



The Biddle Sparrow Trap

Courtesy of Brad Biddle



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Sparrow Trap Plans

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Thanks to Bet from www.Sialis.org for photo of the completed trap.

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*Many thanks to Brad Biddle who developed these plans
and allowed PurpleMartins-R-Us to make them
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For the sake of the Purple Martins*

The Biddle Sparrow Trap

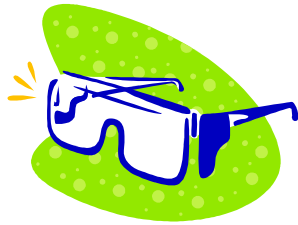
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Introduction

I sold this trap for several years, they are scattered throughout the US. This trap is very effective, and if used properly can reduce a large House Sparrow population quickly. When I first started using these traps, I caught over 300 HOSP the first year that I used them. To ensure success you must place the trap where the birds are. HOSP naturally eat seeds off the ground. I have my most success when placing this trap directly on the ground, either on bare dirt, concrete, or on a piece of plywood.

While building this trap, make certain that you wear eye protection. The small left over ends of wire that you will be cutting off, can fly many feet when cut. Protect you vision. You may also want to wear gloves while building this trap. When any wire is cut it leaves a sharp edge. Gloves and even a long sleeved shirt can protect you from scratches.



Never leave a trap unattended for more than a few hours. Check all traps frequently. If you have to leave, put the trap away. All traps can and will lure and trap nontarget birds, it is imperative that you are able to quickly identify these other species and release them when trapped. If you are not absolutely positive of the identification of what you have captured, release them immediately! It is a federal offense to kill any native bird species; the English House Sparrow and European Starling are not native species, and are not protected. If you cannot distinguish male and female House Sparrows from other common seedeaters, we suggest you purchase *A FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS* by Roger Tory Peterson or [visit PurpleMartins-R-Us for an online guide to Sparrow ID](#).

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What You Will Need

To build this trap, you will need a 60 inch length of 3 foot wide, ½ inch by 1 inch welded cage wire. It's also sometimes called rabbit wire.

You will also need at least 100 J-clips with J clip pliers, or 4 inch zip ties, and a good pair of side cutting pliers to construct the trap. It's pretty simple you don't even need a tape measure.

Building the Trap

First lay the wire out flat. You can see that I marked the first cuts with painters tape. I did this to make them easier to see in the pictures, it's not necessary to mark them. The first two pieces we'll cut are the top and the bottom of the trap. Those two pieces need to be 21 inches long and 17 inches wide, refer to the pictures before cutting. I never use a tape measure when building a trap from this wire. Simply count the wires to come up with the length and width. Just remember when counting one direction, your wires are $\frac{1}{2}$ inch apart and when counting the other the wires are 1 inch apart. By making the trap 17 inches wide, there is very little waste. (Figure 1 and 2)

