



Nuisance Birds

EPIC Fact Sheet

Nuisance birds, such as rock doves (pigeons) and starlings can threaten human health and safety.

General information:

- More than 60 diseases are attributed to nuisance and domestic bird and bird dropping exposure, including examples such as:

Bacterial	Viral	Fungal	Protozoal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salmonellosis • Listeriosis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encephalitis & Meningitis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Histoplasmosis • Blastomycosis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toxoplasmosis

Routes of exposure:

- Food and water contaminated with feces
- Inhalation of contaminated dust
- Transference by parasites (fleas, ticks, mites & other ectoparasites)
- Direct contact with feces

Other issues caused by droppings, feathers, carcasses & nests:

- Roofs - Accumulations of droppings, nests and carcasses block roof drains, impede watershed and collapsing roofs.
- Ventilation Systems - Airflow blockage by feathers and debris reduce the efficiency of mechanical systems increasing energy costs and reducing system lifespan. Combustion exhaust vent or make up air blockage causes carbon monoxide poisoning. Ventilation systems impacted by bird debris deliver odors and pathogens throughout a building.
- Fire Hazard - Bird nests located on top of security lights can burst into flame. Nests inside lighted signs or other electrical equipment can start fires.
- Corrosion - Bird droppings are very acidic and degrade construction materials.

Nuisance bird reduction strategies:

An integrated pest management (IPM) strategy should be employed to ensure the least impact on human health and the environment, which achieving the desired pest control.

- **Reduce habitat opportunities**
 - Structural reduction of nesting / perching sites
 - Perching deterrents (spike strips, shock strips, etc.)
 - Nesting barriers (exclusion, fencing, etc.)
 - Reduce / eliminate water / food sources



The Disaster Ready Emergency Preparedness Infection Control (DR EPIC) program provides education and technical assistance for skilled nursing providers throughout the state. Individual providers will need to exercise their independent discretion in how to apply this information and technical assistance to the unique operation of each facility. For that reason, a facility's exercise of its professional judgment and due diligence in utilizing the program for infection control and risk management practices is solely within the facility's control for which it is entirely responsible.

- **Scare tactics**
 - Flags
 - Reflective spinners
 - Predator calls
 - Ultrasonic deterrents
- **Removal**
 - Trapping
 - Extermination

Clean-up considerations:

- Nuisance bird waste can contain bacteria, virus, fungi, and parasites. Nuisance birds are often attracted to high or precarious locations. Issues such as ladder safety, fall protection, respiratory protection and the like must be carefully considered before cleaning up messes left by nuisance birds. Please consult with a licensed pest control firm, an industrial hygienist and/or a biohazard remediation firm.

Photos with descriptions:

	
<p>Rock doves congregating and nesting near air handlers with plastic owl present. CSC photo</p>	<p>Feathers blocking HVAC condenser unit. CSC photo</p>

Resources to learn more:

- Web links to and description of relevant laws, standards, guidelines or books
 - CDC page on Histoplasmosis
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/histoplasmosis/index.html>
 - NIOSH page on Histoplasmosis
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/97-146/>
 - County of Maricopa flyer on Pigeons
 - <https://www.maricopa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/15250/Pigeon-Flyer>
 - UofA cooperative extension office
 - <https://cals.arizona.edu/yavapai/anr/hort/byg/archive/nuisancebirds2010.html>
 - IAQTV video on Histoplasma capsulatum & Histoplasmosis
 - <https://youtu.be/z3PJzOwcGeE>
 - IAQTV video on Pet Birds, IAQ & Your Health
 - <https://youtu.be/N2-RldVHvE>
 - IAQTV video on Psittacosis: Chlamydia psittaci
 - <https://youtu.be/hyGk8vO2dgY>
 - Additional EPIC resources
 - Leave a message on the EPIC hotline at 602-241-4644 or email EPIC@AZHCA.org
 - Visit the EPIC Web Resource Pages at www.EPIC.disasterreadyaz.org

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