

Noise routs courthouse pigeons

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Pigeons have for years laid out a welcome mat at the door to the county courthouse. The lawyers, judges and bureaucrats who entered stepped lightly.

Andy Andrade, building manager of the courthouse, inventive problem solver, met the pigeon challenge head-on. This week, he conquered it.

He first tried a putty mixture that was supposed to give the birds hot feet, but it wore off. He tried a glorified barbed wire, but they covered it up and nested on it.

So when he spotted a \$375 bird repellent as he paged through a catalog, Andrade figured it was worth a try. The "Ultrason Et" bird repellents are round black gizmos that emit a high-pitched screeching noise inaudible to the human ear. Two were installed Friday.

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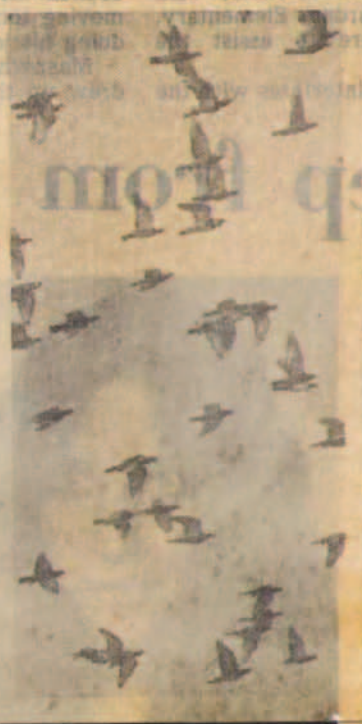
since," he said.

Indeed, the entrances are free of the Jackson Pollack-like splats that were the pigeons' legacy. All that remains is run-of-the-mill debris: an empty pack of Pall Malls, gum wrappers, a straw, a few leaves, a couple of paper clips.

Despite the success of the wall of noise in the battle against the pigeons, Andrade has no plans to use the noise-maker on the buzzards that return every winter to circle the pyramid atop the courthouse.

That means some pigeons will still find a courthouse roost. Sheila Gaby, an ornithologist who studied the habits of buzzards in South Florida for seven years, said pigeons share the top of the courthouse with the buzzards.

In behavior not uncharacteristic of some human groups in Miami, the relationship between the two bird species is of "mutual nonexistence. The vultures don't care about the pigeons and the pigeons don't care about the vultures," she said.



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