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Small domesticated birdDomestic pigeonA selection of domestic pigeon breeds and colors, the result of centuries of selective breeding[a]Conservation statusDomesticated Scientific classification Kingdom:AnimaliaPhylum:ChordataClass:AvesOrder:ColumbiformesFamily:ColumbidaeGenus:ColumbaSpecies:C.liviaSubspecies:C.l. domesticaTrinomial nameColumba livia domesticaGmelin, 1789[1]SynonymsColumba domesticaColumba livia rusticaThe domestic pigeon (Columba livia domestica or Columba livia forma domestica)[2] is a pigeon subspecies that was derived from the rock dove or rock pigeon. The rock pigeon is among the world's oldest domesticated birds: mesopotamian cuneiform tablets mention the domestication of pigeons more than 5,000 years ago, as do Egyptian hieroglyphics.Pigeons have held historical importance to humans as food, pets, holy animals, and messengers. Due to their homing ability, pigeons have been used to deliver messages, including during the world wars. Despite this, city pigeons, which are feral birds, are generally seen as pests, mainly due to their droppings and a reputation for spreading disease.Emperor Honorius is a historically prominent individual who kept pigeons as pets.Despite the long history of pigeons, little is known about the specifics of their initial domestication. Which subspecies of C. livia was the progenitor of domestics, exactly when, how many times, where and how they were domesticated, and how they spread, remains unknown. Their fragile bones and similarity to wild birds make the fossil record a poor tool for their study. Thus most of what is known comes from written accounts, which almost certainly do not cover the first stages of domestication.[3][4][5]Dovecote at Nymans Gardens, West Sussex, EnglandPigeons were most likely domesticated in the Mediterranean at least 20005000 years ago, and may have been domesticated earlier as a food source.[6] Some research suggests that domestication occurred as early as 10,000 years ago.[7][8]The earliest recorded mention of pigeons comes from Mesopotamia some 5,000 years ago.[9] Pigeon Valley in Cappadocia has rock formations that were carved into ancient dovecotes. Ancient Egyptians kept vast quantities of them, and would sacrifice tens of thousands at a time for ritual purposes.[10] Akbar the Great traveled with a coterie of thousands of pigeons.[11][12][13][14]The domestic pigeon was brought to the Americas by European colonists as an easy source of food and as messengers. Some sources state the species was first introduced to North America in 1606 at Port Royal, Nova Scotia,[15] although other sources cite Plymouth and Jamestown settlements in the early 17th century as the first place for species introduction in North America.[16]Around the 18th century, European interest in fancy pigeons began, and breeders there greatly expanded the variety of pigeons, importing birds from the Middle East and South Asia and mixing different breeds to create new ones.[4][8] Among these European fanciers was Charles Darwin, who was famously requested to write a book on pigeons during the process of writing On the Origin of Species. His own experiences with pigeon fancying would ultimately lead to another book; The Variation of Animals and Plants Under Domestication.[17][11]Because domestic and feral pigeons have extensively interbred with wild rock doves, genetically pure wild-type pigeons may not exist anymore, or are nearly extinct. This frequent admixture further muddies the true origins of pigeons.[4][5]A Spread Ash Pomeranian show crest pigeon, showing one of the forms of feather crest that pigeons may possessFrom a genetic perspective, there are two loose ancestral clades of pigeons, but there is striking genetic homogeneity due to frequent interbreeding and human directed cross-breeding; pigeon fanciers often do not enforce breed standards, unlike with dogs. The first ancestral clade contains pigeons with exaggerated crops, tails, and manes; the second contains tumblers (the most diverse group), homing pigeons, owl pigeons, and those with exaggerated wattles.[4] Over the millennia of human interaction with pigeons, a multitude of pigeon breeds have been created, which differ in either plumage or body structure.[citation needed]Some varieties of domestic pigeon have modified feathers called "fat quills". These feathers contain yellow, oil-like fat that derives from the same cells as powder down. This is used while preening and helps reduce bacterial degradation of feathers by feather bacilli.[18]A wild-type pigeon is closest in markings to the rock dove, which possesses a gradienting, slate-grey head and body with a green-purple iridescent neck, and ash-grey wings and tail with dark, often black, barring.[19] Due to millennia of selective breeding, including crossing with other Columba species, domestic pigeons possess major variations in plumage; often two birds from the same clutch may be of different color. The domestic pigeon possesses 3 main colors; the wild-type blue, brown, and ash-red. This variation in color is linked to the parent's sex chromosomes; as animals with the ZW chromosome system, cockbirds possess the color genes from both parents, while hens only inherit their father's color and patterns. Additionally, there is some dominance observed; ash-red is dominant over the other two base colors, while blue is dominant over brown.[20] Recessive red is a unique color which is inherited differently from the three base ones; it is distinct from ash-red in that the bird always is a uniform chestnut color.[21]Another important aspect of pigeon markings is the pattern on the wing coverts, which exists in four variants; wild-type bar, check, T-check, and barless. T-check is the most dominant pattern, followed by check, barred, and the least dominant barless pattern.[22] Additionally, the modifiers spread and dilute affects the expression of the color; the spread gene spreads the color of the bird's tail to its entire body, while dilute lightens the bird's overall color, as if were a dye being diluted to reduce its saturation.[23][24]There are many other markings present in pigeons; among them are milky, almond, opal, dirty, indigo, grizzle, and various "stencil" and "bronzing" factors; all of which further modify the base markings of a bird. Conversely, pigeons possess multiple genetic pathways that can produce a completely white bird.[25]A recessive allele in the EphB2 gene controls the crested-feather mutation in domestic pigeons.[26] Pigeons with two copies of the crest allele grow neck and head feathers that point towards the top of the head, unlike other feathers that point towards the tail.[27] Additionally, bacterial growth analysis suggests that crested pigeons have reduced bacterial-killing abilities due to reduced kinase activity.[28] Pigeons may express the crest gene differently depending on its genetic heritage; two squabs from the same brood descending from the same pair may have one bird develop a peak crest, and the other a wild-type smooth head.[29]White Cropper pigeon with feathered feetPigeons with feathers growing on their feet have differently expressed genes: a hindlimb-development gene called PITX1 is less active than normal, and a forelimb-development gene called Tbx5 that normally develops the wings is also active in the feet, causing both feather growth and larger leg bones. The cause of these changes is a change in the regulatory sequences of DNA that control the expression of the Pitx1 and the Tbx5 genes, rather than mutations in the genes themselves.[30][31] Pigeon foot feathering has been studied as a potential model for the transition from feathered to "scaled" feet in non-avian dinosaurs.[32] It is thought that large feathers, especially flight feathers on the feet were lost in all living birds as it was too inefficient in powered flight. Domestic pigeons quickly overheated when flying with their scaled feet covered, and it is thought that the loss of microraptorian-like hind-wings allowed for more efficient powered flight.[33]Pouter- or cropper breeds exhibity the trait of inflating their crops with air, producing their signature "globe". This trait is inheritable and partially dominant, though cockbirds tend to exhibit this trait more than females.