

## For More Information Contact

wildlifecontrol@spca.bc.ca  
BC SPCA Provincial Call Centre  
1.855.622.7722

BCSPCA  
SPEAKING FOR ANIMALS

# 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



#### Did you know?

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

Magpie, Photo Credit: Laurie Schretlen

## 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](http://www.animalkind.ca) for more information



[spca.bc.ca/urban-wildlife](http://spca.bc.ca/urban-wildlife)



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House sparrow, Photo Credit: Shayne Kay



### 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.

Photo Credit: Martin Smart