Management Solutions for Nuisance Birds
Who is USDA Wildlife Services?

- Provide federal leadership in the area of wildlife damage management
- Specialize in Animal Damage Management
- Resolve human/wildlife conflict
- Not to be confused with
  - Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
  - US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Introduce methods so you can make informed decisions
What we do.

- Protect Agriculture
- Protect Property
- Protect Natural Resources
- Protect Health and Safety
Protecting Agriculture

- Predator control for the protection of livestock.
- Invasive European starling control.
- Protect various crops.
Protecting Property

- Damage to homes.
- Damage to golf courses and resorts.
- Damage to parks.
Protect threatened and endangered species.

Protect natural areas (such as wetlands).

Protect against invasive species.
Protecting Heath and Safety

- Aviation safety.
- Disease sampling.
- Wildlife threats.
Learn to Identify Nuisance Birds
Discuss Common Bird Problems and Explore Damage Management Solutions
First Step

Recognize The Damage And Identify The Problem Species!
Droppings
Nesting
Geese on Buildings
Geese on Turf
Why is Identification so Important?

- Need to know species so you can use appropriate management techniques.
- Need to know if that species is protected.

**Migratory Bird Treaty Act**
- Legally protects birds.
  - Even many that don’t ‘migrate.’
- Exceptions?
  - Some Game Birds
  - Invasive non-native species…
Non-Native Invasive Birds

Pigeons

Starlings

House Sparrows

…and…
Eurasian Collared-Dove

- Not federally protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act

- Photo by Greg Gillson
House Sparrow ID?

From The Golden Guide Birds of North America
If you have to remove a protected species, then a Depredation Permit is needed from the USFWS.

A depredation permit is required before any person may take, possess, or transport migratory birds for depredation control purposes.

NO PERMIT is required merely to scare or herd depredating migratory birds other than T&E species or eagles.
Depredation Order 50 CFR 21.43

No permit required to control:

Blackbirds  Cowbirds  Grackles  Crows  Magpies

IF found committing or about to commit depredations upon:

* Valuable Trees
* Crops
* Livestock
* Wildlife

OR if large numbers create a health concern

Restrictions apply! Annual report, shot, etc.
Wildlife plays an important role
- No “good” wildlife, no “bad” wildlife
- Wildlife is often attracted to human environments
- Can lead to conflicts
- Laws in place to address conflicts
- Those are the laws we operate under

No ‘Cure-All’
Every situation is different. Use appropriate tool or combination of tools.
Accumulation of multiple techniques add up to give you desired results.
Pros and Cons.
Cost-Benefit Analysis.
Management Techniques

- **Non-lethal**
  - Exclusion
  - Habitat management
  - Repellants
  - Hazing

- **Lethal**
  - Trapping
  - Shooting
Feral Pigeons (Rock Doves)

- Prolific - multiple nests in a year
- Attracted to human environments
- Over 40 diseases associated with feral pigeons
Pigeon ID

- Photo by Greg Gillson-
- Droppings (physical damage and disease threats)
Pigeon Control Methods

- Exclusion
- Habitat Modification
  - Remove attractant
    - Food? Water? Roost?
- Frightening Devices
- Repellants
  - Sticky Gel
- Trapping
- Shooting
  - Using legal methods
Exclusion

BirdSlide photo courtesy of birdbarrier.com
Exclusion

Metal wire or coils

“Daddy-long-legs”
Frightening Devices

- Hazing not effective
- Visual and auditory devices
  - Short term effectiveness
  - Habituate
Pigeon traps
Wooden pigeon trap
Place trap in area birds currently use, preferably off the ground.

PREBAIT an unset trap with food and water.

Use corn, milo or other readily accepted bait.

Prebait until bait in unset trap is consumed.

