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Non-lethal Integrated Pigeon Management [1]

The management of pigeon populations is often a complex challenge requiring an integrated program of bird control. Effective programs typically combine exclusion techniques with reproductive control. Together with OvoControl™ P, a new contraception for pigeons, Innolytics recommends the use of the following tools and techniques:

1. Frightening Techniques
2. Exclusion Techniques
3. Repellents
4. Habitat Modification
5. Contraception (OvoControl™ P)

1. Frightening Techniques

Noise-making devices are usually disturbing to people but have little permanent effect on roosting pigeons. High-frequency (ultrasonic) sound, inaudible to humans, can have an inconsistent response in pigeons. Firecrackers and other pyrotechnics may have a temporary effect but have many limitations in use and often fail to provide long-term control, especially against pigeons.

Scarecrows of one kind or another are often used to control birds. Models of owls, hawks, snakes, and cats are available from many suppliers, although vary in effectiveness, depending on how realistic they are and how often they are moved.

[1] Portions excerpted from "*Prevention and Control of Wildlife Damage – 1994*", Cooperative Extension Division, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Nebraska, Lincoln and USDA/APHIS, Animal Damage Control.

2. Exclusion

Pigeons can be excluded from buildings by blocking access to indoor roosts and nesting areas. Openings to lofts, steeples, vents, and eaves should be blocked with wood, metal, glass, masonry, rust-proofed wire mesh, or plastic or nylon netting.

Roosting on ledges can be discouraged by changing the angle to 45^{o} or more. Sheet metal, wood, styrofoam blocks, stone, and other materials can be formed and fastened to ledges to accomplish the desired angle. Ornamental architecture can be screened with polypropylene u.v.-stabilized netting to prevent roosting, loafing, and nesting.

Porcupine wires are mechanical repellents that can be used to exclude pigeons. They are composed of a myriad of spring-tempered nickel stainless steel prongs with sharp points extending outward at all angles. The sharp points of these wires inflict temporary discomfort and deter pigeons from landing on these surfaces. The prongs are fastened to a solid base that can be installed on window sills, ledges, eaves, roof peaks, ornamental architecture, or wherever pigeons are prone to roost.

Overhead monofilament grid systems have been used successfully to reducing pigeon activity in enclosed courtyards. Persistent pigeons will likely penetrate parallel or grid-wire (line) systems.

Electric shock bird control systems are available for repelling many species of birds, including pigeons. The systems consist of a cable durably embedded in plastic with two electrical conductors. The conductors carry a pulsating electric charge. When pigeons make contact with the conductors and the cable, they receive a shock that repels but does not kill them. The cable can be installed in situations also suitable for porcupine wires and stretched steel wires or monofilament lines. Although these devices and their installation are usually labor intensive and/or expensive, their effectiveness can justify the investment.

3. Repellents

Sticky substances (polybutenes) are sold to discourage pigeons and other birds from landing on treated surfaces, but are not recommend since they can adhere to and foul the feathers of any bird which comes into contact with them, and may be harmful to smaller species.

Fog Force (www.rejexit.com) by Rejexit is an aerosol repellent registered for use in pigeons. The active ingredient in ReJex-iT, methyl anthranilate, is a food grade ingredient and not toxic to humans, dogs, cats, or birds and benign to the environment.

Be sure to read and follow the label of any repellent product you use. The chemical noted above is not highly toxic to aquatic life but should only be applied in accordance with label directions to keep environmental effects minimal. Remember, repellents are designed to deter pigeons, not to physically exclude them from an area.

4. Habitat Modification

Elimination of feeding, watering, roosting, and nesting sites is important in long-term pigeon control. Discourage people from feeding pigeons in public areas and clean up spilled grain around elevators, feed mills, and railcar clean-out areas. Eliminate pools of standing water that pigeons use for watering. Modify structures, buildings, and architectural designs to make them less attractive to pigeons

5. Contraception

The most successful integrated, non-lethal bird control programs include population management or reproductive control complemented by exclusion techniques.

When used as the sole tactic, harassment or exclusion techniques merely encourage pigeons to move someplace else. As pigeon populations increase, they eventually create a larger "demand" for habitat. This demand causes pigeons to become increasingly resistant to hazing techniques.

Unlike many other common birds, pigeons are not protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) or other federal statutes. The options available for population management of pigeons are nevertheless limited. The use of the tools outlined here do not require a federal permit although State or local permitting may be required. Always consult with your local or State Fish & Wildlife Services office prior to taking any action to confirm permitting requirements.

OvoControl P is a specially formulated product to help control the hatchability of the eggs from pigeons. The active ingredient is nicarbazin, originally used as a drug to control an enteric disease in chickens and now developed as a hatch control technology for pigeons.

OvoControl P for pigeons is ideal for use at large scale sites and facilities, areas where some birds can be tolerated, but where a significant reduction in the population is desired. Potential sites include urban areas, schools, airports, power plants and refineries. Large scale field studies at urban sites in Italy demonstrate a population decline of nearly 50% in just two years[2]. One person can effectively treat an entire community or area.

OvoControl P, fed as a palatable bait, prevents eggs from hatching. Registered by the EPA, the product is non-lethal and supported by the U. S. Humane Society (HSUS), PETA and mainstream animal welfare and conservation groups.

[2] References available on request