



Pigeon Control Advisory Service
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Experts Dub New Mayor's Bloody Spectacle Illegal

New Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, has taken a decision to continue wasting huge sums of public money on the use of a hawk to control an estimated 140 pigeons in London's Trafalgar Square.

Ken Livingstone, the man that Johnson replaced as Mayor in May 2008, starved thousands of pigeons to death in Trafalgar Square in late 2000/2001 as part of his 'humane' pigeon control programme. It appears that Johnson is now following in his footsteps.

Johnson has confirmed that he intends to retain the use of hawks in an effort to control pigeons in Trafalgar Square because he considers their use to be "value for money", even in light of the fact that hawks are completely ineffective as a means of controlling pigeons.

Johnson has further attempted to justify the continued use of hawks by suggesting that there can be up to 4,000 pigeons in Trafalgar Square at 'peak times'. This might have been the case in 2000/2001, prior to the mass extermination undertaken by Livingstone, but it is pure fantasy to suggest that pigeon numbers are anywhere near 1,000, let alone 4,000, in 2008.

Johnson also suggests that prior to his decision to extend the use of a hawk "extensive research of potential solutions was undertaken"; this was what Livingstone told the public in 2001. However, the only expert body specialising in pigeon control worldwide, PiCAS, was never consulted by either Livingstone or Johnson; PiCAS even offered Livingstone *free* advice in 2000.

Since 2003 hawks have been seen ripping pigeons to pieces every day of the week in front of international visitors to Trafalgar Square and yet the new mayor seems quite prepared to allow this horrific and potentially illegal spectacle to continue. Not only this, but to use public money to pay for it!

To *throw* a hawk at young, sick or injured pigeons, and reports suggest that hawk handlers are doing this regularly whilst 'playing to the gallery' it is likely that they are doing so in direct contravention of the Animal Welfare Act 2006. Anybody that deliberately inflicts pain and suffering on an animal or bird, irrespective of the

circumstances, can be prosecuted for cruelty under the 2006 Act. The property owner, in this case the GLA, is legally liable for the actions of its contractor and is therefore also liable for prosecution.

As the hawks in Trafalgar Square are being used for the purposes of ‘controlling’ pigeons, and if the hawks then kill pigeons, it is possible that the terms and conditions of the General Licences (part of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981) are also being contravened.

In order to justify the use of lethal controls a property owner, in this case the GLA, cannot use lethal controls to protect property (i.e. the statues in Trafalgar Square) and can only justify the use of lethal controls if there is a serious and demonstrable threat to public health and safety. Furthermore, lethal controls can only be used a *last resort* and once *all* non-lethal methods have first been tried and found to fail.

As Johnson has suggested that the hawks are being used to protect property (the statues) in Trafalgar Square, and as there is clearly no serious threat to public health and safety associated with pigeons feeding in Trafalgar Square, the use of hawks to kill pigeons is illegal, even if their primary function is as a deterrent. More importantly, it is quite clear that the GLA has not explored *all* non-lethal methods of control.

Johnson’s continued use of hawks in Trafalgar Square is not only a massive waste of public money but it is likely to contravene both the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and the General Licences contained within the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

PiCAS UK contacted the GLA’s Press Office some 6 weeks ago and asked to be updated on this issue. Ben McKnight (Press Officer) confirmed he would get back to PiCAS UK with full details. The GLA’s Press Office has failed to contact PiCAS UK with this information.

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Editors Notes:

For further information on the law when it comes to controlling pigeons, please see ‘The Law’ page on the PiCAS UK website: http://picasuk.com/the_law.html

For further information on non-lethal bird control, please see the PiCAS UK website: http://picasuk.com/alternatives_to_lethal_bird_control.html

The PiCAS Group is recommended by national and international agencies worldwide for independent and expert advice on all matters relating to the non-lethal control of all bird species. In the UK the RSPB refers many of its bird control enquiries to PiCAS UK. The PiCAS Group is the only independent consultancy service of its type worldwide and although the group will design and provide holistic programmes for the control of any species of bird, it specialises in the control of feral pigeon populations.

PiCAS UK advises its client base throughout the UK and PiCAS International provides a global service for its client base worldwide. PiCAS bases its recommended controls on a mix of scientific research and over 30 years experience in the bird control sector. PiCAS's range of clients include Governments, Town and City Councils, Housing Associations, Property Management Companies, Town and City Centre Management Agencies, Hospitals, Train Operators, Architects, Demolition Contractors, Developers, Building Contractors, Airports and Port Authorities, The Mounted Police, The Aviation Industry and Water Authorities.

For more information on PiCAS UK visit the website at www.picasuk.com or contact Emma Haskell on 02392 583540 or 07903 011715.