

From messengers to companions: The fascinating history of pigeons as pets.

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Pigeons are a common sight in urban environments, often seen as dirty and unappealing. But what most people don't know is that pigeons have a rich history as pets. In fact, they weren't always just messengers or street birds. For centuries, pigeons have been bred and kept for their beauty, loyalty, and intelligence. They were adored by royalty, featured in art, and even used as a form of communication during wartime. Today, pigeons are still kept as pets by enthusiasts all over the world. In this post, we'll take a look back at the fascinating history of pigeons as pets, their many uses over the years, and how they have evolved from messengers to companions.

1. Introduction to the History of Pigeons as Pets

Pigeons have been around for thousands of years and have played various roles in human society. From being used as messengers during wars and conflicts to being bred for racing and exhibition purposes, these birds have been an integral part of human history. However, not many people are aware of pigeons being kept as pets. Surprisingly, pigeons have been kept as pets for centuries and have been a source of joy and companionship for many people throughout history. Pigeons are doves and all pigeons are columbida. The Columbidae family includes thousands of different variations. The mixup on the language is derived from a mistranslated germanic word. It is said that the ancient Egyptians and Sumerians kept pigeons as pets and even worshipped them as symbols of fertility, love, justice, and loyalty. As time passed, the practice of keeping pigeons as pets spread throughout the world, and different breeds were developed for various purposes. Today, there are thousands of pigeon breeds, each with unique characteristics and qualities that make them a popular choice for pet lovers around the globe. In this blog post, we will explore the fascinating history of pigeons as pets and how they have evolved from messengers to beloved companions.

2. Pigeons in Ancient Cultures: Sacred Birds and Symbols of Peace

Pigeons have been revered and celebrated in many ancient cultures dating back to thousands of years ago. In ancient Egypt, pigeons were seen as sacred birds and were associated with the goddess Isis. They were the holy animal in Sumer to the Non-Binary God known as Inanna and in other places Ishtar. Our few assumed depictions and statues of them always depict pigeons on them. They were also used in religious ceremonies and their droppings were believed to have medicinal properties. In ancient Greece, pigeons were associated with Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty.

In the Bible, the story of Noah's Ark tells of a dove, which is a type of pigeon, being sent out to find land after the flood. The dove returned with an olive branch, which has become a symbol of peace.

Pigeons were also used as messengers in ancient Persia, Rome, and China. They were trained to carry messages over long distances and were highly valued for their ability to deliver important information. In fact, during the Siege of Paris in 1870, pigeons were used to deliver messages from inside the city to the outside world.

The importance of pigeons in ancient cultures is a testament to the fascinating history of these birds. Even today, pigeons continue to be celebrated and appreciated for their beauty, intelligence, and loyalty as pets.

3. Domestication of Pigeons: From Messengers to Companions

Pigeons have been domesticated for thousands of years and their history is fascinating. Initially, pigeons were domesticated for their ability to deliver messages over long distances. They were used as messengers in ancient Persia, Greece, and Rome. They were also used during World War I and World War II to carry important messages across enemy lines.

However, over time, people began to appreciate pigeons for more than just their message-carrying abilities. Pigeons were bred for their beauty and unique characteristics. Different breeds of pigeons were created through selective breeding, producing a wide variety of colors, sizes, and patterns.

As pigeons became more popular as pets, they were no longer just messengers but also loving companions. Pigeons are intelligent birds that can recognize their owners and respond to their touch. They have incredible emotional and social capacity that we are still learning about today. I emphasize that pigeons are very social birds that enjoy the company of other pigeons and humans. They are not an animal to confine to a cage, they need a mate and/or flock mates and human companions.

In some parts of the world, pigeon breeding has become a competitive hobby. Pigeon shows and competitions are held to showcase the beauty and unique characteristics of different breeds. Pigeon fanciers take pride in their birds and invest a lot of time, effort, and money into breeding and caring for them. Which can be considered animal cruelty with the way they breed them and how some like the Fantail pigeon have been bred to have their spines do a backturn and be completely restructured from that of a healthy pigeon spine to support the body. There are even pigeons bred to have such tiny beaks that they cannot feed themselves.

In conclusion, the domestication of pigeons has been a long and fascinating journey from their role as messengers to their status as beloved companions and competitive show birds. Pigeons are truly remarkable creatures that have captured the hearts of many people throughout history.

4. Pigeon Figures in History: The Early Years

Pigeons have been around for centuries and have played an important role in history. In fact, they were domesticated as early as 4500 BC in Sumer and Mesopotamia and were used as messengers to deliver important messages to distant places and to provide people with friendship. These birds were trained to travel long distances and deliver messages to their destinations with great accuracy.

The ancient Greeks and Romans also made use of pigeons for the same purpose. In fact, Julius Caesar used pigeons to send messages to his commanders in battle, and the birds were also used to carry messages during the Olympic Games.

During the Middle Ages, carrier pigeons were used as a means of communication between castles, and they were also used during wartime to communicate with troops on the front lines. The birds were able to carry messages over long distances and were considered more reliable than other forms of communication.

Pigeons have also played a significant role in religion. In the Bible, Noah used a pigeon to determine if the floodwaters had receded, and the dove has become a symbol of peace.

Today, pigeons are still kept as pets, and while they are no longer used as messengers, they continue to be admired for their unique beauty and intelligence. With their fascinating history and continued presence in our lives, pigeons truly are remarkable creatures.

5. The Rise of the Pigeon Fancying Movement

During the mid-19th century, pigeon fancying became a popular hobby among the upper classes in Britain. It was a time when people began to appreciate pigeons not only for their practical uses but also for their aesthetic beauty. Pigeon shows were organized where breeders could exhibit their birds and compete for prizes.

