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BIRD MANAGEMENT GUIDE

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Tips for bird control success



Boost your bird business with expert advice for commercial and residential jobs.

By Ryan Hall;
Charles Holt, CWCP; and
Stephen Vantassel, CWCP
Contributors

Pest management professionals (PMPs) looking for a way to make 2018 a year of record profits in their bird businesses should look no further than the following hints for commercial and residential jobs.

COMMERCIAL JOBS

● **Know your birds.** Most birds are protected from being harmed in the United States by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. Three notable exceptions are pigeons (*Columba livia domestica*), European starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*). Federal law does not protect them because they are not native to the United States. However,

some communities have added protections for these birds. Familiarize yourself with regulations in dealing with all pest bird species before performing any control.

(Editor's Note: For an interesting take on dealing with a bird species that is protected by the Act, turn to p. 10.)

● **Ask the right questions.** Starting with the initial phone call, assess the caller's situation and evaluate whether the client is prepared for what it may take to effectively solve the problem. Use Google Earth to help you view the site while the client is on the phone.

● **Don't skimp on your site evaluation.** This is especially critical when servicing a large commercial property. Perform a thorough on-site analysis by surveying the entire property, areas of concern, and where the birds may move if control attempts are implemented. Visit during different times of the day to ensure you have a full grasp of the problem.

House sparrows, above, and European starlings, left, are commonly encountered pest bird species.

- **Identify the problem birds.** How long has this problem existed? Determine the birds' activities, such as flight times, loafing periods, flight paths, and nesting and feeding areas.

- **Determine the pressure.** How attached are the birds to the location? Few clients ever call when the problem is new. Recognize that most problems will require control methods suitable for medium- and high-pressure situations.

- **Create detailed reports.** Include in your report findings solutions and recommendations using photos, videos and diagrams. On the other hand, don't be so detailed that the client can simply take your assessment and hire someone else. Don't overwhelm your client with lots of options, either. Focus the client on no more than three options. Certain methods will fit into varying price points for some clients, and will allow them to choose what works with their needs.

- **Protect everyone's health.** Clean from all areas bird nests, debris and droppings prior to installing any bird deterrents. Be sure your workers know how to protect themselves and your clients from diseases spread by bird droppings.

- **Keep informed about the latest bird control tools and methods.** Develop a relationship with your bird control suppliers. New products

are regularly being created to turn a construction problem into a very easy way to eliminate birds.

- **Know when to ask for help.** Take advantage of technology — cell phones, emails, photos and video — as you reach out for help. A large bird job can be overwhelming. But there are professionals willing to provide technical assistance on bird control jobs when needed. Seek out the advice of vendors, colleagues, co-workers and other bird control experts.

RESIDENTIAL JOBS

- **Don't ignore residential bird jobs.** While large commercial bird jobs are always desirable, the logistics of such jobs, coupled with extreme competition to secure these somewhat limited accounts, can create issues. "Base hits" that easily add to your bottom line can be a better decision than a time- and budget-busting job that involves waiting months for payment.

- **Take advantage of easy money.** Controlling European starlings and house sparrows is relatively simple. Both species are cavity nesters and will readily invade vents, louvers and other structural gaps. Nests associated with starlings can become so large that home inspectors might mistakenly think they were created by squirrels, owls or even raccoons.

What about woodpeckers and chimney swifts?

Woodpeckers (Picidae) are a particularly thorny problem, as they are a protected species. Lethal control can only be performed with a permit after proving that non-lethal control efforts have failed. Woodpecker behavior falls into three types:

1 Drumming occurs when the pecking is used to advertise for a mate or territory. Typically, this occurs in the spring.

2 Sometimes, pecking is done to **excavate** a nest. The nest may be temporary or may be a first step to raising young.

3 Lastly, pecking is done in search of **food** (insects). Feeding behavior is typically horizontal hole-making into the surface of structures. In some areas, carpenter bee larvae are a favored food source. Addressing the source of insects, if present, should be your priority.

The best chance for woodpecker control is to haze the bird quickly with shiny/flasher products, coupled with rapid repairs of damage. Always remind your client, though, that hazing techniques do not work in every situation.

