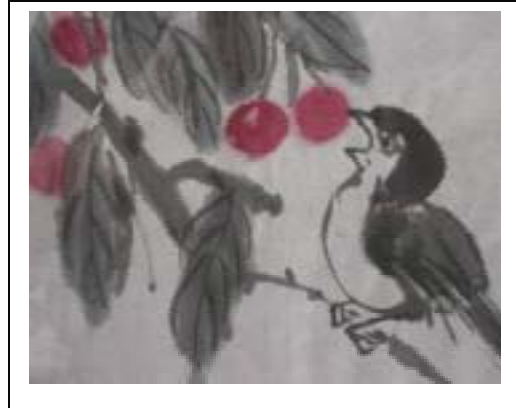


# Reducing Bird Damage

*Lynn E. Long, Extension Horticulturist  
Oregon State University, Wasco County Extension  
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I recently read a report on bird-scarring techniques written by the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture that I thought you might find informative. It was entitled "The use of audible bird scare devices in British Columbia in 2001". Although, most Wasco County growers don't use noisemakers to scare birds, the need for such devices may increase as more isolated blocks come into production in south county. Hood River cherry growers may also find these devices to be useful.



The article states that noisemakers do work to scare birds, but they need to be managed appropriately to be effective. If cannons are used, the frequency of firing needs to be low at the beginning of the season. If the bird pressure grows and as the birds begin to become used to the cannons the firing frequency should increase. Firing the canon too frequently at the beginning of the season will cause the birds to get use to the noise more quickly.

To maximize the bird scaring effectiveness over the entire cropping season the noises should be irregular and unpredictable, change direction and location often and integrate other bird-scarring devices into your program. This seems to be the key to the success of these systems.

In a 1994 study which was cited by the report, bird populations in orchards did not return to normal levels for two weeks following cessation of the cannon. Obviously, cannons can be an effective tool for reducing bird populations in orchards.