

## Lost Homing Pigeons

On Sept. 11 2002 a group of 80 pigeons, posing as white doves evoking peace, were released in the New York City area. It was a tribute that went quickly awry as a fundamental misunderstanding became apparent. These pigeons from a poultry market, originally destined for soup, were confused with homing pigeons- resilient birds that after release are able to navigate to homes up to 600 miles away. In southern Sweden during a homing pigeon race in July of 2005, an unprecedented failure occurred. Of the original 2,000 homing pigeons released, 1,500 went missing. Lars-Aake Nilsson of the Malmö Homing Pigeon Club said, "the weather was perfect - no rain, no thunder and no strong winds. I have worked with pigeons since 1960 and have never experienced anything like this". Similarly, in the summer of 1998, two separate homing pigeon races reported large losses on the same day. Both races were on the east coast of the U.S. with flights terminating near Philadelphia and Allentown, Pennsylvania. One race lost a remarkable 1600 of 1800 birds, another lost 600 of 700 birds. Typical "failure" rates hover under 5 percent, attributed to hawk attacks, poor navigation or physical inability. In August of 2005, the journalist Daniel Engber noted, " huge crowds turned out in Hiroshima Saturday on the anniversary of America's nuclear attack in World War II. A bell rang at 8:15 a.m., exactly 60 years after the bombing, and 1,000 doves were released into the sky". Daniel then asked, "What happens to the doves after they fly away?"

- Melissa Dubbin and Aaron S. Davidson    New York City    August/September 2005

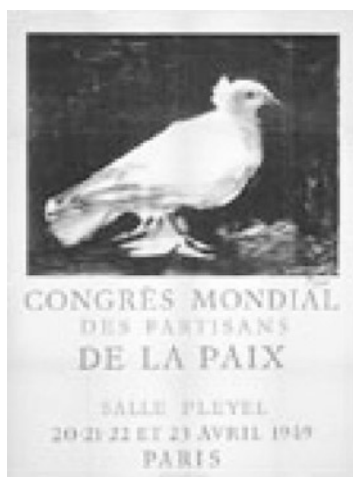


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The origin of the dove of peace is in the Old Testament. Noah sends out a pigeon from his ark to see if the earth is still flooded. The bird returns with a twig from an olive tree, proof that the flood waters are retreating and a sign of change for the better. The symbol of the dove was not restricted to the branch of peace activism based on the bible, it has spread all over the world.



After World War II Pablo Picasso, at that time a Communist, was responsible for the decisive use of the dove of peace. His lithograph designed for the international peace congress in Paris, 1949, features the white ancestor of a new family of doves.





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Note in the following article that pigeon "losses" are expected and accepted as a normal part of the pigeon racing "hobby". If only a few percent are routinely sacrificed as claimed (a questionably low estimate) out of the thousands released every weekend, the toll of those cruelly abandoned adds up quickly into the thousands of feathered souls doomed to unimaginably suffer and die or be killed. -ed.

OCTOBER 07, [1998] 18:00 EDT  
Racing Pigeons Fly the Coup

By GENARO C. ARMAS  
Associated Press Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Some 2,200 homing pigeons competing in two races along the East Coast never made it home, leaving their handlers wondering if somehow, some way, the birds' legendary instincts went south. "I've never seen anything like this," Earl Hottle, who has been racing pigeons for 37 years, told the Allentown Morning Call. "Nobody can explain it."

About 1,600 pigeons vanished out of 1,800 competing in a 200-mile race from northern Virginia to Allentown on Monday. And 600 out of 700 birds were missing after a 150-mile race on the same day from western Pennsylvania to Philadelphia.

Ordinarily, the swift birds should have been back in their lofts in a matter of hours.

The mystery continued on Wednesday: Did the birds fall prey to a flock of hungry hawks? Did some strong wind .....

see the rest of the article article at:

<http://www.urbanwildlifesociety.org/pigeons/LostRacgPjs-AP.html>

## Lost Homing Pigeons



Pigeons on Genbaku Dome (A-Bomb Dome)- Hiroshima  
photo: Reggie Thomson

Genbaku Dome - 1945

*Experimental Analysis of Behavior of Homing Pigeons as a Result of Functional Disorders of their Lagena*

**Author:** Harada Y.

**Abstract:**

Behavioral experiments concerning the homing abilities of pigeons were done by sectioning their lagenal nerves or interfering with the function of the lagena using a magnet. Twenty-one birds were treated in this way and 30 birds from the same loft of racing pigeons were used as controls. The results of homing tests clearly revealed a magnetic influence on the function of the lagena in terms of the navigation ability of pigeons: the treated birds were either lost or significantly delayed while the controls returned within 30 min of release. The lagena of birds is a unique organ and it is concluded that it is a key element in the magnetic sensory system of birds.

