

THE INS AND OUTS OF BIRD MANAGEMENT

Two of the most common pest bird species, the English house sparrow and the pigeon are non-migratory and can be problematic all year round for commercial structures. A third species, the European starling, will migrate and may have different roosting areas in the winter and summer.



All of these birds will come to structures for food, water and nesting. They can leave unsightly droppings on paved surfaces, ledges and windows. Bird droppings are associated with diseases like histoplasmosis and several food borne illness pathogens. They can carry parasites such as bird mites which may leave the bird nest and attack people. Lastly, pest birds will also build nests in signs and ledges, detracting from the buildings appearance and value. They may also come indoors and wreak the same havoc inside as outside.



Bird management programs should begin with prevention. To start a prevention program, the exterior of the facility should be inspected on a regular basis. Look for evidence of pest birds such as droppings, feathers, or nesting materials. In addition, focus inspection efforts on finding conditions which can provide food, water and shelter. If we can limit the items needed for bird survival, we can make the site less attractive to pest birds. Inspect for access points such as openings around doors and pipe/wall junctures which may allow pest birds inside. The inspection must cover all areas of the

building's exterior including entry points at ground level and the roof. Use the information uncovered in the inspection to further educate staff, correct conducive conditions and bird proof the building.

Food is one of the major attractions for birds. Food spillage around dumpsters, exterior eating areas, fruit trees and open trash receptacles are examples of areas where birds may find food. Establishing a regularly scheduled clean-up is essential. Use trash receptacles with self-closing lids to help keep birds from accessing food garbage. Employees and guests should be discouraged from feeding birds with lunch scraps or bird feeders. Although many people like to encourage wildlife, more pest birds may be attracted than song birds for a free meal and even mice and rats can prosper from the spillage around bird feeders.



Water sources will attract birds and provide an essential need. Birds need a readily available source of drinking water each day. Parking lot pot holes, poorly designed drainage systems and other sources of standing water can provide the drinking water they need. Eliminate these sources whenever feasible.

The last conducive condition focus is harborage. Pest birds like the English house sparrow will readily build their nest in structures around gaps in exterior walls. Pigeons will seek harborage on ledges especially when there is some cover provided over the ledge. Inspecting for these nesting opportunities and then sealing or use of bird management devices to repel or exclude birds is needed. Bird netting is often used to exclude nesting areas like those found underneath overhangs, signs and canopies. Other tools include electrically charged tracks which can be placed along ledges and signs which mildly shocks the bird when it lands. There are also ledge exclusion devices which prevent landing via a series of cables, spikes or total modification of the horizontal ledge into a 45 degree diagonal angle.

Trees and shrubs can encourage birds in providing cover and food. Landscaping should be evaluated for its impact in providing nesting or resting opportunities. Although some municipalities may place certain requirements on businesses regarding landscape choices; trees with dense foliage and cover should be avoided. Consider pruning trees and shrubs to reduce attractiveness. Removal of the problematic vegetation may be the best solution in some cases.

Inspecting the building for openings which are vulnerable to bird entry is another important survey function. This includes, doors, windows and vents which do not seal properly or are intentionally left open. Education of employees regarding the importance of keeping doors closed and the correction of structural deficiencies will be required to keep birds out.

If despite your best efforts at prevention and good exterior practices, what should you do if a bird gets in? The first step is to isolate the bird if possible. Try to keep it in one area should capture be required.

The next step is to use light management to try to encourage the bird to leave. This means turning off the interior lights and opening the doors. Laser guns or noise can be used to help move the bird towards the open doors. These procedures should be done as soon as the bird enters. It is important not to let the bird become acclimated to its surroundings. If it becomes comfortable, lights and harassment strategies will be less successful. If you cannot get it out using light management and harassment, your pest management professional should be contacted. Netting and trapping are two possible control tools for the removal of indoor birds.

All animals need food, water and shelter. Establishing a program to inspect and eliminate these resources will help reduce both interior and exterior pest bird populations. Bird management is important for the health and safety of employees and visitors.