Leave decoy birds in trap
European Starlings

- Very prolific species
- Huge seasonal flocking tendencies.
- 100 starlings introduced to Central Park in 1890’s.
  - Current US estimates between 100 and 200 million.
Starling Damage

- Nesting
- Droppings
- Disease transfer
- Others
  - Damage to Dairies and Feedlots
  - Damage to Vineyards and berry crops
  - Aggressiveness to and displacement of native birds and their nests
Starling Damage Control

- Exclusion
- Habitat Modification
  - Remove attractant
    - Food? Water? Roost?
- Frightening Devices
- Trapping
- Shooting (where legal)
  - Time consuming
  - Not real practical
Exclusion - Best Option

- Seal gaps
- Bird spikes
- Netting
- 45 degree ledges
- Little more effective for starlings compared to pigeons.
- Short term effectiveness
  - Habituation
- Visual and auditory devices
- Lasers
- Pyrotechnics
Lasers

- Laser Genetics
- Green light
- Use in low light condition
- Roost dispersal
Starling trap
Another Starling Trap
Place trap in area birds use.
PREBAIT with food and water.
Use poultry pellets, cat food, chips or other readily accepted bait.
Prebait until bait in unset trap is consumed.
Leave decoy birds in trap
House (English) Sparrows

- Non-native
- Prolific
- Adapted to Human Environments
- Multiple nests per year
- Primarily seed eaters
- Compete with native bird species
PARROWS are small brown-bodied birds with streaked backs and short conical beaks. Their food, mostly seeds except during the nesting season, is obtained on or near the ground. When not nesting, most are seen in flocks. Each species has its own habitat preferences; these may be diagnostic. Head and breast patterns are most helpful for identification; note also the length and shape of the tail. In most species females are very similar to males. Heads of adult males of most species are brown on this spread. The juncos and longspurs are represented by one each; the striking Lark Bunting, the Snow Bunting, the towhees, and the Olive Sparrow are omitted. Immatures of some species are much duller, especially those species with black or rufous on the head. Songs and chips of sparrows are often more easily distinguished than are their plumages. See pp. 328-345 for further details.

From The Golden Guide Birds of North America
Control of House Sparrows

- Very Difficult
- Hazing/Harassment
- Exclusion
  - Nesting sites
- Sparrow Traps
  - Bait with millet or white bread
  - Leave decoy birds in trap

Photo courtesy of sparrowtraps.net
Alternative trap design
Canada Geese

- Canada geese are a migratory species
- Feed by dabbling in water or grazing on grass/turf
- Nest between March and May
- Molt in June
Resident Canada Geese

- Don’t migrate
  - Nest in the lower 48 instead of Canada/Alaska
- Tremendous growth in the last 30 years
- The North American resident Canada goose population increased approximately 4 fold from 1 million birds in 1990 to over 3.9 million in 2008
- Becoming more problematic
Geese Damage and Risks
Health and Safety

- Disease risks
- Traffic issues
- Aggressiveness
Goose Control Methods

- Many tools!
- All methods have pros and cons
- What is Appropriate
- Habitat Modification
- Hazing
- More Hazing
Habitat Modification

- Remove attractants
  - Eliminate vegetation
  - Hard to do when they are attracted to a school’s turf!
- Remove/modify ponds or ditches
  - ‘Channelize’ ditches
  - Manage storm water
Exclusion

- Grid wires/nets
- Fencing
Hazing Methods

- Dogs
- Paintball marker
- Lasers
- Remote control boats/planes
- Effigies/scarecrows
- Combination?
Don’t shoot the geese!

Effective for geese in water.

Splash from paint ball scares them.

Clear paint balls.
Lasers

- Avian Dissuader
- Laser Glow
- Laser Genetics
Effigies
Other examples of bird complaints we receive

- Woodpeckers excavating holes in structures and ornamental trees
- Nuisance from crows and jays
- Net or screen off area of structure getting damaged.
Exclusion

- Net off large area
Exclusion

- Fine net over entire side of structure
- Almost unnoticeable.
Visual repellents-Sight & Motion

- Scary Man
- Scarecrows
- Combination Eyes & Mylar
- Evil Eye balloons
- Mylar tape
Do they work?
Mounds are distinctly crescent-shaped - Closed
Burrows/chambers can be six feet below ground
~2 inch diameter burrows
A burrow can have up to 200 yards in lineal length
A single gopher may construct 300 soil mounds and move more than 4 tons of soil per year!!
Densities up to 20/acre
Habitat Management

- **Buffer Strip**
  - 50-foot (15-m) buffer strips provides unsuitable habitat around the fields and can minimize immigration of gophers.

