

# BIRD THREATS

## A DANGER TO YOUR PROPERTY AND YOUR BUSINESS

Pest birds cause tens of millions of dollars of damage every year to machinery, automobiles, roofs and ventilation systems. Even worse, they can be the cause of permanent harm to your business itself, not just your property.



### Safety and Health Hazards

Pest birds and their droppings can carry diseases, and some of these diseases can spread to humans.



### Liability

Bird droppings can pose serious liability risks if left unaddressed and can lead to dangerous incidents, such as slipping and falling.



### Tarnished Brand Image

Bird droppings, nests and debris can be foul smelling and may create a poor public image with tenants, customers, visitors and patrons.



### Maintenance and Repair Costs

Bird droppings contain acid which may damage building components, including steel.



**Bird droppings and nests can cause thousands of dollars a year in ongoing property maintenance, but their financial implications can be far more costly than simple property repairs. A few real-world examples include:**

### **Costly Settlements**

**Birds can lead to expensive litigation and settlements.**

- An apprentice elevator mechanic received a multi-million dollar settlement from a property owner after bird droppings caused him to slip and fall down an elevator shaft.

### **Federal Warrants**

**Bird infestations can result in regulatory action against a company.**

- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) found widespread, active rodent and bird infestations during an inspection at an animal supplies distribution center. At the request of the FDA, U.S. Marshals seized various animal food products stored in these unsanitary conditions.

### **Bankruptcy**

**Costs to remediate settlements and federal fines can lead to bankruptcy.**

- Inspections at a Texas peanut plant found dead rodents in and near ventilation units, rodent droppings and bird activity inside the plant. State officials imposed a \$14.6 million fine – the largest ever in Texas – for violations, including unsanitary conditions, product contamination and operating without a license. The facility ceased production and its owner, the Peanut Corporation of America, filed for bankruptcy.



**Learn how The Orkin Man™ can help protect your business from the threat of pest birds.**

## HEALTH RISKS

Pest birds pose a number of health risks, including:

### Blood Sucking Insects

Birds can carry blood sucking insects that may feed on humans if they come in close contact. These pests include poultry and swallow bugs.

### Bird Mites

Too small to be seen by the naked eye, these parasitic mites jump from an infested bird – or from a bird’s habitat like a tree, nest or bench – onto a human. Bites cause small reddened bumps, intense itching, lesions and a crawling sensation on the body. When these bites are repeatedly scratched, the site may become infected.

### Food Borne Illness

Research shows that birds carry disease bacteria such as Salmonella, E. coli, Yersinia, Listeria, Cryptococcus and Campylobacter. Bird droppings containing these microbes can easily lead to food borne illness, some of which can be fatal. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that more than 1,500 people die of food borne illness each year.

### Viruses

The World Health Organization reports that birds are the principal hosts or amplifying hosts for viruses associated with eastern and western Equine Encephalitis, St. Louis Encephalitis, West Nile Virus and even some influenza viruses.

### Dangerous Fungi

Histoplasmosis, a pulmonary disease from fungi, grows in bird droppings and contact with the associated soil. The fungi is Histoplasma capsulatum and thrives in bird environments.



### Birds can carry any of the following disease agents:

St. Louis Encephalitis flavivirus	Campylobacter jejuni	Listeria monocytogenes
West Nile flavivirus	E. coli enteropathogenic	Cryptococcus neoformans
Tick Borne Encephalitis flavivirus complex	Salmonella spp.	Histoplasma capsulatum
Chlamydomphila psittaci	Yersinia pseudotuberculosis	Toxoplasma gondii

## Recognizing pigeon health threats

Of all pest birds, pigeons are perhaps the most troublesome for property managers. Frequently nesting in or around buildings, they are a constant problem. Breeding occurs throughout the year, usually taking place between March and July.

Contact with pigeon droppings may pose a health risk. Three human diseases are known to be associated with pigeon droppings:

### Histoplasmosis

Caused by a fungus that grows in pigeon and other bird droppings, symptoms of this disease include fatigue, fever and chest pains. When cleaning droppings, a person may breathe in the fungus, which in cases of high exposure can cause infection.

### Psittacosis

Also known as ornithosis or parrot fever, humans contract this rare infectious disease when bird droppings dry and become airborne. Symptoms include fatigue, fever, headache, rash, chills and pneumonia.

### Cryptococcosis

Another airborne fungal disease associated with pigeon droppings, individuals with compromised immune systems are at a substantial risk for infection. Symptoms include fatigue, fever, headache and blurred vision.



As with any pest borne disease, medical attention should be sought for these diseases.

## Dropping Removal

It is crucial to protect the health of workers who clean pigeon droppings, as well as passersby, so it is important to consult a licensed pest control professional. If your internal staff handles dropping removal, be sure to take the following minimum steps before any extensive clean-up measure is taken:

- Inform workers of the possible health risks involved, particularly those with weakened immune systems.
- Wear protective clothing like disposable coveralls, boots, gloves and respirators.
- Wash hands and any exposed skin when finished with removal.
- Implement dust control measures, such as containing the area with plastic sheeting.
- Wet down the work area to prevent inhalation and reduce the risk of infection.

Once the structures are cleaned, trained, licensed professionals should install bird control products to help prevent further accumulation of droppings.

**For effective and conscientious bird control, call today for a FREE consultation.**



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SS1065POD 11/10