

# Pigeon Bird and its Uses in Agriculture

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**Abstract:** *Feral pigeons (Columba livia) are typically ignored by ornithologists but can be found roosting in the thousands within cities across the world. Pigeons have been known to spread zoonoses, through ectoparasites and excrement they produce. Along with disease, feral pigeons have an economic impact due to the cost of cleanup and maintenance of human infrastructure. Pigeon farming require less labor and low investment. Even you can also raise and take care of them during your in leisure time. The meat of baby pigeon (squab) is very tasty, nutritious and restorative. Squabs also have huge demand and price in the market. On the other hand pigeon farming can be a great source of some extra income and entertainment. Raising pigeons using modern methods is very profitable than traditional way. So, to be successful in pigeon farming business, use modern rearing techniques and take good care of your birds.*

**Keywords:** Pigeon farming, benefits, sustainability and profit.

## 1. Introduction

Of the 7.53 billion people that live on Earth, over half inhabit cities [1, 2]. Increase in development has altered biodiversity through an increase in fragmentation and invasive species abundance. Urban areas are highly susceptible to invasions of nonnative species [3], which can increase threat to native species and increase economic costs due to environmental and structural damage [4, 5]. One species that is associated with urban areas, but is often ignored by ornithologists, is the invasive feral pigeon (*Columba livia*) [6].

Descendants of cliff-dwelling rock pigeons, feral pigeons have a close relationship with humans [7]. Most likely originating in southern Asia, wild rock pigeons colonized areas in Europe and North Africa [7]. Around 5,000–10,000 years ago, rock pigeons became the first known domesticated bird [8]. Throughout history, these domesticated birds were honored for their reproductive ability and because they were an important food source [9]. As agriculture developed, the use of pigeons for meat dwindled, leading to the species escaping and creating feral flocks in urban areas across the world [9].

Pigeon farming is very interesting, profitable enterprises and pigeons are very popular domestic bird. Pigeons are considered as the symbol of peace. Here in India due to religious sentiments, this farming has not taken its shape. In our neighbor country like Pakistan, Bangladesh, China the squab raising has become a means of livelihood for the poor rural people. It fetch good money without involving any expenditure. In our country also now the people has started realizing its importance and is becoming more popular day by day. Among tribal people this farming is very popular. Almost all types of people who have facilities, love to raise some pigeon in their home.

### Facts about Pigeons

**Kingdom:** Animalia

**Phylum:** Chordata

**Class:** Aves

**Order:** Columbiformes

**Family:** Columbidae

**Species:** 300

**Diet:** Seeds, Fruits, Insects, etc.

**Natural Habitat:** All around the earth, except the driest and coldest regions

**Number of Offspring:** 2 eggs

**Age:** 10 – 15 years

**Age of Sexual Maturity:** As early as 6 months of age

### Benefits of Pigeon Farming

- Pigeon farming has some great benefits. The main and notable advantages of this business profitable are described below.
- Pigeons are domestic bird and it's very easy to handle them.
- From their six month of age they start laying eggs and produce two baby pigeon per month on an average.
- Pigeon can be raised easily in the home yard and roof of the house.
- It takes about 18 days to hatch their eggs.
- Baby pigeon (squab) become suitable for consumption within their 3 to 4 weeks of age.
- You can build a pigeon house in a small place with little investment.
- Pigeon feeding costs is very low. In most cases they collect food by themselves.
- Pigeon meat is very tasty, nutritious and has a great demand and value in the market.
- Pigeon farming is also very pleasing and entertaining. You can spent some good times through watching the activities of pigeons.
- You can get maximum profit form them, by investing small capital and labor.
- Diseases are comparatively less in pigeons.
- Closet of pigeon is a good manure for crop cultivation.
- Different types of toys can be made by the feather of pigeons.
- Pigeons help to keep the environment safe by eating different types of insects.
- The squab has has a great demand in the market as a good patient's diet.
- Pigeons start laying eggs at their 5 to 6 months of age.

