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## PERCHES AND REPELLENTS

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*Presto-X Company, Omaha, Nebraska*

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## PERCHES AND REPELLENTS

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Some of the things that you must know in bird control are your state and local regulations. The state law may read that a license is required for bird control. A state law may read that the techniques and manners of your control must conform with their law. A state law may require registration of the poison you're going to use. State law may also prohibit placement of baits at a certain time during the day or year. And most important, a state law may prohibit control of specific types of birds.

In Nebraska and most of the other states, the English Sparrow, the Pigeon, and the Starling are our #1 birds on the most-wanted list. The Rid-A-Bird perch that I'm going to speak about today has been registered by EPA for the control of those types of birds. Assuming that we get a call at Presto-X in Omaha from a potential customer to look at a bird problem, the first thing I'd do is a survey. The survey is so important that it just cannot be overlooked. You just can't pick up the phone, have the guy tell you the problem and say, "Oh yeah, we can do that for \$100. We'll be out tomorrow and take care of them." You just can't do that in bird control.

In my survey, I look to see what pest species is the target and if non-target types are around. In other words, if we're dealing with sparrows, are there any Cardinals or any other types of birds in the same area. This determines the amount of money that we're going to spend for the bait and the pre-baiting and how long it's going to take to get them under control. I want to know the food sources and the type of food that they're eating and where the birds are feeding. It is very important to know the exact area where the birds are feeding.

I want to know the water sources if possible, and I want to know the roosting, nesting, dusting, and molting sites. And most important are the travel patterns of the birds that are entering or leaving the area. Where are these birds actually staying? Are they loafing or nesting here? What are the birds doing? Why are they in this particular area?

I'm going to show a short series of slides indicating where the Rid-A-Bird perch is appropriate. Now there are other products that also may be appropriate, such as Avitrol and repellents, but I'm going to speak mainly on the Rid-A-Bird perches. This is a sign in the middle of a parking lot, and the reason that we would use the Rid-A-Bird perch in this area is because it is a parking lot. You wouldn't want to apply Avitrol down on a concrete parking lot. The rain would wash it away. The cars will run over it. The pets will possibly eat it, and the kids are walking around it. There is too much traffic in this particular area to use anything but a repellent or the Rid-A-Bird perches. The Rid-A-Bird perches can be placed right on top.

When we go in to sell a job like this, obviously the droppings on the sign make it look unattractive. The nesting inside the sign could create a fire hazard, and the nesting debris at the base of the sign makes it look very unsightly. So once again, this is an excellent area where the Rid-A-Bird perch can be used.

In the same lot, but in a different location, we have another sign. This is a very easy job to sell. As you know, with birds there are always droppings, and the droppings will always seem to land on the window. When you can go in to talk to the store manager, he knows the problem because he has to send a man out there everyday to clean the window. Once again, your Rid-A-Bird perches can be placed at the top. They are not noticeable; they are very small, and they do a good job of control.

Here is an example of another sign on the corner of one of our very busy intersections. Again, the Rid-A-Bird perch can be placed on top. We always have a Pigeon and Starling problem on signs such as this. The Rid-A-Bird perches can be placed inside the sign. This is a double sign that has the metal grid support in the center. One of the reasons why you wouldn't use Avitrol in a situation like this is that the sign company, with whom you have the contract, may not own anything but the sign. And if you put the Avitrol down on the street or up on the roof, you could be in very serious trouble with the owner of that particular property.

We once had a fellow who got a job to do a church, and he said he could do this job. But the church had a very steep roof. Obviously, the Avitrol wouldn't stay up on the roof; it would roll down the side, but he could do the job anyway. And they told him when he got

the job that there was no way that he could put the Avitrol on the ground because people going in and out of the church would see the Avitrol, and "we just can't have that in church." And he said, "That's all right. I can still take care of the job." So the following morning he gets up early and he watches the birds take off from the church. They fly down the road, and he follows them; they begin feeding at another site. So the next morning, here he is bright and early with his bait out there in that site where the birds are feeding, and the birds come in. The only problem is that he did not get permission to put the bait in that area, and he got sued. And the plaintive won the case and rightfully so. The PCO did not have permission to place the bait at that site.

You can only do bird control with the people that you are under contract with. You can't indiscriminately, as in this case, put the Avitrol down on the ground or in somebody's yard.

