

Information on installing a pigeon loft for the purpose of flock reduction:

Installing a Pigeon Loft for the use of an artificial breeding programme (ABF's): This method of control is of particular benefit where pigeon-related problems have been ongoing for many years. The principal of this system is to encourage pigeons away from their existing roosting and perching areas, by installing deterrents and anti-roosting control where needed, and into the loft facilities where the pigeons will be encouraged to roost and breed. Eggs will then be removed and replaced with dummy eggs, this a humane and integrated approach to pigeon control, rapidly reducing the flock size on the local buildings and across the town. The project has long term sustainability becoming exceptionally cost-effective across its many years of service.

Using an artificial breeding facility as part of an Integrated Bird Management Programme: ABF's can be used as a stand-alone control method and can be highly effective in doing so, however, to increase the efficiency of the unit it is recommended to be used as part of an area-wide control system in conjunction with deterrents and anti-roosting installations across the town. A designated feeding area with daytime perches will also prove beneficial to the town and overall pigeon control. Flock Reduction: Once pigeons are using the loft for night-time roosting and breeding the flock size can be controlled by birth control. This is achieved by removing eggs when laid and replacing them with dummy eggs. This method of control will dramatically and effectively reduce pigeon flock size down to an acceptable size.

Here are the facts: The reason that ABF's are so effective is that pigeons are prolific breeders. Pigeons breed all year round and produce 2 young each time they breed. A normal pair of adult pigeons can produce up to 16 young each year in optimum conditions. Therefore, irrespective of what conventional controls are provided if breeding continues unrestricted flock size can increase at a staggering rate. The following example, based on one breeding pair of pigeons over 12 months, gives an idea of how effective one small ABF can be:

- One adult pair of pigeons produce 13/14 young per year in optimum conditions (taking 15% juvenile mortality into consideration)
 - Those young birds form into 6 further breeding pairs and each young pair breeds once in their first year of life bringing approximately 10 more young into the world (considering 15% juvenile mortality)
 - The original adult pair has produced 13/14 young and these young birds have paired and produced a further 10 young birds
 - This is a total of 23/24 young birds produced courtesy of the original adult pair in one year
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- If you persuade the original adult pair to use an artificial breeding facility instead of breeding in an uncontrolled environment the result is that 23/24 young birds are taken out of the system in one year via egg removal/replacement with dummy eggs
 - Therefore, if 50 adult pairs are resident in one loft and all their eggs are removed over 12 months the number of young birds taken out of the system rises to over 1150, courtesy of one pigeon loft

Case Studies found from research carried out: "Loft-based systems can become effective within a matter of weeks following installation. One NHS hospital installed two basic lofts on a site experiencing deeply entrenched pigeon-related problems was removing 40 eggs per week

from the lofts within 2 months of siting the facilities. The great benefit of a loft-based system is that pigeons will readily use any type of purpose-built structure (providing that it has been designed with the pigeon in mind) and exploit it for breeding. Dedicated pigeon lofts will not only attract breeding pairs of pigeons, but non-breeding birds will also readily take up residence in these facilities.”

Long-term Goals: To stabilise flock size to an acceptable level and that pigeon-related problems, such as the soiling of buildings and feeding in sensitive areas, had reduced dramatically throughout the town centre. This will be an excellent working example of how councils can and should work in partnership with retailers, Building owners, pigeon feeders.

Optional:

Further Measures to assist with the programme: Each town has pigeon feeders; they are part of the local community and will layout food for pigeons around the town. To combat this and help to move the pigeons away from sensitive areas within the town centre, designate an area for bird feeding, this can be a park or public open space. By installing day perches and providing a feeding area pigeons will be drawn away from the town, in doing so there will now be 2 controlled areas.