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- Pigeon farming can be a great income source for the people of some poor country, such as Bangladesh, India, Nigeria, Pakistan etc.

### Life cycle

Generally pigeons are raised in pair. One pair of male and female pigeon stay together for their whole life. They can survive for about 12 to 15 years. Male and female both collect straw together and build a small nest for them to live. Female pigeon start laying eggs at the age of 5-6 months of age. They lay two eggs every time and their breeding capability stays for about 5 years. Both male and female pigeons hatch the eggs. Usually it takes about 17 to 18 days to hatch the eggs. The stomach of baby pigeon contains crop milk, which they eat for 4 days. Female pigeon feed their baby for ten days by their lips. After that, they start taking supplementary food by their own. At their age of 26 days, they become adult.

### Pigeon Breeds

There are about three hundred pigeon breeds available around the world. Pigeon breeds are of two types which are described below

### Meat Productive Breeds:

White king, texona, silver king, gola, lokha, etc. are meat productive pigeons.

### Entertaining:

Moyurponkhi, shirazi, lohore, fantail, jacobin, frillback, modena, trumpeter, trubit, mukhi, giribaz, templar, lotal etc. are most popular entertaining pigeons.

Generally, the main purpose of pigeon farming is their meat. The meat of baby pigeon is soft and tasty than the adult one. Weight of some fleshy squab productive pigeon breeds are described below.

### Housing

Housing is very important factor for pigeon farming. Keep in mind the following factors before making house for your pigeons.

- Built their house in a higher place. This will keep the pigeons free from dog, cat, mouse and some other harmful predators.
- Ensure huge flow of air and light inside the house.
- Prevent the entrance of rain water directly inside the house.
- The house can be build by thin wood or tin, bamboo or with packing boxes.
- Every pigeon require about 30 cm long, 30 cm high and 30 cm wide space.
- Every room of the pigeon house have to have the facilities of staying two pigeon.
- The house will be adjoining to each other and polyhedral.
- Keep a door on every room measuring 10×10 cm.
- Always try to keep the house clean and dry.
- Clean the house once or twice per month.
- Keep the food and water pot near the house.
- Keep some straw near the house, so that the pigeons can make bed for them.
- Keep water and sand near the house, as they clean their body by water and dust.

### Feeding

Pigeons generally eat wheat, maize, paddy, rice, enamel, legume, triticumaestivus mustard, gram etc. Keep foods in front of their house and they will take the food by themselves. You have to serve them balanced feed for proper growing, good health and for proper production. You can also serve them balanced feed, prepared for the chickens. Pigeon feed should contain 15-16 % protein. Every pigeon consume 35-50 grams of grainy feed daily. For fast growing of baby pigeon and for nutrition of adult, feed them oyster shell, lime stone, bone powder, salt, greeet mixture, mineral mixture etc. with their regular feed. Along with this, feed them some green vegetables daily. A chart of balanced feed for pigeons mentioned below.

### Feed Ingredients Amount (kg)

Broken Wheat 2.8 kg, Broken Maize 2.2 kg, Mustard 1.0 kg, Broken Gram 1.0 kg, Soyabean Cake 0.8 kg, Rice Bran 1.8 kg and Salt 0.4 kg.  
Total 10 kg

### Amazing Facts You Didn't Know About Pigeons

#### How old are pigeons?

Pigeons have lived alongside man for thousands of years with the first images of pigeons being found by archaeologists in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) and dating back to 3000 BC. It was the Sumerians in Mesopotamia that first started to breed white doves from the wild pigeon that we see in our towns and cities today and this undoubtedly accounts for the amazing variety of colors that are found in the average flock of urban pigeons. To ancient peoples a white pigeon would have seemed miraculous and this explains why the bird was widely worshipped and considered to be sacred. Throughout human history the pigeon has adopted many roles ranging from symbols of gods and goddesses through to sacrificial victims, messengers, pets, food and even war heroes!

