

Pigeons in Barcelona are being put on the pill in an attempt to cut their numbers by 80 per cent as the city's councillors abandon controversial culls.

Barcelona authorities are to give pigeons contraceptives to cut numbers. Pigeons are known to damage historical buildings by excreting over them. The pill replaces the old method of rounding up the birds and culling them. Experts say pigeon numbers could fall by up to 80 percent in five years

More than 150 animal welfare groups are celebrating after Barcelona's city council decided to put its 85,000 pigeon population on the pill! The new controls will replace the controversial rounding up and killing of the birds which are threatening to take over the historic centre, pooping on monuments, listed buildings and tourists. Barcelona's leaders are taking expert advice over contraceptive methods which could cut numbers by as much as 80 per cent within four to five years. The first step will be to count the number of pigeons, a huge task which will take place during December and January.



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damaging-is located. Meantime, the city council has officially confirmed, culling will be suspended, with the aim of avoiding interference with the results. From April of 2017, 40 special feeding dispensers will be installed in the different districts of Barcelona, each containing contraceptive food. The first results will be analysed at the end of that year.

'We will be using nicarbazin which acts first on the younger birds,' said a council spokesman. 'It's predicted there will be a reduction of 20 per cent in the pigeon population in the first year and between 70 and 80 per cent in four or five years.' The authority believes the method will work and allow them to abandon culling permanently.

Experts from Barcelona are helping with the problem. Animal rights groups say they are delighted with the decision as 152 of them had earlier protected about 'unethical' method of catching the pigeons in nets and then killing them.

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Barcelona, Spain's second most populous city after Madrid, is famous for its beautiful architecture and is a tourist hotspot. The Commission for the Protection of Animals had led the fight for change for months. The use of the pill for pigeons and has

been operating successfully for more than 15 years throughout Europe, including in several Catalan municipalities and in the cities of Alicante and Valencia. The drug inhibits the formation of eggs in birds.