

All wild birds are protected by state and federal laws, with the exception of the European starling, rock (feral) pigeon, and English (house) sparrow. This means that you cannot pursue, shoot at, trap, poison, or otherwise wound, kill, capture or possess one without a permit. However, there are many methods available to harass and prevent problems with birds that are damaging property.

TURKEY VULTURES

On average a turkey vulture weighs 4 pounds and has a wingspan of up to 6 feet. The turkey vulture, common in Indiana, is predominantly black with a bright red head. The species is protected by state and federal law and cannot be killed or captured without a permit.

Food Habits

Vultures usually eat dead animals. They have excellent eyesight and sense of smell, which they use to find food.

Prevention and Control

Vultures may cause problems when they begin roosting in large numbers on rooftops and trees in backyards and cities. These roosts are largest in late fall through early spring. Eliminating food, roost trees, and nest sites will help reduce the number of birds in the area.

Promptly remove any carcasses on your property. On a farm, vultures are attracted to placentas where lambing/calving occurs.

To deter vultures from perching on a rooftop, install a wire or strong hardware cloth pulled tight about 8 inches above and parallel to the edge of the home. Keep the wire tight to prevent the vultures from pushing it down.

Try repellants such as Tangelfoot, or double-sided tape in situations where the installation of wire is not possible or practical.

Removing roost sites and pruning branches may cause vultures to move to another area.

Pyrotechnics can be used to harass the vultures. Where legal, starter pistols, firecrackers, or propane cannons are sometimes effective. Be sure to check state and local laws before using these methods. Use these methods persistently and as soon as the problem starts in order for them to be most effective. If birds are already using a roost site, pyrotechnics may have to be fired on multiple nights.

Reflective tape can also be strung in the roost trees or on the roof to deter vultures, but this may have limited success.

Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish & Wildlife

If these preventive and harassment measures fail, and you are still experiencing significant problems due to vultures, contact the Indiana DNR (Linnea Petercheff at 317-233-6527) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for permits to lethally remove the birds.

For more information about the prevention and control of turkey vultures, please go to: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/wildlife_damage/content/printable_version/fs_vulture_damage_man.pdf