[25] Some cropper breeds may have issues with passing food and water through their crops, though this problem isn't universal and can be treated by owners.[34]There is strong evidence that some divergences in appearance between the wild-type rock dove and domestic pigeons, such as checkered wing patterns and red/brown coloration, may be due to introgression by cross-breeding with the speckled pigeon.[35][36][37][38]Domestic pigeons may be crossed with the ringneck dove (Streptopelia risoria) to create offspring, but the offspring are not fertile.[39][40]See also: Pigeon keepingTwo very young pigeon chicks, perhaps a few hours old. Domestic pigeons hatch out blind, immobile, and covered in down.Domestic pigeons reproduce exactly as wild rock pigeons do;[19] settling in a safe, cool nook, building a flimsy stick nest, and laying two eggs that are incubated for a little longer than two weeks, usually 17 to 19 days.[3] A pigeon keeper may select breeding partners, but in an open loft the birds choose their own mate. Both sexes of pigeons are extremely protective of their eggs and young, and often defend them vigorously from nest predators,[3] including their human keepers; they are defensive of their personal space, and see their nests as extensions of said space.[41]Baby pigeons are squabs,[3] squeakers,[42][43] or peepers, the latter two being a reference to their cry when begging for food.[44] Initially, the squabs are fed by their parents with crop milk, which contains high amounts of protein and fat,[45] some breeds are bred into such debilitating forms that they may require human intervention to produce squabs successfully, which necessitates the owner to raise them themselves by feeding the chicks with special squab formula (similar to infant formula)[46] or by fostering them under another pair of pigeons. This may also be necessary if the parents are unable or unwilling to raise the squab.[47][17] When fed by their parents, the squabs develop much faster than other species of poultry, such as quail,[45] and fostering in human care may be more effective than using a surrogate pair of pigeons.[47]As the chicks grow and become more mobile and alert, their parents transition them to their adult food of seeds and grains. A pigeon hen may start a new clutch before her previous one has fledged, in which case her mate raises the previous clutch on his own.[48][19] Pigeons reach their adult size around four weeks of age,[45][49][48] and after fledging the chicks will follow their parents to the communal feeding ground; areas with plentiful forage that a pigeon flock uses. Here the chicks gain their independence and integrate into pigeon society.[19]Domestic pigeons were selected to breed faster than their wild ancestors;[50] a lack of a breeding season,[3] abundance of food in a domestic setting, and swift maturity (squabs fledge in about a month, and often have already bred and fledged a few clutches of their own before reaching a year in age) leads to swift population growth of pigeons in the flock. This fact, and the number of pigeons lost in races or intentionally released, leads to exponential growth in free-living, feral populations.[citation needed]Feral pigeon nest with two eggsNestlings, one dayNestling, five daysNestlings, about 10 days18 days oldYoung bird, 22 daysFeral pigeons in courtshipMain article: Feral pigeon PathogensPigeon breeders sometimes suffer from an ailment known as bird fancier's lung or pigeon lung. A form of hypersensitivity pneumonitis, pigeon lung is caused by the inhalation of the avian proteins found in feathers and dung. It can sometimes be combated by wearing a filtered mask.[51]Other pigeon related pathogens causing lung disease are Chlamydophila psittaci (which causes psittacosis), Histoplasma capsulatum (which causes histoplasmosis) and Cryptococcus neoformans, which causes cryptococcosis. Avian paramyxovirus is carried by pigeons and is a serious affliction in birds.[52][clarification needed]Avian mites may infest domestic pigeons and cause gamasoidosis in humans. There are several methods to treat birds infested with mites or louse, including external insecticides and oral medicine.[53]This section does not cite any sources. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. (March 2025) (Learn how and when to remove this message)Two squabs in their nest. Sharing this trait with many columbids, a domestic pigeon hen has a maximum clutch size of two.Main article: SquabPigeons bred for meat are generally referred to as a meat or utility breed. The term "squab" can either refer to young birds or the meat harvested from them; these birds grow to a very large size in the nest before they fledge and are able to fly; during this stage of development they are often fattier and seen as being tastier than the fully-flighted adults. Squabs during this stage are valued as food; in Neolithic and early agricultural communities they were an easy and reliable source of protein, the birds requiring only reliable sources of grains and water (which they independently foraged for) to enter breeding condition, and the rock formations they nested in would have made for attractive dwellings for early humans.Pigeon meat, both from squabs and from adult birds, are still a source of protein for people worldwide.[45] Breeds of pigeons harvested for their meat during adulthood are collectively known as utility pigeons. For commercial meat production a breed of large white pigeon, the King pigeon, has been developed by selective breeding.[54]Main articles: Homing pigeon and Pigeon racingPigeon in flight. Coupled with their honed sense of direction, the flight speed of a homing pigeon made them a reliable, sometimes the only, method of sending small objects over long distances.Homing pigeons are a specialized type of pigeon bred for navigation and speed. Originally developed through selective breeding to carry messages,[55] most notably during warfare,[3] members of this variety of pigeon are still being used in the sport of pigeon racing and the ceremony of releasing white doves at social events.[56]These breeds of domestic pigeons, especially when trained are able to return to the home loft if released at a location that they have never visited before and that may be up to 1,000km (620mi) away. This ability of a pigeon to return home from a foreign location necessitates two sorts of information. The first, called "map sense" is their geographic location. The second, "compass sense" is the bearing they need to fly from their new location to reach their home. Both of these senses, however, respond to a number of different cues in different situations. The most popular conception of how pigeons are able to do this is that they are able to sense the Earth's magnetic field[b] with tiny magnetic tissues in their head (magnetoception), though the exact location of the magnetoception organ is still being researched;[63][64] Areas of the pigeon brain that respond with increased activity to magnetic fields are the posterior vestibular nuclei, dorsal thalamus, hippocampus, and visual hyperpallium.[65][66] Wherever the organ is, pigeons can detect magnetic anomalies as weak as 1.86 gauss.[67]Another theory is that pigeons have compass sense, which uses the position of the sun, along with an internal clock, to work out direction. However, studies have shown that if magnetic disruption or clock changes disrupt these senses, the pigeon can still manage to get home. The variability in the effects of manipulations to these sense of the pigeons indicates that there is more than one cue on which navigation is based and that map sense appears to rely on a comparison of available cues.[68]Other potential cues used includeThe use of a sun compass[69]Nocturnal navigation by stars[70]Visual landmark map[71][72]Navigation by infrasound map[73]Polarised light compass[74]Olfactory stimuli[75][76] (see also olfactory navigation)Main article: Flying/Sporting pigeonsPigeons of different plumage in flightPigeons are also kept by enthusiasts for the enjoyment of Flying/Sporting competitions. Unlike racers, these birds are not released far from their home lofts; breeds such as tipplers are bred for the ability to hover above the loft for hours at a time. Their ability to hover for a long time shows the ability of the keeper to select for endurance.