

SSBC, Inc.

Pest Management

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Pigeon Quick Reference



About: The pigeon is found throughout California, congregating in urban, suburban, and rural agricultural areas. It is hard to know the range of the ancestral rock dove because feral pigeons are so widely distributed, but they are believed to naturally occur in southern Europe, the middle east and north Africa. Rock doves nest on protected cliffs and inside the mouths of caves. Human cities are made of artificial cliffs (buildings) and caves (attics, abandoned buildings, open warehouses) so these pigeons feel at home and flourish.

Food and Food Sources: Pigeons feed primarily on seeds and grain, but in urban areas they also eat human food scraps like bread crumbs, etc. Bird feeders provide a primary food source for pigeons in urban and suburban areas. Pigeons are especially fond of cracked corn and sorghum or milo seeds in general bird seed mixes. In agricultural areas pigeons eat or contaminate large amounts of livestock feed. Pigeons are not picky about their food: they are often seen picking undigested seeds from the feces of livestock.

Reproduction: Pigeons breed year round in California. The nests are simple platforms of sticks built in sheltered locations on horizontal ledges. Pigeons commonly nest on man-made structures; window ledges, balconies, under bridges, in barns and open warehouses, on or behind signs, and in soffits and attics of houses. They enter attics through missing soffit panels or attic vents. A clutch normally consists of 1 or 2 eggs. The incubation period is 16–18 days and fledglings leave the nest at 4–6 weeks of age. Adult pigeons feed their babies a material secreted by their crops called "Pigeon's milk".

Health-Related Problems: The most common problem associated with feral pigeons nesting in buildings is bird mites invading the human occupied space during or after the nesting season. Bird mites, like northern fowl mite and tropical fowl mite, will bite humans and cause a small pustule, similar to a chigger bite. Pigeon nests can also be a source of stick-tight fleas, soft ticks, bed bugs, and dermestid (carpet) beetles invading buildings.

Pigeons have been long associated with disease organisms transmissible to humans and livestock. These include: 13 bacterial diseases including salmonellosis (*Salmonella* food poisoning), fowl typhoid, paratyphoid, pasteurellosis, streptococcosis, and tuberculosis; five fungal diseases including aspergillosis, blastomycosis, and histoplasmosis; six protozoan diseases including toxoplasmosis and coccidiosis; chlamydiosis; the rickettsial disease Q Fever; eight viral diseases including eastern equine and St. Louis encephalitis, Newcastle disease and fowl pox of poultry; the tapeworms in the genus *Taenia*, *Davainea proglottina*, and *Railletina tetragona*; four genera of parasitic nematodes of poultry including *Tetramares* (2 sp.), *Capillaria* (5 sp.), and *Acuaria spiralis*; and 14 parasitic flukes of poultry, livestock, and humans.

Pigeons are generally a more serious disease vector to livestock, especially poultry and egg producers, and wildlife than to humans. Still, the presence of pigeons where food is prepared or people eat-such as picnic areas and outdoor restaurants-should be a cause for concern about the spread of *Salmonella* bacteria.

Bird Control

Birds cause untold millions of dollars of damage every year to homes, commercial buildings, government facilities and industrial complexes. Their droppings, nesting materials, and parasites pose serious threats to structures and to the people in and around them.

Common Issues

- **Image** –Birds on signs, ledges and roof's send a message to the public that the facility is dirty and may be unsafe.
- **Damage** – Bird droppings are acidic and can eat through paint, roofing material, fabric and soft metals like aluminum.
- **Health Risk** – Bird droppings can expose humans to more than 60 dangerous diseases, including Salmonella, Lyme Disease, Histoplasmosis, Meningitis and The West Nile Virus.
- **Parasites** – Bird mites, flies, bed bugs and even rodents are attracted to bird nests.
- **Droppings on the Ground** – Droppings are slippery and can result in expensive lawsuits from accidents. Furthermore, disease-bearing droppings can be tracked inside a building.
- **Clogged Drains** – During heavy rains, clogged drains can spell disaster if water accumulates on the roof as result.
- **Maintenance Cost** – Cleanup of bird droppings on a regular basis can turn into thousands of dollars over time. Avoid product recalls, repair, and restoration and replacement costs.
- **Inventory Damage and Loss** – Birds perching above storage areas often leave their droppings, feather and nesting materials on packaging or food products.
- **Work Stoppages** – Workers regularly refuse to perform their duties on equipment that is covered with droppings or OSHA shuts a facility down, causing extra maintenance charges.
- **Noise** – Birds are noisy. Even two pigeons roosting on a ledge will coo loudly in the early morning hours, disturbing people.
- **Theft of Product** – Birds are known scavengers and decimate crops, fish-farms and vineyards in a very short period of time.

How Pest Management works: A professional Pest Control Technician has the equipment and training to do a thorough job and has access to products not available over the counter. Below, is a typical approach to **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)**.

IPM Approach for Pigeons:

- Exclusion Netting
- Spikes
- Coils
- Visual Deterrents
- Bird-Shock Flex-Track

Our mission at SSBC, Inc. is to provide our customer's with low visibility deterrents and exclusion methods that prevent nesting and roosting within the problematic areas while preserving the appearance of your home or place of business.

Common areas of Concern:

- Solar Panels
- Eaves
- Under Air Conditioning units
- Decorative beams
- Window ledges
- Two story homes
- Gutters
- Chimney
- Attic vents

**If you have additional questions, please contact us!
SSBC, Inc. 916-715-0138 or 916-400-4305**