

Lowering the boom on the birds.

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Say what you want, but one thing stands out about pigeons: They are *persistent*. And the volume of their droppings is legendary.

John Arrigo, owner of Arrigo Pest Control in Las Vegas, knows. He has been in the pest control business for 30 years—the last 20 as owner of his own company. Over the years, Arrigo has used an array of products with varying degrees of success. One product he recalls is a “sticky foot” gel called Bird Proof Gel. When applied to ledges and other favorite avian perches, it creates such discomfort that pigeons and other pests intent on landing soon vacate the offending sticky foothold.

Arrigo has also used netting to discourage birds from landing, roosting and nesting. “I’ve even used a plastic owl around a pool,” he says. But sometimes, the good old standby solutions are not sufficient.

As Arrigo tells it, one of his customers was losing control of his gas station business to the pigeons. Perched atop the station, they were in a position to poop relentlessly, day after day. The sorry scene was a disgrace for the gas station owner, and he feared that customers would begin to complain. The territorial pigeons were making their presence felt far too tangibly.

The dire situation merited a more powerful approach. That’s when Arrigo turned to the latest technology to deter birds: the Broadband PRO ultrasonic, programmable unit. He read about the BroadBand PRO unit, the newest repeller from Chicago-based Bird-X, Inc.

“I’d never used one,” he says, “and I didn’t know what to expect. So I called Bird-X and they walked me through the process of installing and programming the unit.” As a veteran in the business, Arrigo was naturally a bit skeptical, yet willing to experiment with the latest wizardry to outwit the dirty birds for good.

While sonic repellers have been marketed for years, this is the first machine to multi-task. That is, it features not only distress cries that signal danger to pigeons (and starlings and gulls and others), but also predator cries like falcons and hawks, plus a mix of sounds and frequencies and volumes for all-encompassing harassment. It’s non-injurious to birds and harmless to the environment, yet gets the job done quickly and efficiently.

After Arrigo installed the BroadBand PRO and turned it on, results were instantaneous, he says. “It was awesome. The pigeons left immediately,” he notes. “And they have not come back,” he adds. Arrigo says he first set the BroadBand PRO on high volume, as recommended by the manufacturer. “Then, after a few days,” he says, “I gradually reduced the sound and then programmed the unit to run silently, in an ultrasonic range that only birds hear.”

The gas station manager is, according to Arrigo, “very happy” with the results. Ditto for the gas station customers—including Arrigo, who happens to buy his gas there.

Arrigo’s satisfied customer owns another 100 gas stations and is currently asking Arrigo to supply broadband units or netting whenever and wherever the pigeons begin to congregate. “It’s a smart preventive move,” Arrigo notes, rather than waiting until the problem gets out of control.

Sometimes, Arrigo says, it’s too late for prevention, as was the case recently with two McDonald’s restaurants in Las Vegas. Examining the scene for his client, Arrigo found pigeons had taken up residence behind three McDonald’s signs and on two levels of roofing. “There were a dozen permanent pigeon residents, complete with nests, eggs and hatchlings,” he says, “and dozens more flying in from the pigeon-infested shopping center across the street.”

The pigeons loved those signs. According to Arrigo, the signs provided safety and protection, where the birds could hang out and remain hidden from view. “The pigeons were also attracted to McDonald’s by the scent of food,” Arrigo recounts, “and by stray French fries that fell from children’s fingers.”

Pigeon droppings were accumulating in all the wrong places. Concerned about the health aspects, the owner of the two McDonald's facilities asked Arrigo what he could do. Arrigo removed the nests, cleaned up the nesting sites, and placed metal spikes to prevent re-nesting. Then he installed the piece de resistance, the Broadband PRO—one unit on each McDonald's outlet.

"In each facility, I put the Broadband PRO unit on the lower roof along with two speakers; then I put the other two speakers on the upper roof," he explains. That gave complete coverage and the desired prevention. "In my experience," he says, "sonic technology works the best and is most humane to the birds."

Afterwards, Arrigo called his client, the owner/manager of the two McDonald's. "I asked: Are you happy?"

"Yes, I'm happy," came the reply.

Now Broadband PRO is Arrigo's first choice if his customer's budget permits the expense. Otherwise, he relies on manual methods of discouraging the birds, such as applying sticky gels and similar discomforting substances.

Arrigo also recommended Broadband PRO for specific use in a residential setting. "My customer owns a multi-million-dollar home with a Spanish tile roof and private courtyard," he explains. "When pigeons took up residence in the courtyard, this was unacceptable to the executive and his family. After discussion, we decided to install two Broadband PRO units to cover the whole property," Arrigo says. "Maybe one unit would have done it, but we didn't want to take a chance in this upscale gated community." Arrigo and the homeowner also explained their approach to neighboring homeowners to assure cooperation.

The results were impressive, Arrigo reports. "From the first blast, the birds were gone—both pigeons and an annual infestation of blackbirds." Gradually, he reduced the volume, and then he programmed the units to run silently. "The birds left the neighbors' property, too," he adds. Arrigo says that multiple speakers can run off each BroadBand PRO, producing wide-ranging effectiveness. That was more than a year ago. The results have been lasting.

"The product is fantastic. Just program it and leave it," he says. "I would recommend it to anyone here in Las Vegas."

In fact, Arrigo did exactly that recently when the operations manager of one of the largest hotel/casino facilities in Las Vegas called him about pigeon problems. Arrigo recommended the BroadBand PRO and advised hotel personnel to contact Bird-X, Inc. in Chicago. The hotel is now in the process of purchasing multiple units.

According to Ron Schwarcz, President of Bird-X, "The BroadBand PRO unit moves sound waves from speaker to speaker, generating a menacing defense covering up to 10,000 square feet. It works equally well in partially enclosed spaces and in wide open areas such as rooftops, parking lots, signs, towers, power stations and stadiums—virtually anywhere that birds congregate." Schwarcz goes on to explain that the unit is programmable to produce random timing, fluctuating volume, and varying sound-wave frequency of species-specific calls to scare away all birds. According to Arrigo and his customers, it really works.