[citation needed]Wild pigeons naturally flip or somersault when evading aerial predators such as large-bodied falcons; they are naturally selected by the extreme speeds that some stooping falcons reach (over 320km/h (200mph)),[77] being able to dodge this attack at the last second. Tumbler and roller pigeons are bred to enhance this ability;[25][78] some birds have been recorded to be able to somersault on the ground and land on its feet, and some breeds are even deliberately bred to a point where the rolling ability is debilitative, being wholly unable to fly due to it.[25][78]A breed called the zurito, bred for its speed, may be used in live pigeon shooting.[79][80]This section does not cite any sources. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. (March 2025) (Learn how and when to remove this message)Main article: Fancy pigeonPigeon fanciers developed many exotic forms of pigeon through selective breeding. Perhaps the simplest form of display pigeon are those of white plumage, either truly albino or merely white-feathered; these white birds were seen as holy animals or heralds of peace and are well represented in both ancient and contemporary culture.As pigeonkeepers accrued more experience, they started selecting for increasingly more unusual features in their birds; features such as unusual plumage patterns and colors, various crests, foot feathering, altered stance and proportion, or unusual behaviors are well represented in extant pigeon breeds. These birds are generally classed as fancy pigeons.Pigeon shows are conventions where pigeon fanciers and breeders meet to compete and trade their fancy pigeons. The various pigeon breeds dubbed "American show" were developed specifically by pigeon show frequenters pursuing a certain show standard determined by the National Pigeon Association. Fanciers compete against each other at exhibitions or shows and the different forms or breeds are judged to a standard to decide who has the best bird.There are many fancy or ornamental breeds of pigeons: among them are the English carrier pigeons, a variety of pigeon with prominent wattles and an almost vertical stance, the Duchess breed, which has as a prominent characteristic feet that are completely covered by a sort of fan of feathers, the fantails with a fan of tail feathers like a peacock, and the Voorburg Shield Cropper which are bred to inflate their crops in an effort to woo their handlers.Variety of fancy pigeonsArchangel showing its extensive iridescenceOld Dutch CapuchineLucerne Gold CollarOriental FrillOld German OwlOld Dutch OwlEnglish OwlChinese OwlValencian Figurita, one of the smallest breeds of pigeonPortuguese tumbler, another small breed of pigeonOld Dutch TumblerThe Giant Runt, one of the largest pigeon breedsGhent CropperHolle CropperSilesian CropperVoorburg Shield CropperNorwich CropperPygmy pouterAmerican Show RacerDutch Beauty HomerGarden or English FantailAmerican FantailIndian FantailDanzig HighflyerOriental RollerBirmingham RollerDanish TumblerZagreb TumblerMain article: Pigeon intelligenceDomestic pigeons are model organisms commonly used in laboratory experiments relating to biology; often to test medicines and chemical substances, or in cognitive sciences. Research in pigeons is widespread, encompassing shape and texture perception, exemplar and prototype memory, category-based and associative concepts, and many more unlisted here (see pigeon intelligence).[citation needed]Pigeons have been trained to distinguish between cubist and impressionist paintings.[81] In Project Sea Hunt, a US coast guard search and rescue project in the 1970s/1980s, pigeons were shown to be more effective than humans in spotting shipwreck victims at sea.[82]Pigeons are able to acquire orthographic processing skills,[83] which form part of the ability to read, and basic numerical skills equivalent to those shown in primates.[84]Pigeons have notably been "employed" as medical imaging data sorters. They have been successfully trained under research conditions to examine data on a screen for the purposes of detecting breast cancer. They appear to use their innate visual navigation skills to do so.[85]Pigeons are sometimes kept as indoor pets, with the practice's popularity growing over recent years.[86] These pet pigeons may be outfitted with "pigeon pants" (a diaper-like garment) to maintain cleanliness,[87] and some birds may be "potty trained".[88]Domestic pigeons, especially the leucistic and albinistic specimens commonly referred to as "white doves", have had a long history in symbolism.[89]In the United States, some pigeon keepers illegally trap and kill hawks and falcons to protect their pigeons.[90] In the West Midlands region of the United Kingdom pigeon fanciers have been blamed for a trap campaign to kill peregrine falcons. Eight illegal spring-loaded traps were found close to peregrine nests and at least one of the birds died. The steel traps are thought to have been set as part of a "concerted campaign" to kill as many of the birds as possible in the West Midlands.[91]A large flock of feral pigeonsMain article: Feral pigeonMany domestic birds have escaped or been released over the years, and have given rise to the feral pigeon.[8] As a result of inherited genetic variation, feral pigeons demonstrate a wide variety of plumage patterns and colors, ranging from closely resembling wild rock doves, to patterns directly inherited from their domestic ancestors, though over time a population tends to homogenize and adopt a plumage that suits their environment, such as camouflaging against black asphalt, and birds that have distinct coloration from flockmates are more often targeted by predators.[92][93] The scarcity of the pure wild species is partly due to interbreeding with feral birds. Domestic pigeons can often be distinguished from feral pigeons because they usually have a numbered metal or plastic band around one (sometimes both) legs which shows that they are registered to an owner.[94]Feral pigeons bear striking genetic resemblance to homing pigeons, supporting the idea that most feral pigeons trace their origins to homing pigeons who did not find their way home, or were otherwise sired by homing pigeons.[4][8] The huge numbers of birds released in pigeon races and loft owners breaking down their lofts and leaving the pigeons to fend for themselves may be a significant factor in the persistence of urban pigeons. Ferals started to become maligned in the 1930s-40s, culminating when New York City parks commissioner Thomas coined the term rats with wings in June 1966.[95][89]^ Breeds depicted are: Middle-billed TumblerGerman DrumAnatolian TurbitRomanCoburg LarkAntwerp CarrierStrasserLynxNunMalteseCarrierLong-billed TumblerFantailEnglish Pouter^ [57][58][59][60][61][62]^ "Columba livia Gmelin, 1789" (Web data). ITIS Report. Retrieved 26 February 2008.^ Krautwald-Junghanns, Maria-Elisabeth; Zebisch, Ralph; Schmidt, Volker (2009). "Relevance and Treatment of Coccidiosis in Domestic Pigeons (Columba livia forma domestica) with Particular Emphasis on Toltrazuril". Journal of Avian Medicine and Surgery. 23 (1). Association of Avian Veterinarians: 15. doi:10.1647/2007-049R.1. JSTOR27670700. PMID19530399. S2CID31939394.^ a b c d e f Levi, Wendell (1977). The Pigeon. Sumter, S.C.: Levi Publishing Co, Inc. ISBN978-0-85390-013-9.^ a b c d e Gilbert, M. Thomas P.; Shapiro, Michael D. (2014). 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called "map sense" is their geographic location. The second, "compass sense" is the bearing they need to fly from their new location to reach their home. Both of these senses, however, respond to a number of different cues in different situations. The most popular conception of how pigeons are able to do this is that they are able to sense the Earth's magnetic field[b] with tiny magnetic tissues in their head (magnetoception), though the exact location of the magnetoception organ is still being researched;[63][64] Areas of the pigeon brain that respond with increased activity to magnetic fields are the posterior vestibular nuclei, dorsal thalamus, hippocampus, and visual hyperpallium.