

Why "Dove Releases" Are Cruel

By Guest Author Elizabeth Young, Founder and Executive Director of Palomacy Pigeon & Dove Adoptions



Homing pigeons released as "wedding doves". Photo by Jim Kennedy

Most will survive the flight home. But the reality is very different from the fantasy. The "dove release" business perpetuates the idea that white birds can be "set free" and they will just fly away and live happily ever after. Even under the best of circumstances, trained "wedding doves" are hurt, lost and killed trying to get home. It's even worse when do-it-yourselfers mistakenly buy white Ringneck Doves or King Pigeons to release. Nearly all of them will die.

When you hear about a "dove release" or "wedding doves", it usually means that Homing Pigeons, selectively bred to be all white, small and dove-like, were rented so as to be ceremoniously released. (I wonder why they don't call them "wedding pigeons"?)

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Four-week old King Pigeons rescued after their "release" at a funeral

Please help counteract this fantasy with the reality. We have to speak up for the birds because no one is listening to them. We strongly recommend against using these gentle, loyal birds in this uncaring way.

A nice employee at Evergreen Cemetery called to tell me that he managed to save six of a flock of white doves "released" at a funeral. The mourners had to pull them out of the cage and throw them in the air. One was hawk-struck, another run over... others flew away (but they won't survive). We all know people who will be having weddings, funerals, graduations and other ceremonies and rituals... Please help educate people to how cruel and unfair this is to the birds.

Even when done "properly", by hiring a professional to release trained white Homing Pigeons, casualties are still common.

We recommend against all releases of domestic birds. We have rescued plenty of lost and/or injured white Homing Pigeons too.

See the heartbreaking story of Pope Francis' 2014 "release" in the Ukraine [here](#).

Birds of pray: Doves released in the Vatican as a gesture of peace are immediately ATTACKED by vicious seagull and crow

- Tens of thousands of people were watching in St Peter's Square
- Seagull and a large black crow swept down on the doves today
- They had been set free from open window of the Apostolic Palace

By HANNAH ROBERTS IN ROME and MARK DUELL

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To millions of Christians, they are a symbol of peace.

But to a pair of larger birds, the two doves released in the Vatican yesterday were nothing more than a chance for a bit of Sunday morning sport.

No sooner had the birds been set free in St Peter's Square – as a symbolic gesture of peace for Ukraine – than they were set upon by a seagull and a crow.



Predators recognize what we do not - domestic birds are easy prey

The odds of survival for true doves (white Ringneck Doves) & King Pigeons are much worse. Whether they are being used for a ceremony or misguidedly "set free", most of them don't survive long enough to be rescued. Their life span, whether in the city, a park or the wild, is only hours to days. These King Pigeon youngsters sold as squab at a live poultry market and "set free" in Golden Gate Park beat the terrible odds and were rescued. Most are not so lucky.



Baby King Pigeons "released"



These were very lucky to be rescued

"Released" domestic birds have no survival skills. They are killed by hawks, ravens, gulls, dogs, cats, raccoons, mean people and cars.

Please share with your friends, family and colleagues. This happens a lot!

Palomacy Pigeon & Dove Adoptions
www.PigeonRescue.org