

PIGEONS AMONG US



The pigeon--formally known as the Rock Dove-- has an illustrious history.

Pigeons have been domesticated since earliest times. They can fly over 500 miles in one day at speeds over 60 mph and can find their way home from places they have never been.

Pigeons delivered the results of the first Olympics and brought news of Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo - the first airmail. A million pigeons served all sides in the World Wars for communications.

Pigeons provide a lot of joy to their many fanciers and racing enthusiasts. They have long been a prized food--squab. And, they are positive symbols in many religions.

Then why are pigeons so unloved, despised? These "rats with wings" as Woody Allen once called them, have become an urban problem. Pigeons congregate in flocks producing droppings at the rate of 25 lbs of excrement per yr. per bird. These droppings are acidic and can corrode roofing, stone, wood, and metal. Although droppings are breeding grounds for infectious bacteria and parasites, they aren't dangerous unless the dried matter is inhaled. Just like we don't inhale when we change our cats' litter boxes!

The birds themselves do not carry disease-- not the plague nor West Nile virus. They are resistant to avian influenza.

But you may need help if a flock picks your property as home. Close off nesting places under eaves or on ledges. And most important, make sure there is no food for them. Cleverly placing your feeders off the ground and away from large open spaces, you can safely feed other birds without attracting pigeons.



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The SAS Building Our Bird Friendly Community Bookmark Series offers tips on how you, your family and your community can become more “bird friendly”. For all the bookmarks go to our website www.sonoranaudubon.org

- ☑ Arizona’s Backyard Birds that are Declining
- ☑ Native Plants for Your Backyard
- ☑ Pigeons Among Us
- ☑ Sonoran Audubon’s Speakers’ Bureau: Programs for Your Club or Community Meeting
- ☑ Six Simple Things You Can do to Help Birds in Your Yard
- ☑ Water Features for Your Backyard Birds