

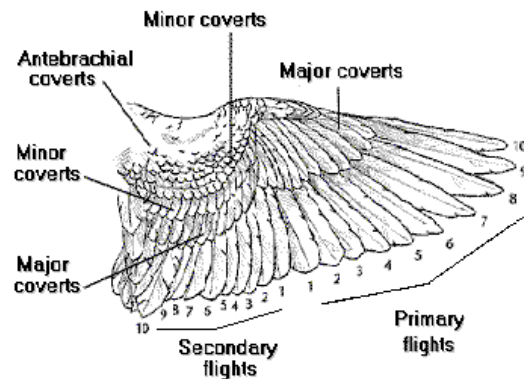
Trimming HOSP Wing Feathers

Once the HOuse SParrow (HOSP) is trapped its feathers can be trimmed. The best way to trap it is to use an in-box trap. If the HOSP adopts or likes a box, it becomes easy to trap it. HOSP are very difficult to catch by hand after they are trapped, hence special methods are needed to remove them from the trapping box.

First get a large clear plastic bag (I use shredder bags I buy from "Office Depot" used for paper shredders they sell.) Also have a pair of scissors ready. Put the bag over the box so the box is all the way into the bag. Put one hand (and arm) inside the bag, the other hand is used outside the bag to "gather" the bag around your arm and the mounting pole. Make sure there are no gaps for the HOSP to escape by holding the bag tightly! Now open the door of the box (all the time keep the bag closed tightly so no openings can form.) The HOSP will fly right out, fluttering a lot against the bag. Be careful not to get scared or surprised, keep the bag closed tight,

the bird will not escape. Now catch it with your hand. It may try to bite you, but besides a little pain it cannot harm you. Once you have it in your hand, make sure to hold it firmly. Now take it out of the bag, spread one wing out, carefully count four outermost feathers and trim them near the major coverts (these are #7,8,9, and 10 in the picture shown.) Turn the bird around and similarly cut the other wing primary feathers. Now let it go. It will fly as if nothing happened, or it may fly a little lower than usual,

either way, the job is done. [If the trapped bird is not a HOSP, be sure to let it go at once. In-box traps should be inspected often to make sure no bird is trapped for a long time. I check mine at least every hour, often I just wait a few minutes and I see the HOSP getting into the trapping box.]



HOSP with shortened primary feathers cannot maneuver as well in flying and in fighting with other birds, so they tend to live peacefully with this handicap. In six months, they will molt and will get new feathers. Most probably they will also move away. If not, then the same process is repeated, just once each year. With practice you will be so good at trapping them you will get any of them in less than 15 minutes...

In years of using various methods, this method works the best for me. Each year I have raised between 25 and 30 EABL (Eastern Bluebirds) around our house without killing any HOSP. The HOSP becomes quite friendly, even perches next to the parent EABL with no fighting. It seems somehow the EABL know the HOSP is friendly and they do not chase it away!

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