



## HOUSE SPARROW ADVISORY

Dear Establishment Owner/Manager:

I couldn't help but notice that House Sparrows are breeding, feeding and/or roosting at your facility. Like Starlings, House Sparrows are non-native birds that were introduced to the United States. The avian equivalent of pests like rats and crabgrass, their populations have exploded. One pair of House Sparrows could theoretically multiply into more than a thousand birds over a five year period.

While some people may think they are cute, House Sparrows can cause many problems, including:

- contaminating and defacing buildings with their nests and acidic droppings, which can also damage the finish on automobiles;
- blocking gutters with nests and creating fire hazards when nesting around power lines, lighted signs or electrical substations;
- damaging crops and gardens (by eating seed, seedlings, buds, young vegetables, maturing fruit, and stored grain),
- consuming and fouling livestock food and water;
- spreading other pests such as weed seeds;
- creating janitorial problems associated with droppings and feathers, as well as hazardous and unsanitary situations inside and outside of buildings and on sidewalks under roosting areas;
- attacking many native species such as Bluebirds, Tree Swallows and Purple Martins, often killing adults, pecking eggs and tossing babies from the nest.



House Sparrow

Last but not least, House Sparrows could introduce bird mites to your facility and expose your employees and customers to bacteria like Salmonella, various parasites, and viruses such as Equine Encephalitis and West Nile Virus.

Please help reduce the health, safety, ecosystem and economic problems associated with House Sparrows by taking steps to prevent them from feeding or breeding at your facility. House Sparrows and European Starlings are not native, and are considered nuisance species. For this reason, they are not protected by federal law and their nests, eggs, young, and adults may be legally removed and destroyed.

There are many ways to control House Sparrows. Options include the following:

- **DO NOT PROVIDE ACCESS** to bird seed, grain, or food waste.
- Put up plastic **BIRD NETTING** (attached with tacks or pieces of lath), or wood, metal, glass, masonry, or 3/4 inch rust-proof wire mesh on upper structures like rafters where House Sparrows can roost or nest;
- **CLOSE OFF ALL OPENINGS** larger than 3/4 inch in warehouses, garages and farm buildings, including ventilator openings that allow access to buildings, sealing openings, using methods such as:
  - **BLOCK OPEN DOORWAYS** with full-length, hanging plastic strips (4 to 6 inches wide);
  - **USE EXPANDING FOAM** to fill and/or seal cavities in out-buildings and barns. Wad up scraps of chicken wire and stuff them into any place where you see House Sparrows trying to nest, then squirt in foam. After it dries and hardens, shave off the excess that oozes out. The hardened foam can be painted;

- SCREEN poultry houses and feeders;
- REPLACE OR COVER BROKEN WINDOWS in upper stories with wire mesh, plastic, plywood or sheet metal.
- Remove vines or place plastic netting over them. Vines provide nesting and roosting places.
- At feeding and roosting sites, LINES OF WIRES spaced one to two feet apart may help repel House Sparrows.
- Once POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED as House Sparrows, REMOVE AND DESTROY ANY NESTS AND EGGS. Since House Sparrows (and Starlings) are not native, they are not protected. Please note that it is illegal to disturb the nest of any NATIVE bird without a permit.
- Note that some counties or localities may require permits or otherwise restrict some active control methods such as shooting or poisoning. Poisoning and use of chemical repellants are not recommended because of the possibility of impacting native birds.

If you would like more information on how to control House Sparrows, you may wish to consult with your local wildlife nuisance animal control agency, the New York State Bluebird Society at [www.nysbs.org](http://www.nysbs.org), review information at <http://www.sialis.org/hosp.htm> or hire a professional pest control company.



Eastern Bluebird  
Photo by Judy Derry

Thank you in advance for addressing this problem.

For further information, please contact us by email at [Info@nysbs.org](mailto:Info@nysbs.org) or visit the NYSBS website at [www.nysbs.org](http://www.nysbs.org).

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