

Invasive Birds in Your Backyard

by Malcolm Rodin

Introduced English House Sparrows are a significant issue in our region, and their success is being facilitated by well-meaning individuals.

The House Sparrow was introduced to help reduce insect pests to agriculture. Unfortunately, as with most introduced species, this bird causes more harm than good. Non-native House Sparrows eat seeds and tender young veggie greens, so they can be a bane to the gardener, but of more importance is their impact to native cavity-nesting birds. Cavity-nesting birds typically use old woodpecker nests in trees, or in an urban setting they rely heavily on birdhouses. House Sparrows nest early, and often claim these available nesting sites for themselves, leaving limited nesting opportunities available to beneficial native insect-eating birds such as Violet-green and Tree Swallows, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, House Wren, and Bewick's Wrens. The House Sparrow is known to evict native species from their nests, destroying eggs, young, and even adult birds.

Charming-looking bird nesting boxes of every dimension are quickly taken over by this invasive species, when all it would take would be to modify the entrance hole to only allow native species to use the boxes.

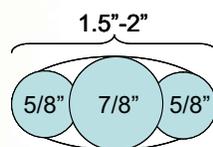
Please see our web site and YouTube video on how to make the oval hole. If you do not have a computer to view this free information you can call me at 250-812-6461, or see below.

The web page is <http://members.shaw.ca/swallows/> and my email address is swallows@shaw.ca

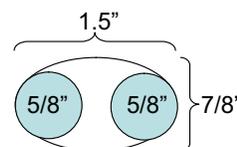
Making the invasive House Sparrow-resistant entrance holes

Use 3/4" thick piece of hardwood or plastic wood, and place over existing hole.

Option 1: Drill 7/8" and 5/8" holes (Forstner bits work well). Trim out the remaining bits with a file and then sand (do not exceed the 7/8" in height).



Option 1



Option 2

Option 2: Measure 1 1/2" across then drill two 5/8" holes on each end. Measure 7/8" height in the middle and draw an oval shape. Cut inside of this line with a coping saw, then file and sand to 7/8". It is okay to be wider than 1 1/2".

Option 3: Templates are available by donation from the Victoria Natural History Society (members@vicnhs.bc.ca)

Introduced female House Sparrow