

Pigeon Management in Feed Stores

IGFA Briefing

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Introduction

In the modern supply chain, HACCP requirements and food safety concerns demand that bird and pest infestation is kept to a minimum. Bird nests attract ticks and mites and sometimes rats. Their droppings can damage block vents in buildings and cause odour issues in grain stores. Pigeon infestations are a source of nuisance, fouling, but most importantly, can impact human and animal health through the transmission of diseases such as Salmonella.

It must be recognised from the start that a feed store potentially provides a very suitable and welcoming habitat for pigeons as they can readily access food supplies (grain and feed), nesting sites, shelter, and water. Left undisturbed and with a suitable climate, pigeons can multiply rapidly. Limiting or controlling the birds access to these factors will dislodge the bird attachment to the area and is key to pigeon management.

The best approach to pigeon control is to adopt an integrated pest management approach. This involves using all legally permitted strategies available in the region the store is situated. Shooting birds (under licence), removing nests and eggs (where permitted), poisoning or trapping are some of the strategies employed but only provide a short-term solution. For a long-term resolution, habitat destruction and manipulation should be the primary step, alongside suitably trained staff to recognise hot spots and problem areas. It may also be useful to seek the advice of a Biologist/Ornithologist who understands the species involved and where it is possible to deal with an infestation over a large area (e.g., an entire port facility). They may be useful in drawing up a coordinated controls plan aimed at different parts of the surroundings.

Details of Possible Control Methods

Habitat Control

Feed material buildings will offer shelter, nesting, and landing sites. Where possible stores should have doors that can be closed once loading/unloading has taken place. Alternatively, doorways can be bird proofed to slow down the entry of birds. Beams, struts, and ledges should be cleaned and cleared of debris and nesting material. Debris should be cleared from outside the store area to ensure spillages are easily noticed and cleaned up immediately.

Bird Proofing

This is done to prevent entry to stores but also to prevent birds landing and nesting. Gaps and under eaves may be blocked with mesh or timber pieces. Bird wire, spikes and netting are the three most effective methods for ridding nuisance birds from your property.

Bird wire is commonly used on flat surfaces to stop birds from perching and roosting. This is achieved by attaching nylon wire to stainless steel posts and tensioning them with springs. The wire is positioned at different heights and intervals which creates an unstable landing area that birds tend to avoid.

Bird spikes work similarly to bird wire, but spikes are used instead on uneven layers of wire to deter birds from roosting. Bird spikes can also be used on almost any linear surface.



Bird spikes



Bird spikes

Bird netting works simply as a barrier to prevent birds from roosting in a certain area. The nets can vary in size depending on their positioning and are typically assembled on rooftops. Bird netting works effectively against pigeons and seagulls.



Bird netting

The basic principle of protecting a building with bird netting or pigeon netting is to completely exclude the target species from the netted area. To achieve this goal the netting must be installed as per manufacturer's recommendations and to an extremely high standard. The netting is held in place by a suspension system that involves the provision of highly tensioned steel or stainless-steel wire rope around the periphery of the area to be protected.

Gel Deterrent - These can be contact or optical and manufacturers claim that deterrent can be quite high with these gels. However, a recent paper refutes these claims ([link](#)). They may be useful in certain circumstances but only in conjunction with other integrated methods.

Decoy Kites - Decoy kites can get rid of bird populations by using a kite-shaped decoy bird image to sway in the wind to deter a pigeon from landing in a certain area. This method can be effective, but it may not work since birds can become accustomed to the decoys. They need to be moved regularly and used in combination with other methods depending on the circumstances.

Lasers & Sound Devices - Lasers used against pigeon populations can be effective due to the piercing light that blinds the pigeons once they scout an area for nesting or roosting. This method can be initially effective, but pigeons may become accustomed to the lasers and move out of the way. The use of lasers can be effective, although there is some evidence to suggest some birds are laser resistant. Systems using bioacoustics may be the most effective but must be moved regularly and the frequency used must be specific to the bird pest.

Shooting birds on a regular basis will help control numbers but will need to be done regularly and dead birds collected and disposed of appropriately. In some areas shooting will not be permitted so it is necessary to check with the local authority. This method may not be permitted in built-up areas or indeed due to local objections.

The UFAS Standard 2020 V2 F6.11 states that, *in cases where shooting takes place as part of the pest control programme, nontoxic ammunition must be used.*

Birds of Prey - In some cases, pigeon infestations have been reduced by using a falconry expert to visit the area on a regular basis. The bird of prey will disturb and kill pigeons.

Resource references

<https://www.pigeoncontrolresourcecentre.org/html/reviews/bird-netting-and-pigeon-netting.html>

<https://bpca.org.uk/a-z-of-pest-advice/bird-and-gull-control-get-rid-of-birds-and-gulls-bpca-a-z-of-pests/189183>