Chimney swifts (*Chaetura pelagica*) are another protected species, but are easy to control, at least in northern areas, provided the client is patient. All that is needed is to wait until late August or so for the birds to migrate south again. Once the birds and their young have left, simply secure the chimney with a professionally manufactured chimney screen.

— R.H., C.H., S.V.



Pigeons are often jokingly referred to as "rats with wings," and can be persistent pests.

- **Install prefabricated screens.** After removing the nesting material and treating for ectoparasites, install vent screens to prevent birds from reoccupying vents. Passive and bathroom exhaust vents are easily secured with screens ranging in

quality from plastic to stainless steel. Most can be installed in a just a few minutes, making them a superb add-on repair service.

- **Take special care around dryer vents.** Building codes in your area may prohibit any tampering with the dryer



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vent. Nevertheless, improper treatment of dryer vents can increase the likelihood

Starling nests can be so large, it's easy to mistakenly think a bigger animal created them.

of a fire. One product with a good reputation is a metal dryer wall vent that uses micro magnets to close. They not only are aesthetically appealing, but also do not trap lint as a screen-style cover could.

- **Mind the gaps.** For any gaps behind the gutter, use a drip edge or gutter apron (sheet metal or aluminum flashing with a 90° or 105° angle that is installed under shingles). Secure other bird entry points using vent covers and similar products, easily installed with common tools. Custom screening of louvered or gable vents requires some skill to make aesthetically pleasing, but with a little practice and effort, it should become part of a bird control professional's repertoire.

- **Continue your training.** With bird management methods and products always improving, get involved in the National Wildlife Control Operators Association (NWCOA) Certified Bird Barrier Training Course to stay up-to-date on the latest advancements in bird control and exclusion. This course will be offered at the 2019 Wildlife Expo in Myrtle Beach, S.C. Visit NWCOA.com for registration information and more details. PMP

HALL, HOLT and VANTASSEL are board members of the National Wildlife Control Operators Association. Learn more at NWCOA.com.

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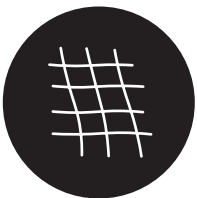
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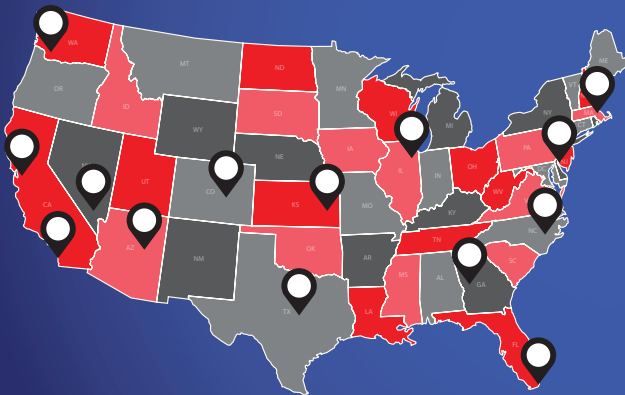




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7 tips to help your bird control marketing take flight

By June Van Klaveren | Contributor

Bird control is a logical add-on service for many pest control companies' menu of services, but the marketing techniques may be slightly different from that for general pests — especially for a company that has just added it. Let's explore some techniques for the newbie bird control professional, as well as the seasoned professional whose marketing may need a lift.

1 Inform your current customers (and employees) that you provide bird control services. Mention bird control services on *all* your printed and online materials, including invoices, newsletters, website, social media, fliers and business cards. Companies often fail to let their current customers know of new services, so extra effort to announce this will pay off in the long run. Remember to also ask for referrals from current customers. Don't forget to share your marketing materials and messages with all employees, so everyone understands your approach.

2 Ask your technicians to identify bird problems on current commercial accounts — and other businesses in the area. Teach them to look up, to spot flocks of roosting birds, and to look down, to spot the messes the birds leave behind. Offer an incentive to technicians who bring in leads as a result of their observations on the job.

