

## Does your Property have a Pigeon Problem?

Many property owners do not realise their building has a feral pigeon problem. Factors which indicate a pigeon

problem on your property include the following;

- Do one or two pigeons frequent the building?
- Do flocks of pigeons regularly frequent the building?
- Is there an accumulation of pigeon droppings on or around the building?

Once you have recognised that your property has a pigeon problem action will need to be taken to prevent pigeons from roosting and nesting on/in the building. If no action is taken the problem may escalate and more cost will be involved. In majority of cases, if corrective action is taken, the property should be pigeon proofed indefinitely.

## Pigeon Facts

- Life span of 3-4 years in the wild, up to 16 years in captivity
- Pigeons are monogamous and a mating pair will have 3 to 4 broods per year of 1-2 eggs each
- Eggs are a solid white colour and hatch in 18 days, and the young leave the nest within 35 days
- Pigeons do not migrate, staying near their birth site (which may be your home)
- Seed eater that will exploit multiple food sources including waste food in urban areas and deliberate feeding by the public
- Constant Pest

**The standard feral pigeon is generally:**

- Blue-grey with a white rump
- Iridescent feathers on head and neck
- Two broad black bars across each wing
- A broad dark band across the end of the tail
- Can also display white, brown or grey plumage



**The presence of pigeons can result in a range of problems. These can include:**

- Attracting ticks, cockroaches and rats.
- Damage to buildings and monuments due to the highly corrosive nature of acid in pigeon droppings.
- Damage to properties by pigeons roosting/breeding in roof spaces, rolled steel joists and inside factory units.
- Debris from roosting flocks building up, causing gutters and drains to block, damage to roofs and other structures, and creating potential fire hazards.
- Extensive damage to air-conditioning units and other roof top equipment.
- Hygiene concerns due to pigeon droppings in/on industrial, commercial, and domestic buildings.
- Providing a vector for the introduction of weeds and disease.
- Increasing the risk of disease and parasite transmission between feral, domestic and seabird populations.

## Control Techniques

Research has shown that simply using lethal methods of pigeon control (culling) is not effective in the long term.

Implementing non-lethal control techniques is the most effective long term solution to reducing the pigeon population. These include;

- **Food reduction**

Remove sources of food and water (outdoor pet food bowls, bird baths, bird feeders). Ensure that refuse, especially from a food premises is properly stored and food spillage is kept to a minimum.

- **Destruction of nesting sites**

Pigeon nests are very simple and often consist of a few stiff twigs. Look for nests along building ledges, bridge supports, air-conditioning units, window sills etc. Pigeons are very persistent and destruction of the nest at regular intervals is needed with a combination of other control methods.

- **Proofing / Deterrents**

It is important to prevent pigeons from gaining access to roosting and possible nesting sites by sealing doorways, windows, open eaves etc. This may require extensive renovations or may be as simple as closing a window or sealing a crack or crevice using materials such as mesh or wooden panels. Products such as *netting* (bird wire or mesh), *wire coils* or '*pigeon spikes*' prevent pigeons from landing or roosting on building surfaces. Please note that poorly designed or maintained pigeon proofing can lead to birds becoming fatally trapped. It is important for such products to be installed by a professional. Other methods include; *scare devices* such as a combination of audio or visual deterrents, or the application of *gel products* that pigeons find sticky and uncomfortable to stand on. It will also be in the best interest for neighbouring properties to proof their property otherwise pigeons will quickly take up residence and simply move the problem around without reducing the flock size.

## Further Information

For advice on feral pigeon control, contact your local Environmental Health Officer.

or

For the control of feral pigeons, you may seek the services of a licensed pest control operator.