

The DawnSong

With our compliments
PurpleMartinProducts.com, TroyerGourds.com, SuperGourd.com

[Check out our new YouTube Channel!](#) Coming soon Swapping a Brake Winch for a Worm Gear Winch.

The Importance of Trapping

Do I really have to trap and kill Starlings and Sparrows?



Unequivocally the answer to the question is YES! If you want to have a thriving martin colony you must trap and kill both the European Starling and the English House Sparrow.

When I began my martin hobby way back in 1990 I did not have a lot of choices. You used natural gourds with round holes. These gourds were starling magnets, and when I finally had my first breeding pair, and while I watched, a starling entered the gourd, and in the time it took me to run out side, the sitting female was killed and the eggs destroyed. That began my lifelong hatred of the starling.

The first "starling-resistant" entrance soon followed with the advent of the "Crescent" entrance. They are still used today and with great success.

Since then there have been a lot of "starling-resistant" entrances developed. The most commonly known are the Conley II and the Excluder entrance. My personal preference is for the Conley II especially when starting a new colony.

Over the years our martins have learned to navigate starling-resistant entrance holes (SREH) and we are now seeing the martins choose an SREH before a round hole.

But while we can make our gourds "starling-resistant, we have yet to design a hole that will keep out sparrows. The English House Sparrow is evil. I have seen first hand the destruction they can cause for no other reason than they can.

So what can we do to keep our martins safe. We MUST trap the sparrow and starling and if at all possible this should become a year round project for you.

There are many types of commercially available traps. First lets look at traps for gourds. When considering gourds to purchase you should also look at the traps that work with each style of gourd.





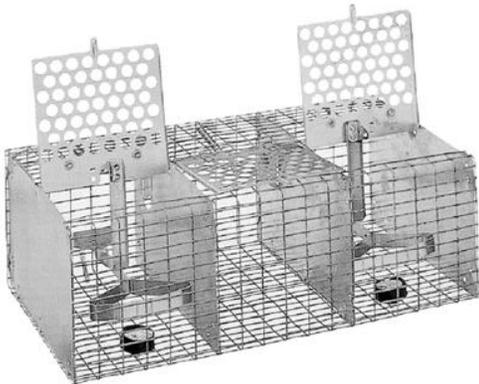
Troyer gourds with tunnels have a wonderful and very effective trap called the [Troyer-Haskell Tunnel Trap](#). This 2 piece trap includes a shutter door and tripping mechanism. Slip the trip wire in thru the access port, and insert the stem of the trip wire thru the tunnels receiving port. Once thru slip the shutter door over the face of the tunnel till it rests on the protruding stem. Once the sparrow enters and hits the trip mechanism, the shutter door falls down and the bird is trapped unharmed.

[SuperGourds](#) too have a dedicated insert trap. It can be used easily with round-holed SuperGourds, but when using it with Crescent-holed gourds you will need to remove any porch you may have on the gourd.



What other kinds of traps are there? You should consider both a house trap as well as a bait trap. Starlings in particular will seek out Nest Box Traps during the spring. My favorite nest box style trap is the [Troyers S&S Eliminator Trap](#). This trap features the all metal trapping mechanism that was originally designed by Creative Universe. It is very effective. If possible using this trap in pairs becomes even more effective as the male may enter one trap while the female starling enters the other.

Bait Traps are very effective in capturing house sparrows. Bait the traps with cracked corn, white millet and bread. We offer both the [Wire Sparrow Trap](#) as well as the [NO Escape Sparrow Trap](#). Both of these traps work well when you leave a decoy bird in them. Place these traps on the ground away from bird feeders and near bushes. The Troyers keep a No Escape Trap in their barn and it has been capturing sparrows with great success. I have also mounted my Wire Sparrow Trap to a piece of rebar which I push into the ground near my martin housing. When I find sparrow material in a gourd, I remove the sparrows nesting material and place the softest, fluffiest material as bait inside the wire traps cages. Works like magic for me.



For T-14 houses consider placing internal cavity traps such as the [Universal Trap Long](#), or the [Super T-14 Trap](#).

I'd be remiss if I didn't talk about the [S&S Controller](#). I love this trap! My S&S Controller is set up by the store, near a large maple tree. As soon as the martins arrive I close the trap door (I keep it open during the winter months as it is much to hard to get to it when the snow flies). This is my single most effective trap I use during the nesting season. I have captured 6 starlings at a time, I have caught house sparrows and starlings at the same time. This trap is available to purchase with or without the pipe. There is even a [plan booklet](#) to build your own.