**Keywords:** LAGENA; MAGNETIC; DETECTION; NAVIGATION; PIGEONS



## Lost Homing Pigeons

### Plane Killing Homing Pigeon

Homing pigeons used to kill plane engines

If somebody took the time to train homing pigeons to be attracted to jet airplanes, especially their engines, then you could attach as many titanium beads to each pigeon as it could carry, and then release them close to an enemy airport. It would then go somewhat like this- Pigeon sees and hears plane engine and fly's toward it. by the time pigeon realizes that this isn't a safe home it's too late because pigeon is caught in suction. pigeon goes into jet engine, titanium beads come off and then chew up the engine. effective with enough pigeons, and relatively cheap. or you could just use a swarm of locust with a titanium bead on each locust; and then the ones that didn't get to the planes would get to the enemy food supply.

Cracked Helmut, Nov 13 2002

Actually, this isn't too far off from a tactic that was tested by the U.S. government during WWII under the direction of B.F. Skinner.

Miss Ann Thrope, Nov 13 2002

You'll have problems finding pigeons that can fly fast or high enough to intercept a jet engine. I'm sure you'll research the speed, accuracy, and endurance of many species, but I'd suggest falcons. (\_!\_) It's possible to use cats, but only if you can get them to wear beads.

Amos Kito, Nov 13 2002

[Amos Kito] I imagine the idea is to target airfields, trying to kill the 'planes engines on takeoff or landing - its most vulnerable flight phases. Easy to train pigeons to like airfields ....





## Lost Homing Pigeons



DEFENSE OF THE REALM  
Regulation 21A

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**SHOOTING  
HOMING PIGEONS**

*Killing, wounding or molesting homing pigeons is punishable under the Defense of the Realm Regulations by Six Months Imprisonment or £100 Fine*

The public are reminded that homing pigeons are doing valuable work for the government, and are requested to assist in the suppression of the shooting of these birds.

£5 Reward

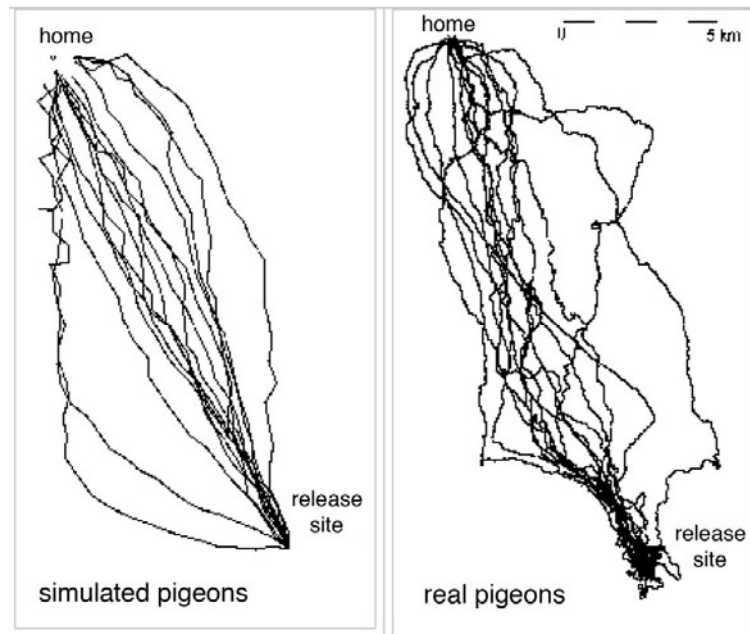
will be paid by the National Homing Union for information leading to the conviction of any person SHOOTING HOMING PIGEONS the property of its members.

Information should be given to the Police, Military Post or to the Secretary of the Union, C C Plackett, 14, East Parade, Leeds UK

15th February 2005, 01:23 PM

Looking for any help to find my bird. Lost in Van Nuys/Mission Hills area, of Los Angeles County on Jan 15, 2005. Band is: ARPU41056 Teal colored, with blue numbered plain band #26. Any info is appreciated. **-nltrask**

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Computer simulations compared to reality in the UK.

