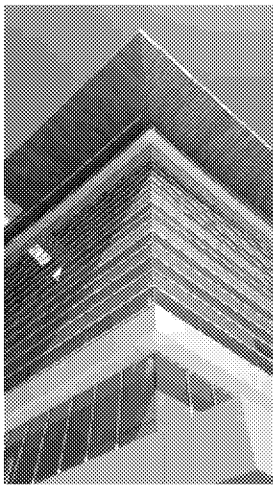


Fiserv Forum deemed the world's first bird-friendly sports arena after Bucks tweak design

James B. Nelson, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Published 6:00 a.m. CT Oct. 24, 2018 | Updated 9:07 a.m. CT Oct. 24, 2018



(Photo: Milwaukee Bucks photo)

The new Milwaukee Bucks arena is not for the birds — and that's a good thing.

The new Milwaukee Bucks arena, Fiserv Forum, includes design elements that make the massive building bird-friendly, making it less likely that birds will be killed after flying into the large glass windows.

The Bucks and arena designer Populous incorporated the features in the arena early in the design process after they were urged to do so by Bryan Lenz, who was then director of Bird City Wisconsin.

"The Bucks stepped up for birds in a way that no sports franchise ever has," said Lenz, who lives in Cedarburg and now works for the American Bird Conservancy.

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Populous had already planned to incorporate green building features into Fiserv Forum in accordance with standards set by the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program, known as LEED.

The LEED certification is pending, but the arena has already been granted a "bird collision deterrence credit" as part of the green building certification.

It's the first pro sports arena in the world to receive such a designation, Lenz and the Bucks said.


"I know it sounds like it's not a big deal, but it is — because we happen to be in a migration path," said Bucks President Peter Feigin.

Feigin credited Lenz with being persistent to raise the bird issue as the building design was coming together.

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"It was one of the hundred meetings that I took — he was very persistent — and it lasted five minutes and I was sold," Feigin said. "He had a very

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Birds help combat pests, pollinate plants and spread seeds, Lenz said.

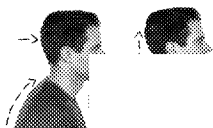
An estimated 1 billion birds die each year in the U.S. after colliding with glass, he said.

Milwaukee is an important flyway for migrating birds that follow the Great Lakes, and Lenz said the glassy new arena presented peril.

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"They can sleep when they fly, which is why when they land in the forest of glass they're going to get killed," Lenz said.

For Fiserv Forum, concern was greatest in the southeast corner of the building, where glass windows that form the corner of the building extend from the ground to the swooping roof.

The arena's most obvious bird-friendly feature is the use of fritting, a thin ceramic coating on glass. The fritting gives the glass tiny lines that humans can see up close but that do not interfere with the transparency.

For birds, fritting reduces the transparency of the glass and signals that the glass is, in essence, a wall that they should avoid.

Fritting also reduces energy use, said Populous spokesman Rich Polzin.

Making sure a building design considered the well-being of birds was something new for the designers.

"Honestly, this is not a typical or traditional thing we've done," said Gabe Braselton, the Populous architect responsible for the overall design of the building.

The designers planned to use some fritting for aesthetic reasons but made far more extensive use of the material after advice from the bird advocates.

"It seemed like a unique opportunity for us," Braselton said.

Other bird-friendly steps include controlling the lighting of the arena so that it is dark overnight and clearly an obstacle, said Heather Stewart, a Populous designer who focuses on sustainability.

The bird-friendly measures did not add to the cost of the \$524 million arena, Polzin said.

The Bucks have incorporated other sustainability features into Fiserv Forum, such as banning straws, using natural landscaping, composting and declaring the arena and surrounding area a nonsmoking zone.

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The bird-friendly designation comes with a requirement that the Bucks monitor bird collisions with the building for three years.

"The Milwaukee Bucks have demonstrated outstanding conservation leadership and shown that it is possible to build a world-class facility with birds in mind," Lenz said. "We hope that their example will inspire others to take action."

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