3 Use an educational approach in all your marketing, and focus on the customer. Instead of focusing on “selling,” try educating in a way that will support your reputation as being knowledgeable and professional bird control experts. Your blog and all your marketing materials should aim to be a mix of 70 percent educational information and 30 percent sales message, regardless of pest.

As Joe Pulizzi, founder of the Content Marketing Institute, says, “Our customers don't care about our products or services; they care about themselves. Our content must be based on fulfilling our customers' needs and interests, so that they come to build a trusted and emotional connection with our brands.”

4 Update your website to highlight your bird service. Add information about birds, control and the services you provide, with links to valuable resources. Updating the content on your site regularly not only helps build trust between you and your customers, it also helps your site

achieve a higher Google rating. Include keywords, because having pages on your website that speak about bird control is only useful if the keywords are mentioned. Also keep in mind that more than 60 percent of web traffic now comes from mobile devices like smartphones and tablets. This means that if your website is not mobile-friendly and easy to view on a smaller screen, you could be missing out on more than half of your potential customers.

5 Take advantage of online opportunities. Once you have a bird control article written, break it up into small bites to use in social media posts, thus using your articles for many purposes. Repurpose the same article on LinkedIn and your blog. Consider having a “bird month,” where you publish information about birds on all your social media sites during the month(s) that birds are especially problematic. Participate in online forums, and mention information regarding pest birds. In addition, pay attention to any online reviews and responses you receive. Respond to *all* of them with a simple “Thank you for your kind comments.” Or, in the case of an unhappy customer, respond appropriately to them as well.

6 Don't abandon your traditional marketing avenues. This includes paid advertisements, direct mail, vehicle signs, etc. Regardless of whether you're just adding bird control services or you've been doing this for some time, it's a good idea to review *all* your current marketing activities and update them to include bird control. Don't assume everyone knows and remembers all you do.

7 Run a bird control campaign to reinforce your online efforts. Use invoice stuffers, fliers, brochures and other printed materials. Avoid putting the information “out there” merely one time and assuming everyone will remember it. Repeat. Repeat. Repeat. PMP

Bonus tip: Partner with roofing, rain gutter, solar, skylight, HVAC or other property-related maintenance companies, and share mailing lists and marketing expenses. Consider combining an ad for both your services.

VAN KLAVEREN is president of Compelling Communications, which focuses on helping pest control companies market their services with dynamic marketing materials. Contact her at june@compelcom.com.

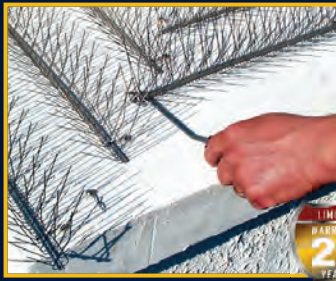
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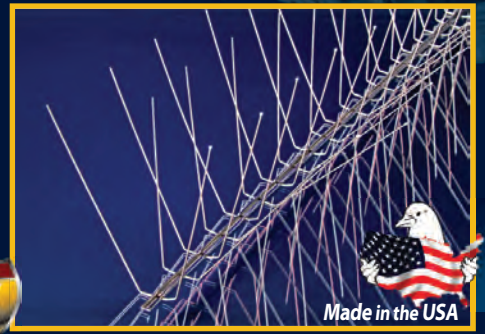
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Success with commercial control

Four PMPs share how they make bird management profitable year after year.

By Jerry Mix | Editor-at-Large

When you've built your business to the point where it consistently exceeds expectations in general pest and termites, it's only natural to want to build on that success. Many pest management professionals (PMPs) see bird control as the next logical step — and become quickly discouraged when they cannot make it as profitable as their other segments.

But bird control is, forgive the pun, a horse of a different feather than other pest control segments. There's the equipment investment, the training, the different expectations you have to give customers looking for an elimination of their problem — and the tasks put on them to make sure the problem can be permanently solved.

Starting on p. BG4 of this section, three board members of the National Wildlife Control Operators Association provide an excellent overview of technical tips for bird control success. On BG10, industry marketing guru June Van Klaveren spells out how to market your bird service. Now, read on for advice from PMPs in the field.