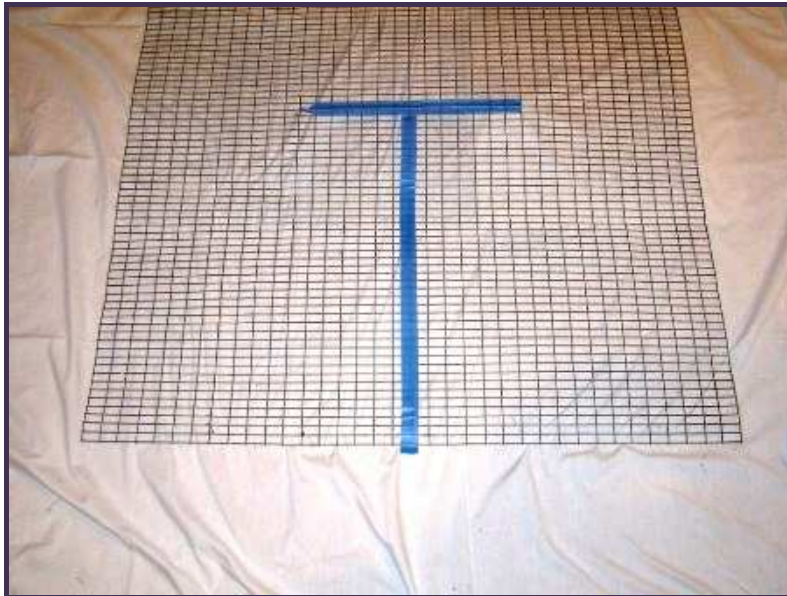


Figure 1

The Biddle Sparrow Trap

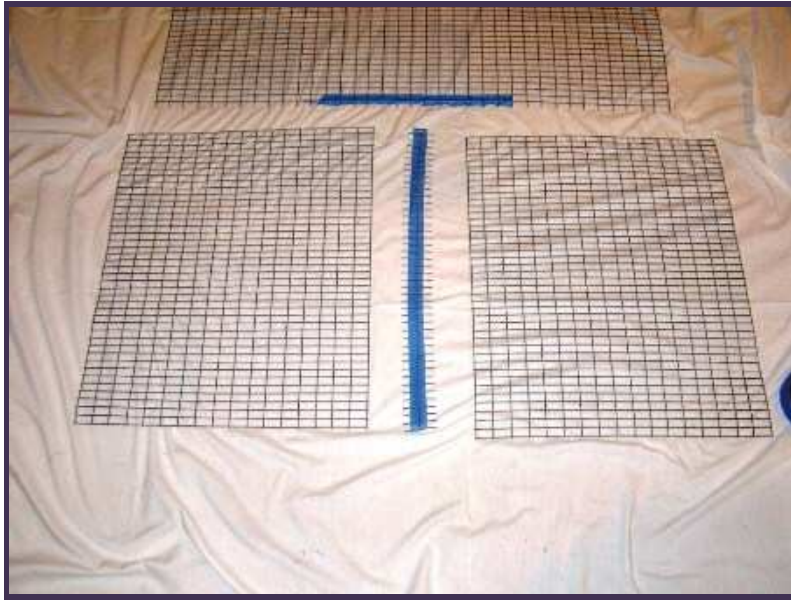


Figure 2

Now that you have the top and bottom of the trap, now cut out the two ends. They should be 7 inches tall and 17 inches wide.

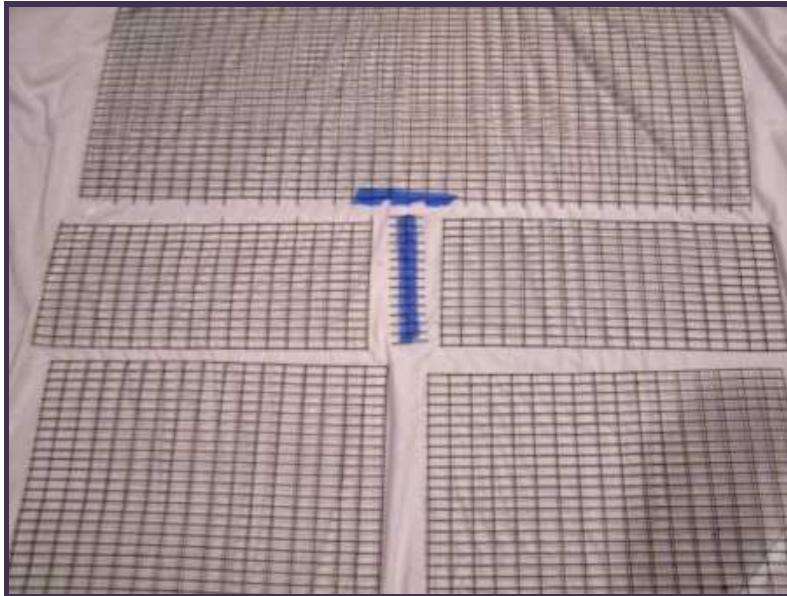


Figure 3

(Figure 3) You will now have a full width piece of your original cage wire, around 18 inches long left.

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I have never caught a Starling in a bait trap of any kind. If you wish to make this a Starling and Sparrow trap, you need to make the trap funnel 6 inches wide by 7 inches long. For HOSP only, make the funnel pieces 5 inches wide by 7 inches long. It is very important to but the funnel pieces exactly as shown in the photo. A sparrow funnel is on the left, a HOSP and Starling funnel is on the right. (Figure 4)