### Mumblers and the practice of hunting with pigeons

Mumbling is a practice that exists at the periphery of pigeon talent, exploiting a vulnerability, an oscillation between the allured and the alluring known as "flying the doves". To be specific, mumbling, thieving, hawking and flying the doos (doves) all point to the practice of using ones own pigeon flock to steal from another flock. This can be an individual act, one pigeon luring another of the opposite sex back to their loft. Or it can be a flock phenomena, where hundreds of birds mix and redistribute themselves, typical of Brooklyn mumblers.

- Melissa Dubbin & Aaron S. Davidson New York City August/September 2005





## Lost Homing Pigeons



New York City's pigeons are not all "wild" birds; many are specially trained homing pigeons that belong to competitive "mumblers." Photo: Martha Cooper



Pigeon/dove hunting in Paraguay



## Lost Homing Pigeons

Some breeders select champion homing pigeons by examining their eyes.



### **The Technologies of Extinction (Passenger Pigeons Demise)**

Every Passenger Pigeon colony that was accessible to humans was exploited. There were no laws restricting the way pigeons were killed, and certainly no limits on how many could be taken. What limited the take for a while was lack of access to markets for the meat, fat, and feathers, as well as inefficient communications that kept hunters from easily finding the roosting and nesting sites. People killed as many birds as they could use locally, but until the great city markets were accessible, the impact on pigeon populations was minimal. The late 19th century saw revolutionary changes in human infrastructure, most notably the greatly expanded railroad system and the telegraph. In addition, the population of the country was exploding, from just over 5 million people in 1800, to 23 million in 1850, to 76 million in 1900. (Incidentally, there are now over 280 million people living in the United States.)

Railroads allowed easy access for market hunters to reach nesting colonies and ship millions of pigeons out for city markets. The telegraph provided a way for scouts who located colonies to inform the professional pigeon trappers. When professional hunters started netting and shooting the pigeons for city markets—where they often sold for as little as fifty cents a dozen—the populations began to noticeably decrease. The description of this activity at the Bird Lore website is particularly poignant.

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Not all birds can fly. The moment a bird takes off in flight, there is a thin slice of time during which varying birds potential characteristics are rendered equal. The ability to fly even short distances unites the birds in a general bravado they can share. Once flight takes hold, the moment after liftoff, numerous avian idiosyncrasies emerge. A wild turkey can muster a fluttering hop over short distances, to reach a tree limb as it saves itself, while a barn swallow flies fast with aerobatic tendencies, feeding off insects in the air.

Set against this backdrop of varied avian accomplishments the homing pigeon displays a unique characteristic in addition to its flying abilities. As is implied in the name, homing pigeons have extraordinary direction finding characteristics.

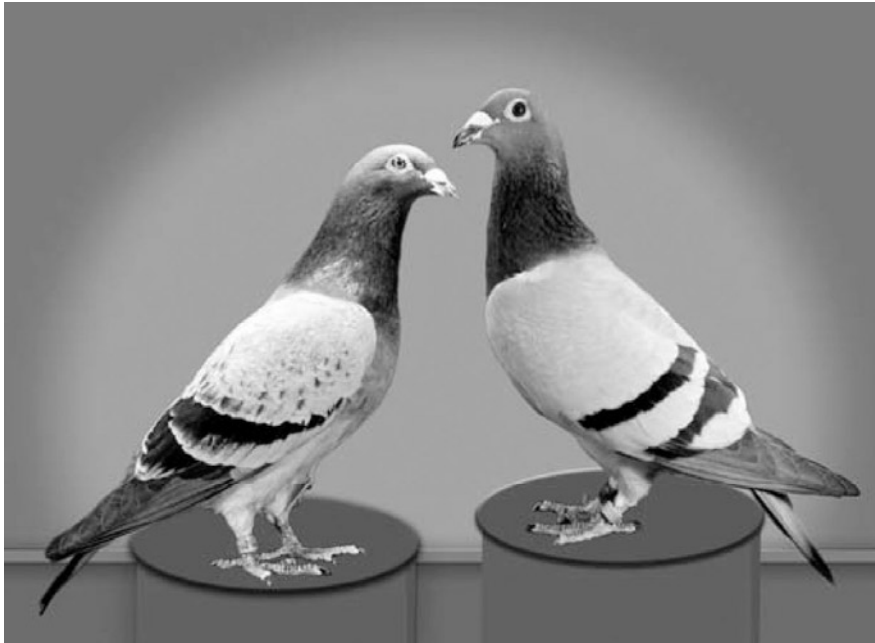
Echoing a concern, one could amend Daniel Engber's statement, "What happens to the doves after they fly away?". It is now, what happens when they fly? Replacing the long term with the immediate, focusses on instinct and flight abilities. Homing pigeons combine both this immediate instinct and long term navigation "skills".