BRUCE CARTER: ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES

Bruce Carter, president of Farmington, N.M.-based Carter Services, has been in the pest management industry for 39 years. He started out in 1979, when a buddy purchased a small pest management firm and convinced Carter to buy one, too. A year later, Carter bought his buddy's firm — and today services much of the southwestern U.S.

He offered bird service essentially from the beginning, but admits it has evolved. These days, Carter Services does approximately \$250,000 a year in bird control work, the majority of it translating to netting jobs for the “Big 3” species: pigeons, sparrows and starlings. Overall, Carter Services is about 98 percent commercial; Carter says his bird work is 100 percent commercial to stay profitable.

Bruce Carter is on Copesan's bird control committee, which garnered him a “Bird Brain MVP” award along with his fellow committee members.

How has he consistently achieved success?

For starters, Carter is a stickler for working alongside his crew to get the jobs completed on time and on budget. Indeed, the first time we called to interview him, in mid-February, he couldn't come to the phone because he and his team were working on a netting job at a warehouse in Colorado Springs, Colo.

When we finally got the chance to talk to Carter, we learned the weather had pushed the job from a one-day to a two-and-a-half day project. It snowed in Colorado Springs the night before the project began, and when the work started, it was 4°F. Work progressed, but trying to stay warm during installation meant frequent breaks. That's why being flexible and considering wild card factors are so important when bidding, preparing and doing bird jobs, Carter says.

“I get into the mix with my guys because I can't expect them to do something I wouldn't do,” he adds. “Plus, I enjoy working.”





CHRIS McCLOUD: MARKET TO YOUR CLIENTS

Chris McCloud, president and CEO of South Elgin, Ill.-based McCloud Services, also has a pest control company that is almost exclusively commercial. Drilling down further, the majority of its revenue is from the food industry. McCloud also does a fair amount of work in other areas including health care, hospitality and property management.

“All of these companies are also very good bird control accounts,” points out McCloud, a fourth-generation owner of the 104-year-old firm. “As long as we have been doing pest control, we have been doing bird control work in one form or another. But in the past 50 to 60 years, bird control has become

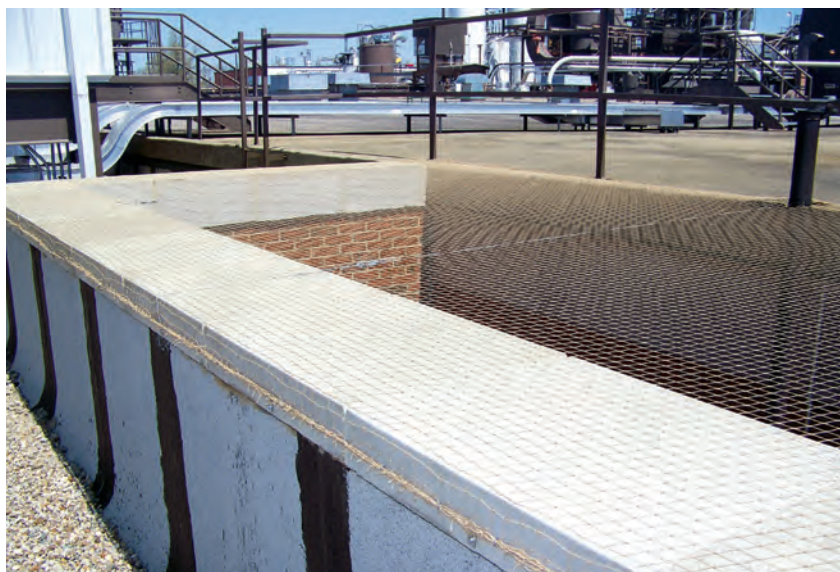
a key component of our integrated pest management (IPM) program. We are comfortable performing any level of bird control work, from large-scale netting jobs to smaller things like signs on retail stores.”

McCloud says the company has done some bird control jobs that had revenue in the range of \$100,000 — government post office work, for example.

“Our customers are always looking for bird control solutions,” McCloud says.

“As people continue to be more concerned with public health issues and the aesthetics

McCloud nets potential bird access points on a food plant roof as part of an overall IPM program.



PHOTOS: MCCLOUD SERVICES

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of their work environment, bird control has become a big, growing segment of our business that is only going to increase.”

