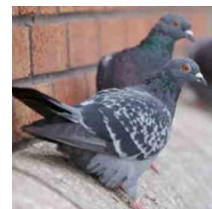


The Feral Pigeon (*Colomba Livia Var*)

If your main experience of the feral pigeon is of the head bobbing bird in the high street seemingly pecking at nothing then you might not consider it to be much of a pest. If however you have even two of them nesting or roosting at the back of your home or business then you'll know how unpleasant it can be to have them around.

The UK feral pigeon population is estimated to be around eighteen million and many live alongside humans as we provide them with plenty of discarded food and also plenty of shelter around our buildings. Generally, they build very basic nests into which two small, pale eggs are laid. The young squabs are reared on pigeon milk and often the next pair of eggs is laid before the current squabs have fledged and thus the feral pigeon can breed up to seven times per year and the young can start to breed at 6 months.



Each pigeon produces around twelve kilos of guano per year. If that twelve kilos falls mainly around your home or business then that's going to be a horrible, foul smelling, sticky mess which can contain the three diseases known to be associated with bird guano: histoplasmosis, cryptococcosis and psittacosis - all can represent a risk to human health. Histoplasmosis and cryptococcosis are fungal diseases that grow in the droppings and soil. Psittacosis is a bacterial disease that spreads when guano dries and guano particles become airborne and are inhaled. It is therefore important that larger quantities of pigeon poo are removed utilising both biocides and insecticides by qualified personnel wearing full personal protective equipment including P3 masks and that the guano is then disposed of in accordance with current legislation.

In substantial quantities bird guano's acidic matter can even cause damage to the fabric of buildings which in turn, leads to higher cleaning and repair bills. Large quantities of guano will also be infested with blood-feeding insects and can harbour the brown house moth which feeds on animal matter including your wool carpets.

Preventing the feral pigeon from nesting or roosting on your property is best achieved using some form of physical exclusion method including specialist pigeon netting, pigeon spikes and wires. Often used in combination, these barrier methods, when installed correctly, will keep you pigeon free for many years.

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