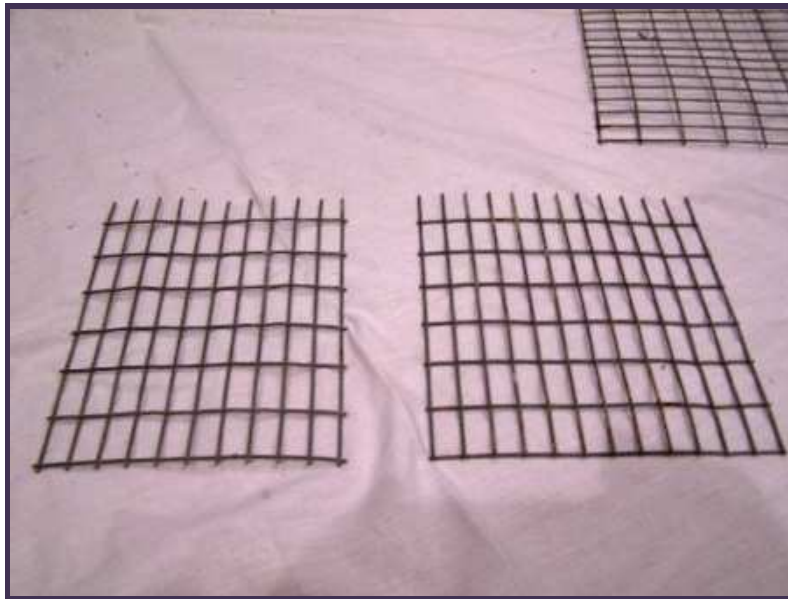


Figure 4

Once you have the funnels cut out bend them into a curved shape and bend the “stickers” down towards the center of the funnel. (Figure 5)

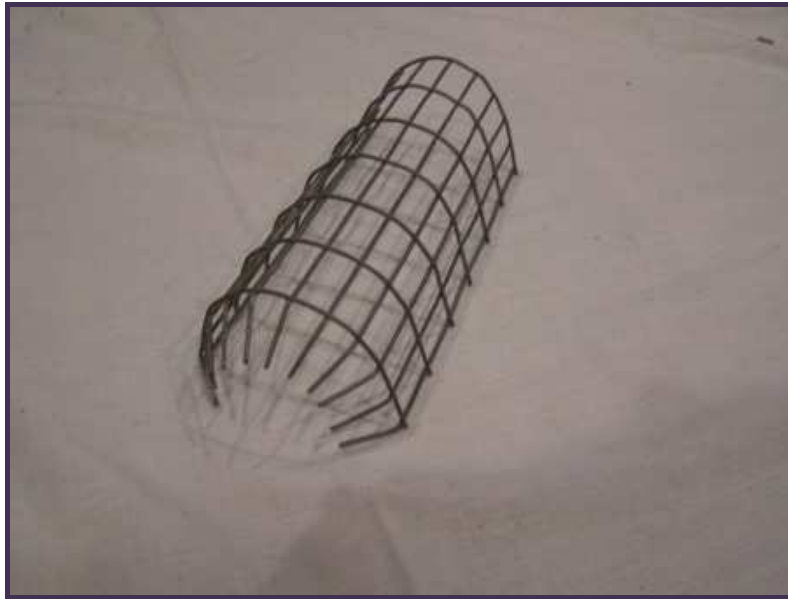


Figure 5

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Now use a scrap piece of wire to cut out the “corral” that goes at the end of each funnel. Each corral should be 7 inches long and one inch tall. (Figure 6)

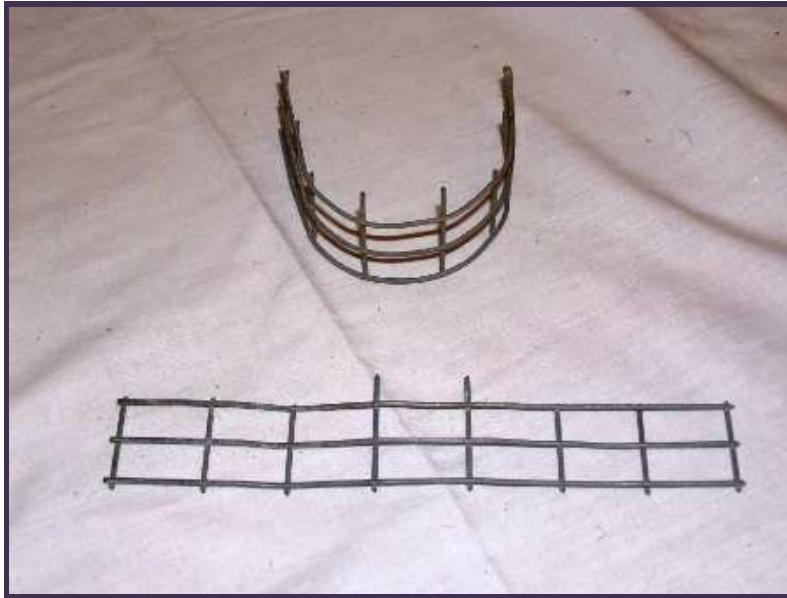


Figure 6

Attach the funnel and corral to the bottom panel of the trap as shown. Count the distance on each side of the funnel to make sure the funnel is centered on the bottom panel. The funnels and corral should be attached to the ends of the bottom panel. (The 17 inch wide end) (Figure 7)