McCloud Services has offices in seven Midwestern states, and does business in a total of 10 states. It trains every technician in bird control with the help of a supplier-based program. But while every tech ends up with some bird service knowledge, an elite few comprise the backbone of the bird control team.

“We have a dozen or so people who are very skilled at bird control work, so when we have a large-scale job, we are able to source that group and perform the work,” he explains, adding that there is never any shame in asking for assistance or for more information. “If our technicians can’t solve a bird problem themselves, they know enough to ask a lot of questions.”

McCloud Services’ bird prevention measures help grow the business.



Clark Pest Control protects the stucco walls of this building with bird netting under the eaves.

FRANK GIANNICO: LEARN MORE EVERY DAY

For Frank Giannico, commercial services manager for Clark Pest Control in Santa Maria, Calif., bird control work is an interesting process that often requires both time and patience.

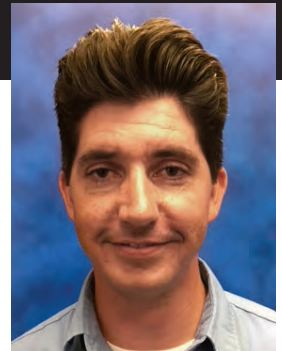
“I’m constantly learning on a daily basis,” says Giannico, who notes that his construction background has been an asset in bird work. “The best way to learn about bird control is after you have finished your install. Wait around for an hour or two, and see how the pest birds react to the exclusion you have put into place. You can learn a lot about how successful you are going to be.”

Clark Pest Control, founded in 1950 and based in Lodi, Calif., has 23 locations throughout California and northwestern Nevada. Commonly encountered pest birds for the team include pigeons, seagulls and grackles. Giannico, who has been involved in bird control for 13 years, remembers another common bird, the swallow, as being the reason for one of his most difficult jobs.

“There were swallows on the back wall of a hotel, with droppings all over the fourth-floor windows, which were ocean view rooms,” he says. “That job involved

scaling up the back side of the hotel with a lift. The hotel needed to have that problem addressed immediately, and we were able to accommodate them.” The upside? “I had an ocean view from the lift,” he says, tongue-in-cheek.

Giannico concludes with one more tip gleaned from his bird control work when bidding on a job: “We say, ‘Send us a lot of pictures, dimensions and information on what we will be drilling into, and we will do our best to help.’”



Giannico advises checking back in an hour or two after initial install of something like this electrified track, to gauge the birds’ reaction.

PHOTOS: CLARK PEST CONTROL

DAVID KANE: PREPARE FOR CHALLENGES

In New York City, the thermometer said it was 70°F. That made residents believe spring was just around the corner on this late-February day, even though that is rarely the case.

David Kane, treasurer of Manhattan-based AKA Pest Control, also manages the division appropriately called “Bye, Bye Birdie.” He took advantage of an unusually warm day to check out the water towers of two local hospitals for a couple of bird control projects.

In the winter, pigeons tend to move into the water towers, he explains. And when it’s time to change the water towers’ air filters, workers won’t go into the towers until the towers are cleaned and disinfected.

“Both of those jobs are basically netting,” Kane says. “These hospitals are already customers, so we move them to the top of the list.”

AKA operates in the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, primarily focusing on commercial accounts — hospitals, nursing homes, universities and office buildings in particular. When asked about some difficult bird control jobs the company tackles, though, Kane pointed to the railroads.

“These are some of the most challenging jobs we do because of the permits required for road closures to gain access to the undersides of railroad bridges,” he explains. “The hardest part is when



you protect one area, and the birds then just move to another area, on the left or on the right. It’s one continuous job.”

In addition to the public image issue for railroads, there’s also potential damage done to wiring and steel from bird droppings and urine, Kane says. When workers need to be in enclosed areas, the chance for disease increases, too, he adds. It’s why his team must be thorough during inspections, treatment and follow-up, he says.



An example of a New York City water tower.

“We go back and re-inspect an area to make sure everything is up and running correctly,” he adds, noting that AKA conducts quarterly inspections. “Sometimes we have to clean the area and do a reinstall.” PMP

MIX, a 2005 PMP Hall of Famer, can be reached at pmpeditor@northcoastmedia.net.