- Melissa Dubbin & Aaron S. Davidson, Sept. 2005





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"Numerous experiments on homing have already been carried out with pigeons. Nevertheless, after nearly a century of dedicated but frustrating research, no one knows how pigeons home, and all attempts to explain their navigational ability in terms of known senses and physical forces have so far proved unsuccessful. Researchers in this field readily admit the problem. 'The amazing flexibility of homing and migrating birds has been a puzzle for years. Remove cue after cue, and yet animals still retain some backup strategy for establishing flight direction.' 'The problem of navigation remains essentially unsolved.'

- © 2005 Rupert Sheldrake.



## Lost Homing Pigeons

Just returned from a few weeks home in Scotland, didn't get much shooting done but did manage my best ever bag about 500m from my house. Don't normally get on to these fields so it was a bonus as most of my land could not get harvested because of the changeable weather.

My mate shot crap (not my usual decoying partner, he tried 3 different guns throughout the day!!, a novice really but wouldn't take my advice)

I got 211 kills out of the total bag of 268 head my average was 2 to 1 which I was quite pleased with as I started slowly. 240 pigeons, 19 crows, 9 ferals. Best day on Pigeons was 200 before this. At times I couldn't load quick enough.

Quite a lot of Pigeons around in the area, but no one making large bags, my game dealer said that this was the largest he has had thus far at harvest which would be unusual, he's still giving 30p/pigeon and 80p for head shot rabbit's which is pretty good. - Hammy





## Lost Homing Pigeons

I can't believe no-one has any pigeon recipes. Here's two of my faves:

### Several Roasted Pigeon in Cider

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Take at least four birds, dressed but with feet attached.  
Find a roasting tin into which they fit snugly.  
Make a stuffing of: brown bread crumbs, juniper berries,  
parsley, red wine vinegar, eggs.  
Stuff the birds in a jar, combine:

- cider
- honey
- onions (chopped coarsely)
- garlic
- herbs (whatever you have in the garden)

and stand for 1h.

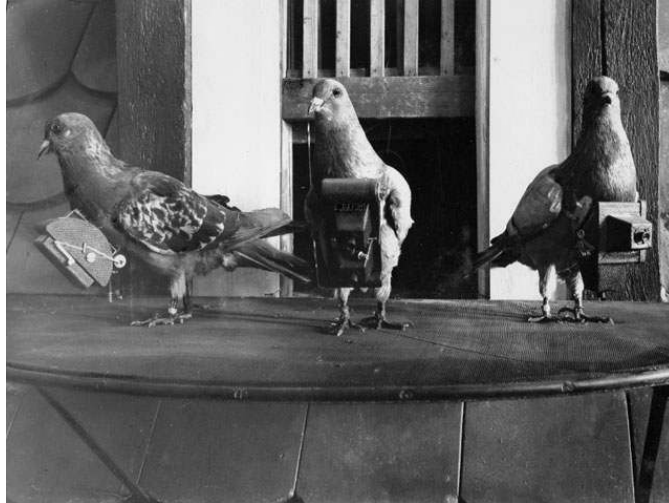
Pour jar over birds in dish. Roast for ~1h or less.



French soldier in WWI with pigeons on his back.



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Pigeon Breasts Stuffed with Black Pudding and Wrapped in Bacon

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For each breast:

cut most of the way through the breast, along the long edge.

fill the gap thus created with mashed black pudding and berries of your choice.

wrap securely in fatty bacon.

wrap in clingfilm.

poach gently for ~20m.

- Jim Whitson Hot Shot Pigeon Shooter

Very simple pigeon recipe

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Take breast on bone add onions and carrot pour tin of either French onion soup or ox tail soup and cook in slow oven for 1 hour . Thats it !

- Greylurcher Newbie Pigeon Shooter



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sources include:

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Pigeon wearing aerial surveillance camera, Germany, circa 1917-18  
©2002 International Spy Museum

[http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/pigeons\\_and\\_world\\_war\\_one.htm](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/pigeons_and_world_war_one.htm)

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