[65][66] Wherever the organ is, pigeons can detect magnetic anomalies as weak as 1.86 gauss.[67]Another theory is that pigeons have compass sense, which uses the position of the sun, along with an internal clock, to work out direction. However, studies have shown that if magnetic disruption or clock changes disrupt these senses, the pigeon can still manage to get home. The variability in the effects of manipulations to these sense of the pigeons indicates that there is more than one cue on which navigation is based and that map sense appears to rely on a comparison of available cues.[68]Other potential cues used includeThe use of a sun compass[69]Nocturnal navigation by stars[70]Visual landmark map[71][72]Navigation by infrasound map[73]Polarised light compass[74]Olfactory stimuli[75][76] (see also olfactory navigation)Main article: Flying/Sporting pigeonsPigeons of different plumage in flightPigeons are also kept by enthusiasts for the enjoyment of Flying/Sporting competitions. Unlike racers, these birds are not released far from their home lofts; breeds such as tipplers are bred for the ability to hover above the loft for hours at a time. Their ability to hover for a long time shows the ability of the keeper to select for endurance.[citation needed]Wild pigeons naturally flip or somersault when evading aerial predators such as large-bodied falcons; they are naturally selected by the extreme speeds that some stooping falcons reach (over 320km/h (200mph)),[77] being able to dodge this attack at the last second. Tumbler and roller pigeons are bred to enhance this ability;[25][78] some birds have been recorded to be able to somersault on the ground and land on its feet, and some breeds are even deliberately bred to a point where the rolling ability is debilitative, being wholly unable to fly due to it.[25][78]A breed called the zurito, bred for its speed, may be used in live pigeon shooting.[79][80]This section does not cite any sources. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. (March 2025) (Learn how and when to remove this message)Main article: Fancy pigeonPigeon fanciers developed many exotic forms of pigeon through selective breeding. Perhaps the simplest form of display pigeon are those of white plumage, either truly albino or merely white-feathered; these white birds were seen as holy animals or heralds of peace and are well represented in both ancient and contemporary culture.As pigeonkeepers accrued more experience, they started selecting for increasingly more unusual features in their birds; features such as unusual plumage patterns and colors, various crests, foot feathering, altered stance and proportion, or unusual behaviors are well represented in extant pigeon breeds. These birds are generally classed as fancy pigeons.Pigeon shows are conventions where pigeon fanciers and breeders meet to compete and trade their fancy pigeons. The various pigeon breeds dubbed "American show" were developed specifically by pigeon show frequenters pursuing a certain show standard determined by the National Pigeon Association. Fanciers compete against each other at exhibitions or shows and the different forms or breeds are judged to a standard to decide who has the best bird.There are many fancy or ornamental breeds of pigeons: among them are the English carrier pigeons, a variety of pigeon with prominent wattles and an almost vertical stance, the Duchess breed, which has as a prominent characteristic feet that are completely covered by a sort of fan of feathers, the fantails with a fan of tail feathers like a peacock, and the Voorburg Shield Cropper which are bred to inflate their crops in an effort to woo their handlers.Variety of fancy pigeonsArchangel showing its extensive iridescenceOld Dutch CapuchineLucerne Gold CollarOriental FrillOld German OwlOld Dutch OwlEnglish OwlChinese OwlValencian Figurita, one of the smallest breeds of pigeonPortuguese tumbler, another small breed of pigeonOld Dutch TumblerThe Giant Runt, one of the largest pigeon breedsGhent CropperHolle CropperSilesian CropperVoorburg Shield CropperNorwich CropperPygmy pouterAmerican Show RacerDutch Beauty HomerGarden or English FantailAmerican FantailIndian FantailDanzig HighflyerOriental RollerBirmingham RollerDanish TumblerZagreb TumblerMain article: Pigeon intelligenceDomestic pigeons are model organisms commonly used in laboratory experiments relating to biology; often to test medicines and chemical substances, or in cognitive sciences. Research in pigeons is widespread, encompassing shape and texture perception, exemplar and prototype memory, category-based and associative concepts, and many more unlisted here (see pigeon intelligence).[citation needed]Pigeons have been trained to distinguish between cubist and impressionist paintings.[81] In Project Sea Hunt, a US coast guard search and rescue project in the 1970s/1980s, pigeons were shown to be more effective than humans in spotting shipwreck victims at sea.[82]Pigeons are able to acquire orthographic processing skills,[83] which form part of the ability to read, and basic numerical skills equivalent to those shown in primates.[84]Pigeons have notably been "employed" as medical imaging data sorters. They have been successfully trained under research conditions to examine data on a screen for the purposes of detecting breast cancer. They appear to use their innate visual navigation skills to do so.[85]Pigeons are sometimes kept as indoor pets, with the practice's popularity growing over recent years.[86] These pet pigeons may be outfitted with "pigeon pants" (a diaper-like garment) to maintain cleanliness,[87] and some birds may be "potty trained".[88]Domestic pigeons, especially the leucistic and albinistic specimens commonly referred to as "white doves", have had a long history in symbolism.[89]In the United States, some pigeon keepers illegally trap and kill hawks and falcons to protect their pigeons.[90] In the West Midlands region of the United Kingdom pigeon fanciers have been blamed for a trap campaign to kill peregrine falcons. Eight illegal spring-loaded traps were found close to peregrine nests and at least one of the birds died. The steel traps are thought to have been set as part of a "concerted campaign" to kill as many of the birds as possible in the West Midlands.[91]A large flock of feral pigeonsMain article: Feral pigeonMany domestic birds have escaped or been released over the years, and have given rise to the feral pigeon.[8] As a result of inherited genetic variation, feral pigeons demonstrate a wide variety of plumage patterns and colors, ranging from closely resembling wild rock doves, to patterns directly inherited from their domestic ancestors, though over time a population tends to homogenize and adopt a plumage that suits their environment, such as camouflaging against black asphalt, and birds that have distinct coloration from flockmates are more often targeted by predators.[92][93] The scarcity of the pure wild species is partly due to interbreeding with feral birds. Domestic pigeons can often be distinguished from feral pigeons because they usually have a numbered metal or plastic band around one (sometimes both) legs which shows that they are registered to an owner.[94]Feral pigeons bear striking genetic resemblance to homing pigeons, supporting the idea that most feral pigeons trace their origins to homing pigeons who did not find their way home, or were otherwise sired by homing pigeons.[4][8] The huge numbers of birds released in pigeon races and loft owners breaking down their lofts and leaving the pigeons to fend for themselves may be a significant factor in the persistence of urban pigeons. Ferals started to become maligned in the 1930s-40s, culminating when New York City parks commissioner Thomas coined the term rats with wings in June 1966.[95][89]^ Breeds depicted are: Middle-billed TumblerGerman DrumAnatolian TurbitRomanCoburg LarkAntwerp CarrierStrasserLynxNunMalteseCarrierLong-billed TumblerFantailEnglish Pouter^ [57][58][59][60][61][62]^ "Columba livia Gmelin, 1789" (Web data). ITIS Report. Retrieved 26 February 2008.