

Birds

- BC is home to a wide diversity of birds – most species are protected under the *Migratory Birds Convention Act* and require a permit to control
- BC has seven Schedule C (non-protected) bird species under the *BC Wildlife Act* which do not require a permit to control
- See also: *Geese & Swans, Pigeons, Starlings* Best Practices



Crows

Understanding Birds

Protected bird species, for example gulls, woodpeckers, robins and eagles, **require permits** to handle nests, eggs, and young. Note that some domestic species found living in the wild, like domestic doves and peacocks, are not considered wildlife.

Schedule C birds include house sparrows, European starlings, rock pigeons, American crows, northwestern crows, black-billed magpies, and brown-headed cowbirds. Empty nests and nests with eggs of Schedule C birds can legally be destroyed, while nests with young may be moved (or a false replacement nest provided) from the original nesting site.

Common Conflicts

Birds can come into conflict because of their droppings, or when they nest in structures, cause damage to agricultural crops, gardens or greenways, and gather in large groups which can be noisy. They are more abundant where they are intentionally or accidentally fed (food scraps, crumbs, and garbage). Birds can sometimes get stuck inside buildings and cannot, or will not leave.

Humane Choices

The BC SPCA does not support killing birds for nuisance reasons.

Killing is rarely necessary and control methods should be selected to cause the least harm to the animal's welfare. If attractants have not been removed, more birds may arrive, so follow-up monitoring is needed.

The BC SPCA strongly encourages non-lethal, non-contact methods. Prevention and exclusion comes first, followed by deterrence, and if necessary, eviction. Eviction should be done carefully to avoid potentially orphaning young.

Did you know?

Varying by species, birds can eat nuts, seeds, grains, fruits, berries, and are important sources of insect control and seed dispersal.



House Sparrow

Birds...

- frequency of egg laying, number of eggs, and growth rate varies widely by species
- babies may be **altricial** (rely on parents to feed them), or **precocial** (feed themselves)
- all bird species, including Schedule C, can be rehabilitated and released

Conflict Resolution

Intentional feeding with human foods is highly discouraged, because it is harmful, attracts and habituates animals. For more information on managing bird conflicts, *flip page over*.



Recommended Actions & Methods

Prevention & Exclusion

Before any conflict, and to prevent future issues

Remove potential food sources

- ✓ Secure garbage bins and compost
- ✓ Bird feeders filled only in winter (if at all), no pet food outside
- ✓ Discourage intentional feeding

Maintain urban and residential structures

- ✓ Block access to ledges, vents, soffits, window sills, rafters
- ✓ Use door curtains to prevent birds flying into buildings
- ✓ Use netting to prevent access to specific areas
- ✓ Prune tree branches to make roost sites less attractive

Deterrence

If babies can fly, or no babies present

Use mild humane harassment techniques

- ✓ Use devices like bird wires, bird spikes, predator decoys (e.g. owls, hawks), reflective strings, sound deterrents, or wires that deliver a small electric shock
- ✓ Hazing with specially-trained raptors may also be used

Eviction

Evict the animal

- ✓ Use a one-way door or funnel cone so birds can leave the structure or net barrier, but not re-enter
- ✓ Do not install these devices when birds are nesting
- ✓ Permanently seal openings when nest or structure is undisturbed for several nights
- ✓ Follow all prevention and exclusion steps above

These are legal, regulated methods - but they are **not recommended*** as they can cause animal suffering, may be high risk to non-targets, and/or are difficult to administer; legality must also be confirmed according to local bylaws and/or regulations

- Live traps with food, water, bedding, checked at least every 24-48 hours
- Carbon dioxide or carbon monoxide - using pure gas cylinder into sealed chamber with regulator
- Shot to brain of trapped or free-ranging bird
- Repellent gels or sticky substances
- Cervical dislocation
- Manually applied blunt trauma that induces immediate unconsciousness
- Penetrating captive bolt
- Immobilization with alpha-chloralose followed by hand capture
- Avicides, permit required

*email wildlifecontrol@spca.bc.ca for information on these methods

It is **illegal** to use...

- Bait poisons or chloroform
- Maceration
- Thoracic compression
- Drowning or suffocation
- Carbon monoxide by vehicle exhaust
- Glue traps
- Freezing (including dry ice)