

Bower

Ellen Driscoll & Joyce Hwang

with Matthew Hume

Bower a leafy shelter of recess, an arbor, a rustic dwelling

Where birds thrive, people prosper.

From urban centers to rural towns, each community can provide habitat for native birds.

In turn, birds offer us a richer, more beautiful, and healthful place to live.

Over the past century, urbanization has taken contiguous, ecologically productive land and fragmented and transformed it with sterile lawns and exotic ornamental plants. We've introduced walls of glass, toxic pesticides, and domestic predators. The human-dominated landscape no longer supports functioning ecosystems or provides healthy places for birds.

Bower is an arrangement of architectural fragments which host birdhouses. Etched glass windows in the structure promote awareness of local bird species, and draw attention to the ever-increasing perils of bird-strike window collisions and deaths.

The outlines of the structures evoke the vernacular architecture of the Lewiston area but could be stand-ins for homes almost anywhere in the country. These fragments, invite the viewer to imagine what has been forgotten, or lost, or what might be created in the future.

The embedded birdhouses (or nesting boxes) are designed to accommodate a variety of local bird species – including chickadees, wrens, flycatchers, nuthatches, bluebirds, and purple martins. They are attached to the structure, in an arrangement that have taken into account environmental factors which affect bird nesting and habitability.

The window images are created from drawings that depict local species of birds that have come to prefer human-made structures to nest in. Some, like the purple martin, make an annual journey of 3000 miles from North America to Latin America and back again. The surface of the window is overlaid with a grid of dots, a pattern which prevents birds from colliding with the pane of glass.

By simply choosing native plants when we landscape our yards, neighborhood parks, and public spaces, we can help restore vital habitat for birds in our communities.

By simply turning off your lights at night, cities across the flyways can reduce the disorienting effect of light pollution, thereby saving tens of thousands of birds each year.

Ecology / Biology Consultant: Katharina Dittmar, Ph.D, University at Buffalo, Associate Professor of Biological Sciences, Heather Williams, Ph.D Candidate, University at Buffalo, Department of Biological Sciences

Construction Assistants: John Costello, John Wightman, Olivia Arcara **Structural Consultant:** Mark Bajorek, P.E.

Programming: Buffalo Audubon Society

Artpark Laboratory: Bower is the first newly commissioned work created in collaboration with **CALL/City as Living Laboratory** to establish an experimental program for Artpark as a laboratory to make “sustainability tangible through the arts” and contribute to an effort to revive the mission of Artpark as a leading center for creative experimentation and innovation.

Highlighted Species

* **Eastern Bluebirds** live in open country surrounded by trees with cavities used for nests. Bluebird boxes are often found in pairs to give other species a place to nest while tolerating bluebirds nearby. The Eastern Bluebird is the New York State Bird.

Black Capped Chickadees are among the easiest birds to recognize. Brave beyond their size, they will often be the first birds to find a new feeder in your yard. Nest boxes for chickadees are best placed in wooded areas.

The House Wren can be found in backyards across much of the United States. They make nests out of twigs in a variety of nooks and crannies in both natural and man-made environments. House Wren consume many types of bugs and insects and weigh only as much as two quarters.

The Eastern Phoebe is one of the most recognizable of the flycatchers, especially with their distinctive “Fee-Bee” call. They often place nests made out mud and grass in the eaves of houses, barns and other structures. They prefer open woods and yards where they can find the insects and small fruits and seeds that make up their diet.

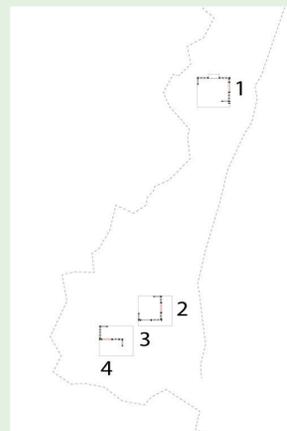
* **Tree Swallows** have dark blue iridescent backs and bright white fronts. While their natural nesting location is a tree cavity they easily take to nest boxes – especially those near fields and ponds where they swoop and dive as they chase insects.

The Tufted Titmouse can be recognized by its large black eyes, small round bill, and bushy crest. Tufted Titmice like nesting boxes placed in areas with mature deciduous trees. The small size of a titmouse is made up for by their booming voice!

Red-Breasted Nuthatch are commonly seen creeping upside-down along branches, tree trunks or feeders. They eat insects and seeds – often taking the biggest seed they can carry. As they build their nest they aggressively chase away other birds, or steal materials from nearby nests.

* **Purple Martins** live almost exclusively in man-made structures. They are colonial, so their nest structures have space for dozens of pairs. Aerial acrobats, they flap and glide across fields and ponds as they catch insects midair.

* indicates birds figured in the Bower windows. Additional information about the above and other birds can be found at www.audubon.org



window drawings:

location 1: treeswallow

location 2: bluebird

location 3: purple martin with the globe

location 4: purple martin with inverted map of the continents

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