

Columba (Pigeon sp.)

The pigeons are the typical representative of flying birds and are known both as wild and domesticated forms. They exhibit most of the peculiar characters of birds and are available in large numbers.

The pigeons are seen almost throughout the world, specially in tropical and temperate zones. About ten species of pigeons are found in India. Some examples are as follows-

(i) Common Green Pigeon, *Treron phoenicoptera* (throughout India),

(ii) Orange breasted Green Pigeon, *Treron bicincta* (throughout India, mainly in wet, evergreen and moist deciduous forests),

(iii) Pintailed Green Pigeon, *Treron apicauda* (Lower Himalayas)

Habits and Habitat of Pigeons:

Both the wild and domesticated forms exhibit social behaviour. They fly in flocks and roost together. Usually these birds start the day with a chorus of humming notes. In the morning and afternoon, entire flock flies to search food and water.

Food:

Most pigeons are grain or seed eaters (graminivorous), and some are frugivorous. Blue rock pigeons eat cereals, pulses and groundnuts

Courtship:

The pigeons are monogamous and partnership lasts for entire life. Fighting rarely occurs, though threatening posture during mating season is often displayed.

Nest building:

Nest building commences after courtship. The season of nesting varies in different species. Blue rock pigeons nest throughout the year.

The pigeon's nest appears to be crude and disorderly arranged, but is tough enough to face the hazards of wind and rain. The nesting materials include sticks and twigs.

Eggs and Incubation:

Each clutch includes either single or two bluish-white eggs and the parents alternately sit over the eggs. Such incubation continues for seventeen days.

Nestlings:

Newly hatched nestlings are helpless, blind and without feathers. The parents provide them first with a special kind of 'milk' and then with partly digested seeds and grains. The feathers appear after 10th day of hatching but the young pigeons continue to stay for a month with the parents.

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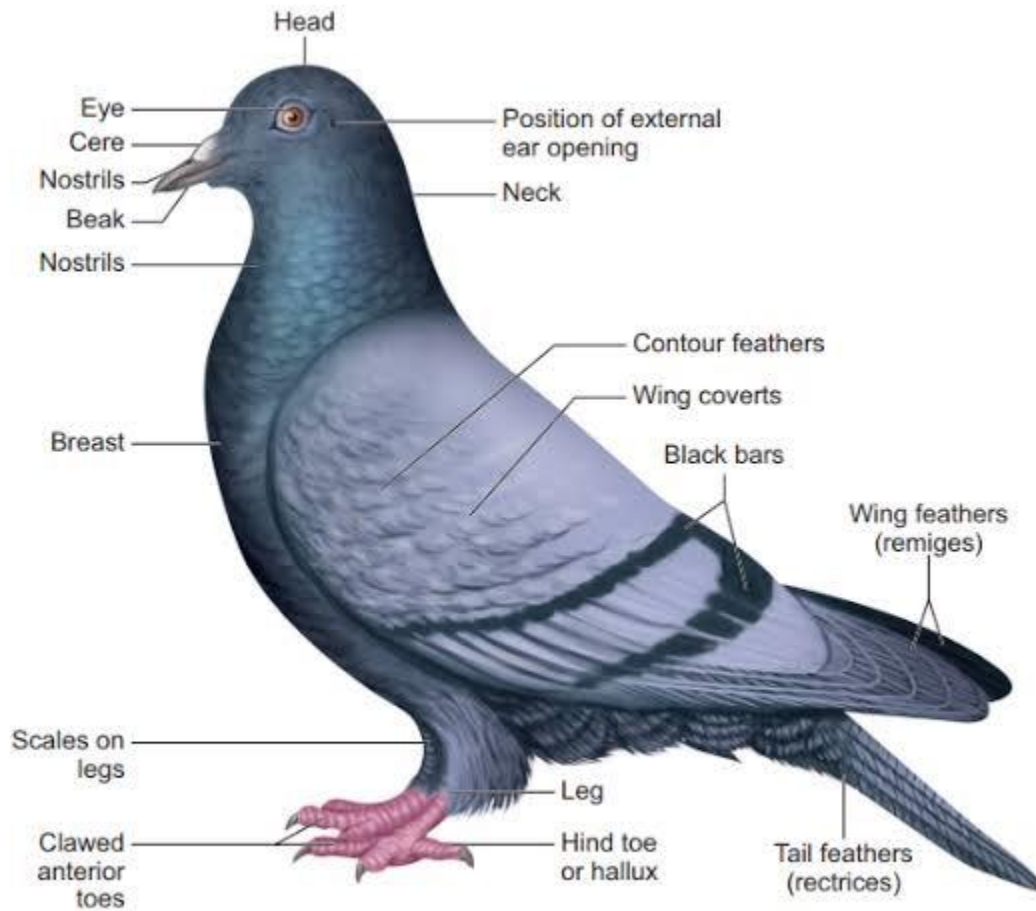


Figure 4.26 *Columba livia* – Common Rock Pigeon-External Features