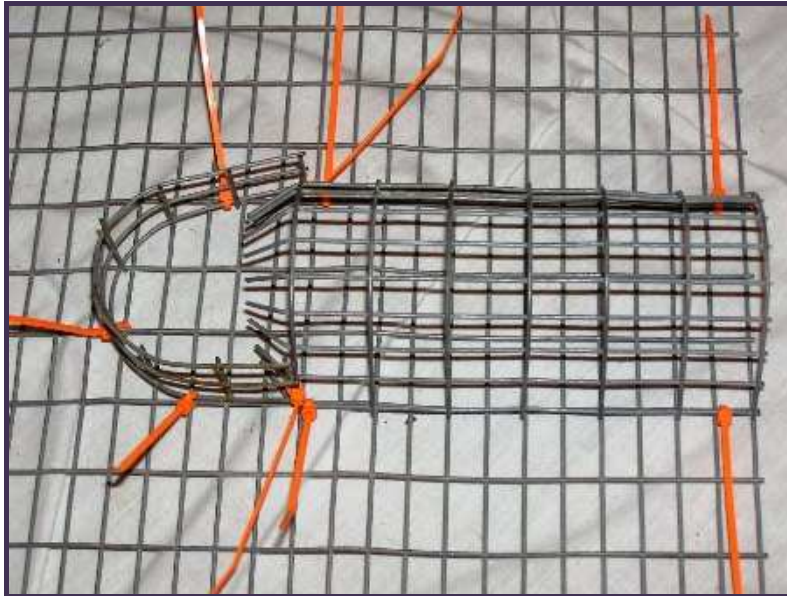


Figure 7

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Now start attaching the end panels. Once the end panels are attached, mark and cutout the entrance hole to the funnels. Once the entrance hole is marked, you can lift the side panel to make cutting the entrance hole easier. The entrance hole can be cut in between wire sections. (Figure 8 and 9)

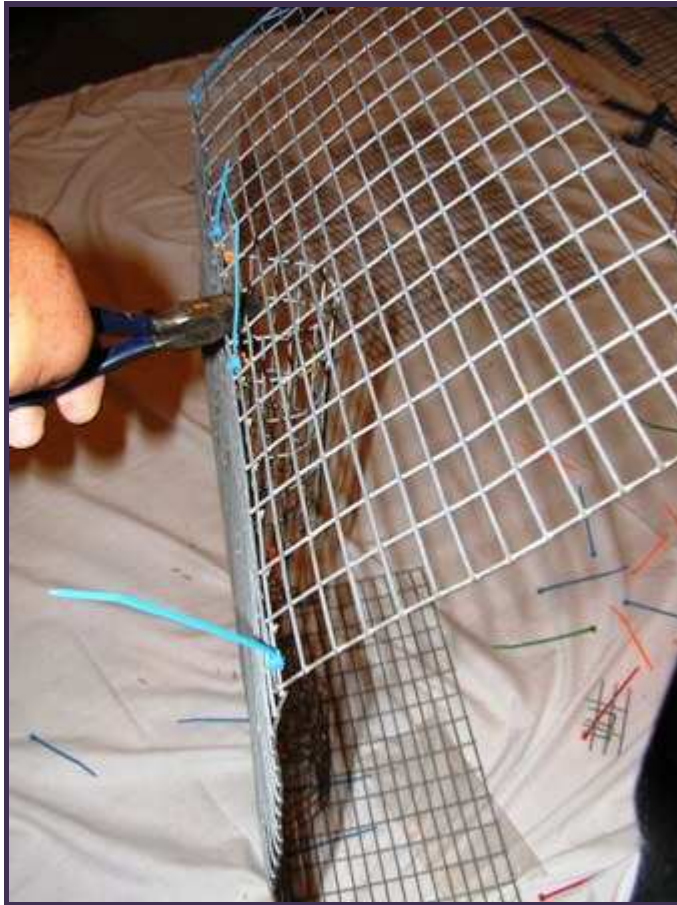


Figure 8



Figure 9

Now attach the side panels of the trap in the same method you used to attach the end panels. Attach the side panels to the end panels, as well as to the bottom panel of the trap. When I was selling traps, I did not have a holding cage for a “bait” bird in the traps. I never left a bird in the trap to help lure others in. I never had a problem catching birds without a “bait” bird. I have added a “bait” bird holding cage to this trap in the event that you want to add one to yours. You can either add this, or leave this step out.

