

FIELD REPORT

Device drops a bomb on bird-dropping problem

AN UNUSUAL ULTRASONIC DEVICE HAS HELPED A New Jersey manufacturing facility drop a bomb on its bird-dropping problem.

"Birds would fly in the bay shipping doors and leave droppings on the customers' cartons and customers didn't like it," says Fletcher Kerns, warehouse shipping manager for Wheaton Injection Molding Co., a Millville, NJ, manufacturer of pharmaceutical and cosmetic caps and auto steering gears.

The problem was so serious that company officials were concerned about dropping business. After one carton of boxes had been damaged by bird droppings, Wheaton had to send a group of employees to the Midwest to repack it. It was a costly trip.

The firm couldn't continue to send out cartons loaded with bird droppings, particularly with pharmaceutical, medical, and cosmetic products involved. Wheaton manufactures products for companies such as Avon, Helene Curtis, Proctor & Gamble, and TRW. Bird droppings indicate low quality, unhealthy products, and poor handling.

In addition to being unsightly, bird droppings are a health hazard. Pigeon droppings are known to contain fungi that can cause serious lung diseases. The diseases histoplasmosis and cryptococcosis can affect susceptible individuals who breathe the harmful fecal dust.

And pigeons were one of the primary culprits at the Wheaton plant. "Pigeons are the dirtiest things in the world," says Kerns. Starlings were also a problem.

Things had gotten so bad that several employees reported that droppings had fallen on their heads while they were working. Something had to be done.

"We tried professional exterminators who used poison, electric wires, and spikes on the birds' roosting areas, but none worked," says Kerns. "Then we saw an ultrasonic device advertised in trade publications. We sent for information and eventually purchased two rotating units."



Installed on the warehouse ceiling and directed at the loading dock, the UET-120 ultrasonic device has eliminated a serious problem with bird droppings for Wheaton Injection Molding Co.

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The ultrasonic UET-120 units bought by Wheaton are about half the size of a shoe box and weigh less than 8 lbs. Manufactured by Bird-X, Inc., the UET-120 produces sound waves that are inaudible to humans, but very annoying to birds.

Rotating on a table, the unit sends bird-bothering signals in a 360° sweep for more than 45 ft. The high-frequency sound waves emitted by the UET-120 bombards birds with sounds they can't tolerate, but which doesn't harm them.

Wheaton employees easily installed the ultrasonic devices, says Kerns. They were placed high on warehouse beams and directed at the loading-dock area.

Bought more than one year ago, the ultrasonic units have worked very well, according to Kerns. He says: "The ultrasonics are one of the best purchases we've made. It took a little longer for them to work on the starlings than on the pigeons. The starlings were a little braver—or maybe they were just dumber."

To ensure the elimination of the bird problem, Wheaton maintenance officials also purchased several Terror-Eyes inflatable balls from Bird-X. The 2-ft.-diameter vinyl balls, which have two sets of holographic eyes that look like giant owls, are frightening to most birds, especially since the eyes give the appearance of following the birds' every move.

The Terror Eyes were installed at the Wheaton facility before the UET-120 units were hooked up. Kerns says the ultrasonic devices work best, but the Terror Eyes reinforce them. The combination has dropped a bomb on bird droppings, making Wheaton managers—and their customers—very happy.

Bird-X, Inc., 730 W. Lake St., Chicago, IL 60661.