



Tompkins County SPCA

Wildlife Series

Humane Bird Deterrents

Birds, long considered a symbol of peace, are intelligent, adaptable creatures. Many birds mate for life, and both the male and female are generally protective and affectionate with each other and their young. Take the time to watch, and you will notice their fascinating preening and courtship rituals.

Watching birds is a relaxing and enjoyable pastime for many people. But for those who wish to discourage birds from roosting or nesting on their homes or buildings, there are many humane solutions:



Barriers

- Bird netting can be used to block access to nooks and crannies where birds like to roost. Netting is available at some hardware stores and through a company called Birdbarrier (800-662-4737). It comes in a variety of sizes for different types of birds. Many experts consider netting to be the best barrier available.
- Bird Wire consists of parallel strands of wire strung between pegs of various heights, preventing the birds from landing. It is also available from Birdbarrier.
- If birds are landing on a railing or narrow ledge, secure a stretched out Slinky toy or other wire coil. The birds cannot land on it.
- Cover the ledge with a board slanted at an angle greater than 45 degrees--the birds cannot keep their footing, and will stop landing there.
- Some buildings may be glazed with a coating that dries to a hard, slippery finish. (Not to be confused with sticky gel products). Check with painters or building contractors.

Deterrents

- Wind chimes.
- White balloons can be painted with black concentric circles to look like the eyes of predators, frightening birds away. "Scary Eye" balloons can

be purchased at hardware stores and through Birdbarrier. Mylar balloons may also be effective.

- Garbage can liners cut in strips can be hung around the area you wish to protect.
- Hang strips of mylar flash tape on plants, trees, and ledges. Its holographic pattern reflects flashes of light and prevents birds from landing.
- Silhouettes of hawks can be placed in windows, on roofs, and other locations to scare birds away.
- A motion-activated sprinkler that sprays water at intruding animals is manufactured by Contech (800-767-8658).

Ideas that do not work

- Killing or trapping wild birds is generally against the law. It is also ineffective since the reason for the animals' presence remains--e.g. habitat, food source, etc.
- Sticky gel repellent can glue birds' feathers together, causing them to lose body heat and die of cold, or plummet to the ground, unable to fly. Wildlife rehabilitation centers report receiving many birds every year covered in the gel. Sticky gel repellent is also ineffective because it quickly becomes covered in debris or washes away in rain.
- Sharpened metal spikes in some cases may accidentally cause birds to be impaled.

Nesting birds

State and federal laws restrict disturbing or destroying certain birds' nests. Before beginning any bird proofing, be sure there are no active nests. Birds become fully independent of their parents in approximately 4 to 6 weeks.