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If you wish to add the small cage, you will need a section of wire 14 inches long and 6 ½ inches tall. Bend the 14 inch long section so that each end is 4 inches long, leaving the longest side 6 inches long. If you cut the panel 7 inches tall, the same as the end panels, it will be too tall for the top panel to sit flat. Attach the holding cage to one side panel of the trap as shown. (Figure 10)



Figure 10

We're almost done. All that's left to do now is attach the top panel, cut out and install the doors. Install the top panel so that the 1 inch wire runs on the top side of the length of the trap. This makes it easier to debur (remove the sharp points) the door opening. (Figure 11)



Figure 11

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Once the top panel is attached to the 4 sides and to the holding cage, you can cut out the doors. You can make the door any size you wish as long as you have enough wire to cover the holes. The main door needs to be 2 inches wider, and 2 inches longer than the opening. The holding cage door needs to be 2 inches wider and 1 inch longer than the opening in the holding cage. (Figure 12)



Figure 12

I cut the main opening 5 inches by 5 inches, leaving 2 inches of top panel between that opening and the opening for the holding cage. The holding cage opening is 4 inches by 4 inches. Cut out the doors for each opening. (Figure 13)



Figure 13

The edges of the wire on the openings you cut in the top panel must be filed smooth (debur) with a file or a grinding wheel, OR you can leave the cut pieces of wire long, and roll them with pliers. If you fail to do this, you will find that your arms will look like you've been chasing a rabbit around in a briar patch when you remove birds from the trap. Roll the wires over or under the cross wire, depending on which side of the opening you are working on. You can see two different sides of an opening in photo 15.

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One side the wires are bent up and over. The other side they are bent down and under. (Figure 14 and 15)



Figure 14



Figure 15

Attach the doors onto the top of the trap as shown (Figure 16)



Figure 16

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Once the doors are attached, you have a completed HOSP bait trap. I use white millet seed for bait. I place a small pile (maybe 1/8th cup) close to a long side of the trap. I then sprinkle a very small amount of seed around the trap, and just a few inside the funnel. This trap relies on a birds desire to fly as their escape mechanism to work. You will see the trapped birds trying to fly up and out the trap. Very few times a bird will figure out that it can go back out the funnel. Not to worry, they'll come back. I have marked HOSP with a small amount of paint, let them go, and caught them in the trap the next day. If you don't put much bait in the funnel, the birds are less likely to escape.

If you cannot find the exact wire that I use to build these traps, you could make the trap from 1/2 inch hardware cloth. HOSP can escape from 1 inch square cage wire, so do not use it. In my opinion the funnel must be made from the wire I use. You can try a different wire and it might work.

It is not my intention to sell anything. My time is very limited. If you absolutely cannot find the proper wire, I will send you the funnels for \$5 plus shipping. They will be shipped flat.

If you need the funnels, you can contact me at yard1man@charter.net Use the subject line: funnels

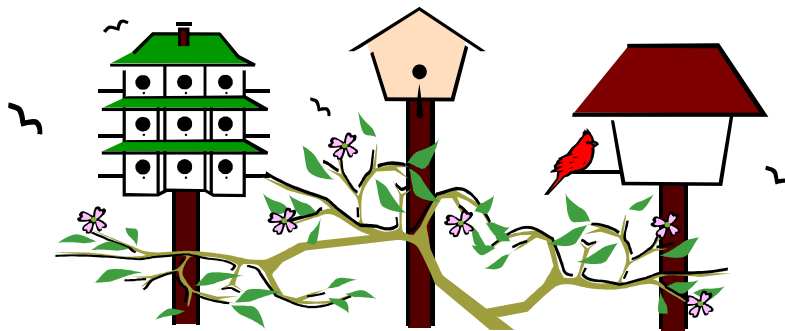


In Closing

Remember, you must think like a HOSP to catch a HOSP. Find the shrub or tree that they congregate in and trap there. Take the trap to them, don't make them find it.

The pictures posted here are not for the use of any individual or company to commercially reproduce this trap in any form. They are strictly posted so landlords can build a trap for their use. These photos or directions to build a trap should not be posted on another site without my approval. Thanks.

Good luck and good trapping,
Brad Biddle



Resources and Links

Biddle, Brad 2010, Jun. 2010. Purplemartins.org, Retrieved from Purple Martin Conservation Association online: <http://www.purplemartin.org> (<http://purplemartin.org/forum/viewtopic.php?t=17171&highlight=traps>)

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