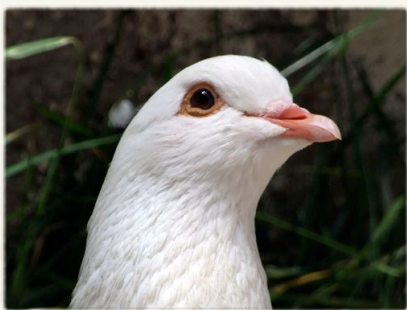
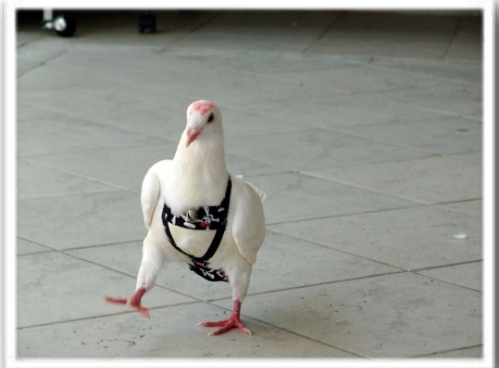


# ◆ Adopt a King Pigeon! (or two) ◆



MickaCoo is an all-volunteer organization rescuing pigeons and doves from Bay Area shelters where they face euthanasia, and placing them in forever homes.

Most rescued birds are King pigeons (pictured), a majestic all-white, domesticated species. They can not survive in the wild or in the streets.

Kings make excellent pets! They don't ask for much: a regularly cleaned enclosure (in- or outdoors), fresh seeds and water, company (yours or another pigeon's; they are doting spouses), vet care as needed, and family planning (replace real eggs with fakes). If you are interested in adopting, or want to learn more about us or pigeons / doves, contact:

Email: **[AdoptKings@gmail.com](mailto:AdoptKings@gmail.com)**

Website: **[www.MickaCoo.org](http://www.MickaCoo.org)**

Blog: **[www.RescueReport.org](http://www.RescueReport.org)**

We need your help!

- ★ Forever homes for pigeons and doves
- ★ Donations -- every penny donated goes to vet care
- ★ Volunteers (outreach, foster care and transport...)



# **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.

## ***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 fertilizer 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!

## ***Are pigeons intelligent?***

Pigeons are considered to be one of the most intelligent birds on the planet with pigeons being able to undertake tasks previously thought to be the sole preserve of humans and primates. The pigeon has also been found to pass the 'mirror test' (being able to recognize its reflection in a mirror) and is one of only 6 species, and the only non-mammal, that has this ability. The pigeon can also recognize all 26 letters of the English language as well as being able to conceptualize. In scientific tests pigeons have been found to be able to differentiate between photographs and even differentiate between two different human beings in a photograph when rewarded with food for doing so.

## ***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.

## ***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.

## ***The religious significance of the pigeon***

Many religious groups including Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs feed pigeons for religious reasons. Some Sikhs 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 centers throughout the country. In the Christian religion the pigeon is both a symbol of peace and of the Holy Spirit.

## ***'Rock Dove' or 'pigeon'?***

The feral pigeon that we see in our towns and cities today is descended from the Rock Dove (*Columba livia*), a cliff dwelling bird historically found in coastal regions. The word 'pigeon' is actually derived from the Latin word 'pipio' which meant 'young bird'. The word then passed into Old French as 'pion' and thus the English name 'pigeon' was derived and is now used the world over as a common name for the Rock Dove. Other common names include 'domestic pigeon' and the 'feral pigeon'. In 2004 British and American Ornithologists officially re-named the bird the Rock Pigeon.

## ***How do pigeons navigate?***

There are many theories about how pigeons manage to return 'home' when released 100's of miles from their loft. A champion racing pigeon can be released 400-600 miles away from its home and still return within the day. This amazing feat does not just apply to 'racing' or 'homing' pigeons, all pigeons have the ability to return to their roost. A 10-year study carried out by Oxford University concluded that pigeons use roads and freeways to navigate, in some cases even changing direction at freeway junctions. Other theories include navigation by use of the earth's magnetic field, visual clues such as landmarks, the sun and even infrasounds (low frequency seismic waves).

## ***Pigeons as lifesavers***

Although pigeons are one of the most intelligent of all the bird species man has found limited uses for the birds other than for the purposes of sport, food and as a message carrier. A team of navy researchers, however, has found that pigeons can be trained to save human lives at sea with high success rates. Project Sea Hunt has trained a number of pigeons to identify red or yellow life jackets when floating in the water. The pigeons were not only found to be more reliable than humans but they were also many times quicker than humans when it came to spotting survivors from a capsized or sinking boat. The pigeon can see color in the same way that humans do but they can also see ultra-violet, a part of the spectrum that humans cannot see, and this is one of the reasons they are so well adapted to lifesaving.