**Living with Vultures in Hillsborough**

The Hillsborough Township Health Department has been receiving an increasing number of complaints and concerns regarding the presence of vultures on residents’ property. While vultures are an important part of the ecosystem, they have begun roosting in trees near houses and on buildings where they can do damage and their excrement can collect.

**Background Information on Vultures**

- Two species of vultures are found in New Jersey: Turkey Vultures (red heads) and Black Vultures (black heads).
- Populations of both species are expanding throughout NJ.
- Both species of vultures are federally protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.
- Both species of vultures are protected in New Jersey as “non-game birds.”
- Vultures play a vital role in the removal of dead animals.

**Control Methods**

Since vultures are protected by state and federal law, it is illegal to kill, trap and/or remove them. With these restrictions, the best alternative for dealing with the vultures on your property is by harassing them until they leave to find a new roost where they feel safe. In order for any harassment technique to work, it must be persistent and continual to convince the birds that your property is not a safe place to roost.

**Vultures roosting on buildings**

- Products are available, including bird repellent spikes or wire that is placed on the peak of the roof, both of which do not allow the birds to land there.
- Harassment techniques such as throwing a tennis ball near them or loud noises such as using an air horn will scare birds from their roost. Again, these harassment tactics must be done every time vultures are present in order for them to no longer feel safe at your property.

**Vultures roosting in trees**

- If vultures are roosting in a dead tree on your property, consider removing the dead tree(s).
- If vultures are roosting in a tree that is alive, helium-filled Mylar balloons can be allowed to float in the upper canopy to scare vultures away.

If all else fails, the United States Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services may be hired to hang a dead vulture carcass, a method known as effigy, which will indicate to the vultures their roost is no longer safe. This method can ONLY be performed by USDA personnel and requires a federal permit and payment of $400 per effigy.

The link for the Fish, Game and Wildlife Agency is [https://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/](https://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/)

Another good link for dealing with local property pests is [https://wildlifeweb.org/](https://wildlifeweb.org/)