Question: On the Rid-A-Bird perches, when you were placing them on the signs, what type were they? Is that the all-weather, flat type?

Meester: That's the kind we like.

Question: On top of the sign?

Meester: And sometimes inside. Normally the birds will fly to the top of the sign. I'll get back to the question later.

This is a sign that we did with the Rid-A-Bird perches. It was very difficult to do this job. We attempted to do it with a grain product first, with no success whatsoever. We had a grain elevator about 5 blocks from this sign. This is at the busiest intersection in the city of Omaha. We went up with a boomtruck and placed our Rid-A-Bird perches in the grid inside the sign (this sign is approximately 60 feet in the air). We did get rid of the birds. We had Pigeons, Starlings, and sparrows in there all the time. Their droppings were unsightly. This food store is a very good customer of ours, and we wanted to solve this problem. We finally succeeded in doing it with the Rid-A-Bird perches. We will service this sign, under contract, every six months, but we are responsible for this sign every month. In other words, if for some reason, the birds come back here or a building is torn down and a flock moves in, we are responsible for taking care of those birds. Our contract is for us to go up and refill those perches on a six-month basis.

The point I want to bring out on this particular job is that boomtrucks cost us about \$25/hour, and there is no other way you're going to get to the top of that sign without that truck. So it is very important that you incorporate your costs to include that boomtruck. If you don't, you won't make any money on the job, because if you're there for three hours, you've got \$75 that goes to the boomtruck before anything else. Now we don't have a lot of perches in that particular sign, and it is a very large sign. I would say we probably have 12, and control didn't happen over night. It took several weeks, maybe with some of the birds, even longer; but the job did get done. The customer is happy.

What is there is a sign that says Wells Fargo. You've got some Starlings on top, and there are gobs of repellent on each one of the Wells Fargo letters. It looks just terrible. The person who put the repellent up never got the job done because the Starlings are living behind the sign. What we would do in a case like this is to put the Rid-A-Bird perches along the ledge where the birds that you see now are sitting. If you watch birds long enough, you will find that each individual bird species has a certain type of pattern that it follows. A lot of times a Starling will sit on top first and then go down to the ledge. There's where the Rid-A-Bird perch can be placed, and the control will be achieved. Once again it takes a while; the birds have got to get used to the perch, but you will get control.

This is a nursing home. Another company was doing the work, and they had a terrific sparrow and Starling problem in the little louvers that the architect thought it would be nice to have on this particular building. There were literally hundreds of Starlings and sparrows inside these little louvers. So the other company decided that they could do the job by going up with ladders and spraying each little individual hole. Well, it didn't work. They got rid of very few birds. I don't know what they were using, but they did accomplish one thing: they stained the front of the building with the chemical. Of course, they were fired. A new bid was submitted; and even though our bid was a little higher, we were given the job. A lot of times the birds would go directly from the ground to the holes, but often the birds would fly from the ground directly to the ledge, and then drop into the holes. Sometimes one bird already was in the nest, and there wasn't room for both at the same time. So we decided to put the perches on top. There was no place to fasten them except at the top, anyway.

Question: How long did it take you to determine that they were going to the top and how long did it take to get results?

Meester: I had already surveyed the place when we put the bids out, the first time, and I knew just exactly what we were going to do if we got the bid. So it had already been determined that I would use the Rid-A-Bird perches. I would say it probably took about a month to get 95% control. Almost all of our bird jobs are done on a monthly basis, because we do the general pest control at the same time. That way our man can watch, and if he finds a portion of the building that's having a little problem, then we can work in that area. But we do go there every month to observe the birds if any, whether we do anything or not. We may be doing bird control, per se, but we don't actually fill the tubes up again for six months; but we're there, and we observe.

Question: Are you putting Rid-A-Bird perches on each ledge or just on the top?

Meester: Top ledge. It's a straight, flat building.

This slide is of a car wash that has bird problems. And this is a normal structure in Nebraska for barns and sheds, just about anything where you have the wood supporting metal. And in this particular case we had a sparrow problem. Our survey told us that it's a sparrow problem so we know how to deal with the sparrows. If it had been a Starling problem, we might have done something a little different.

