

Vulture Nuisance Abatement Tactics

There are two species of vultures found in Georgia, turkey vultures and black vultures. Both species can cause nuisance problems in urban areas and in rural settings. Property owners who are experiencing nuisance problems or damage caused by vultures can try the techniques and tactics listed below to reduce vulture problems on their property.

Habitat Modification: Sometimes it is as simple as removing roost trees or food resources.

Harassment: If roosting is a problem on your property and the roost tree(s) can be identified, harass vultures when they arrive to the roost site in the late evening just before dark. If the roost is not on your property, harassment should commence as soon as the first bird arrives in your area, which normally occurs mid-morning. The ultimate goal of dispersal is not allowing a single bird to roost/loaf.

Harassment should be executed for at least three consecutive days to allow the birds to acclimate to a new roosting/loafing site. The use of pyrotechnics for visual and audio harassment coupled with use of effigies often equates to a successful roost dispersal. Other harassment strategies include lasers, air horns, and paintball guns. Pyrotechnics can be acquired from the Reed Joseph Company (www.reedjoseph.com). It is recommended to contact local authorities to inform them prior to using pyrotechnics (especially in urban areas).

Sometimes, deploying an effigy (a fake dead vulture) is all that is needed for roost dispersal. Effigies seem to be more effective on roosting sites compared to loafing sites. Landowners can acquire effigies from the USDA Wildlife Services (706-546-5637) or build their own using a dog training duck dummy painted black outfitted with fake black wings and a black tail. Best results come when the property owner installs the effigy upside down in the roosting area of the tree.

Exclusion: Another option is the installation of perch inhibitors. There are multiple types/brands available online with names such as bird spikes, bird wire, coyote roller, etc. These will eliminate the perching/loafing areas but installation can be time consuming and not cost effective if there is a large area to cover.

Confining livestock in an enclosed area during the birthing process will exclude vulture access. If that is not possible, then immediate removal or burial of carrion and afterbirth will assist.

Lethal control: Property owners are required to have a U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service migratory bird depredation permit before they can use lethal control for vultures. Landowners must complete a migratory bird depredation permit application from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (<https://www.fws.gov/forms/3-200-13.pdf>) and pay a processing fee, and complete a Form 37 from the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture's Wildlife Services (https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/wildlifedamage/operational-activities/ct_federal_permit_process) as part of their application packet. The Form 37 identifies the problem and provides recommendations and other information.

A combination of methods is often the most successful way to disperse vultures. Incorporating lethal control with harassment (pyrotechnics and effigy deployment) is the ideal combination, but it's dependent on each situation. As an alternative, property owners can hire staff from USDA Wildlife Services to conduct the harassment and lethal control.