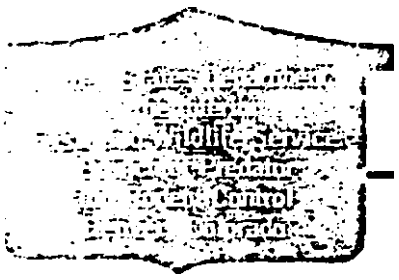
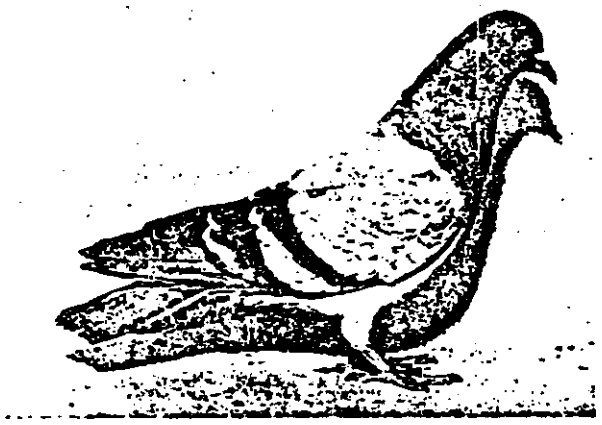


CONTROLLING

Pigeons

Prepared in the office of the District Agent, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau *of* Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, 1033 Broadway, Denver, Colorado In cooperation with the Colorado Department of Agriculture.



Pigeons similar to those now living in a semi-wild state in towns and cities have been closely associated with man since before recorded history. Originally these birds came from the blue rock pigeon (Columba livia), of Europe, Asia, and Africa. The few birds that are owned by individuals can generally be recognized by numbered bands on their legs and should be returned to their owners.

Feeding of pigeons by bird lovers and grain spillage around elevators, railroad sidings, and feedlots are sources of food for city pigeons. Abundance of shelter assures them places to roost and breed. These factors and a sympathetic or tolerant attitude toward the birds are the reasons for their continued existence. The presence of pigeons affords pleasure to many people. However, excessive numbers of the birds cause property deteriorationand constitute a health hazard. Pigeons play a part in the transmission of ornithosis, encephalitis, Newcastle disease, aspergillosis, thrush, histoplasmosis, cryptococcosis, toxoplasmosis, pseudotuberculosis, avian tuberculosis, salmonellosis, and coccidiosis, besides harboring many ectoparasites that will attack man.

Roost Elimination. Pigeon numbers can be reduced by blocking access to indoor roosts and breeding places. Openings to lofts, steeples, vents, eaves, and the like, should be blocked with wood, metal, glass, masonry or 3/4-inch rustproofed wire mesh. Roosting on ledges, ornaments, and signs can be discouraged by glues, "porcupine wires", electrical devices, 3/4" wire mesh, or netting. These devices vary in effectiveness. While wire mesh is more permanent, netting such as plasticized paper mesh or nylon "mist" nets with lead weights may be cheaper and easier to install. Chemical compounds or "glues" make roosts sticky and uncomfortable for the birds. They can be spread in heavy ribbons on ledges or sprayed on trees. Spray applications are short-lived, but some compounds applied in heavy bands to ledges will remain effective up to three years. The "glues" are messy and difficult to remove from buildings, unless tape is first applied to the roosting areas.

Removal of Nests. Populations of pigeons can be reduced by destroying their nests and eggs at two-week intervals during the spring and summer months. Use a hook fastened to the end of a long pole to tear down nests under eaves and the like.

Frightening Devices. Noise-making machines are usually disturbing to humans, but have little permanent effect on roosting pigeons. High frequency sound vibrations, inaudible to humans, are usually ineffective in scaring pigeons. Revolving lights or waving colored flags and balloons likewise have little or no effect.

Shooting Roman candles or firecrackers, into roosts are temporarily effective in moving birds. Streams of water will also move pigeons

from roosts but if pyrotechnics or streams of water are to be effective, they mast be persistently used until the birds have established themselves elsewhere.

Trapping. Pigeons may be taken in traps placed on buildings and other likely locations. One very effective trap uses a door made of swinging, light-weight rods. As these rods move only inward, the birds cannot return through the trap door. Plans for making and operating traps are contained in OSA-7 "Trapping birds."

Shooting. Consult local police regulations before shooting pigeons. There are restrictions against the use of firearms within most corporate limits. Where permissible, persistent shooting with .22 caliber rifles (using ammunition loaded with fine shot or short-range "BB" pellets), .410 gauge shotguns, or high-powered air rifles can eliminate a small flock from a given area.

Poisoning. Although poisoned baits are effective and reasonably safe when used by experienced persons, this control method is not recommended for the general public. Most poisons are toxic to animals in general and there is danger in exposing them. However, should conditions make the use of poison necessary, the following method will produce results. Winter is the best time to expose poisoned baits.

Prebaiting. Prebaiting with unpoisoned grain is important. Select a flat roof or other likely place where pigeons can be encouraged to feed. Distribute the bait sparingly at first. If pigeons are not attracted to the spot, try another place. Whole corn, poultry scratch feed or a mixture of five parts whole corn to one part of wheat is usually acceptable under most conditions. However, observe their grain preference and be guided accordingly in mixing the poisoned bait. It is preferable that prebaiting be done by the same person with the same identifiable clothing each day for a week or more. Follow with a liberal amount of poisoned material.

