

IF YOU FEED THEM, THEY WILL COME



IF YOU HOUSE THEM, THEY WILL STAY!

The beauty of nature in Hawaii is awe inspiring. However, at times humans can come into conflict with nature. In certain areas an over population of birds could present a problem you need to deal with. This brochure offers useful suggestions to help you keep a sustainable and balanced bird population on your property and in the islands.

Shut down the free buffet!

You may not realize that you are inviting birds to your property by providing them with plenty of good food. Look around and see if you can identify what is attracting them.

- Some birds are fond of a particular fruit or seed—replace any tree or shrub they are dining on with something less tasty.
- Are you, or a neighbor, handing out food to birds? Food for one species may attract another.
- Is pet food [and water] left where birds can find it?
- If you are a business, have you put up “Please don’t feed the birds” signs? Are you and your employees enforcing that rule?
- Is food being served outside? Dishes may need to be removed and spills swept up more quickly. Keep unattended food covered.
- Are all trash cans covered? Is trash overflowing? Any spills will attract birds, so make sure the area is cleaned up and hosed down as often as possible.
- If birds are attracted to a splashing fountain, consider adding white vinegar to the water to make it unpleasant.
- In severe cases, spray water bottles or small water pistols may be useful. Please spray the water lightly from a distance in order to scare the bird not harm it. ***Shooting birds with anything that harms them is a violation of state and/or federal law depending on the species.***
- Fruit on trees can be protected by netting, either around the individual fruits, or draped over the tree or shrub, and enclose your flowerbed with screens used in greenhouses.

Put out the NO VACANCY sign!

While some birds carefully build elaborate nests, others are satisfied with a few twigs atop any sheltered flat surface.

- Check to see if nests are being built in the eaves of the building, between exposed pipes,

or any other space. Close these spaces with boards, metal flashing, or hardware cloth (wire mesh) with spaces ½” or smaller. Make sure there is no space at either end where birds can enter.

- Tops of light sconces and other flat surfaces can be inviting. Put a board or piece of metal flashing set at an angle like a lean-to or ten on top. No flat surface means no nest.
- Remove any empty nests. *Please don’t disturb occupied nests. A permit is required to do so.*
- Check for convenient roosting or perching sites and make them less convenient. Top flat fence posts with chicken wire, which is too flimsy to support most birds, and is nearly invisible to us.
- Check outbuildings, carports, and other structures around your property.
- You may want to remove some tree branches or “decorate” them with chicken wire.
- For outdoor areas such as golf courses or agricultural fields, herding dogs can be trained to chase birds away.
- If there are fewer nesting sites, fewer birds will be born. Potential nesters may not be able to find suitable alternative sites when they are ready to nest, so the result is fewer birds.

Reducing nesting sites will have a significant impact on the bird population in your area. The next suggestions will give you even more ideas on how to make your building less attractive to birds.

Why not just remove the birds?

People often think the easiest way to solve a bird problem is to trap them all and release them in a remote location. This NEVER works—the birds usually arrive back home before the people do. Most wild birds have an excellent sense of direction.

Researchers in England report the “next step” of permanently removing all the birds is not effective, and will create a even larger subsequent population. This is because birds like most animals are territorial. If all the birds in a given area are

suddenly removed, the birds in the adjacent territories will spy the vacated nesting sites and take them over. The sudden dramatic increase in the number of good nest sites encourages birds to breed who might, in normal circumstances, be too young or too old to compete with the stronger birds in the home territory. The result is that in one year, there are ten to twenty percent more birds than if the original population had been left in possession of its territory.

How can I further reduce problem bird populations?

Once you have taken all the actions you can to remove food and nest sites, you should find the resident population greatly reduced. Normal aging, illness, accidents, plus fewer babies, will cause the population to continue to reduce so that, within five years, only about 10% of the original number remain. This population size should stay fairly stable, which is ideal: you want your minimal population to retain control of their territory and keep neighboring flocks from moving in.

There are two additional safe and humane methods of reducing flocks by limiting their reproduction capabilities. One of these following methods takes more money than time; the other takes time but only a modest investment in bird seed.

Birth control for birds!

A new bird contraception called OvoControl-P® [for pigeons & doves] and OvoControl-G® [for ducks & geese]. It is expected that OvoControl-P® will also be attractive to feral chickens and other seed-eating birds. The contraceptive prevents the eggshell from hardening so there are no viable eggs.

The product consists of tasty feed laced with the contraceptive. Fed first thing in the morning, hungry birds will learn when and where to turn up for the special treats. They will also quickly learn that no more is coming after the one small feeding, so they quickly disperse to look for food elsewhere.

A timed machine can be purchased to dispense the food once a day; the machine may be filled every few days. Visit www.ovocontrol.com for more information and a video of birds showing up five minutes before the timed feeding and disappearing immediately after.

A less-expensive method:

This method actually depends on you **providing** ideal nesting sites and furnishing with food! It's equally effective for pigeons, doves, feral chickens, etc:

- Build a pigeon coop on a low rooftop or other place the pigeons like to gather.
- Use seed to attract them to the structure, explore it, and conclude that your nest boxes are ideal. Laced plain seed with highly desirable safflower seed at least until they move in.
- Provide hay or other nesting material.
- Have fresh food and water available daily.
- Every 2 days, visit the coop to clean up.
- Remove all eggs from the nests.
- Replace with wooden eggs of the same size, or eggs collected before and chilled to prevent embryo growth.

IT IS CRUCIAL THAT YOU REPLACE THE EGGS TO PREVENT MORE FROM BEING LAID.

No poison please!

Death by poisoning is horrific and agonizingly painful. No creature should suffer this way. Poison doesn't just harm the targeted birds:

- Other animals may get access to the poison, including pets and endangered species.
- Dead and dying birds may be eaten by pet cats and dogs, who will then also suffer and die.
- Poisoned remains will gradually be weathered away, into our underground water supply.

Besides, studies show that removing resident flocks simply encourages neighboring flocks to expand into the vacant territory; the sudden increase in nesting sites and food triggers a population

explosion, winding up with more birds than would have been there had nothing been done at all.

Also NO glue traps!

Death by glue trap is truly horrible. Many birds are caught in glue traps set out for other animals. Again, removing the birds is only a temporary solution, one that will make matters worse in the long run. *If you find a bird caught in a glue trap, use vegetable oil (in spray or liquid form) to work the birds' feathers loose from the glue. The bird will likely need immediate veterinary attention and a short stay at a rehab facility.*

Use humane traps humanely:

If you find you must trap birds, use safe, humane traps; set them in a place sheltered from sun, wind and rain, and protected from predators; make sure there is plenty of water in a dish that will not tip over; and check the trap every two hours [if you leave food and extra water, check every six hours]. Remove the birds immediately, secure them in an appropriately safe container, and transport in a vehicle that is ventilated and neither chilled or overheated.

Call Wild Bird Rehab Haven for advice on any wild bird issues or for assistance in helping an orphaned or injured wild bird.

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Through rehabilitation resources and educational outreach, Wild Bird Rehab Haven makes a difference in our community by helping concerned citizens help the wild birds of Hawaii.

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