Our service technician will apply the Rid-A-Bird perches in this ceiling area. Now, you do not have to put Rid-A-Bird perches everywhere in the building. For one thing, the cost would be so high you would price yourself right out of the job. The perches are placed at random. It's important to let the customer know that the birds have to land on the perch before you can get control. Sometimes, with a strange object like that, you will not get control immediately; but if you explain this to him, he'll understand it and there's no problem.

After the perch is placed, using a protective garment such as gloves is required by the label, the trigger oil can is filled with the Rid-A-Bird solution. The PCO is wearing gloves, coveralls; and we require our people to wear hard hats also.

He goes back up after securing the perches, making sure that the perches are level. If they're not level, you'll get the chemical going out one of the holes at the low end. It's very important that they be level. And with the oil can, and once again the protective clothing, he fills the perches. Here is a slide of a power plant where perches can be used. We do an awful lot of work in power plants for bird control all across the state of Nebraska, Iowa, South Dakota, and Missouri.

Question: How many perches are used?

Meester: It depends once again on the problem. If you've got 40 or 5 sparrows in the area, you may want to use only 1 or 2 perches. We have one place in Des Moines, Iowa where we have 200 perches on one piece of property.

In the use of repellent for bird control, which we also use to some extent, the problem right now is not good. The simple fact is that it's a non-toxic substance, and we have found that sparrows especially just love to build nests immediately over the repellent. Once again, note protective clothing. We feel that beside getting it on the bird's feet we want to get it on the bird's feathers, if possible. If the treating ledge is wide, we would put the repellent on the front one to two inches of the board, not in the center. We have found that when birds land, they will land on the very front of a ledge, not on the back side. So it is important in putting a repellent out that you try to get it a 1/4" high and that it be placed approximately 1 to 1 1/2 " on the front ledge. This slide is a foam aerosol that's a repellent also, and we use this once in a while for very small, corner areas. We have found, though, that the foam has a lot of air in it; and it bubbles up and then it kind of goes down again, so you've got to be very careful that you don't get it to run and that you get enough of the repellent in there to do the job. We also do a lot of feed lots in Nebraska, and this slide is an example of Rid-A-Bird perches being used in a feed lot.

In this day and age, it is so important that you have a label for every single product that you use. We have a copy of every single label that we use in our office file. And when we have our service meetings the first day of the month, we often read labels. And let me explain to you why labels are so important. As an example, this label for a Rid-A-Bird

perch is for control of Starlings, Pigeons, and sparrows only. You cannot use it for the control of any other kind of bird. Also, Rid-A-Bird perches can be used only in the following areas: in and around farm buildings, pipe yards, loading docks, building tops, and in other buildings and bridges. Do not use in food storage, food processing, or food handling buildings. It is so important that you know, and your service technicians know, this label. It could save your company money, a customer, or both.

Comment: In California the only reason Rid-A-Bird is not registered is because in the early days when we added fluorescent dye we picked up dye in the cattle feed bins. That blew the registration for the whole thing and we've never been able to get perches registered.

Question: What about the use of something like that in a residential area where there are a lot of trees?

Meester: We use Rid-A-Bird perches on some homes. We have some awnings once in a while that have a sparrow problem. Here is a case where we would put Rid-A-Bird perches up for a short time.

Question: Can they stand outside in the weather?

Meester: Yes.

Question: In the case I'm talking about, they would be in large trees.

Meester: Trees are a completely different subject, and if we had time, we could get into trees. We've done a great deal of work with trees, but it's a topic all its own!

Question: But a Rid-A-Bird perch is not suited for that kind of thing?

Meester: It's very difficult to put the perches in the tree and keep them up there in the wind.

In bird control the Rid-A-Bird perch is just one tool of several on the market in controlling pest birds. Sometimes bird control can be achieved by one method, other times it may take a combination of methods -- keep an open mind and above all follow the label



FIGURE 1. Always include rental equipment on cost of job. First, always make sure there is equipment available to do the job.



FIGURE 2. Apply repellent past 1/2" back from the edge of the ledge. The strip of repellent paste should be 1/4" wide and 1/4" high.



FIGURE 3. Proper placement of perches is important in getting job done. Watch for favorite place where birds are landing when first entering location, and then locate perches nearby. Make sure perch is level.



FIGURE 4. Filling trigger oil can with Rid-A-Bird solution. The service technician is wearing protective gloves as well as coveralls and hard hat.