



PIGEONS

The common pigeon (*Columba livia*) is the most notable bird pest to people. It is easily recognized by its large size, stout body and short legs, short bill and compact body feathers. There are many domestic varieties of pigeons with many different color patterns. The pigeon is distinguished from the mourning dove by the fan-shape of its tail. Pigeons usually eat grains and seeds, but may also eat fruit and other vegetable matter. They rely on water and grit in their diet to help with digestion. The grit, like sand and gravel, helps to grind food in the gizzard.

Pigeons normally live for 15 years and have been known to live up to 30 years. They produce 1 to 2 eggs at one time and may have several offspring each year. Eggs develop and hatch in about 17 to 19 days and the young are prepared to leave the nest in approximately 4 to 6 weeks. The adult female may lay another 1 to 2 eggs even before the young birds have left the nest.

PIGEON PREVENTION AND PROTECTION

Pigeons are excellent scavengers and have strong homing instincts, making them difficult to eliminate. Sanitation and prevention techniques work best for the control of pigeons. Listed below are several suggestions for the control of pigeons.

- Keep garbage stored properly.
- Cover all structure openings and vents with boards or hardware cloth.
- Prune dead fronds from palm trees to prevent nesting.
- Eliminate ledges by covering with wire netting or installing wood or metal sheeting at a sharp angle.
- Remove nests and eggs at two week intervals during the spring and summer months.

The pigeon is an intelligent bird and is often kept as a pet. Pigeons are popular birds and are often hand-fed by people. This encourages pigeons to stay and often attracts large numbers to an area. Large numbers of these birds can cause a variety of economic and health problems for people.

PIGEON PROBLEMS

- Pigeon droppings can deface buildings, cars and other objects.
- When in abundance, the droppings may kill lawns and shrubbery and cause odor problems.
- Pigeon nests may obstruct drainpipes, mar windowsills, interfere with awnings and create a hazard for fire escapes.
- Pigeons may spread diseases to people through contact with fresh droppings or by breathing dry, dusty droppings.
- Try using glue-like or "sticky" repellents on ledges and other landing places to make the pigeons uncomfortable. More permanent repellants are made of metal wires in the form of a bristling fence to prevent roosting. Frightening devices, such as buzzers, are *not* usually effective.
- Discourage hand-feeding of pigeons by people.
- Place traps on buildings or ledges where pigeons are likely to land. Grain or water is often used to lure pigeons into the trap through a one-way swinging door.
- Consider contacting a licensed pest control operator for removal of large number of pigeons.



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