



BIRDS living with wildlife

In an effort to coexist with wildlife, consider the enormous hardships these intelligent and fascinating wild species encounter because so much of their habitat has been destroyed. Each year they are forced into closer contact with humans and must compete with us for food, shelter and space. With a little understanding, patience and a few precautions and common sense steps, we can all enjoy the wonderfully interesting wild animals who share our backyards and cities.

Common questions:

A bird is trapped in my house. How can I remove it?

Birds will fly towards natural light if caught indoors. The best thing to do is to open a door or window leading outside, close all other doors and cover other windows. Make sure to turn off any lights in the room. Leave the room and the bird will fly out the open door/window on its own. The bird may exit almost immediately, or it may take several hours before the bird finds his way out. You may also want to place birdseed just outside the exit to encourage the bird to leave.

Birds keep flying into my windows. How can I stop this?

There are many reasons why this may be happening. If you have a bird feeder it should be placed more than three metres away from any windows, or less than one metre from windows. This will stop birds from flying into windows and injuring themselves. You can also try placing decals, masking tape, or suncatchers on your windows so birds can see them and will not mistake the vegetation reflected in the glass as a clear flight path.

A bird keeps tapping at my window. Is something wrong with it?

This type of behaviour usually occurs around nesting time. The bird sees its reflection in the window and thinks it is an intruder. During this time, cover your windows with curtains or blinds to stop the behaviour, or, if that doesn't work, cover the outside of the window with a screen for about a week.

Birds are trapped in my vent/chimney. How can I get them out?

When homeowners hear birds in a vent or chimney, the birds are generally not trapped and there is most likely a nest inside. When birds nest in these spaces, it can be inconvenient for homeowners and dangerous for the birds. As baby birds grow they can become too crowded in a

vent or chimney and some may die as a result. To prevent birds from gaining access to build their nests use chimney caps and place wire meshing over any outside vents. If nesting does take place and the nest is easily accessible, it should be moved soon after the eggs hatch. Remove the nest carefully, collect all young and place them in an alternative, artificial nest on the side of the building.

An artificial nest can be provided for sparrow-sized birds with a cut two litre pop bottle. Four litre windshield-washer jugs can be used for starling-sized birds. (Larger birds do not usually nest in vents). A hole can be cut in the side of the container to create an entrance and drainage holes should be made in the bottom. The artificial nest should be attached within two feet of the original vent opening. Place the babies, and as much original nesting material as possible, inside the bottle or jug. The mother will then continue to care for and feed her babies. Once the birds have been removed, the vent or chimney should be fitted with an animal-proof cover.

If the nest is not in a dangerous place or posing a fire hazard, we recommend patience until the young are able to leave the nest. No exclusion attempts should be made. In the fall, when all the young birds have matured and left the nest, you should clean out the nests from vents and chimneys, and permanently seal the entrance with steel screening to prevent the birds from nesting there next year.

I found an injured bird. How do I care for it?

Firstly, it is important to determine if the bird is actually injured. In many cases the bird is not injured but is a "fledgling," which is a young bird that has just left the nest and is learning to fly. Fledglings are mostly feathered and look very similar to the adult, which is why they are often confused with adult birds. In most cases the parents are still in the area caring for the fledgling. Fledglings can take from two to seven days to learn to fly and they are, unfortunately, vulnerable during this time. One way to help protect the young bird is to keep pets and curious children away. If the bird is injured, for example there is blood or an obvious broken bone, please call your local Ontario SPCA Branch, affiliated Humane Society or a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

Birds perch on my doorway and defecate. How can I stop this?

To stop birds from landing on your doorway place a piece of wood or metal at a 60-degree slope on the ledge. The birds will be unable to perch on a sloped surface. You can also try some scare devices to frighten birds away from your doorways. Strips of aluminum foil can be placed near the perching site to create a visual deterrent.

To stop birds perching on building ledges you can put up different types of wires so they are unable to land. A single wire of 18 to 20 gauge can be installed a few inches above the ledge to stop perching, or bird coil can be wrapped around railings or fixed to a ledge. If the birds are persistent, try fixing porcupine wire to the ledges. It is important to use the appropriate material in order to ensure that none of the birds are injured.

If you are having problems with pigeons nesting in open buildings you can attach netting to the underside of beams so that the pigeons cannot access the beams. Also, you can place netting over doors, which enables vehicles to enter but excludes pigeons and other birds.

Birds are eating my fruits and vegetables. How can I prevent this?

Place netting over your fruit trees so the birds cannot access them. Make scare devices and place them around your garden. Aluminum pie plates attached to posts by string are effective at scaring birds away. You can also try scare tape, aluminum foil strips, mirrors, and scarecrows. Bird of prey decoys, such as owls, are also effective in deterring birds from gardens and other areas of the home.

How can I make some of these pigeons leave?

Do not feed the pigeons! This will only attract more pigeons to the area. Make garbage and other food sources, including bird feeders, inaccessible to them. If your neighbours are feeding the pigeons, discuss the matter with them. As long as there is food available, the pigeons will continue to stay. This is not good for the pigeons either, as they will become dependent on a food source and will become less adept at finding their own meals.

How can I stop the woodpeckers from damaging my property and yard?

Many people with wood siding have encountered problems with woodpeckers. The woodpeckers will "drum" on the siding to create noise as a territorial display. Placing insulation under the siding is the most effective way to stop the noise that is made by their drumming, which will cause them to cease the activity. They may also drill holes in siding in search of insects. The best way to prevent this from happening is to keep insects under control so that the siding does not offer the woodpeckers an attractive food source. Usually the problem is on one section of the house, and in such cases it is possible to cover the section of the house with netting. Attach the net to the roof several inches from the wall, allowing it to hang down so the woodpecker cannot access the problem section. You can also try some of the scare devices described in other sections of this fact sheet. In addition, wind chimes can be installed near the problem section of your house to scare away woodpeckers. As a preventative measure you should fill any holes in the siding with caulking, wood filler or wood plugs. Removing dead trees from your property will also make the area less attractive for woodpeckers.