BIRDS
WILDLIFE CONTROL
BEST PRACTICES

Species
More than 300 species in BC

Legal Designation
There are many different legal
designations for birds. Before
controlling birds, identify their legal
designation. Refer to the provincial
BC Wildlife Act and the federal Migratory
Birds Convention Act

Disease Risks
Avoid direct contact with bird droppings,
dead bodies, or water contaminated by
birds

Common Conflicts
Birds can come into conflict with people when they
nest in structures, cause damage to agricultural
crops, gardens or greenways, or gather in large
noisy groups. Their acidic droppings can damage
building exteriors. They are most abundant where
they are intentionally or accidentally fed (food
scraps, crumbs, garbage, agricultural areas). Birds
can sometimes get stuck inside buildings and cannot,
or will not, leave.

Conflict Prevention
Discourage intentional feeding – giving birds bread,
grain, or other food can be harmful and attracts
more birds and other animals. Secure garbage bins
and compost to prevent accidental feeding, and only
fill bird feeders in winter (if at all).
Maintain urban and residential structures: block
access to ledges, vents, soffits, window sills and
rafters; use door curtains to prevent birds flying
into buildings; use strong, well-maintained netting
to prevent access to specific areas.

Protected vs. Non-Protected Birds
Most bird species are federally or provincially
protected and require permits to interfere with
their nests, eggs, or babies. In contrast, some
domestic species living in the wild (e.g. domestic
doves, peacocks) are not considered wildlife.
In BC, Schedule C (non-protected) 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 be
legally destroyed. Nests with babies may be moved
short distances (where parents can still see them),
or a false replacement nest provided.

Call an AnimalKind accredited
pest control company if you
need help managing birds
Visit www.animalkind.ca for
more information

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

spca.bc.ca/urban-wildlife
RECOMMENDED
Actions & methods for control
Where birds have already become an issue, use mild humane harassment techniques like bird wires, bird spikes, predator decoys (e.g. owls, hawks), reflective strings, sound deterrents, or wires that deliver a small electric shock. Hazing by a professional with a specially-trained raptor may also be used - a permit may be required for some species of birds. Humane harassment should be postponed if birds are nesting or have babies in the nest.

If birds enter a home or building, use one-way doors or funnel cones so birds can leave but not re-enter. Do not install these devices when birds are nesting, or parents will not be able to feed their babies. Permanently seal openings once the babies have left the nest and the structure is undisturbed for several nights to prevent the issue from recurring.

NOT RECOMMENDED
Actions & methods for control
The BC SPCA does not recommend killing birds. However, legal regulated methods may be used for euthanasia to relieve suffering when animals are injured. They may also be used legally to control birds, but are not recommended as they can cause suffering, may be high risk to non-target animals, and/or are difficult to administer. Check local bylaws and/or regulations to confirm whether the method is legal in a municipality.

- Alpha-chloralose
- Avicides – permit required
- Blunt force trauma
- Carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide – using pure gas in sealed chamber with regulator
- Cervical dislocation
- Live traps with food, water, and bedding – checked at least every 24-48 hours
- Captive bolt
- Repellent gels or sticky substances
- Shot to brain

ILLEGAL
Actions & methods for control
- Bait poisons or chloroform
- Drowning
- Suffocation
- Freezing (including dry ice)
- Glue traps
- Maceration
- Thoracic compression
- Vehicle exhaust

Bird lovers often use bird feeders to attract birds to their yard, but these are also a source of human-wildlife conflict. Seed feeders often attract rodents and other wildlife, can attract large volumes of birds, and may disrupt migration patterns. Only use bird feeders in harsh winter conditions, choose feeders with a wildlife-proof design, and clean up spilled bird seed immediately. Liquid hummingbird feeders don’t attract rodent and other wildlife, but may attract ants and other insects. All feeders must be carefully monitored and maintained.