

# Tips to Catching Sparrows with the Sparrow “Trap Door”

The most difficult bird to catch.

## Usage Guidelines

The Sparrow Trap Door is an innovative, effective trap for trapping sparrows indoors. Whether using the optional audio call or not this guide will provide advanced techniques to improve the success rate of a trapping program.

## Site Assessment and Evaluation

It is best to first identify the following items on site:

1. Identify the species and number of birds.
2. Identify the access points, both structural and conditional (gaps, doors being propped or left open, trash in unmaintained areas, etc.) These areas need to be corrected immediately and addressed before the capture process begins.
3. Identify the interior travel paths/flyways and roosts. Look down for patterns of droppings on the floor indicating perches or flyways. Look up for droppings on common perches like signs, shelves, pipes or other structural features.
4. Identify the food and water sources such as employee break rooms, public dining areas, stored goods or trash.
5. Identify the harborage areas – areas where birds are hiding or resting at night.

Based on this information, the trap placement pattern can be developed. It is important that the traps are placed so that they are effective, but out of the way of the operation of the facility.

## Preparation

Sparrows in particular are very adept at finding food and water indoors. They will drink water from a mop bucket, or a dripping coffee maker. It is imperative that these sources be identified, and that measures are taken to eliminate or dramatically reduce them. Otherwise, the birds will continue to feed and water from these sources which could lengthen the trapping process or hamper complete success.

**KEY FACT** - *Due to their small size and high metabolism birds need to eat and drink many times a day or they will expire. Therefore, if a sparrow is actively flying around indoors over 2-3 days it has found a food and water source inside the facility.*

## Positioning

Similar to placing multiple rodent bait boxes along common pathways - placing multiple “Trap Doors” throughout indoor flyways is an excellent strategy.

When using the Sparrow Trap Door as a preventative “set and forget” trap you can hang traps throughout potential flyways or space out per the following guidelines.

Generally each Trap Door should be placed so it covers a maximum of 10,000 sq. ft. (100 x 100 ft.) For reference the average size of a large discount store carrying general merchandise and a selection of groceries is 102,000 sq. ft. For this size facility ideal coverage would be 10 or more Sparrow Traps unless the birds are confined to smaller areas.

For smaller facilities or where a bird is actively flying around indoors a simple formula for estimating number of trap doors is this:

- 1 sparrow = 1 trap door with sound, or 2 or more without sound
- 2 sparrows = 1 trap door with sound, or 2 or more without sound
- 3 sparrows = 3 trap door with sound, 4=4 and 5=6 etc.

Note that having 5 or more birds indoors is a unique situation and depending on the size of the facility may require multiple Trap Doors or a Trap Door paired with a repeating funnel trap.

Using multiple Sparrow Trap Doors with adequate spacing will work well for capturing a small flock of sparrows over a large area. However, in a smaller facility it is critical to catch as many of the birds as quickly as possible. In small facilities traps should be deployed at night so the sparrows do not see the technician.

**KEY FACT** – *when placing and setting up the Sparrow Trap Door never look directly at the sparrows you intend to trap.*

Ideally the best place to put the “Trap Doors” is near bird activity, preferably where they eat. If the other food sources have been eliminated, then it should be fairly simple to attract the birds. Additional tips for placement include:

- Placing the traps at night when the birds are hidden and roosting so the sparrows will not associate the traps with humans.
- Hang or place the traps in the line of sight for the sparrows; they must be able to see the bait.
- Place traps on shelves or other flat surfaces higher up, near their nests or other roosting areas. Or hang from pipes or beams with the included hangar.
- The height of the placement is not as critical so long as the placement is secure from falling or displacement when activated.
- Using the audio call to bring a timid sparrow to the trap to investigate.

**KEY FACT** – *outdoors sparrows like to perch inside bushes and dense leafy trees for safety. Place the trap near pipes, plants or other perches that simulate*

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*structure resembling a bush or tree. A sparrow will prefer to visit a trap close to structure vs. a trap placed out in the open.*

## Pre-Baiting

If there are multiple birds to catch, it is important that they have a chance to become comfortable with the “Trap Doors.” This is especially true if you are not using the audio call. Stretch a strong piece of tape across the trap, under the lid, so the trap is in the open position and cannot close. Apply the bait and allow the birds to eat for several days.

## Baiting

The bait must be positioned behind the perch trigger, inside the baffle area.

**Preferred Bait - Food** - The first choice should be a food similar to what they already eat. If they eat bird food from packages on the floor, use that. In testing bread was the preferred bait. Bread dries out quickly and will not spoil. Simply slide a 1/4 piece of white or wheat bread on to the two wires that stick up on the baffle.

### Alternative Baits – If Food Doesn’t Work

- Nesting Material – Birds are often looking for soft materials with which to make their nests. Try putting some yarn, grass or other nesting favorites on the trap.
- Water – Birds need to drink far more often than they need to eat; try a small bowl of water, preferably something long, wide and shallow, like a mini pie-pan. Remember, the water will spill inside the trap, so consider lining the inside with a plastic bag, or putting a small towel in the bottom of the trap.
- Live Insect – Birds can’t resist a live cricket or other such insect. These can be purchased at pet stores. They should be placed in a small cage. Consider pointing a small light at them so they are even more noticeable. A dead cricket could also be set on the flat area, or hung by a thread over the desired area.

## Audio Call (optional)

The optional audio call can significantly reduce the time it takes to catch a sparrow. The male call turns normally skittish sparrows into curious sparrows. They go to inspect the top of the trap to locate the source of the call and are trapped in short order. The audio call contains 9 individual programs – some of which offer delayed start, intermittent calling times and different volumes.

Pressing the program button will produce a short audible tone that indicate which program number is selected. With experience the user will soon get into the habit of counting to their favorite call program.

Note that there are no wrong or incorrect call programs – they will all help bring sparrows to the Trap Door. For most general trapping applications a good place to start is call program #8. Program #8 features a 20-minute delay before the call starts. This delay allows the user time to deploy the trap and vacate the area before the call begins to attract the sparrow’s attention.

Other call programs allow for deploying the trap the day before with the call starting up to 24 hours later. There is also a lower volume call program, which can be useful in a public place or in a “set and forget” preventative application.

Regarding battery life, in our testing we found that batteries can be expected to last approximately one week. As the batteries begin to run out the volume will decrease and sound quality may degrade. Replacing with fresh batteries or using the optional power cable for extended running time is recommended.

## Checking the Traps

The Sparrow Trap Door is extremely effective and if the baffle is down you can be assured there is a sparrow inside. To confirm a catch you may see movement when looking through the crack along the closed baffle lid or by tapping lightly on the side of the trap. Sometimes the sparrow will be up clinging to the perch which is now inverted and hanging in the closed baffle. **Do not open the lid even a crack or the bird will escape.** An escaped bird will never enter a trap again.

Store or maintenance personnel can be trained to visually inspect the traps from a distance and call the pest management company whenever they observe a baffle in the down, closed position. The ideal situation is for the service visits to be made daily until the birds are captured.

**KEY FACT** – *Using a live decoy sparrow to attract sparrows to a trap is a proven technique. A Sparrow Trap Door is ideal for catching a decoy sparrow indoors or outside. Once captured, place the decoy inside a repeating trap such as a funnel trap Bird Barrier part #TT-SP10 along with food and water.*

Thank you for choosing the Sparrow Trap Door - we hope you enjoy using this innovative tool.



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