

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)



Protecting People | Protecting Agriculture | Protecting Wildlife

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Fact Sheet

PYROTECHNICS FOR BIRD MANAGEMENT

Background:

The use of pyrotechnics to harass birds away from damage sites is a very effective management technique. Pyrotechnics are noise-making devices that are shot out of a pistol launcher or 12 gauge shotgun. No Federal or New Jersey (NJ) State wildlife permit is required to harass most wildlife species. However, any individual or company that purchases or otherwise acquires explosive pest control devices, such as pyrotechnics, may need to possess a Federal explosives license or permit. Individuals in need of obtaining a Federal explosives license or permit may find information and application forms at



<http://www.atf.gov/explosives/how-to/explosive-pest-control-device-requirements.html>. You must also comply with all Federal, State and local laws regarding the possession and use of a firearm. In NJ, possession of a Firearm Purchasers ID Card is required for the use of a firearm. Consult with your local Police Department, and comply with all relevant laws, regulations, and policies prior to your use of pyrotechnics, firearms, and pistol launchers.

General Guidelines For Pyrotechnic Use:

1. Begin their use as soon as birds arrive.
2. Collect pyrotechnic debris (wads, casings, duds, caps, etc.) from the environment.
3. Integrate use of pyrotechnics with other methods such as habitat management.
4. Fire in such a manner to cause the birds to fly away from the damage site.



Basic Firearm Safety Rules:

1. Treat every firearm as though it were loaded.
2. Always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction.
3. Keep the firearm unloaded and the safety engaged until you are ready to fire. Do not touch the trigger until you are ready to shoot.
4. Use the correct ammunition.
5. Be sure of your target and what is beyond it. Never point the firearm at something you do not want to shoot.
6. Wear eye and ear protection when shooting.
7. Never run, jump, or climb with a loaded firearm.
8. Know how the firearm operates, do not alter or modify the firearm, and clean and service it regularly.
9. Ensure that the barrel and action are clear of obstructions.
10. Never use alcohol or other drugs before or during use of a firearm.



Basic Pyrotechnic Safety Rules:

1. Wear eye and ear protection.
2. Check the barrel after each round. Clean the barrel as needed.
3. Store in a locked, temperature and humidity-controlled safe or cabinet separate from live ammunition.



4. Do not fire into the wind.
5. Do not fire towards buildings or people, or over a dry field.
6. Do not discharge pyrotechnics from within a vehicle.
7. Duds and damaged pyrotechnics should be completely soaked in water before they are discarded.
8. Carry operating instructions with the pyrotechnic pistol.
9. Carry a fire extinguisher for use in case of a fire.
10. Clean the pistol/shotgun often, as per manufacturer recommendation.

Loading and Firing The Single Shot Pistol Launcher:

1. Pull the pistol launcher's hammer back to the cocked position.
2. Place the .22 caliber cap in the angled chamber and secure it in place with the small spring clip.
3. To prevent an accidental discharge, pull the hammer back to the cocked position, and place your thumb between the cap and the hammer.

4. Insert the pyrotechnic device into the muzzle of the pistol with the hollow end (screamer) or the fuse end (banger) in the pistol. Check that the pyrotechnic fits loosely into the muzzle end. If you have to apply force to insert the pyrotechnic, remove it and clean the muzzle. Otherwise, the pyrotechnic may become lodged and explode in the muzzle.
5. Hold the pistol away from the body at a 45-degree angle, and fire in the direction of the birds. Screamers and bangers travel 30-60 yards.

Loading and Firing the 12 Gauge Shotgun:

****A break action single-shot shotgun is recommended for use with shell crackers.****

****Use only a 12 gauge open choke shotgun.****

1. Break open the 12 gauge shotgun and check and clear the barrel of debris.
2. Place the shell cracker into the chamber and close the shotgun.



3. Fire the shotgun from the shoulder, holding it at approximately 45 degrees.
4. Pull the hammer back. Squeeze the trigger to fire the shell cracker towards birds in a safe and appropriate direction. Shell crackers travel up to 100 yards.
5. Check the barrel after every shot, and make sure it is clear of debris.

USE OF PYROTECHNICS CAN CAUSE DEATH AND SERIOUS INJURY. TREAT THEM AS YOU WOULD A LIVE ROUND. PYROTECHNICS ARE A CLASS C EXPLOSIVE.

WARNING!!

IF YOU DO NOT HEAR THE SHELL CRACKER EXPLODE, DO NOT LOOK DOWN EITHER END OF THE BARREL; THE SHELL MAY BE LODGED IN THE BARREL AND COULD EXPLODE, CAUSING SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH.

SPECIAL NOTE: Recommendations in this leaflet should not be implemented if they would be in conflict with the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

AGENCY CONTACTS

USDA APHIS Wildlife Services- 140-C Locust Grove Rd. Pittstown, NJ 08867 (908) 735-5654/ Fax (908) 735-0821 **Permit Applications, Recommendations, and Technical/Direct Control Assistance

US Fish and Wildlife Service-300 Westgate Center Drive Hadley, MA 01035 (413) 253-8200/Fax (413) 253-8308
**Permit Applications, Federal Permit Status of Applications

NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Wildlife Management-P.O. Box 400 Trenton, NJ 08625 (609) 292-3649 **Hunting information, Status of Permit Applications

SOURCES OF SUPPLY

Becker-Underwood- P.O. Box 667 Ames, IA 50010 1-800-232-5907 ReJex-iT ® (MA repellent)
www.beckerunderwood.com

Bird Barrier-74 Henry Street Secaucus, NJ 07094 1-800-503-5444 **Balloons, reflective tape, perimeter fencing, gridding systems, twine, netting, sound system, dead bird decoys, pyrotechnics, propane cannons, lasers
www.birdbarrier.com

Bird-X, Inc.-300 North Elizabeth St. Chicago, IL 60607 1-800-860-0473 **Balloons, reflective holographic tape, distress call sound system, Goose Chase™ (MA repellent) www.bird-x.com

Margo Supplies, Ltd.- P.O. Box 5400 High River, Alberta, Canada T1V 1M5 1-403-652-1932 **Balloons, reflective tape, traps, distress call sound systems, pyrotechnics, bird lasers, propane cannons
www.margosupplies.com

Nixalite of America, Inc.-1025 16th Ave. East Moline, Il 61244 1-888-624-1189 **Balloons, reflective tape, netting systems, ReJex-iT ® (MA repellent) www.nixalite.com

Reed-Joseph International Co- P.O. Box 894 Greenville, MS 38702-0894 1-800-647-5554 **Balloons, reflective tape, pyrotechnics, propane cannons www.reedjoseph.com

SEA Technology, Inc.-Louisville Branch P.O. Box 195 382 E. Oak St. Lebanon Jct., KY 40150 1-888-732-2246 **Bird lasers www.aviandissuader.com

Sutton Agricultural Enterprises, Inc.-746 Vertin Ave. Salinas, CA 93901 1-866-280-6229 **Balloons, reflective tape, pyrotechnics, propane cannons, netting systems, distress call sound systems www.suttonag.com

Wildlife Control Supplies- P.O. Box 538 East Granby, CT 06026 1-877-684-7262 **Balloons, reflective tape, pyrotechnics, propane cannons, repellents, effigies www.wildlifecontrolsupplies.com

Wildlife Control Technology, Inc.-2501 N. Sunnyside Ave. Fresno, CA 93727 1-800-235-0262 **Balloons, reflective tape, pyrotechnics, propane cannons www.wildlife-control.com

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*USDA APHIS WS does not recommend, nor oppose any such private company or group that may provide wildlife management services or products.*  
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