^ Krautwald-Junghanns, Maria-Elisabeth; Zebisch, Ralph; Schmidt, Volker (2009). "Relevance and Treatment of Coccidiosis in Domestic Pigeons (Columba livia forma domestica) with Particular Emphasis on Toltrazuril". Journal of Avian Medicine and Surgery. 23 (1). Association of Avian Veterinarians: 15. doi:10.1647/2007-049R.1. JSTOR27670700. PMID19530399. S2CID31939394.^ a b c d e f Levi, Wendell (1977). The Pigeon. Sumter, S.C.: Levi Publishing Co, Inc. ISBN978-0-85390-013-9.^ a b c d e Gilbert, M. Thomas P.; Shapiro, Michael D. (2014). 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La vocalizacin del ronroneo es relajante y puede comunicar una sensacin de calma y satisfaccin.Aplaudiendo: Otra vocalizacin que realizan las Palomas Domsticas es aplaudiendo, donde rpidamente juntan sus picos para producir un sonido agudo y chasquido. El aplauso de los picos se realiza a menudo durante los rituales de cortejo y puede servir como muestra de fuerza y vitalidad.Silbido de Alas: cuando estn en vuelo, las Palomas Domsticas pueden producir un sonido distintivo conocido como silbido de alas. Este ruido es causado por el aire que pasa a travs de las plumas de las alas durante el aleteo, creando un suave silbido o zumbido. Se puede escuchar el silbido de las alas cuando las palomas bravas despegan o maniobran en el aire.Llamadas de alarma: Las Palomas Domsticas tienen llamadas de alarma que utilizan para alertar a los miembros de su bandada sobre posibles amenazas o peligros. Estas llamadas de alarma suelen ser arrullos o cloqueos rpidos y agudos que indican peligro e incitan a otras palomas a estar alerta o tomar medidas evasivas.Llamadas Agresivas: durante disputas territoriales o encuentros agresivos, las Palomas Domsticas pueden vocalizar con arrullos o arrullos speros y guturales. Estos llamados agresivos tienen como objetivo intimidar a los rivales y afirmar el dominio sobre el territorio o los recursos.Welcome to the National Pigeon Association (NPA) website.The NPA is the governing body of Fancy Pigeons in Great Britain. We control the issue of rings, Championship Shows and the exhibiting of pigeons. The NPA supports affiliated breed clubs and societies, sometimes in the form of monetary grants and loans, to enable them to continue to provide shows of good quality for the benefit of the whole Fancy.The NPA caters for over 200 varieties of Fancy and Flying Pigeons. Many are old breeds from the United Kingdom but also breeds that have been imported and developed in this country. Our aim is to breed and exhibit our stock at shows throughout the country from local clubs and agricultural shows to larger shows and Championship Shows organised by various clubs and societies. Many of the breeds have their own individual breed club, but those that do not are catered for by the Variety Pigeon Club. Fancy Pigeon shows may only be held under the rules of the NPA, and pigeons may only be exhibited bearing a ring issued by the NPA, or a recognised ring issued by the breed clubs of the various flying pigeons or rings issued by a recognised foreign club. We issue Challenge Certificates at Championship Shows - a bird must win 5 Challenge Certificates (only 2 as a young bird) under 4 separate judges to be recognised as a True Champion.The NPA has a wide variety of fanciers from the very experienced exhibitor to the novice, and are very keen to introduce young people into a rewarding and not necessarily expensive hobbyXFacebookPinterestRedditShareThe domestic pigeon (Columba livia domestica) is far more than a common city bird. With a complex social life, impressive cognitive abilities, and centuries of history living alongside humans, pigeons are both biologically and culturally remarkable. Lets dive into 12 fascinating characteristics that make this bird stand out.1. Highly Social CreaturesPigeons Thrive in FlocksPigeons (Columba livia domestica) are among the most sociable avian species, displaying strong flocking behavior that is deeply rooted in their evolutionary history. Whether inhabiting rocky cliffs in the wild or nesting among skyscrapers in bustling cities, pigeons rarely live in isolation. Instead, they form cohesive flocks ranging from a few individuals to several hundred, driven by both survival needs and complex social instincts.Living in groups offers pigeons several evolutionary advantages. When foraging, flocks increase efficiency by sharing information about food sourcesan ability supported by their sharp visual memory and observational learning. In terms of predator avoidance, the collective vigilance of many eyes allows the group to detect threats faster, often giving individuals precious seconds to escape aerial hunters like falcons or hawks.Their social bonds extend beyond mere proximity. Pigeons engage in frequent mutual preening, vocal communication, and coordinated flight maneuvers. These interactions help maintain group cohesion and reduce aggression. Pairs often stay monogamous and cooperate closely in raising their chicks, taking turns incubating eggs and feeding hatchlings with nutrient-rich pigeon milk. Even juvenile pigeons benefit from being part of the flock, learning social cues and flight skills through imitation and shared experiences.In essence, pigeons dont just survive in flocksthey flourish. Their social nature is a key factor behind their remarkable adaptability and success in both natural habitats and human-altered environments.2. Exceptional Homing AbilityThey Can Return from Hundreds of Miles AwayPigeons possess an astonishing navigational talent known as homing ability, enabling them to return to their nest or roost site from distances of up to 1,000 miles. This remarkable skill has fascinated scientists for decades and stems from a complex interplay of sensory mechanisms and environmental cues.At the core of their orientation system lies the ability to detect the Earths magnetic field, a sense called magnetoreception. Specialized cells in their beaks or brain are believed to perceive subtle geomagnetic variations, helping them determine direction even when visual cues are unavailable. Complementing this internal compass is their capacity to use the sun position as a celestial guide, adjusting for time of day through an internal circadian clocka trait demonstrated in controlled experiments with altered light cycles.In addition to celestial and magnetic cues, pigeons rely heavily on olfactory navigation. Studies have shown that they use atmospheric odors carried by wind currents to create an olfactory map of their environment. Furthermore, pigeons can recognize and memorize familiar visual landmarks, such as rivers, highways, and buildings, creating a mental topographic map that guides them home.During both World Wars, homing pigeons played a vital role as living messengers. Despite gunfire, bad weather, or injury, many completed missions successfully, carrying critical intelligence across enemy lines. One famous pigeon, Cher Ami, saved nearly 200 soldiers in World War I by delivering a message while wounded.The homing ability of pigeons is not just a biological marvelits a testament to how evolution has fine-tuned their sensory systems to achieve feats of navigation that still surpass many modern technologies.3. Strong Pair BondsLifelong MonogamyPigeons are renowned for their enduring fidelity, often forming monogamous pair bonds that last a lifetime. This deep social connection is more than just matingit is a cooperative partnership built on shared responsibilities and synchronized behaviors that enhance reproductive success.Courtship in pigeons is a complex ritual involving cooing vocalizations, bowing displays, and mutual preening. Once a pair forms, the bond is solidified through continued close contact, nest building, and synchronized movements. Unlike many bird species that rely primarily on the female for parental duties, pigeons share parenting responsibilities equally. The male typically gathers nesting materials, while the female arranges them, and both partners take turns incubating the eggsmales usually during the day, females at night.After hatching, the cooperation continues. Both parents produce a nutrient-rich secretion known as pigeon milk from the lining of their crop. This unique substance, packed with protein and fat, is