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA/MARTIN THOMANN



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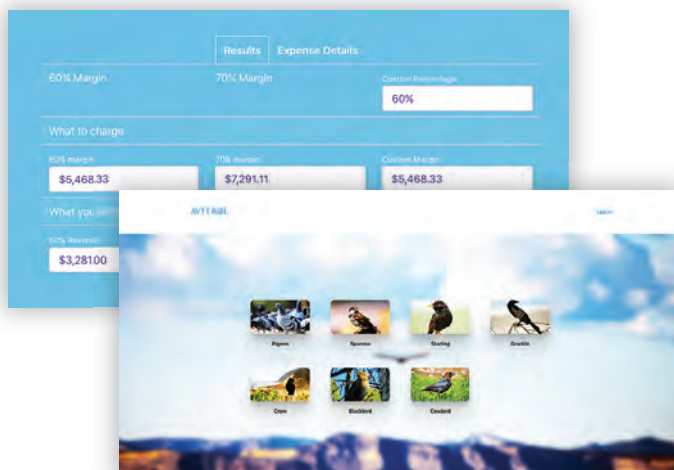
Avian Enterprises: Bird Repellent Line

In 2015, Devlin Reynolds, owner of bird repellent manufacturer Natural Forces and Rejex-It, passed away. His family did not want to continue the business, so they turned to Avian Enterprises LLC to carry on the product line. Avian Enterprises, a subsidiary company of Stone Soap Co. and makers of third-generation bird repellent Avian Control,

saw an opportunity to expand its bird repellent business. The company purchased the intellectual assets (including EPA registrations) of Natural Forces and Rejex-It. Recently, Natural Forces and Rejex-It products Fog Force and Migrate have been

reformulated for better performance by Avian Enterprises, and are now known as Avian Fog Force and Avian Migrate.

AvianControl.com



Avitrol: App 2.0

Version 2.0 of Avitrol's app takes tech-based bird control a step further. In this version, you'll find updated bid calculating functionality, a built-in dilution calculator functionality with intuitive input suggestions for sensitive bird treatments, and the most detailed pest bird ID information available to date, the company says. The dilution calculator will output the suggested amount of both live and pre-bait needed for your bird job.

App.Avitrol.com

Bird Barrier: Online sales tools

Bird Barrier introduces two new sales tools for the professional's arsenal: Product Advisor and Quick Quote. Product Advisor lets professionals walk through three simple questions — what kind of birds, what are they doing and where are they doing it — to determine suggested product solutions for their customers. After building the right program based on the Product Advisor results, Quick Quote then facilitates a speedy estimate to gauge the customer's interest before a final proposal. Product Advisor does not require a login, but Quick Quote does.

BirdBarrier.com/advisor.php and
BirdBarrier.com/quickquote





Bird-B-Gone: Instant Repair Patch

This repair patch can create watertight, durable seals on a variety of objects. Seal off minor pest entry points in a warehouse, repair a compromised PVC pipe, and more. Approved by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration, the patch is activated by ultraviolet (UV) light or sunlight. It's made with reinforced polyester for long-lasting repairs. With a no mixing/measuring/mess process, the Instant Repair Patch is easily applied to plastics, plexiglass, fiberglass, metal, wood, concrete and more. Once applied and cured, the patch can then be drilled, sanded or painted.

Bird-B-Gone.com



Bird-X: Stainless Steel Bird Spikes

These spikes are backed by a 10-year warranty, help eliminate birds' ability to perch, roost or nest, and help professionals reduce cleanup time and labor costs. Stainless Steel Spikes won't corrode or decay, and install with adhesive, nails, screws or ties. Bird-X Bird Spikes have a flexible polycarbonate base that allows for installation on curved surfaces. With four variations — narrow, regular, extra-tall and extra-wide — virtually all types of birds can be deterred. Even stubborn birds like seagulls will not land when extra-tall spikes are in place, the company says.