Preparation of Poisoned Bait. Make a paste of 3 ounces of laundry gloss starch in 1/2-cup cold water; add 2 cups boiling water and stir until free of lumps; add 1 ounce powdered strychnine alkaloid and 1 ounce baking soda, stir well. Apply to 8 pounds of corn-wheat bait. Shovel or stir. Spread out thinly and allow to dry. Place a "POISON" label on all containers.

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trapping Pigeons

A colony of pigeons tends to use regular feeding and roosting areas and can sometimes be controlledby intensive trapping.

General Recommendations

Set traps in inconspicuous places where pigeons commonly roost or feed and where they are not apt to be molested. Roof tops that have water from air conditioning units are excellent trapping places in the summertime.

Small traps can be used effectively, but iarger walk-in types are better. They should be easy to dismantle. It is important to bait the trap with the kind of food the birds are eating. Whole corn and grain sorghum are generally good baits. Scatter a small amount outside the trap door to attract the birds. Keep a generous quantity of bait on the floor inside and near the trap door at all times. Water should also be available in traps. One or two decoy birds in the trap will tend to draw other birds. Leave the same individuals in the trap. Light-colored birds make better lures than drab, blue-gray ones. Trapped birds should be removed frequently as too many fluttering around will tend to scare others away Birds marked with leg bands should be returned to their owners or turned over to the local humane society.

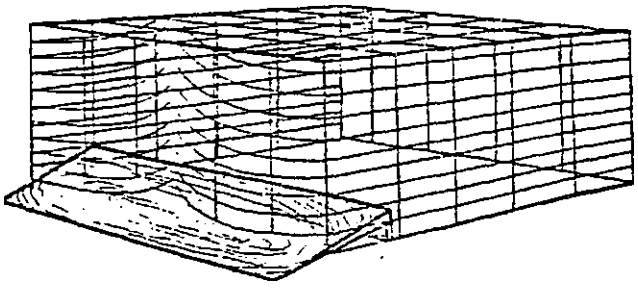
LOFT TRAPS

Birds often use attics, unused upper stories in industrial buildings, deserted factories or partially used buildings as nest and roosting sites. These door roosts can be made into productive traps by closing them up with screening or plastic. Leave one or two entrances open until the birds become accustomed to using them. Then fit the entrances with trap doors which can be closed from the outside at night after the birds have settled down. The trapped birds can then be caught by hand or with nets.

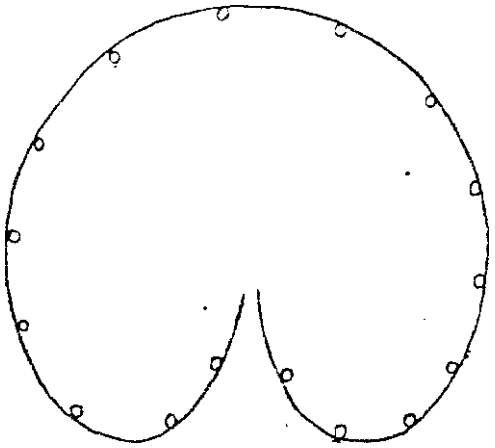
FUNNEL TRAPS

A simple trap can be easily made of 1 x 2 inch welded wire with a 1-1/2 inch *"V"* opening. This is kept from springing shut by large nails. Pigeons are attracted to a small amount of bait scattered at the entrance. They see more bait inside the trap and force their way through the small opening.

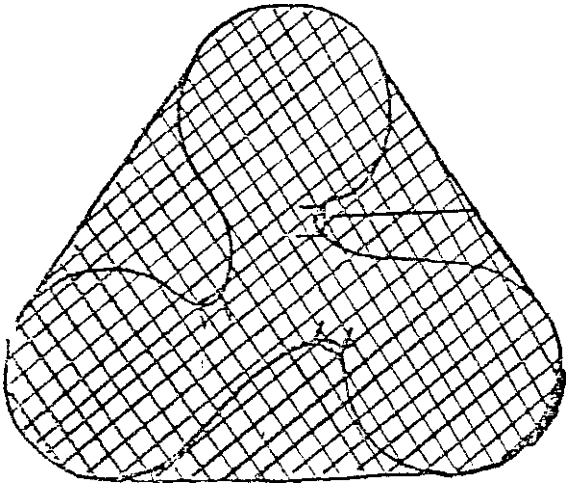
A variation of the above can be made by having the funnel on an inclined board. Pigeons pick up bait, squeeze their way through the opening, then hop down 4 to 6 inches to the floor of the trap. This use of an inclined board tends to keep trapped birds away from the entrance.



Various shapes can be utilized in making funnel traps. The lily-pad and clover-leaf shape traps are easy to set up and peg to the ground.



Lily-pad Trap



Clover-leaf Trap

BOB-TYPE TRAP

This trap is capable of large daily catches and enables a person to enter and remove the birds through a small door constructed in the end of the trap Although large traps are preferred, good catches have been made with poultry crates and other small enclosures.

The construction of a trap with 1 x 2 inch material is desirable so as to reduce the weight, which is a factor if the trap is to be moved. The use of bolts and the construction of the trap in five sections will facilitate dismantling.

The door or entrance through which pigeons are lured is the principle feature of a trap. Individual, free-swinging "bobs", as illustrated, are most practcal and successful. The bobs can be made of heavy aluminum wire or light weight metal rods. It is important that they swing upward and inward easily and drop back smoothly into slots at the base of the door.