

Pigeons and Public Health - The TRUE Facts.



Urban Wildlife Society

The following are quotes from **credible** experts with the **REAL FACTS** about pigeons and public health:

- TV series segment, *Healthier Living*, shows how **feeding wild pigeons helps relieve the stresses of day to day living.**
- **"...diseases associated with [pigeons] present little risk to people..."** Dr. Michael McNeil, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta.
- **"One man's nuisance is another man's pleasure." "People worry that pigeons carry disease,' but the danger is 'an exaggeration created by pest control companies looking for business.'"** - Guy Hodge, Naturalist for the Humane Society of the United States.
- **"The New York City Department of Health has no documented cases of communicable disease transmitted from pigeons to humans."** - Dr. Manuel Vargas, **New York City** Department of Health.
- **"Pigeons are not a public health hazard. Nobody in public health is losing any sleep over pigeons."** - Dr. Joel McCullough, Medical Director, Environmental Health, **Chicago** Department of Public Health.
- **"[...the Arizona Department of Health Services does] not have any documented human cases of disease which have been definitively linked to outdoor pigeons or pigeon droppings.** When cases of diseases are reported (and by law [certain bird related zoonoses are] reportable diseases), VBZD staff conduct complete investigations to confirm the diagnosis and identify the source of infection. ...Our case investigation data gathered so far, would suggest that **pigeons are not significant as a cause of human disease in Arizona.**"
- **"We don't see pigeon-related-disease problems..." "I don't think they're seeing them anywhere..."** - Bill Kottkamp, Supervisor, Vector Control, **St. Louis** County Health Department
- **"Pigeons do not get avian influenza and don't carry the virus,"** Dr. Cornelius Kiley, DVM, **Canadian** Food Inspection Agency
- Although **pigeons** have been shown to become infected **with West Nile Virus**, they **do not act as reservoirs and therefore don't transmit the virus...** - **Pennsylvania** West Nile Virus Surveillance Program.
As a result, pigeons are generally no longer accepted for West Nile Virus testing by other government disease-surveillance agencies in the U.S and elsewhere.
- **"We do have some concern about the indiscriminate killing of pigeons." "[For example, histoplasmosis disease rates are] misleading and irrelevant, because histo's so ubiquitous. It's in the soil, regardless of whether pigeons are around or not..."** - Dr. Marshall Lyon, National Center for Infectious Diseases, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta
- **"Problematic density [affecting human safety] is probably more determined by people getting their possessions defaced."** "I'm not terribly worried about pigeons." - Dr. Alex Bermudez, University of **Missouri-Columbia** College of Veterinary Medicine

- "I am **not** aware of **any reported cases of diseases** that were **transmitted by pigeons in Mohave County.**" - Larry Weibert, R.S., Mohave County Environmental Health Division

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