

# Why are feral pigeons a pest?

Feral pigeons (also called city doves, city pigeons and street pigeons) descend from domesticated rock pigeons that returned to the wild. They have adapted to urban life and substitute cliffs for the ledges of buildings.

They are now common in many urban areas worldwide and feed on scraps of food discarded by humans and spillages from food outlets. Feeding pigeons will just attract more to the location.

Feral pigeons can breed throughout the year peaking between March and July. Incubation lasts just 18 days and fledging takes place with 5 weeks.



Feral pigeons are now a major pest, particularly in urban areas. Attracting large numbers of feral pigeons to an urban environment should be avoided as they pose a significant risk to human health for the following reasons:

- \* They have the potential to transmit diseases through their droppings such as ornithosis and salmonellosis
- \* Droppings cause unsightly mess and can lead to slippage accidents on pavements, fire escapes and ladders etc...
- \* Dried droppings can be inhaled in confined spaces such as roof voids. This can potentially cause respiratory problems

- \* Droppings and dead bodies can attract flies and other insects as they provide a food source
- \* Pigeon droppings are acidic and can therefore cause corrosion damage
- \* The build up of nesting material, droppings and dead pigeons may lead to blocked drains/gutters causing property maintenance issues



## How can I help prevent feral pigeon infestations?

### Prevention is better than cure

There are many things you can do to avoid having a problem with feral pigeons, many of them are simple and things you can do in your day to day life.

- \* Feed birds responsibly by using suspended wire feeders or suspended tables
- \* Never put food directly on floor and clear up any spillages
- \* Ensure that any food which is kept outdoors for pets or livestock is stored in sealed containers
- \* Ensure food waste is stored and disposed of properly and that bin areas are kept clean and tidy



## Proofing

Where pigeons have gained entry to the property or are using the property to roost then it will be necessary to proof the areas concerned to deny pigeons access.

If the property is council owned then the problem should be reported to your local housing office. If the property is let then the problem should be reported to your landlord.

If you own the property it is recommended that you seek professional assistance to proof the building. When obtaining quotes you should obtain 3 to enable you to compare the services and prices offered.



## Proofing Tips

- \* Block any gaps where birds could gain access to your roof (i.e. replace any broken roof tiles, broken windows and repair any eroded pointing)
- \* Proofing is often done at heights, therefore professional assistance should be sought so that you and others are not at risk



- \* If feral pigeons have been roosting on your property then an anti roosting system should be installed, such as netting, wires or spikes
- \* Persistence. The above measures may not always be 100% effective but may help limit the problem



## Leeds City Council Services

### Commercial Properties

The council can provide a service to commercial premises for feral pigeon problems. Should you require further information or would like a free survey then please contact us on 0113 2224406.

### Domestic Properties

The council does not offer a domestic service for feral pigeon infestations. We recommend the householder to contact their housing office, landlord or where the house is privately owned to seek the services of a reputable private contractor.

## Contact us

If you have any questions about the information in this leaflet or would like professional advice please contact

Leeds City Council Corporate Call Centre  
0113 2224406  
or email  
[pests@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:pests@leeds.gov.uk)

Further information and copies of this leaflet can be found on the council's website  
[www.leeds.gov.uk/pestcontrol](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/pestcontrol)