regurgitated directly into the mouths of the squabs (baby pigeons) for their first days of life. Few other bird species share this trait, and it underscores the level of physiological investment both parents contribute to their young.Even outside the breeding season, bonded pigeon pairs often remain side by side, reinforcing their connection through grooming and coordinated flight. This long-term monogamy is not only rare among birds but also evolutionarily advantageous, as it increases the chances of offspring survival and reduces the energy cost of finding new mates.The strength and stability of pigeon pair bonds exemplify their high level of social intelligence and emotional complexityqualities that continue to captivate both scientists and bird enthusiasts alike.4. Fast and Enduring FliersSpeeds Up to 100 km/hDespite their stout bodies, pigeons are remarkably powerful and efficient fliers. Equipped with robust pectoralis major musculeswhich make up nearly 3035% of their total body massthese birds generate rapid, forceful wing beats that propel them through the air at speeds reaching up to 100 kilometers per hour (62 mph).Their wings are broad but pointed, ideal for both burst acceleration and sustained gliding, allowing them to maintain high speeds over long distances without fatigue. In homing pigeon races, some individuals have been documented flying hundreds of kilometers in a single day, often across complex landscapes and under varying weather conditions. Their large heart and efficient respiratory system, featuring unidirectional airflow through air sacs, enable high oxygen delivery to muscles, supporting prolonged exertion.In flight, pigeons exhibit agile maneuverability, able to turn sharply, dodge obstacles, and even perform mid-air adjustments to maintain formation or evade predators. Their natural flight prowess, refined over millennia of evolution and enhanced through selective breeding, makes them not only durable travelers but also surprisingly graceful aviators in urban skies.5. Advanced Visual MemoryRecognizing Faces and PlacesPigeons are not just creatures of instinctthey possess a sophisticated visual cognition system that rivals that of some primates. Research has demonstrated that pigeons can recognize and remember individual human faces, even after long periods without exposure. This capacity isnt limited to people; they can also distinguish between complex patterns, shapes, and imagesskills often tested in controlled laboratory settings.Their visual processing is supported by a large optic tectum and a dense concentration of photoreceptors in the retina, granting them exceptional resolution and motion detection. Pigeons can even perceive ultraviolet light, which enhances their ability to detect subtle visual cues in the environment.This advanced memory allows pigeons to navigate intricate urban landscapes with uncanny precision, remembering not only routes and landmarks but also locations of food sources and potential dangers. In homing experiments, pigeons trained to fly between two points have been shown to choose the most familiar and efficient pathseven when starting from unfamiliar surroundingssuggesting that they construct and retain detailed spatial maps of their territory.Such cognitive prowess highlights pigeons as more than just urban dwellersthey are highly intelligent navigators with memory capabilities that continue to challenge our understanding of avian brains.6. Urban AdaptabilityThriving Alongside HumansFew bird species have adapted to city life as successfully as the pigeon. Originally native to rocky cliffs and coastal regions of Europe, North Africa, and western Asia, feral pigeons (Columba livia domestica) have seamlessly transitioned into the modern urban world. Their intelligence, behavioral flexibility, and dietary generalism have enabled them to flourish in environments profoundly different from their ancestral

Feral pigeon PathogensPigeon breeders sometimes suffer from an ailment known as bird fancier's lung or pigeon lung. A form of hypersensitivity pneumonitis, pigeon lung is caused by the inhalation of the avian proteins found in feathers and dung. It can sometimes be combated by wearing a filtered mask.[51]Other pigeon related pathogens causing lung disease are Chlamydophila psittaci (which causes psittacosis), Histoplasma capsulatum (which causes histoplasmosis) and Cryptococcus neoformans, which causes cryptococcosis. Avian paramyxovirus is carried by pigeons and is a serious affliction in birds.[52][clarification needed]Avian mites may infest domestic pigeons and cause gamasoidosis in humans. There are several methods to treat birds infested with mites or louse, including external insecticides and oral medicine.[53]This section does not cite any sources. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. (March 2025) (Learn how and when to remove this message)Two squabs in their nest. Sharing this trait with many columbids, a domestic pigeon hen has a maximum clutch size of two.Main article: SquabPigeons bred for meat are generally referred to as a meat or utility breed. The term "squab" can either refer to young birds or the meat harvested from them; these birds grow to a very large size in the nest before they fledge and are able to fly; during this stage of development they are often fattier and seen as being tastier than the fully-flighted adults. Squabs during this stage are valued as food; in Neolithic and early agricultural communities they were an easy and reliable source of protein, the birds requiring only reliable sources of grains and water (which they independently foraged for) to enter breeding condition, and the rock formations they nested in would have made for attractive dwellings for early humans.Pigeon meat, both from squabs and from adult birds, are still a source of protein for people worldwide.[45] Breeds of pigeons harvested for their meat during adulthood are collectively known as utility pigeons. For commercial meat production a breed of large white pigeon, the King pigeon, has been developed by selective breeding.[54]Main articles: Homing pigeon and Pigeon racingPigeon in flight. Coupled with their honed sense of direction, the flight speed of a homing pigeon made them a reliable, sometimes the only, method of sending small objects over long distances.Homing pigeons are a specialized type of pigeon bred for navigation and speed. Originally developed through selective breeding to carry messages,[55] most notably during warfare,[3] members of this variety of pigeon are still being used in the sport of pigeon racing and the ceremony of releasing white doves at social events.[56]These breeds of domestic pigeons, especially when trained are able to return to the home loft if released at a location that they have never visited before and that may be up to 1,000km (620mi) away. This ability of a pigeon to return home from a foreign location necessitates two sorts of information. The first, called "map sense" is their geographic location. The second, "compass sense" is the bearing they need to fly from their new location to reach their home. Both of these senses, however, respond to a number of different cues in different situations. The most popular conception of how pigeons are able to do this is that they are able to sense the Earth's magnetic field[b] with tiny magnetic tissues in their head (magnetoception), though the exact location of the magnetoception organ is still being researched;[63][64] Areas of the pigeon brain that respond with increased activity to magnetic fields are the posterior vestibular nuclei, dorsal thalamus, hippocampus, and visual hyperpallium.[65][66] Wherever the organ is, pigeons can detect magnetic anomalies as weak as 1.86 gauss.[67]Another theory is that pigeons have compass sense, which uses the position of the sun, along with an internal clock, to work out direction. However, studies have shown that if magnetic disruption or clock changes disrupt these senses, the pigeon can still manage to get home. The variability in the effects of manipulations to these sense of the pigeons indicates that there is more than one cue on which navigation is based and that map sense appears to rely on a comparison of available cues.