

Feral pigeons are common in the urban environment and although they are generally considered to be no more than a nuisance, they can potentially pose a risk to human health. Pigeons and their droppings can also cause damage to the buildings they reside, perch or nest in or on.

Impacts of Pigeons

Potential health risks associated with pigeons include transmission of diseases such as histoplasmosis, cryptococcosis, and psittacosis (ornithosis) through their droppings and attraction of ticks, mites, cockroaches and rats.

Pigeon activity can also create nuisance issues and property damage including unpleasant odour and noise, damage to buildings and monuments due to the highly corrosive nature of pigeon droppings, and damage to air-conditioning units and other rooftop machinery.

Control Options

It is important that members of the community work together to reduce pigeon activity otherwise the pigeons may simply relocate to a neighbouring property and the flock size will not be reduced. There are many techniques that can be used to reduce or remove the population. The best way to minimise or prevent the nuisance caused by feral pigeons is to control where they roost, nest and feed.

Removing food sources is the most effective way of discouraging feral pigeons. The number of pigeons in an area is determined by the availability of a sustainable food supply. A plentiful food supply encourages year-round breeding. Some simple ways to deny pigeons food include:

- Ensure that poultry coops and bird enclosures are inaccessible to pigeons.
- Keep animal feed in metal bins with tight fitting lids. When feeding animals, leave out just enough food for pets to eat immediately.
- Store garbage and food waste bagged in enclosed bins and ensure that they are regularly emptied.

Pigeon proofing your building will prevent pigeons from gaining access to potential nesting or roosting sites. This includes sealing any gaps into buildings and under eaves with mesh or wooden panels, or with more extensive renovations. Pigeons commonly perch on sites such as eaves, roofs and window ledges. A licensed pest control operator can install products such as mesh, wires, spikes and gel in these locations to prevent pigeons from landing.

Regular removal of nests will, in the long term, help to discourage persistent pigeons from nesting in a particular area.

Scare devices such as audio or visual deterrents can discourage pigeons from roosting or nesting.

Other Options

A licensed pest controller who can advise on the best approach for the situation should be contacted for other options on controlling or deterring pigeons. Lethal control techniques are usually only a short-term solution as removed pigeons are quickly replaced by juvenile birds.

Protecting yourself

When dealing with pigeons and/or pigeon droppings it is important to ensure that you are properly protected. The following personal protective equipment should be worn:

- protective clothing
- gloves
- goggles
- face mask/respirator