

# Bird Battle Tips from the Pros' Nest

**W**e spoke to several marina managers around the country and inquired about their preferred tools in the war on waterfowl. Karen Knull, co-owner and operator of Yankee Point Sailboat Marina in Lancaster, Va., told us that her 105-slip marina occasionally has issues with bald eagles, osprey, seagulls, and one particular great blue heron.

“That heron is a protected species, as are the eagles, so we simply clean up after them,” explained Knull. She said that the marina tried using plastic owls in the past, “but it’s really hit or miss whether they work.” Knull said that about 20 of her customers occasionally use life-like rubber snakes on boat decks or in the cockpit. “Ultimately, we have a lot of customers who like this area for its peace and quiet, and the wildlife is simply part of that, so we all just deal with it.”

In Alameda, Calif., Harold Thompson is the maintenance supervisor at the Oakland Marina, which has nearly 500 slips. Seagulls and geese are the main problems, Thompson said. “The geese congregate on one particular dock, and there’s not a lot we can do. It’s just part of our job to clean the docks, so we spray

it down and clean it up almost every day.” To keep avian pests off the marina’s equipment such as generators and transformers, the company has invested in a number of Gull Sweeps, which Thompson said work well. For protecting boats, the most successful device he’d seen was a motion-activated sprinkler. (PS found the Scarecrow sprinkler from Nixalite online for \$67, but we haven’t tested it.)

Eddy Barr of the Galveston Yacht Basin in Texas said the bird issues at his 500-slip marina are so challenging that they keep one employee busy cleaning the docks for four hours each day. “What we used to have that worked were bird callers...sound-emitting devices, but those really will drive you nuts,” Barr told us. In the end, as Barr said, dealing with birds is just part of owning a boat.

