

How to keep Pigeons out of your home

Step 1: Discourage roosting in selected areas Bird Spikes

These are humane, effective and cost-effective method of discouraging birds from roosting on your building or home.



Although they look if they might harm the bird, they won't: the bird makes a couple of attempts to land and then decides to go and find somewhere more comfortable.

The spikes can be purchased mail-order, or more simply, made by hammering nails or pushing skewers through strips of wood which are then secured to sills and ledges.

Step 2: Encourage roosting elsewhere



Now you have discouraged the birds from roosting on your building, you could do the nature-friendly thing and provide them with a home of their own. There are various styles of Dovecotes

ideal for pigeons to roost in but you must put barbed wire around the supports or possums will attack and the birds will abandon the roost. The dovecote also needs to be waterproof or they won't use it, and the interior requires small nesting boxes, much like a chicken coop. Remove the eggs once a week to prevent over population. Contact us if you would like detailed plans.

You could also try to recreate an aspect of your own building that they find attractive such as a mini-roof with a ledge below. Incorporate this into your dovecote design to make an attractive dwelling for the birds.

Natural Deterrents

Birds of prey keep pigeons away! You could encourage owls, hawks and falcons into your area by planting trees and installing posts and even nest boxes that these birds find attractive. Some people use plastic birds to scare away the pigeons, or you could even create a hawk-shaped kite to fly above your house.

And there you have it, the ideal solution for all concerned: clean sills, an interesting and attractive addition to your premises and you have proven yourself to be someone that cares about the environment and all living things.



And don't forget...

All creatures have a purpose in the ecosystem. Many birds of prey eat pigeons, including the gorgeous peregrine falcon

REPORT INJURED, ABUSED OR ILLEGALLY HELD WILDLIFE

Belize Forest Department
Forest Drive, Belmopan
(+501) 822-2079/1524
e-mail: secretary.fd@ffsd.gov.bz



Bird
Sanctuary &
Rehabilitation Centre

Cayo District, Belize
Tel: (+501) 610 0400
belizebirdrescue@gmail.com
www.belizebirdrescue.org

Contact us to arrange an educational presentation on this or any other bird topic at your school or workplace



Bird
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Rehabilitation Centre

all about Pigeons



BELIZE BIRD RESCUE

Bird Sanctuary & Rehabilitation Centre
PO Box 219 Belmopan

Cayo District, Belize. (+501) 610 0400

www.belizebirdrescue.com

belizebirdrescue@gmail.com





Meet the pigeon

Rock Pigeons originated in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. They are the oldest domesticated bird in the world (232AD)

The 'rock pigeon' we see in our towns are a feral version of the domesticated pigeon originally bred for racing and homing competitions and for carrying messages.

What's the difference between a pigeon and a dove?

The terms 'pigeon' and 'dove' refer to the same family of birds: *Columbidae*. Unfortunately, many people hear 'pigeon' and think pest or sky-rat, whereas 'dove' conjures images of peace and love. The popular 'white doves of peace' are actually just white pigeons.

How long do they live?

Pigeons can live about five years in the wild, but up to 15 years or more in captivity.

What do they eat?

Seeds, berries, fruit, insects, grain: in fact they will eat whatever they can find! So pigeons are flying street cleaners, picking up our mess. Think about the great job that the ones in the market place do when everyone has gone home.

Are feral pigeons dirty? Do they carry diseases?

Pigeons have a bad reputation and they are considered dirty and diseased. But this really isn't true. Like any other faeces, pigeon droppings can create problems on buildings if allowed to accumulate, and they can harbour diseases over time. But the golden rule is, don't eat pigeon droppings and if you must play with them, wash your hands: basic hygiene which is true of anything you touch.

Why do pigeons prefer buildings to trees?

Pigeons will perch on trees, but they are better adapted to the artificial surfaces in urban areas. These

man-made structures are a good substitute for the cliffs and rock ledges of the birds' natural habitat.

Mating Behaviour?

Pigeons mate for life. The courting male displays for his female: puffing up and parading or dancing in a circle, cooing loudly. This may lead to mating or it may just strengthen the lifelong bonds of an already-mated pair. Although this happens all year long, it's most prevalent in March to May.

Where do they nest?

Urban pigeons build nests in places such as covered areas along building ledges and in the nooks and crannies of building beams, rafters and eaves, even the tops of AC units, planters or balconies. Basically, they nest just about anywhere in the urban environment that mimics their natural cave or cliff-side habitat in Europe, the Middle East, and northern Africa.

What is the life-cycle of the young pigeon

Pigeons incubate their eggs for 17-19 days. Once hatched, the babies are ready to leave the nest in only 30 days.

The young babies are fed with a rich crop-milk produced by both parents. They grow fast and walk well at about 18 days of age and start exercising their wings about a week later. Most baby pigeon stay in or close to the nest until they are fully fledged, so it's unusual to see a juvenile pigeon that is not fully grown.

What are pigeon's predators?

Cats, hawks and falcons, owls, and of course humans!

Amazing facts about pigeons

- Pigeon keeping is an art and a science that is 10,000 years old
- Pigeons have an amazing sense of direction. They are thought to navigate by sensing the earth's magnetic field and using the sun for direction. Other theories

include the use of roads and even low frequency seismic waves to find their way home

- Pigeons have been used throughout history to carry messages. Well-trained homing pigeons were used in wars to carry messages between the battlefield and headquarters and have saved many human lives in the process. In World War I and II, thirty two pigeons were presented with medals!
- This 'homing' quality is also used for sport. Pigeon racing can fetch up to \$1 million US in prize money, so pigeon-keeping is big business: Top-quality racing pigeons can cost up to \$135,000US
- Homing pigeon races are usually between 200-1000 miles in distance but it's not unusual for races to cover 1800 miles. They can fly between 600 and 700 miles a day
- Pigeons can fly at altitudes of 6000 feet or more and at average speeds of 75 mph. Some of the fastest pigeons have reached speeds of 93 mph.
- Pigeons (and all the *columbidae* family) drink by sucking water and using their beaks like straws whereas most other birds sip water and then throw their head back to swallow
- Pigeons can see in colour, and can also see ultraviolet light which is invisible to the human eye. Because of this unique sense and excellent all-round vision, pigeons are often used in search and rescue missions at sea
- Pigeons are highly intelligent and can recognise all 26 letters of the alphabet as well as being able to conceptualise. They can differentiate between photographs and even two different human beings in a single photograph. Pigeons can recognise their own reflection in a mirror: one of only 6 species, and the only non-mammal, to have this ability.

So next time you look at a pigeon and think 'PEST, NUISANCE, VERMIN, DIRTY...' **THINK AGAIN!**