

Pigeons

NP



FACT SHEET

Pictured Bird: **Diamond Dove**

Genus : **Geopelia cuneata**

Specie : **G. cuneata**

Class : **Aves**

Size : **18cm**

The average life expectancy : **up to 15 Years**

Social Structure : **Can be kept in pairs, become aggressive during breeding season.**

Enclosure : **Cage size L - 140cm x D - 105cm x H - 105cm or an Aviary**

Temperature : **Non heated**

Food : **Wild bird seed, Sunflower hearts, Veg.**

Drinking : **Will drink from a water bowl and bathe in it, also add a water feeder to provide clean water at all times.**

Breeding Female from age : **8+ Months**

Breeding Male from age : **8+ Months**

Recommended breeding age : **12+ Months**

Breeding Season : **March - August**

Live Birth or Eggs : **Eggs**

Time to Hatch / incubation period : **13 - 14 days in the warm 65 ° - 70 ° F**

HANDLING

Most birds have a fear of humans and contact unless the bird is an imprint. When handling it is best to do it with causing as much minimal stress to the bird.

When catching a bird that you feel maybe ill or showing signs of damage to wings/beak or feet, it's best to lure the bird into a smaller cage or use a dark coloured net to catch the bird. A black net helps keep the stress of the bird to a minimum.

If the bird has to be handled to check wings/beak/feet, it is always best to wear PPE as some birds will use their beak/feet/wings as a defence and attack, unless the bird had been tamed or is imprinted.

When handling it is best to secure the wings as close to the body as possible whilst causing minimal damage, damage to the wings could cause problems with flying, insulation and overall appearance of the Pigeon.

SEXING YOUR DIAMOND DOVE

MALE : Orange eye ring that is 2 - 3mm in thickness.

FEMALE : Has a much smaller eye ring and is not as bright.

FEEDING

Supplementary food diet :

Wild bird seed, Sunflower hearts. mealworms on occasions as a treat as they can be fattening, Veg (Dark leafy greens)

Although they do not need access to veg at all times it does help provide variety of the nutrients they require to keep healthy. Celery, Onions & iceberg lettuce should be avoided as should those with high water contents as these could cause you bird to have excessively runny faeces.

Water : Provide as many clean water sources as possible, if you add a bird bath it must be cleaned as often as possible or when it becomes contaminated by faeces and other contaminants. If you add a bath also add a water gravity feeder that is hard to foul.

HOUSING & HUSBANDRY

Cage : The minimum cage size required for a Pigeon is **size L - 140cm x D - 105cm x H - 105cm bar/mesh 7-12mm**

Always make sure the wire of your cage or aviary is **NOT** galvanised as this can lead to zinc poisoning.

Cage : Should be placed in a corner of a room on a stand or a table at eye height and away from a kitchen (due to possible smoke fumes), this will make the bird feel comfortable so when it feels threatened it feels it can retreat. it should be placed away from a window to exclude drafts and over heating.

Cage Cleaning : The cage must be kept as clean as possible at all times, do not place perches above one another to help prevent faeces dripping from one to another. A grated bottom is advised with a tray underneath holding a substrate such as sand - paper or gravel, this allows bird faeces food to pass through and away from the birds living area and you can remove the tray without having to put your hands in the cage

Aviary : Make sure it is large enough for the number of birds contained within & the species are the correct social group to avoid fighting. You must provide shelter from wind and a heat source if required through the colder seasons. An environment as stress free as possible is advised due to other outside predators such as cats and birds of prey. A flat concrete floor with drainage is advised with mesh between 7-10mm to keep the birds in and the predators out. sink the mesh a minimum of 15cm deep in to the base to help prevent pest rodents digging under and in. A raised edge of the base up to 30cm for birds to hide from ground passing predators and a double door to allow you entrance and exit without birds escaping.

Cleaning an Aviary : You can power wash the concrete floor and replace with a suitable bedding such as lay soft, sand or gravel which is popular with most keepers. If is an open top aviary make sure the top mesh is clean from external bird faeces contamination. be careful not to use enriched bedding that can attract parasites. All wooden appliances, perch's, supports & nesting boxes etc must be checked as often as possible for parasites, don't forget to do checks at night also as there are some mites such as red mite (blood mite) that only come out at night. if contaminated you would need to replace or treat with the correct products such as mite spray or extra mite spray.

HEALTH CHECK

Always check your Pigeon as much as possible to ensure a healthy companion, here is a list of checks to do to maintain a health animal.

A healthy Pigeon is always alert and usually interested in anything moving like humans and their surroundings. Not fluffed up on its own away from other birds.

Eyes : make sure they are clear from discharge.

Nares / Nose : make sure the nostrils are clear from discharge.

Beak : Make sure aligns correctly with no over growth, check for signs of scaly face mite where the beak joins the cere.

Feathers : Flush to body and not fluffed up.

Breathing & Lethargy : Steady non erratic breathing, fully active and aware of its surroundings with energy and fluent movements.

Anus / Vent : Check for discharge and inflammation also check to make sure the vent is clear.

Cleaning

Water: Every day water should be changed and the bowl cleaned, a Pigeon likes to bathe in its water bowl and may defecate in it.

Substrate: should be changed as and when required as again it may defecate and urinate and this can give off a nasty odour.

Cleaning: always make sure you use the appropriate cleaning solutions for your bird as you do not want put it at risk.

Enrichment

Toys : Always make sure they do **NOT** contain **ZINC** Pigeons can become easily stimulated with extra perches and natural branches, if you use natural branches do check for parasites and make sure it is from a tree that is not toxic to your bird. Apple tree branches, Willow tree and Bamboo are most commonly used. Your bird likes to be bath and clean so if able spray water on your bird to encourage cleaning and keep your bird cool in the hotter seasons.

Requirements & Equipment when purchasing

Cage / Aviary + correct size for Bird, Heating, Shelter. water bowl/bath. Food, Decor - toys & perches, A care booklet with this relevant information.

Disease / Disorder	Cause	Visual Signs / Symptoms	Treatment / Prevention
Bumble Foot Staphylococcus bacteria found in Salmonella species	Contracted through an open wound (cut - abrasion)	a visual growth of an abyss full of infection (puss)	Soak the infected foot with epsom salts and warm water. if after 5 days there is no improvement seek veterinary advice.
Aspergillosis	is a fungal disease that develops in Conditions with an excessive humidity level	Weight loss, lethargy & Breathing issues	Seek veterinary advice. Quarantine the bird and keep warm.
Internal Parasites Round Worm, Tape worm, Coccidiosis, Giardia spp	Bad husbandry, Contracted from another infected bird	Runny faeces, A dirty faeces build up around Anus/Vent area	Birds can handle most internal parasites and vitamins and treatments can be purchased from a local pet shop to help.
External Parasites Mites & Lice	Bad husbandry, contracted from another bird, incorrect bedding with too much enrichment that can harvest parasites	Bird constantly scratching, feathers parting and excessive plucking, molting wrong time of year. Tiny black dots moving around between feather partings	A Mite spray can be used to treat the bird, always read the instructions before use to make sure you apply correctly so you do not harm your bird.
PBFD Psittacine beak and feather disease (Budgerigar Fledgling Disease)	Contracted from an infected bird, blood tests need to be completed to confirm.	lack of motivation & alertness and inactive, puffed up and tatty feathers	Notify DEFRA, isolate the bird to a warm quarantined enclosure, viruses cannot be treated by antibiotics. PPE must be used.