[68]Other potential cues used includeThe use of a sun compass[69]Nocturnal navigation by stars[70]Visual landmark map[71][72]Navigation by infrasound map[73]Polarised light compass[74]Olfactory stimuli[75][76] (see also olfactory navigation)Main article: Flying/Sporting pigeonsPigeons of different plumage in flightPigeons are also kept by enthusiasts for the enjoyment of Flying/Sporting competitions. Unlike racers, these birds are not released far from their home lofts; breeds such as tipplers are bred for the ability to hover above the loft for hours at a time. Their ability to hover for a long time shows the ability of the keeper to select for endurance.[citation needed]Wild pigeons naturally flip or somersault when evading aerial predators such as large-bodied falcons; they are naturally selected by the extreme speeds that some stooping falcons reach (over 320km/h (200mph)),[77] being able to dodge this attack at the last second. Tumbler and roller pigeons are bred to enhance this ability;[25][78] some birds have been recorded to be able to somersault on the ground and land on its feet, and some breeds are even deliberately bred to a point where the rolling ability is debilitative, being wholly unable to fly due to it.[25][78]A breed called the zurito, bred for its speed, may be used in live pigeon shooting.[79][80]This section does not cite any sources. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. (March 2025) (Learn how and when to remove this message)Main article: Fancy pigeonPigeon fanciers developed many exotic forms of pigeon through selective breeding. Perhaps the simplest form of display pigeon are those of white plumage, either truly albino or merely white-feathered; these white birds were seen as holy animals or heralds of peace and are well represented in both ancient and contemporary culture.As pigeonkeepers accrued more experience, they started selecting for increasingly more unusual features in their birds; features such as unusual plumage patterns and colors, various crests, foot feathering, altered stance and proportion, or unusual behaviors are well represented in extant pigeon breeds. These birds are generally classed as fancy pigeons.Pigeon shows are conventions where pigeon fanciers and breeders meet to compete and trade their fancy pigeons. The various pigeon breeds dubbed "American show" were developed specifically by pigeon show frequenters pursuing a certain show standard determined by the National Pigeon Association. Fanciers compete against each other at exhibitions or shows and the different forms or breeds are judged to a standard to decide who has the best bird.There are many fancy or ornamental breeds of pigeons: among them are the English carrier pigeons, a variety of pigeon with prominent wattles and an almost vertical stance, the Duchess breed, which has as a prominent characteristic feet that are completely covered by a sort of fan of feathers, the fantails with a fan of tail feathers like a peacock, and the Voorburg Shield Cropper which are bred to inflate their crops in an effort to woo their handlers.Variety of fancy pigeonsArchangel showing its extensive iridescenceOld Dutch CapuchineLucerne Gold CollarOriental FrillOld German OwlOld Dutch OwlEnglish OwlChinese OwlValencian Figurita, one of the smallest breeds of pigeonPortuguese tumbler, another small breed of pigeonOld Dutch TumblerThe Giant Runt, one of the largest pigeon breedsGhent CropperHolle CropperSilesian CropperVoorburg Shield CropperNorwich CropperPygmy pouterAmerican Show RacerDutch Beauty HomerGarden or English FantailAmerican FantailIndian FantailDanzig HighflyerOriental RollerBirmingham RollerDanish TumblerZagreb TumblerMain article: Pigeon intelligenceDomestic pigeons are model organisms commonly used in laboratory experiments relating to biology; often to test medicines and chemical substances, or in cognitive sciences. Research in pigeons is widespread, encompassing shape and texture perception, exemplar and prototype memory, category-based and associative concepts, and many more unlisted here (see pigeon intelligence).[citation needed]Pigeons have been trained to distinguish between cubist and impressionist paintings.[81] In Project Sea Hunt, a US coast guard search and rescue project in the 1970s/1980s, pigeons were shown to be more effective than humans in spotting shipwreck victims at sea.[82]Pigeons are able to acquire orthographic processing skills,[83] which form part of the ability to read, and basic numerical skills equivalent to those shown in primates.[84]Pigeons have notably been "employed" as medical imaging data sorters. They have been successfully trained under research conditions to examine data on a screen for the purposes of detecting breast cancer. They appear to use their innate visual navigation skills to do so.[85]Pigeons are sometimes kept as indoor pets, with the practice's popularity growing over recent years.[86] These pet pigeons may be outfitted with "pigeon pants" (a diaper-like garment) to maintain cleanliness,[87] and some birds may be "potty trained".[88]Domestic pigeons, especially the leucistic and albinistic specimens commonly referred to as "white doves", have had a long history in symbolism.[89]In the United States, some pigeon keepers illegally trap and kill hawks and falcons to protect their pigeons.[90] In the West Midlands region of the United Kingdom pigeon fanciers have been blamed for a trap campaign to kill peregrine falcons. Eight illegal spring-loaded traps were found close to peregrine nests and at least one of the birds died. The steel traps are thought to have been set as part of a "concerted campaign" to kill as many of the birds as possible in the West Midlands.[91]A large flock of feral pigeonsMain article: Feral pigeonMany domestic birds have escaped or been released over the years, and have given rise to the feral pigeon.[8] As a result of inherited genetic variation, feral pigeons demonstrate a wide variety of plumage patterns and colors, ranging from closely resembling wild rock doves, to patterns directly inherited from their domestic ancestors, though over time a population tends to homogenize and adopt a plumage that suits their environment, such as camouflaging against black asphalt, and birds that have distinct coloration from flockmates are more often targeted by predators.[92][93] The scarcity of the pure wild species is partly due to interbreeding with feral birds. Domestic pigeons can often be distinguished from feral pigeons because they usually have a numbered metal or plastic band around one (sometimes both) legs which shows that they are registered to an owner.[94]Feral pigeons bear striking genetic resemblance to homing pigeons, supporting the idea that most feral pigeons trace their origins to homing pigeons who did not find their way home, or were otherwise sired by homing pigeons.[4][8] The huge numbers of birds released in pigeon races and loft owners breaking down their lofts and leaving the pigeons to fend for themselves may be a significant factor in the persistence of urban pigeons. Ferals started to become maligned in the 1930s-40s, culminating when New York City parks commissioner Thomas coined the term rats with wings in June 1966.[95][89]^ Breeds depicted are: Middle-billed TumblerGerman DrumAnatolian TurbitRomanCoburg LarkAntwerp CarrierStrasserLynxNunMalteseCarrierLong-billed TumblerFantailEnglish Pouter^ [57][58][59][60][61][62]^ "Columba livia Gmelin, 1789" (Web data). ITIS Report. Retrieved 26 February 2008.^ Krautwald-Junghanns, Maria-Elisabeth; Zebisch, Ralph; Schmidt, Volker (2009). "Relevance and Treatment of Coccidiosis in Domestic Pigeons (Columba livia forma domestica) with Particular Emphasis on Toltrazuril". Journal of Avian Medicine and Surgery. 23 (1). Association of Avian Veterinarians: 15. doi:10.1647/2007-049R.1. JSTOR27670700. PMID19530399. S2CID31939394.^ a b c d e f Levi, Wendell (1977). The Pigeon. Sumter, S.C.: Levi Publishing Co, Inc. ISBN978-0-85390-013-9.^ a b c d e Gilbert, M. Thomas P.; Shapiro, Michael D. (2014). 