

PIGEON FACTS

DID YOU KNOW????

1. Most of our domesticated pigeons have a common ancestor, the Rock Dove pigeon.
2. Racing Homing Pigeons have been clocked flying 92.5 mph average speed on a 400 mile race.
3. Homing Pigeons have been known to fly 700 miles in a day.
4. Pigeons have flown in many wars, including both WWI & WWII. They have saved countless lives.
5. Pigeons achieved a 98% success rate in the missions flown in WW II, despite enemy fire, and often with mortal injuries to themselves.
6. In the World Wars, flying pilots carried pigeons in case they had to ditch their plane, they would release the bird for help. Many pilots owe their lives to a pigeon.
7. Pigeons are still used today by the French, Swiss, Israeli, Iraqi and Chinese Armies.
8. Pigeons proved valuable in the Gulf War, as their messaging was not affected by the electronic jamming.
9. Pigeons have been bought for as much as \$132,000.00 by Louella Pigeon World in 1992. "Invincible Spirit"
10. They have been proposed to be used by the Project Sea Hunt (U.S. Coast Guard) to spot life jackets out in the open sea.
11. Noah's Dove was most likely a homing pigeon.
12. They were used by many for communication before the telegraph was invented.
13. They were used by the Greeks more than 5,000 years ago.
14. They can and are ready to breed at the age of 5 to 6 months.
15. They can breed as old as 10 years of age, and have been helped to breed past that.
16. They are bred, raised and trained as good as Thoroughbred Horses.
17. Around the world there are about 5 races a year with Million Dollar Purses.
18. There are more than a million fanciers around the world that keep pigeons, meaning there are more than 4 million kept pigeons.
19. Both parents feed their young milk.
20. They have been known to see very well over a 26 mile distance.
21. Scientist believe they may hear wind blowing over mountains from hundreds of miles away.

22. In the late 1800 the most heroic recorded flight was from a pigeon that was released in Africa and took 55 days to get home in England. Traveling over 7,000 miles.
23. A pigeon is about 13 inches from beak to tail.
24. Unless separated, pigeons mate for life.
25. A full grown pigeon has about 10,000 feathers.
26. They have been known to live over 30 years.
27. In the 17th century, King George I of England, decreed all pigeon droppings to be property of the Crown—and the “lofts” were policed to enforce the law! (Pigeon manure was used in making gunpowder)
28. The pigeon beats its wings up to ten times per second, while maintaining a heart rate of 600 beats per minute up to 16 hours without rest.
29. The pigeon has the rare ability for a large bird to be able to fly nearly straight up.
30. Many of the city pigeons feed on grain in the country.
31. Advanced studies at the University of Montana conclude: “Pound for pound, *Columba livia* (the pigeon) is one of the smartest, most physically adept creatures in the animal kingdom.”
32. Queen Elizabeth II races pigeons from the Royal Lofts at Sandringham.
33. Pigeons are the only bird in the world that do not have to lift their head to swallow water.
34. When the pigeon is in long flight, it reaches back and holds on to the short tail feathers with its feet in order to save energy from holding its legs up.
35. During breeding season, when there are more than a few babies on the floor, all parents will feed all babies, even if they are not their own.
36. In the mid 1800's, the Reuters News Agency operated a live telex service using Homing Pigeons.
37. Homing Pigeons were introduced to the United States in the mid 1800's. In the 1880's, the first 500 mile race took place in this country.
38. The ability to hear sounds 11 octaves below middle C allow the pigeons to detect earthquakes and electrical storms.
39. The top national race, Snowbird Classic, awards a purse of \$600,000.
40. The highest priced Homing Pigeon was sold for \$225,000.