



Nature

Spanish town puts its pigeons on the pill in bid to reduce numbers

Officials estimate the population will fall by up to 80 per cent within five years

Alistair Dawber | @AlistairDawber | Tuesday 14 July 2015 18:10 BST |  9 comments

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Officials estimate the pigeon population will fall by up to 80 per cent within five years. File photo
Getty Images

Don't feed the pigeons! It's a common demand designed to stem the population of the flying vermin that occupy almost every major European city.

But now, a town in Spain is going one step further by putting the birds on a course of contraceptives that it hopes will lead to a dramatic fall in numbers.

Badia del Valles in Catalonia has installed dispensers to scatter the pigeon Pill, Ovistop, along with grain each morning. The dispensers will operate from now until the end of the year, the time when ornithologists say most pigeons breed. "Every morning, three automatic dispensers will scatter the required dosage to the pigeon population," said a statement on the town's website.

Officials estimate the pigeon population will fall by up to 80 per cent within five years. At present, a couple of pigeons can produce as many as 48 offspring each year.

Officials in Wellington, New Zealand, said last month that they were considering adopting the same practice.



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Marco Pellizzari

55 days ago

Ovistop is a patented pharmaceutical product made in Italy. For further information please contact marco.pellizzari[at]ovistop.it

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indomitable

62 days ago

Pigeon numbers are controlled similarly in Geneva where the birds are very popular. People feed them and the contraception is added. Unfortunately because councils here in the Uk have vested interests and are bribed by so-called pest control companies, they will not entertain more humane measures.

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Muhammad Abbass

75 days ago

It won't work. People always underestimate the tenacity of nature. If the environment is right, relevant species will fill the gaps. Those

fewer eggs which are fertilized and hatch will have a much higher chance of survival individually in the first instance. Less competition.

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marcopellizzari

66 days ago

Dear Muhammad,
pigeon contraception is showing really good outcomes along the years. We use it in Italy from 13 years in the main historical cities. The city of Genoa have had a decrease of about the 75% in 9 years treatment! (a scientific paper documented it).

The rationale seems to be the disintegration of the treated colonies due to the lack of reproduction. For this reason many young subjects emigrate from the treated colonies and on the opposite new subject avoid to immigrate.

Easy, and without any risk for pigeon, other birds and the environment!

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Romancitizen

75 days ago

Birds are about environment: if the environment is right, they will move in. No amount of reducing current numbers will have any long term effect, you have to change the environment.

The rise of late night fast-food outlets has been mirrored by the rise in seagull numbers: the reason ? seagulls eat carrion, walk the streets of any town first thing in the morning, discarded chips, burgers etc etc. Plus idiotic councils telling people to leave their rubbish out before 07:00 - so they put it out last thing at night. In midsummer this gives gulls (and pigeons, once the gulls have pecked the bags open) 4 hours at least to peck the bags open and help themselves.

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badgerjackson

76 days ago

Sleek , gorgeous coloured birds, they make gentle cooing sounds and walk charmingly with a little pecking motion of the beak. I will now think of a poem about the Noble Pigeon Bird , king of the Skies of the Great Land.

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real horrorshow

76 days ago



If they'll pay for the cartridges, I can thin the buggers out a lot quicker than that!

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-1 likes



Muhammad Abbass

75 days ago

Just think. A bit of timely contraception could have saved us all from reading that.

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real horrorshow

75 days ago

And a timely bit of jihad could have saved us all from hearing from you.

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