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Retrieved 11 March 2025.National Pigeon Association (USA)National Pigeon Association (Great Britain) Archived 28 July 2013 at the Wayback MachineThe Canadian Pigeon Fanciers AssociationDomestic Pigeons Explained (Pigeonpedia)Pigeonetics, a game by the University of UtahPigeons Do Backflips? How Genetics Makes Them Flip! Retrieved from " is an ancient pastime, as is evidenced by the fact that archeologists have uncovered material that places the domestication of pigeons in Egypt, at some 6000 years BC. It is a hobby that is, and has been enjoyed by people of all walks of life, including the Royal Families of a number of countries, including England and Belgium and famous movie stars from all areas of the world.We feel a great sense of pride and accomplishment in seeing our association still alive and active after more than 115 years of existence. Please browse through our site, and as you learn a little about our favorite pastime and hobby, you may find yourself interested by what we have to offer, because there are some 768 different breeds of domesticated pigeons to tease your fancy.(source Encyclopedia of Pigeon Breeds by Wendell M. Levi). The Backyard Hobby of Yesterday and Today! 2026 NPA Grand National Pigeon ShowOklahoma City, OklahomaMore Information Posted On Our National Show Page 100 Year Anniversary BookPurchase Your Book Today While They Last!NPA Store 2026 NPA Grand National ShowJanuary 23-25, 2026 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma NPA SecretaryTim HeidrichPO Box 295 Winston, GA 30187 1.404.922.4960 npasecretary@yahoo.com Monday-Friday: 10-6 Eastern TimeSaturday: ClosedSunday: ClosedNational Pigeon Association Provided by PigeonClubsUSA.com a subsidiary of PCGOTECH, LLC - PigeonClubsUSA.com Las palomas, cientficamente conocidas como Columba livia, son aves muy comunes en todo el mundo. Sin embargo, lo que muchos no saben es que existen diferentes razas de palomas dentro de esta especie. Cada una de estas razas tiene caracterstcas nicas en cuanto a su apariencia, comportamiento y habilidades. Como veterinario experto en animales y mascotas, es importante conocer estas diferencias para poder brindar el mejor cuidado y atencin a estas aves. En este artculo, exploraremos algunas de las razas ms populares de palomas y aprenderemos ms sobre sus peculiaridades.ndice La paloma domstica, conocida cientficamente como Columba Livia Domestica, es una de las aves ms comunes y reconocibles en todo el mundo. Su nombre cientfico tiene un significado interesante y revelador sobre su origen y relacin con otras especies de palomas.El gnero Columba se refiere a un grupo de aves que incluye a las palomas y las trtolas. Este nombre proviene del latn y significa paloma. Es un trmino amplio que abarca varias especies de palomas, incluyendo la paloma domstica.El eptelo especfico Livia tambin tiene sus races en el latn y se deriva de la palabra livor, que significa azul grisceo. Este trmino se utiliza para describir el color caracterstico de las plumas de la paloma domstica, que varan en tonos de gris y azul.El trmino Domestica se refiere a la domesticacin de esta especie de paloma. A lo largo de la historia, las palomas han sido criadas y mantenidas en cautiverio por su utilidad como mensajeras, para la cra de palomas mensajeras y como animales de compaa. La domesticacin ha llevado a la aparicin de diferentes variedades de palomas domsticas, con caracterstcas fsicas y comportamentales especficas. Explorando la longevidad de la paloma domstica La longevidad de la paloma domstica es un tema de interes para los amantes de las aves y los investigadores en el campo de la biologa. Estas aves, conocidas por su capacidad de vuelo y su belleza, han sido criadas y domesticadas por el ser humano desde hace siglos.La longevidad de una paloma domstica puede variar dependiendo de diversos factores, como la gentica, el cuidado que recibe y el entorno en el que vive. En condiciones ptimas, una paloma domstica puede vivir entre 10 y 15 aos, aunque se han registrado casos de palomas que han superado los 20 aos de edad.El cuidado adecuado de una paloma domstica es fundamental para garantizar su longevidad. Esto incluye proporcionarle una alimentacin balanceada y adecuada a sus necesidades nutricionales, as como un ambiente limpio y seguro. Adems, es importante brindarles atencin veterinaria regular para prevenir y tratar cualquier enfermedad o condicin de salud que puedan presentar.La gentica tambin juega un papel importante en la longevidad de las palomas domsticas. Algunas lneas de palomas han sido seleccionadas a lo largo de los aos por su resistencia y longevidad, lo que ha llevado a que ciertas cepas sean ms longevas que otras. El nombre comn de Columba livia: Sabas cmo se le conoce popularmente? La Columba livia, tambin conocida como paloma comn, es una especie de ave que pertenece a la familia Columbidae. Es una de las aves ms comunes y ampliamente distribuidas en el mundo.Esta especie es conocida popularmente con diferentes nombres en distintas regiones. En algunos lugares se le llama simplemente paloma, mientras que en otros se le conoce como paloma domstica o paloma urbana.La paloma comn es un ave de tamao mediano, con un cuerpo robusto y una cola larga y redondeada. Su plumaje vara en colores, pero generalmente es gris en la parte superior y blanco en la parte inferior. Adems, tienen un collar negro en el cuello y manchas negras en las alas.Estas aves son conocidas por su capacidad de adaptacin a diferentes entornos, lo que les ha permitido colonizar tanto reas urbanas como rurales. Se alimentan principalmente de semillas, granos y frutas, y suelen anidar en edificios, rboles o acantilados.La paloma comn es considerada una plaga en algunas zonas urbanas debido a su gran poblacin y a los daos que pueden causar en edificios y cultivos. Sin embargo, tambin son apreciadas por muchas personas como smbolo de paz y belleza. Explorando la dieta de las palomas domsticas: Qu comen las Columba livia? Las palomas domsticas, cientficamente conocidas como Columba livia, son aves muy comunes en reas urbanas y rurales. Aunque a menudo se les considera como aves de plaga, son animales fascinantes que han desarrollado una estrecha relacin con los seres humanos a lo largo de la historia.En cuanto a su alimentacin, las palomas domsticas son omnvoras, lo que significa que comen una variedad de alimentos tanto de origen vegetal como animal. Su dieta se compone principalmente de semillas, granos, frutas y verduras. Estas aves tambin pueden consumir insectos, gusanos y pequeos invertebrados.Las semillas y los granos son una parte fundamental de la dieta de las palomas domsticas. Estas aves pueden alimentarse de una amplia variedad de semillas, como maz, trigo, avena y girasol. Adems, tambin consumen frutas como manzanas, uvas y bayas, as como verduras como lechuga, zanahorias y guisantes.Es importante destacar que las palomas domsticas necesitan acceso a agua fresca para mantenerse hidratadas. Beben agua regularmente y tambin pueden obtenerla de los alimentos que consumen.En entornos urbanos, las palomas domsticas a menudo encuentran alimento en parques, plazas y reas residenciales. Sin embargo, tambin pueden depender de la comida proporcionada por los seres humanos, como migas de pan y restos de comida. Aunque estas aves pueden adaptarse a diferentes fuentes de alimento, es importante recordar que una dieta equilibrada y variada es fundamental para su salud y bienestar. Gracias por acompaarnos en este recorrido por las fascinantes razas de Columba livia! Esperamos que hayas disfrutado de la informacin y que te haya sido til para conocer ms sobre estas hermosas aves. Si tienes alguna pregunta o comentario, no dudes en contactarnos. Nos vemos en el prximo artculo!Si quieres ver otros artculos similares a Las mejores razas de palomas: conoce la diversidad de Columba livia puedes visitar la categora Aves o revisar los siguientes artculos 494 The Racing Homer pigeon, scientifically known as Columba livia domestica, is a remarkable breed revered for its exceptional homing instinct and friendly nature. Originating in Europe and refined for racing in Belgium and England, this breed has become a popular choice for racing, showing, and companionship around the world. Whether youre a pigeon racing enthusiast or a bird lover, their fascinating traits make Racing Hom