

## INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT TIPS for dealing with BIRD PESTS

Lynn Braband, NYSIPM Program of Cornell University

As a culture, we have always valued wildlife. Despite that, many animals have been hunted or culled in such a manner as to decimate populations. The goal of wildlife management is, according to Dan Decker of Cornell University, “. . . to maximize the benefits of wildlife while minimizing the costs of wildlife.

- ❖ Points to consider when dealing with wildlife are:
  - Is there a problem that is significant enough to make action necessary?
  - Do you know the laws concerning management of this particular animal?
  - Have you considered health and safety aspects? Is the pest animal causing health or safety concerns to people or facilities? Will the ensuing management treatment cause any health or safety concern?
  - Are the proposed treatments humane? While we don't object to most treatments of insect pests, the management of vertebrate wildlife pests objectionable?
  - Is the treatment effective? What information did you find to support your choice of management treatment?
  - Is the treatment practical? Is the cost worth the result? Is it sustainable in time and cost needed?
  - How would the management treatment be viewed by outsiders? “Act as if you are being videotaped.”
- ❖ What regulatory agencies have a say in wildlife management?
  - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the regulatory agency dealing with bird management.
  - The NYS DEC regulates wildlife management and has ECO (Environmental Conservation Officers) in the field.
  - The NYS DEC is also the final say on Registered products (pesticides) including products not always considered ‘pesticides’ such as reproductive inhibitors.
- ❖ Know the law!
  - An “unprotected” species can legally be taken by the property owner at any time of the year and by any means as long as other laws (i.e., pesticide regulations, firearm discharge ordinances, trespassing laws, etc.) are not violated. However, without a permit, the property owner cannot release the animal off his/her property. The animal must be destroyed and buried or cremated. (Again... don't take someone else's version—like Cornell's Lynn Braband's words above—as the final word. Protect yourself by knowing the law.)
- ❖ Three of the most problematic bird species are not native to North American and, as of 2013, are unprotected:
  - Rock Pigeon (feral pigeon)
  - European Starling

- House Sparrow (English Sparrow)
- ❖ Know the legal status of any bird you deal with:
  - A “protected” bird species cannot be destroyed, captured, and/or removed without permits. This applies to adult and young birds as well as viable eggs
- ❖ Many other “pest” bird species are native to North America, and are protected:
  - Gulls
  - Swallows
  - Canada Geese
  - House Finch (note: female house finch can be confused with house sparrows)
- ❖ The Monk Parakeet , a new pest due to its nesting preference for power lines, is not protected and is spreading to the northeast
- ❖ Communicate with your constituency
  - Written expectations/policy should be made accessible and clear to people affected by or in proximity to the bird pest
  - Example: Prohibiting the feeding of wild birds—this is especially problematic for gulls, geese, and pigeons
  
- ❖ BIRD MANAGEMENT –Options for EXTERIORS
  - Exclusion
  - Fear-provoking stimuli
  - Chemical repellants
  - Trapping
  - Translocation
  - Reproduction inhibition
  - Avitrol
  - Habitat manipulation
  
- ❖ Exclusion methods include:
  - Netting
  - Spikes (Generic name; see particular brands)
  - Post-and-wire, great on ledges and roof peaks, work well with pigeons
  - Electrified systems
  - Suspended strips/air curtains (note: new concerns about PVC in strips are now limiting their use)
  - Grid and parallel wires, work well on flat roofs and need only be 15-20’ apart
  - Miscellaneous items such as the ‘spider’
  
- ❖ Fear-provoking stimuli is the second most-used option

- NOTE: Habituation is always a concern—alternate uses of any fear-provoking stimuli to reinforce the effect
  - ‘Simple’ devices: Big Eye decoy, Replica predators such as owls and coyote
  - Heli-kites have been quite successful with gulls
  - Miscellaneous items such as mylar tape, reflective devices and ‘scary man’ inflatables
  - Pellet/ Noise guns
  - Auditory stimuli (distress calls or predator calls) used on timers (random is best). Some stimuli are audible to humans, some are not and therefore have increasing regulation
  - Herding dogs—trained dogs, most often Border Collies, have been used successfully on school grounds and golf courses
  - Abatement falconry is a new trend
  - Lasers have been proven efficient but use carefully
  - Delaying habituation: movement is more likely to work, install and uninstall to reduce predictable responses. Use reinforcement such as the use of scarecrows in rain jackets supplemented by actual farmers in rain gear using pellet guns
- ❖ Additional Control Options:
- Chemical repellent. These are registered products and work but can be hazardous to birds
  - Bird Foggers: a taste repellent that coats surfaces
  - Bird Traps: trapped birds may not be transferred elsewhere and are generally destroyed
  - Translocation: trapped birds are moved to other areas but not outside your property
  - Reproduction inhibitors such as damaging eggs (covering with oil or creating a pin-prick hold in shell)
  - OvoControl – registered for pigeon and geese; reduces next generation but does not reduce current generation
  - Avitrol- registered as a scare product; affected birds act wildly and scare others away
  - Habitat manipulation: painting wooden siding, eaves and soffets, or adding fencing or wires to reduce the suitability of a building or field
- ❖ Exterior Bird Management: The Bottom Line
- Use a combination of approaches –no ONE method will work
  - Each situation is likely different—be a problem solver
  - Birds will adapt and change their behavior!
  - Monitoring and preventive maintenance is important
- ❖ BIRD MANAGEMENT – Options for INTERIORS
- ❖ Most common “interior” pest birds (most are unprotected species):

- House sparrows
- Pigeons
- Starlings
- Mourning Doves
- Hawks

❖ Birds inside facilities?

- Prevent where possible by managing exterior areas
- Use bird exclusion when appropriate, such as air curtains at loading docks
- Who to call? Besides Pest Management Professionals and Wildlife Control Officers, your best bet might be a “Bird Bander”. Ask if they have a Federal permit to work with protected species!

❖ Management options for INTERIOR bird pests

- Bird traps (entice with food)
- Glueboards—may be considered inhumane
- Mist nets – lightweight nets
- Pellet guns (used to move birds toward exit but have definite drawbacks)
- Lasers (used to move birds toward exit but have definite drawbacks)
- Bird foggers
- Bal chatri traps
- Lures, such as caged live prey near doorway