

# Pigeons



## **Appearance:**

The feral pigeon is generally blue-gray with a white rump; has iridescent feathers on head and neck; two broad black bars across each wing and a broad dark band across the end of the tail. They also can display white, brown or gray plumage. The adult pigeon will measure 12-15" in height, and weigh 10-16 oz. Pigeons can live 3-4 years in the wild up to 16 years in captivity.

## **Habitat:**

This is the number one urban pest bird, with large numbers found in every city across our nation. These birds are descendants of domestic homing pigeons brought to the United States from Europe during the 1600s. They are not afraid of people; roosting and nesting readily in man-made structures, along with a diverse diet. They have short legs with a level front and hind toes that allow them to perch on branches as well as walk on flat surfaces.

The feral pigeon adapts well to urban environments and is the most troublesome bird pest in urban settings as well as in small rural communities. The abundance of shelter provided by the design of many buildings assures that pigeons will have ample places to roost, loaf, and nest.

Food and water is often in adequate supply, but when it isn't, the birds seek these necessities from nearby rural or undeveloped areas which are generally within flight range. Pigeon droppings deface and accelerate deterioration of statues, buildings, and equipment and foul areas where people may walk or work. Pigeon droppings and nests clog gutter downspouts and air intakes, mar window sills, and render fire escapes hazardous. Their droppings and feathers can contaminate large quantities of livestock feed and food destined for human consumption.

The serious and constant public health problems they create are unmatched by any other bird species. They are known to carry or transmit pigeon ornithosis, encephalitis, Newcastle disease, histoplasmosis, cryptococcosis, toxoplasmosis, pseudo-tuberculosis, pigeon coccidiosis, and salmonella food poisoning. Pigeon ectoparasites include a number of bugs, fleas, ticks, and mites, some of which bite people (e.g., northern fowl mite).

## **Nesting:**

Nest building is very simple and often consists of a few stiff twigs. The male will pick the site. They prefer small flat areas away from the ground. Look for nests along building ledges, bridge supports, air conditioning units, window sills and the like. In crowded flocks, pigeons will even forgo nest building and lay eggs directly on a protected ledge.

## **Breeding:**

Pigeons are monogamous and a mating pair will typically have three or four broods a year. The female will usually lay two or sometimes three eggs at a time. The eggs are a solid bright white color. The eggs take roughly 18 days to hatch and 35 more days before the fledglings leave the nest.

**Cycles:**

Pigeons are not migratory. Their natural instinct is to stay near their birth site. This trait gives the pigeon a very determined personality when it comes to roosting at a particular site, much to the dismay of the inexperienced pest control technician. The daily cycle of a pigeon is to roost at night, feed in the morning and loaf in the afternoon. The seasonal cycle is as follows; courtship in the early winter, nest building in late winter and breeding in the spring. However, in warm climates, breeding will occur year round. Pigeons molt once a year in late summer.

**Diet:**

Widely varied, grains, seeds, corn human food scraps

**Solutions:**

**What you can do:** Good sanitation practices, such as removal of spilled food or refuse, can do much to reduce the attractiveness of an area to pigeons. This depends on the situation and whether or not the food source can be effectively and economically limited. The removal of nests and nest sites also may be included as part of a sanitation program.

**Professional Solutions:**

There are a wide variety of solutions available for handling a pigeon infestation. The best solution for pigeon problems, is complete exclusion.

Quik-Kill provides cleanup, physical removal, and preventive services for pigeons.

Our trained bird abatement technicians also specialize in the following services:

- ★ Anti-Roost Systems (Spikes, Spring Wire, Coils, Electric Shock, and Anti-roost gels).
- ★ Netting Installations (for large areas where anti-roost systems are not practical).
- ★ Bird Aversion Fogging (great for sparrows and starlings when netting is not an option).
- ★ Trapping (for pigeons when other preventive methods are not practical).
- ★ Nest Depredation (for Canada Goose and Seagull problems-permit required).
- ★ Visual and Audio Deterrents (for Canada Geese and Seagulls prior to nesting).
- ★ Specialized Cleaning and Sanitizing of bird nesting and roosting sites.



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