Bird-X.com



Bug Off Pest Control Center: Kwik-Fold Hand Net

Kwik-Fold Hand Nets feature a folding design for compact storage and an extendable handle for added reach. The nets are constructed of heavy-duty plastic and aluminum, with the netting constructed from bird-friendly micromesh. In addition to birds, they can be used for small animals, bats and even fish.

BugOffPCCenter.com

J.T. Eaton: Duster pole

J.T. Eaton's duster pole (#1730BK-2S), featuring double-sided threading, allows mounting of a scraper and web duster in a single device. Attach the #1710YL brush to sweep the bird nest away, and #1735 scraper to help remove bird droppings. The duster pole extends to 125 in. to remove nests and droppings from unwanted areas without the use of a ladder, saving time and money, the company says. Use this pole on tall buildings with minimum ladder movement to increase safety. The pole includes a removable handle for single-sided use.

JTEaton.com

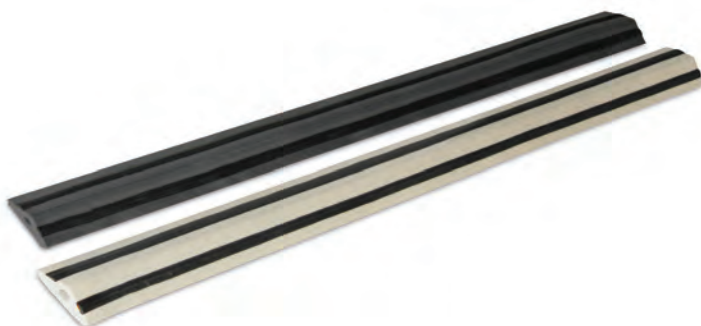




Nixalite: Stainless Steel Vent Screens

Nixalite's termination vent screens, available in 2-, 3-, 4- and 6-in. sizes, make it easy to protect PVC exhaust vents from insects, rodents, birds and debris. The screens are designed with a slotted side that allows for condensation to drain. The small-mesh stainless steel screens are great for protecting vents for furnaces, water heaters, power units and exhaust systems. The casing is made from HD Schedule 40 PVC material, and the screen is constructed of 3/16-in. square mesh stainless steel. The product is designed to be an easy add-on sale and/or exclusion component for both residential and commercial accounts.

Nixalite.com



Pelsis: Avishock Bird Track

Avishock Bird Track prevents birds from landing, roosting or nesting on buildings. The system is a minimalist, low-profile, and nearly invisible solution to keep birds off building ledges and a variety of other surfaces. Delivering a startling, yet harmless electric shock, they are an ideal option when structural aesthetics are an important factor for the account. Available in black or stone colors, Avishock Bird Track is user-friendly and easy to maintain, the company says.

Pelsis.com

Reed-Joseph International Co.:

Bird Banger and Bird Banger EXP

Launched from Reed-Joseph's Single, Double or Seven-Shot Launcher with the aid of a 6mm primer, the 15mm Bird Banger travels 50 to 125 ft. before exploding with a loud report.

The Bird Banger EXP has the same characteristics as the Bird Banger, but the report is louder. Both products are ideal for scaring birds and wildlife from crops, aquaculture ponds, feedlots, landfills and airports. See Reed-Joseph's complete product line on its website.

ReedJoseph.com



Wildlife Control Supplies: Visual deterrents

WCS offers a variety of professional-grade visual avian deterrents. Eco-friendly and specifically designed to repel woodpeckers, chimney swifts, geese, gulls, pigeons and other damage-prone nuisance birds, the full line of merchandise includes wind-driven flashers (such as the Flash-N-Spin, The Intimidator and The Flasher, all pictured), predator decoys, as well as devices uniquely designed to deter birds from landing on roofs, patios, boats, air-conditioning units and more.

ShopWCS.com



Keep pest birds away!

Sonic bird control consisting of predator and distress calls condition birds to stay away from perceived dangerous areas.



BroadBand PRO Sonic & Ultrasonic Bird Control Technology

Brockton, Massachusetts City Hall utilizes the Bird-X BroadBand PRO 4-speaker system to keep pest birds away from the 1892 classic building sited on a full city block.



800.662.5021 www.bird-x.com
300 N Oakley Blvd, Chicago IL 60612