

Nonnative Birds

Eurasian collared doves, European starlings, house sparrows, mute swans, and pigeons (see Pigeon section for more information) are not native species. They are not protected under the jurisdiction of the Wildlife Resources Commission, nor are they protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. In North Carolina, there are established breeding populations of house sparrows, European starlings, and Eurasian collared doves. Mute swans will occasionally come into NC from northern breeding populations, but there are no records of breeding pairs in NC. Mute swans may also be released/escaped pets. Mute swans should not be confused with [tundra swans](#) which are a native migratory bird. Mute swans are much larger than tundra swans and have an orange bill.

What is the common damage caused by these birds? House sparrows, European starlings, and Eurasian collared doves will roost in large flocks, potentially becoming nuisances. House sparrows will sometimes nest in vents leading into houses. Mute swans can be very aggressive when approached and have no fear of people if they are released as pets.

Can a WCA write a depredation permit? A WCA does not need a state or federal depredation permit to remove any nonnative species.

Can nonnative birds be relocated? No, nonnative species cannot be relocated.

What can I do with sick or injured nonnative bird? These species are considered exotic and invasive. It is not recommended that they be rehabilitated. Advise individuals to leave the bird alone to see if it can recover on its own. If the bird has a life-threatening injury or illness it should be humanely euthanized and disposed of in a safe and sanitary manner.

Are there any safety concerns? No, however it is good practice to wear gloves when handling any animal.

Non-lethal Options:

- Exclusion
 - Covering vents with a fine mesh (less than $\frac{3}{4}$ ") will prevent house sparrows from getting inside homes to nest.
 - House sparrows can be deterred from bird feeders by using monofilament [halos](#) around the feeder.
- Harassment
 - Visual or noise deterrents are most effective when birds begin landing in an area. If they have been in the area for a while, harassment becomes less effective.
- Landscape modification
 - Swans prefer gradually sloping grassy areas around water sources, making it easier for them to move from water to land. Using riprap or creating a steep slope can be effective at making the landscape less attractive.
 - Removing submerged aquatic vegetation will remove the swans' food source.

Lethal Options:

- No permits are needed to remove any of the listed species.
 - Check with local ordinances to ensure there are no local laws preventing take.
- Active nests are not protected under the migratory bird treaty act and can be removed at any time.
- Birds can be trapped and removed without any additional licensing.