

Repelling Birds Harmlessly From Municipal Buildings

"... ultrasonic unit repels birds and other pests by emitting ultrasonic sound waves that annoy birds."

by R.W. Delaney, Business Writer

In Arizona, a government contracting firm was snuffing out an infestation of birds. Steinhoff & Sadler, Inc., a national company that specializes in performing contract maintenance and construction repair work for government facilities, had a big mess on its hands.

John Hawker, planner/estimator for Steinhoff & Sadler's office in Fort Huachuca, Arizona, explains. His company had a five-year contract to maintain a large two-story Federal administrative office building. Fort Huachuca, he says, is located just 20 miles north of the Mexican border, on the migratory pathway of mud swallows. "During the migratory season, the swallows built mud nests under the eaves," Hawker says. "This created a pest problem with excrement on the windows and down the side of the masonry. It looked unsightly," he summarizes.

Drastic methods of humane bird control to get rid of the birds were out of the question. "The government is sensitive to the environment and to animals and birds," Hawker says. In this case, the government Wildlife Management Officer was interested in the well-being of the swallows and asked Hawker to count the nests, which numbered as many as 178. "We had to find a humane bird control to discourage the birds," without doing violence to them.

"We looked into having the sheet-metal shop fabricate semi-circular metal aprons to be installed at a certain angle so the pest birds couldn't penetrate the eaves, and we'd treat the eaves with special resistant paint," Hawker says.

But, when he estimated the cost of materials, labor to make the metal retrofittings, and the equipment and skilled labor to put up the metal guards, it was prohibitively expensive. That's when

Hawker turned to Bird-X QB-4 units, which, he heard, had been used successfully elsewhere on government property.

The ultrasonic unit (QuadBlaster QB-4, produced by Bird-X, Inc. of Chicago) repels birds and other pests by emitting ultrasonic sound waves that annoy birds, yet are out of the range of normal human hearing. The unit's UHF sound waves are harmless but effective on most birds in a 6,000 square foot area. It runs on an ordinary 110-volt current.

After the mud swallows had raised their young and vacated the premises, Hawker's crew removed the nests by hand and cleaned the eaves with high-pressure hoses. Then they installed a QB-4 unit on one corner of the building, about 30 feet up. This discouraged all pest birds from nesting, except for one spot that was around a corner where the ultrasonic waves could not reach. So Hawker placed a second unit in the opposite corner. After six months of continual use, he reports, "we've had no bird problems."

Best of all, he notes, are the resulting cosmetic improvement in the look of the building and the elimination of the serious sanitation issue raised formerly by excessive bird droppings in an area frequented by public employees. Also, Hawker says, the unobtrusive unit has a "low profile" that does not detract aesthetically from buildings. And he notes the significant decrease in maintenance expense. Hawker is pleased with the performance of the QB-4. "I wouldn't hesitate to recommend it," he says. "It is well worth the investment, since most other conventional means are more costly." And, oftentimes, less humane.

Apparently, the "sonic humane bird control solution" is good for people and harmless to our feathered friends and fellow critters on planet earth.