#### Biblical References

The first biblical reference to the pigeon (or dove) was in the Old Testament of the Bible in the first millennium AC and was the story of Noah and the dove of peace. Later, in the New Testament, the pigeon was first mentioned during the baptism of Christ where the dove descended as the Holy Spirit, an image now used extensively in Christian art. These early biblical references have paved the way for the many different ways that the urban pigeon is viewed in modern societies worldwide. Perception of the pigeon through the centuries has changed from God to the devil and from hero to zero!

#### Pigeon Poop – Foul or Fantastic?

Although pigeon poo is seen as a major problem for property owners in the 21st Century, it was considered to be an invaluable resource in the 16th, 17th and 18th century in Europe. Pigeon poop was a highly prized fertiliser and considered to be far more potent than farmyard manure. So prized in fact that armed guards were stationed at the entrances to dovecotes (pigeon houses) to stop thieves stealing it! Not only this, but in England in the 16th century pigeon poop was the only known source of saltpetre, an essential ingredient of gunpowder and was considered a

highly valued commodity as a result. In Iran, where eating pigeon flesh was forbidden, doves were set up and used simply as a source of fertilizer for melon crops and in France and Italy it was used to fertilize vineyards and hemp crops.

### The pigeon as a War Hero

In modern times the feral pigeon has been used to great effect during wartime. In both the first and second World Wars the pigeon saved hundreds of thousands of human lives by carrying messages across enemy lines. Pigeons were carried on ships in convoys and in the event of a U-boat attack a messenger pigeon was released with details of the location of the sinking ship. In many cases this led to the survivors being rescued and lives saved. Mobile pigeon lofts were set up behind the trenches in the First World War from which pigeons often had to fly through enemy fire and poison gas to get their messages home. The birds played a vital role in intelligence gathering and were used extensively behind enemy lines where the survival rate was only 10%. In the Second World War pigeons were used less due to advances in telecommunications, but the birds relayed invaluable information back to the allies about the German V1 and V2 Rocket sites on the other side of the Channel.

### The pigeon as a Messenger

The earliest large scale communication network using pigeons as messengers was established in Syria and Persia about 5th Century BC. Much later in the 12th Century AD the city of Baghdad and all the main towns and cities in Syria and Egypt were linked by messages carried by pigeons. This was the sole source of communication. In Roman times the pigeon was used to carry results of sporting events such as the Olympic Games and this is why white doves are released at the start of the Olympic Games today. In England, prior to the days of telegraphs, pigeons were often taken to soccer matches and released to carry home the result of the game. Their use as a messenger in war time resulted in many pigeons being awarded honors by both the British and French Governments. Incredibly, the last 'pigeon post' service was abandoned in India in 2004 with the birds being retired to live out the rest of their days in peace.

### The Religious Significance of the Pigeon

Many religious groups including Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs feed pigeons for religious reasons. Many older Sikhs feed pigeons ceremoniously to honour the high priest and warrior Guru Govind Singh who was a known friend of the pigeon (or rock dove). Some Sikhs also feed pigeons because they believe that when they are reincarnated they will never go hungry if they have fed pigeons in their previous life. Other religious groups in India believe that when a person dies his or her soul assumes the form of a bird (normally a pigeon) and therefore by feeding birds they are caring for the souls of their departed ancestors. The pigeon is revered in India with huge flocks numbering many thousands of birds being fed daily at Hindu temples in town and city centres throughout the country. In both eastern and western societies many of the most entrenched pigeon-related problems in urban areas are considered to be caused, certainly in part, by religious feeding of the birds. In the Christian religion the pigeon is both a symbol of peace and of the Holy Spirit.

## 2. Conclusion

Pigeon farming is most adoptive component in integrated farming system. In this articles detailed about pigeon life cycle , ecology, benefits, housing, feeding, farming process and etc., so economically viable environmentally feasible.

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