

IN THIS ISSUE:

## GOT BIRDS ?



Spring has sprung and with it a plethora of nesting birds. Urban "pesty" birds are no longer the benign beings most of us take for granted... they foul our sidewalks, vector an ever-increasing number of diseases, and create an overload of work for maintenance staff throughout the nesting season. Furthermore, most urban birds plaguing schools are introduced species who steal habitat and resources from our native birds.

If you've got birds in your school, you know they're one of the toughest pests to deal with. There are a number of things your pest management professional can do to remediate the problem, but ultimately it requires participation by the whole school community.

### **The three must-haves for any pest are**

**FOOD, WATER, and SHELTER.**

**Reduce the availability of these to discourage pesty birds.**

#### **Food**

Birds will scavenge on most any outdoor edible debris left after breaks and lunch periods (especially in high schools); consequently, outdoor lunch areas have the worst bird problems, which poses an increased health risk.

#### **Water**

Birds will remember locations where water has collected in puddles created by sagging rooftops, outdoor toys, tarps and other depressions, as well as clogged rain gutters.

#### **Shelter**



Our urban and school environments offer excellent nesting and loafing (roosting) sites. Common among these are light fixtures, building ledges, overhead beams, and overhangs of almost any type. Read on for maintenance suggestions on habitat modification...

Suggest that your principal launch an awareness campaign to discourage pesty birds in your school. University of Arizona IPM staff can help (see contact information, bottom of pg. 2).

## Bird Management 101

Once the school staff and students are aware of their role in minimizing the availability of food and water, your pest management professional and maintenance folks can address the issue of shelter. Management techniques for birds that are loafing vary greatly from techniques used for nesting birds and those that are "generational".

**"Generational birds"** refers to birds born on-site and who consequently have extreme site fidelity. They will remain in the area and attempt year after year to nest, even despite significant lack of success. Pigeons and doves exhibit the greatest site fidelity (they don't call them "homing pigeons" for nothing!). Generational birds (and their nests) need to be physically removed to break the cycle. Live trapping is a humane method offered by several pest management professionals.

### **Useful deterrents for loafing birds only:**

#### **Spike**

Deters large birds from landing and roosting on flat surfaces. Come February, those loafing areas may give rise to nesting and offspring...and the dreaded generational birds. This is **not** a useful method for deterring small birds, and you could make the problem worse!

#### **Coil**

An alternative to spike, coil is also for large birds. Coil will not collect debris and is less likely to create a nesting or roosting habitat like spikes sometimes do.

#### **Sloped surfaces**

Mountable for 90° angles to create a 45° slope that in theory prevents primarily large birds from nesting with limited success.

#### **Electric track**

Useful for any sized bird, an electrical current provides a minor shock (like an electric fence), deterring birds from landing long enough to get comfortable. Note: in school environments use only in high areas, such as roofs where children cannot reach.

Other products, such as gels for applying to surfaces and oils/detergents for adding to water sources, should be considered on a case by case basis with your pest management professional.

# Arizona's Children's Environmental Health Program



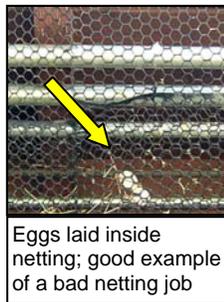
Bird	Size	Management
Pigeon  Dove (white-winged & mourning)	large	Spike Coil Sloped surfaces Electric track (high areas) Netting <u>Note: removal of adults and nests is necessary</u>
English House Sparrow  House Finch	small	Site fidelity less of an issue so reduce food, water and shelter to deter Electric track (high areas) Minor deterrents (gel, etc.) Netting

### For nesting or generational birds:

1. Removal of bird(s) and nest(s)
2. Thoroughly clean area
3. Install netting OR put up spike or coil (large birds)

### Netting

Netting is an excellent long-term solution to both small and large bird problems – particularly in walkways and outdoor food areas with overhead beams. A netting project should be approached like an investment – do your homework and read the tips below. Knotless net will not shrink up, should it come into contact with fire.



Eggs laid inside netting; good example of a bad netting job

- ✓ **Don't low-bid!**  
It can cost you more in the long-run. You get what you pay for when it comes to netting, so do it right the first time and save yourself the headache of additional cost down the road.
- ✓ **Is there a warranty?**  
Check for manufacturer's warranty AND installation warranty (often different companies).
- ✓ **References – always check!**  
Make some calls. Go inspect their work. Use your colleagues in the Arizona Children's Environmental Health Coalition for references, too.

### Before physically modifying any area where birds are commonly present, make sure you sanitize!

Histoplasmosis is a disease of the lungs caused by a fungus which grows in aged accumulations of bird and bat droppings. Spray wash areas frequented by birds before maintenance.

NATIVE BIRDS cannot be harassed. If you have a question as to whether a bird species can be live trapped, etc., contact the Arizona Structural Pest Control Commission.

Teachers, kitchen staff and other school folks: it's April and the bugs are here... are you writing your observations down on your school's pest sighting logs? These should be located in the main office, teacher's lounge, and kitchen area. Help your pest management professional manage your pest problems effectively by communicating what you see – Integrated Pest Management involves the **WHOLE** school community!

### **Congratulations to Dr. Dawn H. Gouge!**

Our school IPM program state director, Dawn Gouge, won an IPM Achievement Award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for her outstanding work with the Arizona school IPM program.



### **They're hear...Arizona's bats!**

Each spring at about this time Arizona Game and Fish receives calls about bats. That's because they're emerging from their winter slumber to feed on tens upon thousands mosquitoes **each night!** The overpass at the corner of **40<sup>th</sup> St. and Camelback** harbors a large roost of bats which can be seen emerging for their nightly feeding – quite impressive, check it out!



For more information on bats, or how to invite bats to feed on mosquitoes around your school or home go to Bat Conservation International, <http://www.batcon.org/home/default.asp>

### **Information sources:**

1. Bennett, Gary W., John M. Owens, and Robert M. Corrigan. *Truman's Scientific Guide to Pest Management Operations*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Purdue University, 2003. 574 pp.
2. Lyle Ferguson, Ecolab (Arizona)
3. Pigeon Man Pigeon Removal (Phoenix, Arizona)
4. Nancy Renison, Bat Biologist, Arizona Game and Fish Department

For information on Arizona's IPM in Schools program contact Dawn Gouge or Jennifer Snyder 520-568-2273, [dhgouge@ag.arizona.edu](mailto:dhgouge@ag.arizona.edu)



Few bugs are bad! More than 95% of all insect species are beneficial to humans