

Distress Calls Scare Away Pest Birds Permanently

High-tech bird distress calls scare away pest birds and attract beneficial birds of prey. "Research shows that naturally occurring distress calls work far better than artificial scare tactics, but if you just play distressed bird cries, the pest birds will soon return" says Rick Willis with Bird Gard. The solution lay in developing a microprocessor driven program to randomize the sounds. "It's surprising just how intelligent birds are. If they recognize a pattern they soon learn to ignore whatever hazing method you use. Every time the Bird Gard unit plays, it alters the order of the bird sounds, the timing, and the relative pitch of the sounds, giving the impression that a lot of starlings or other target birds are under attack from a whole lot of raptors."

To introduce the new technology and educate people to how effective it is, Willis started doing in-field demonstrations. Jackson Family Wines, one of the largest grape growers in the country, was spending as much as \$1,000 an acre to put nets over premium grapes each year. Willis was able to give them better results for a one-time cost of just \$200 an acre. At the end of a 2-year test, the company not only bought the demonstration units, but also gave him maps of other high-value vineyards they wanted protected.

"Grape, blueberry, cherry and other fruit and nut growers all have a problem with pest birds," says Willis. "Blueberry growers can lose from 10 to 50 percent of their crop to birds. A Willamette Valley blueberry grower was losing \$3,000 to \$4,000 an acre." Willis says some growers get multi-crop benefits,

moving their systems from one ripening crop to another. Others with drip irrigation use their systems to keep birds from destroying the drip lines to get at water. "Broccoli and sweet corn farmers use our units to keep birds from pulling seedlings out of the ground," says Willis.

Unlike other bird repellent devices, the Bird Gard is species specific. They don't harm or discourage other species and can even encourage them. "We have a blueberry grower with a lot of ring-necked doves that eat damaging insects," recalls Willis. "We didn't put their distress calls on recordings for his blueberry fields; however, we do use their calls in fields of sorghum and grain where they can cause severe crop damage." In Washington State, a combination of the kestrel's natural cry along with pest birds' distress calls draws the kestrels in to help scare away the pest birds and to feed on mice and voles. In Georgia, desirable purple martins stayed while starlings and cedar waxwings were driven out.

Bird Gard units are also used to protect feedlots and dairies that can be inundated by starlings and other birds, especially in the winter. "Severe winter weather and a scarce food supply make birds desperate. In extreme cases they will disregard all threats in order to survive. In these cases our products may only be 85 percent effective," says Willis. "In nearly every other situation they are close to 100 percent effective."

Bird Gard has units that will protect from 1 to 25 acres and all but the smallest unit have replaceable sound cards so the bird distress sounds can be easily updated. Prices start at



Bird Gard audio system uses randomized patterns of distress calls to scare away pest birds permanently.

\$240 for the 1-acre model and all units can be powered by regular 110-volt current or deep cycle 12-volt battery. Solar panels are available as an option for charging batteries. Every unit comes with an unconditional 1-year guarantee. If you are not completely satisfied simply return the product for a full refund.

Contact: FARM SHOW Follow-up, Bird Gard, 270 E. Sun Ranch Dr., P.O. Box 1690, Sisters, Ore. 97759 (ph 541 549-0205; toll free 888 332-2328; www.birdgard.com).

Reader Inquiry No. 91

Rock Claw Lifts Rocks Into Place

Albert Allpress can build walls with big rocks the easy way with his Rock Claw. He says he needed the patented rock lifter when he was in the excavation business.

Allpress likens his Rock Claw to the arcade game where a claw picks up a stuffed animal. He wanted a simpler version that was all mechanical.

His solution was 3 arms cut from high-grade steel with curved points or claws at the lower end and connected to a chain at the upper end. Each arm is pinned to a 3-pronged steel plate at a point about 3/4 up the length of the arm. This creates a pivot point for each arm.

The 3 chains gather at a ring on a swivel that can be hooked to a loader arm, blade

or other device. With the claws in place around the object to be lifted, the chains are gathered and pulled upward. This forces the arms to pivot at the plate and push the claws against the object being lifted, securing them in place.

The Series I Rock Claw has 1 1/2-ft. arms. Series II has 2-ft. arms, and Series III has 3-ft. arms.

"I've lifted a boulder that is 3 ft. in diameter and more than 700 lbs. with the Series II," says Allpress. "It made the backhoe tires squat, but the Rock Claw handled the boulder without a problem."

Check out a video of the Rock Claw in action at www.farmshow.com.



Rock Claw can handle big boulders with no problem. Three steel arms with curved points at their lower end are connected to a lift chain.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Albert Allpress, 17287 Hallman Rd. NW, Poulsbo, Wash. 98370 (ph 360 509-3574; deerman52@msn.com; www.therockclaw.com).

Reader Inquiry No. 92