- **Weed Control**
  - Chemical or mechanical control of forbs, which frequently have large underground storage structures, can be an effective method of reducing available feed.
Trapping Gophers
Trapping Con’t.
Strychnine *Danger*
- General use and Restricted use
- Depends on the label and application method

Applied and consumed under ground

Others
- Zinc phosphide
- Chlorophacinone and Diphacinone

You are responsible for the products you use
Ground Squirrels

- California Ground Squirrel (Grey Digger)
- Belding’s Ground Squirrel (Sage Rat, Squeaks)
- Hibernators, emerge Feb./March
- Estivate at times during the summer
- Not protected species, although some species are
Ground Squirrel Damage

- Burrowing
  - Safety risk on playground
- Feeding on turf and ornamental plants
- Disease transmission
  - Bubonic Plague
  - Rodent carried bacteria
  - Spread by fleas
  - 8 OR cases since 1995
  - 2 Crook Co. Cases 2012
  - Heppner 2015
  - Lake Co. Case - 2010

Picture credit: Mary Evans Collection
Trapping

- California Ground Squirrel
  - Conibear
  - Cage trap
    - Sunflower seeds
Pesticides

- Acute
  - Single feeding
  - Fast acting (24 hrs)
- Anticoagulants
  - Multiple feedings
  - Slow acting
- Grain baits
- Acceptance?
- PREBAIT
Gas Cartridges

A Note on fumigation for Squirrels
- Try to do when wet
- Fumigating when squirrels are hibernating or estivating is inefficient because squirrels plug their burrows
- Not used near buildings!
Holes are always open, active year-round, at night and day
“Runways” between holes
Primarily herbivores
One to Five litters per year, can be multiple litters
Females mature in 35 – 40 days.
Short lifespan – 2 to 16 months
Cyclical but prolific species– up to 500/acre in Klamath Basin
Not protected
Encourage Raptor Predation

- Won’t solve problem on its own, but can help
- Short above ground vegetation where possible
- Install Perches and Nest Boxes
  - Nesting locations can be limiting factor in predator numbers

Photos courtesy of The Barn Owl Trust
To Control Voles

- Cultivation
- Mouse Traps
- Pesticides (Zinc Phosphide RUP and Anti-coagulants)
  - Some labels allow broadcasting bait, with restrictions
  - Use Bait Stations
Marmot (Rock Chucks)

- Damage mainly from burrowing or feeding behavior
- One litter/year
- Average 4/litter
- Hibernators
- Not protected
Marmot Control

- Fumigants
  - gas cartridges
- Trapping
  - cage traps - apples
  - leghold traps
  - conibear traps
- Shooting
Moles
Mole Facts

- Mounds are volcanic, symmetrically round
- Not common in Central Oregon, prefer moist soil
- Moles are INSECTIVORES!!!
- Damage to “Roots” is either moles gaining access to insects or worms, or rodents are to blame
- Eat 70% to 100% of their weight each day
- 3 to 5 young, once a year
- Not protected
Mole damage control methods

- Insect Control
- Trapping
  - Scissor trap
  - Harpoon trap
Pesticides for Moles

- Zinc Phosphide on grain
  - Insectivores - bait acceptance is a challenge
- Warfarin – gel
- Bromethalin - worm shaped
Raccoons and Skunks

- Pet food is the most common attraction
  - Remove food source
- Eliminate shelter
- Trapping
  - Raccoons are protected as furbearers and so require a permit to be “taken”
Other Critters

- **Woodrat (packrat)**
  - Exclusion
  - Anticoagluants, ZP
  - Conibear, snap trap, live trap

- **Porcupine**
  - Find den site?
  - Snare, leghold, cage trap
  - Shooting

- **Muskrat**
  - Riprap, eliminate food sources, ZP, conibear, leghold
Other Critters

- **Badger**
  - Rodent control
  - Trapping
- **Nutria**
  - Trapping
  - Pesticide - ZP
  - Shooting
  - Habitat Management
In closing

- Identify problem species
- Use appropriate control techniques
- Be sure to follow regulations
- Persistence
- Cost – Benefit
Questions?