

## SENA WANTS TO PUT PIGEONS ON THE PILL, THE SPANISH WAY

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By Sanjeev Sankar, Mumbai Mirror | Sep 8, 2015, 02.04 AM IST

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*Avian experts object to proposal for pigeon birth control, say a study needs to be done first.*

Taking a cue from the Spanish town of Badia del Valles which is feeding its burgeoning population of pigeons with birth control pills, the Shiv Sena wants BMC to bring down the city's pigeon numbers in a similar fashion.

According to reports, the Catalan town of will use three automatic dispensers to scatter the required dosage to the pigeon population every morning. Each pigeon will be fed 10 gm of Ovistop, a product made of corn seeds covered in Nicarbazin, which acts as a contraceptive for the birds.

If Sena corp itor AA Abhishek Ghosalkar has his way, pigeons in Mumbai may be put on birth control too. The birds are often regarded as 'flying vermin'. In his notice of motion, Ghosalkar has claimed the pigeon population is posing a serious health hazard. A pair of pigeons can produce as many as 48 offspring each year.

In April 2014, Mumbai Mirror had reported on how pigeons have rapidly multiplied in the city, and their droppings are leading to respiratory problems in citizens.

The report mentioned how a Mulund homemaker spent Rs 15,000 to cover her apartment windows with netting to block pigeons that had become a health hazard, dropping a huge quantity of 'infection-spreading' excrement on windowsills, but even that did not solve the problem. A well-fed pigeon on an average dispenses up to 11.5 kg of droppings a year, the report had said.

Though there have been no studies conducted on Mumbai's pigeons, the bird, once restricted to a few city areas, have now become almost omnipresent. Ghosalkar has also said in his proposal that many citizens have complained to him.

Incidences of respiratory problems among people, especially those living near the kabootarkhanas, have registered an increase. In fact, there was a move by locals in Ghatkophar a couple of years ago to relocate the kabootarkhana, but it was opposed by bird lovers and even local politicians.

Even before the proposal comes up for debate in the civic body, it has started receiving objections. Sunish Subramanian, secretary, Plants and Animal Welfare Society (Mumbai) said there is no scientific study to prove pigeons in the city are causing respiratory problems in citisens. "Such proposals will send out wrong signals in society," he added.

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