The pigeon fancying movement soon spread across Europe and into North America. Fancying clubs were formed, and members would meet to discuss breeding techniques, share knowledge, and trade birds. The movement became so popular that by the end of the 19th century, there were over 100,000 pigeon fanciers in Britain alone.

The pigeons themselves also evolved during this time, with breeders developing new varieties with unique coloring and feather patterns. Some breeds were even created specifically for their appearance, rather than for practical purposes and end up having a more difficult life thanks to the body they were bred to have.

Despite its popularity, pigeon fancying faced opposition from some quarters. Critics argued that it was a frivolous and wasteful pursuit, and that the resources devoted to it could be better spent elsewhere. Nevertheless, pigeon fancying continued to grow in popularity and remains a popular hobby to this day. The most expensive pigeon ever sold was sold for over 3 million US dollars.

6. Modern Pigeon Breeds: From Show Birds to Racing Pigeons

Pigeons have come a long way from just being messengers and companions. Modern pigeon breeds have been developed for specific purposes like racing, showing, and even as therapy birds.

Racing pigeons, for example, are bred for their speed, endurance, and navigational skills. These birds are trained to fly long distances and return to their home loft, with some races covering hundreds of miles. Pigeon racing has become a popular sport around the world, with dedicated clubs and federations organizing competitions and events.

On the other hand, show pigeons are bred for their physical appearance and are judged on their size, shape, color, and feather quality. There are many different breeds of show pigeons, including the Indian Fantail, the American Giant Runt, and the English Carrier.

In recent years, pigeons have also become popular as therapy animals. These birds are trained to help people with mental and physical health problems, providing comfort, companionship, and even performing tasks like fetching items or opening doors.

Overall, the modern pigeon breeds have shown that these birds have the potential to serve various purposes, from sports and entertainment to therapy and companionship. The fascinating history of pigeons as pets continues to evolve, and it will be interesting to see how these remarkable birds continue to contribute to our lives in the future.

7. Caring for Pet Pigeons: Housing, Feeding and Health Considerations

If you are considering getting a pet pigeon, it is important to understand their housing, feeding, and health needs. Pigeons are social animals and require ample space to fly and exercise. A spacious aviary or loft with a minimum of 3-4 square feet per bird is recommended.

Pigeons are granivore-omnivores and require a balanced diet that includes grains, seeds, and occasional vegetables. It is important to avoid feeding them processed foods, as their digestive system is not designed to handle such foods. Please do not feed pigeons bread or fast food on the streets. Additionally, fresh drinking water should be available at all times.

Maintaining good health is essential for your pet pigeon. Regular check-ups with an avian veterinarian, as well as vaccinations, are recommended. Pigeons are prone to respiratory infections, so it is important to keep their living environment clean and well-ventilated.

Additionally, pigeons require regular grooming, including nail clipping and beak filing depending on the type and their diet and lifestyle.

If you are unsure about caring for a pet pigeon, it is important to do your research and consult with experienced pigeon owners or avian veterinarians. With proper care and attention, pigeons can make wonderful, affectionate companions.

8. The Role of Pigeons in Society Today

The role of pigeons in society today is multifaceted. While they are still kept as pets by enthusiasts all over the world, they also play a significant role in many areas of society. One of the most notable roles of pigeons is in racing. Pigeon racing is a popular sport in many countries, including the UK, Belgium, and South Africa. In this sport, trained pigeons are released from a specific location and race back to their home loft. The time it takes for each pigeon to return is recorded, and the fastest pigeon is declared the winner. I whole heartedly demonize pigeon racing. It is sick.

Pigeons also play a vital role in scientific research. They have been used extensively in medical research, particularly in the study of genetics and behavior. Pigeons are also used in experiments related to vision, memory, and learning.

Finally, pigeons are also a popular subject in art and literature. From Picasso's "Pigeon with Peas" to the character of Bert in Mary Poppins, pigeons have captured the imagination of artists and writers throughout history.

In conclusion, while the role of pigeons in society has evolved over time, they still remain a fascinating and important part of our world today.

9. Pigeon Racing is Animal Abuse

Pigeon racing is a popular sport in many countries, and is often seen as a game of skill. However, this is not the case. Pigeon racing is animal cruelty, and is an abuse of the animals involved. Pigeons are often treated poorly, and have their wings clipped so that they cannot fly away. They are also often deprived of food and water for extended periods of time before the race begins. The birds are then forced to race against one another to win the prize money. The birds are usually killed after the race. This is animal cruelty, and it needs to be stopped.

10. Conclusion: The Enduring Popularity of Pigeons as Pets

In conclusion, pigeons have been kept as pets for thousands of years and continue to be popular today. While they were once used primarily as messengers, they have since become beloved companions for many people around the world.

Their gentle demeanor, low maintenance requirements, and impressive intelligence make them an ideal pet for those who are looking for a unique and rewarding experience.

Over the years, people have developed a deep bond with these birds, and many have even formed communities and organizations dedicated to their care and protection like Great Lakes Pigeon Rescue and Palomacy.

Whether you are a longtime pigeon enthusiast or simply curious about these fascinating creatures, it is clear that they have made a lasting impact on the world of pets and will continue to do so for generations to come.

I hope you enjoyed learning about the fascinating history of pigeons as pets. For centuries, these birds have been more than just messengers; they have been companions to humans like me in various cultures around the world. From their roles in war to their place as modern-day companions, these birds have a rich history that is well worth exploring. I hope that this paper has given you a newfound appreciation for these loyal and intelligent creatures. If you ever consider adopting a pigeon, I recommend Great Lakes Pigeon Rescue.