Last I would like to talk about the [Troyer's V-Top Trap](#). This trap is huge! It can capture hundreds of starlings at a time. You will need to build your own and we have a very nice plan booklet Andy and I did a few years ago. This trap really works best during the winter months. You will place table scraps inside the trap. The starlings enter thru the top of the trap and they can't get out. More records for starlings trapped in one day have been recorded using a V-top trap.



What to do when you have trapped the starling or house sparrow?

If you have captured a bird inside a Troyer gourd, its easiest to place a plastic grocery bag over the entrance port. It gets a bit tricky but you lift off the shutter door and most of time the bird flies right out into the waiting bag.

If you have captured a bird inside a SuperGourd, you can open the access port, carefully, reach your hand inside and capture the bird.

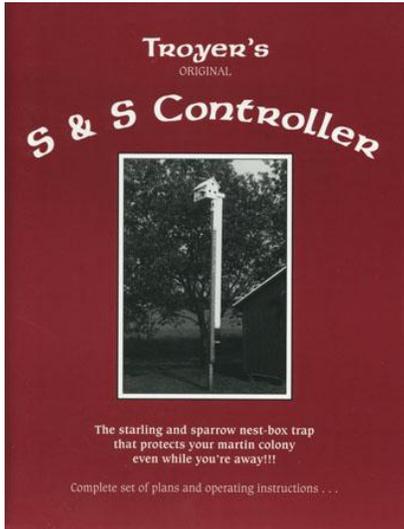
When using internal cavity traps the bird is already captured inside the trap.

Next you need to visually inspect the bird, this can be tricky when it comes to the House Sparrow. Please use an ID chart like the one found [here](#) to ID the bird. It is legal only to dispose of the European Starling and the English House Sparrow.

It was Jamie Hill who taught me how to dispose of the birds by compressing their chest (squeezing). Other ways to dispose of the birds are with ether, and drowning. Look it is no fun dispatching a sparrow or starling. I always seem to remember my defenseless female sitting on her eggs, minding her own business, and then I get the job done.

One last way to control the sparrows and starlings is with shooting. I can't shoot the siding off the side of the barn, but the husband can. His favorite gun of choice is the Benjamin Marauder Air Rifle.

When trapping please monitor your traps carefully. There is a reason we capture birds unharmed, that way if a martin, bluebird or tree swallow were captured they can be released.

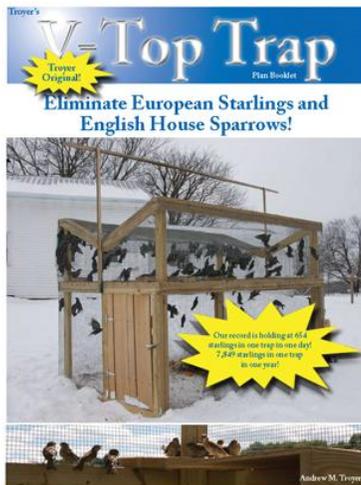


Troyer's ORIGINAL S & S Controller



The starling and sparrow nest-box trap that protects your martin colony even while you're away!!!

Complete set of plans and operating instructions . . .



Troyer's ORIGINAL V-Top Trap Plus Booklet

Eliminate European Starlings and English House Sparrows!



Our record is holding a total of 7,247 starlings in one trap in one day!

Andrew M. Troyer

Product Spotlight: Oriole Feeders

With spring right around the corner I am noticing more of my summer birds arriving. The red-wing blackbirds, grackles, tufted titmouse to name a few have been singing and actively looking for nesting cavities.

While as I write this I have yet to see a martin or Tree Swallow here, our bluebirds have paired and we have been feeding mealworms. The bluebirds have

completed their nest and I expect egg laying to begin any day now.

But all that is nothing to compare with the first Oriole of the season. The [Baltimore Orioles](#) build a basket-like nest in the many deciduous trees that grow all around us. The orioles beautiful song is easy to distinguish among the other birds. The gorgeous orange and black makes for wonderful photo ops for those who enjoy taking bird photos. Orioles love grape jelly and oranges. I purchase my grape jelly from Aldi's, their own brand, but you can also pick up grape jelly from Walmarts. My orioles have yet to get excited over oranges, yet I have a friend that exclusively uses oranges to her success. We have two Oriole Feeders for sale. Available as both a [single](#) or [double](#) feeder. The single has one jelly cup while the double offers two. The feeders can be hung from shepherds crooks, trees, or mount them on your hand made stand. Once the orioles find your feeder they will visit you throughout the day feeding on the jelly and after their young have fledged they bring them to the feeder. Next to my martins and bluebirds, the oriole is in my top 5 of all time favorites.



Check these out! More choices, more great prices!

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