

Humane, Sustainable Pigeon Feeding & Population Management

Why Pigeons Are Not the Problem
Facts Over Fear



Public Health Risks are minimal

Global Research Shows Minimal Health Risks	Evidence Shows Pigeons Are Not the Main Cause
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Six decades of scientific evidence confirm that the risk of disease transmission from pigeons to humans is <i>very low</i>, even for people regularly exposed to nesting sites.• A decade-long surveillance of zoonotic disease in feral pigeons in Madrid found ‘a relative low prevalence was detected suggesting a limited health risk’.• A German study of homing pigeons noted, ‘clinically healthy homing pigeons pose only a low risk for transmission of the investigated pathogens to humans’ and “based on the incidence of the investigated pathogens, we consider homing pigeons to be of minor concern for human health.’• According to the University of Edinburgh, pigeons are resistant to bird flu, meaning they are unlikely carriers of the virus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An RTI response from Mumbai’s three biggest civic-run hospitals shows that only 0.3% of respiratory illness cases in 2024 were linked to pigeon exposure.• Medical literature on 'hypersensitivity pneumonitis' (HP) shows it can occur from repeatedly breathing in bacteria, mold, or chemicals in the environment, and harmful substances may be found in multiple sources like air conditioners, humidifiers, contaminated foods, metalwork fluids, hardwood dusts, hay or grain, and hot tubs – not just bird droppings or feathers. Scientific reviews also note that identifying the exact source is usually challenging, there is no single diagnostic gold standard, and urban air pollution is linked to higher rates of HP.

All of this means pigeons are often scapegoated without conclusive evidence.



True Sources of Zoonotic Diseases:

Public health authorities point to [poultry farms](#), live animal markets and slaughterhouses—not free-living pigeons—as the primary sources of zoonotic outbreaks like bird flu.



Pigeon Feeding Is Not Inherently Harmful:

Problems arise from poor sanitation, not from feeding itself. With proper management, like designated feeding areas, cleanliness, waste control, and education, peaceful coexistence is possible.



Bans Cause More Harm:

Abrupt bans on feeding cause birds habituated to regular food sources to starve, leading to unnecessary suffering without reducing the population long-term. Under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, it is illegal to cause animals to suffer.



Feeding Is Culturally and Constitutionally Protected:

Feeding pigeons is a practice rooted in compassion and religious tradition. Kindness to animals is mandated under Article 51A(g) of the Indian Constitution.





A Humane Management Program: Broad Features and Benefits:

To ensure harmony between public health and urban wildlife, [a modern, compassionate program](#) for pigeon population management is recommended inspired by the globally recognized practices of the [Pigeon Control Advisory Service \(PiCAS\): picasuk.com](#). This program has been implemented with measurable success in global cities.

Core Elements

<p>1. Designated Feeding Zones and Dovecotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Identify and formalize select feeding areas to minimize disruption and maintain order.○ Build dovecotes (artificial nesting and roosting houses) near these zones to attract pigeons away from sensitive areas. These structures can reflect local cultural or architectural aesthetics.	<p>2. Egg Removal for Population Control:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Replace eggs in dovecotes with dummy eggs to humanely regulate reproduction. This method, over time, significantly reduces pigeon numbers.○ Can be managed by municipal staff or trained volunteers from animal welfare or citizen groups.
<p>3. Pigeon-Proofing of Key Structures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Encourage installation of non-lethal and non-dangerous deterrents like ‘reflective bird scare tape’, particularly in dense commercial or residential zones. While mesh can be used on windows, it must be ensured nets are not used as birds can be entangled.○ Local authorities can lead by example and support property owners with expert guidance and humane, cost-effective solutions.	<p>4. Public Education and Participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Launch multilingual awareness campaigns to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Dispel myths about pigeons and disease.▪ Promote feeding only in designated areas.▪ Educate on how managed feeding and humane proofing support animal welfare and city cleanliness.
<p>5. Sanitation and Composting Integration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Regular maintenance of feeding areas by municipal sanitation staff.○ Collection and composting of pigeon droppings to convert waste into valuable organic fertilizer.	

Program Benefits:

	Public Health Protection: Reduces congregation in unmanaged areas, maintaining hygiene standards.
	Animal Welfare: Prevents starvation and allows humane population control.
	Cultural Sensitivity: Upholds traditions and values of compassion.
	Cost Efficiency: Reduces expenditure on cleanups, damage repairs, and ineffective lethal controls.

Pigeons are not a public threat but part of our shared ecosystem. Misconceptions and mismanagement cause the conflict—not the birds themselves. This humane management model offers a dignified, effective, and sustainable solution that respects life, law and tradition. It allows cities like Mumbai to lead with compassion and common sense.

