protections are put in place across the Seattle area. We need robust regulations that safeguard our urban forest to ensure that both wildlife and people can continue to thrive in cities. Thanks to your ongoing support, we're just getting started.







Seattle skyline | Bryce Carithers | Canva

## Bird Advocates Influence Seattle's Comprehensive Plan

*by Joshua Morris, Urban Conservation Manager*

The City of Seattle is in the midst of a once-in-a-decade update to its comprehensive plan, the guiding document for how and where the city will grow through 2035. The State requires plans to contain sections on land use, housing, and climate change, but including plans for nature conservation is optional. That's why Birds Connect Seattle and many of you, our members, are advocating for inclusion of policies that protect urban wildlife.

Last May, we submitted thirty-six specific recommendations that would have clarified the City's obligations and responsibilities as stewards of urban biodiversity and increased the ambition and specificity of conservation goals. Of those recommendations, ten were incorporated into the Mayor's recommended draft, which was brought to the Seattle City Council in January 2025.

One example of a positive change from our advocacy was to Urban Design Goal LU 2.3. It now includes the final clause: "Encourage design that recognizes natural systems, integrates ecological functions such as stormwater filtration or retention, and reduces hazards to wildlife from the built environment."

This small insertion is a big improvement over our current plan, which contains no directive whatsoever to reduce hazards to wildlife from buildings and structures. Assuming this change is not excised during the Council's amendment process—which I do not believe it will be—we will use this improved goal to call the City for bird-friendly building design standards and policies that reduce artificial light at night.

## Bird-Window Collisions

*A Poem by Ser Anderson,  
Urban Conservation Educator*

*Bird-window collisions kill more than one billion birds each year in the U.S.*

*Ser works alongside 100+ volunteers who support BCS by collecting data on bird-window collisions. They write about the heartbreak and hope of this important conservation work.*

If you weren't looking  
you'd miss  
the tiny feathers  
stuck  
to the window pane,

but we're looking,  
70 strong, 700 morning searches,  
at homes across the emerald city.  
We, who usually cast our eyes  
to the skies  
in search of winged wonder,

scan the ground below our windows  
and the windows themselves,  
searching  
for somber evidence  
of a collision.

What you don't know can hurt you  
if you are a bird  
and can't perceive reflective glass  
as a solid barrier,  
the trauma of head-on collision  
often lethal,

so we look for tragedy,  
cradle corpses  
in our gloved hands,  
note the smallest feathers  
stuck to the windows.

As we learn where  
the greatest danger  
hides in plain sight,  
we share our stories,  
the experience  
of this sad scavenger hunt,

to make a change,  
one window at a time:  
dots or designs  
on the outside surface  
no more than 2 inches apart

to break up a reflection,  
make the invisible  
visible.  
We envision  
a bird-safe city,  
no more lives lost to window collisions.

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Read more conservation  
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[birdsconnectsea.org/news](https://birdsconnectsea.org/news)



@birdsconnectsea  
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## From the Executive Director

Dear Members,

Human beings make some bad decisions and the effects can be far-reaching. Window collisions, secondary poisoning, and habitat loss are just a handful of the ways local birds fall victim to the actions and inactions of their urban neighbors—us.

The good news? We can make better decisions. This spring issue of EarthCare Northwest brings to light some of the ways BCS and our partners are standing against these threats and protecting birds in urban spaces. In the face of many remaining challenges, please join us in celebrating these wins. Tomorrow, let the dawn chorus of spring be a call to action for the work to go on.



For cities where people and birds thrive,

*Claire Catania*

Claire Catania  
Executive Director



## A Summer of Birds, Beaches, and Bugs Awaits

Birds Connect Seattle is now enrolling elementary, middle, and high school students in Nature Camp for a summer of fun and nature exploration.

This is the summer to let your child's passion and imagination take flight. We offer three convenient camp locations in the greater Seattle area:

- Kruckeberg Botanic Garden in Shoreline from June 23 to July 25
- North Seattle College in Northgate from July 28 to August 29
- Explorer West Middle School in White Center from June 30 to August 15

Special member pricing and scholarship opportunities available.

Visit [birdsconnectsea.org/nature-camp](https://birdsconnectsea.org/nature-camp) to register for a nature-filled summer.