"PROFILING THE FLIGHT PERFORMANCE OF YOUNG RACING PIGEON COMPARED TO UNTRAINED HOMER PIGEON"

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Project Work By

NESRIN C J

AB20Z00035

Under the guidance of

Ms. PARVATHY K R, Assistant Professor

Department of Zoology, St. Teresa 'College (Autonomous), Ernakulam

Kochi-683011

Submitted to St. Teresa's College (Autonomous) Ernakulam Affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam in partial fulfilment of requirement for the degree of Bachelor in Science in Zoology

2022-23

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project report entitled **“PROFILING THE FLIGHT PERFORMANCE OF YOUNG RACING PIGEON COMPARED TO UNTRAINED HOMER PIGEON”** submitted by **Ms. NESRIN C J**, Reg. No. **AB20Z00035** in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Bachelor of Science degree of Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, is a bonafide work done under my guidance and supervision and to the best of my knowledge, this is her original effort.

Ms. PARVATHY K R	**DR. SOJA LOUIS**
Assistant Professor	Head of the Department
Department of Zoology	Department of Zoology
St. Teresa's college	St. Teresa's college
Ernakulam	Ernakulam

EXAMINERS:

1)

2)

DECLARATION

I, **Ms. NESRIN C J** hereby declare that this project report entitled **“PROFILING THE FLIGHT PERFORMANCE OF YOUNG RACING PIGEON COMPARED TO UNTRAINED HOMER PIGEON”** is a bonafide record of work done by me during the academic year 2019-2020 in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Bachelor of Science degree of Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam.

This work has not been undertaken or submitted elsewhere in connection with any other academic course and the opinions furnished in this report is entirely my own.

NESRIN C J

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the effect of training on the flight performance and homing ability of pigeons. Two groups of pigeons were selected, with one group trained for racing and the other kept untrained as a control group. The flight capacity and endurance of both groups were analysed. Through the study it was discovered that trained pigeons demonstrated higher flight capacity and endurance compared to untrained pigeons. Training had a positive effect on the homing ability of the pigeons. The hours of flight required for training had a significant impact on pigeon performance, and trained pigeons exhibited different flight patterns and behaviours compared to untrained pigeons. These findings provide valuable insights into the breeding and training of pigeons for racing and as a source of communication pathway.

INTRODUCTION

Columbidae is a bird family consisting of doves and pigeons. It is the only family in the order Columbiformes. These are stout-bodied birds with short necks and short slender bills that in some species feature fleshy ceres. They primarily feed on seeds, fruits, and plants. The family occurs worldwide, but the greatest variety is in the Indo Himalayan and Australasian realms.

Pigeons and doves exhibit considerable variation in size, ranging in length from 15 to 75 centimetres and in weight from 30 g to above 2,000 g. The anatomy of Columbidae is characterized by short legs, short bills with a fleshy cere, and small heads on large, compact bodies. The wings are large, and have eleven primary feathers; pigeons have strong wing muscles and are among the strongest fliers of all birds. Columbidae have unique body feathers, with the shaft being generally broad, strong, and flattened, tapering to a fine point, abruptly. The after shaft is absent. The small ones on some tail and wing feathers may be present. Body feathers have very dense, fluffy bases, are attached loosely into the skin, and drop out easily. Columbidae are excellent fliers due to the lift provided by their large wings, which results in low wing loading; They are highly manoeuvrable in flight and have a low aspect ratio due to the width of their wings, allowing for quick flight launches and ability to escape from predators, but at a high energy cost.

Pigeon racing is the sport of releasing specially trained homing pigeons, which then return to their homes over a carefully measured distance. The time it takes the animal to cover the specified distance is measured and the bird's rate of travel is calculated and compared with all of the other pigeons in the race to determine which animal returned at the highest speed.

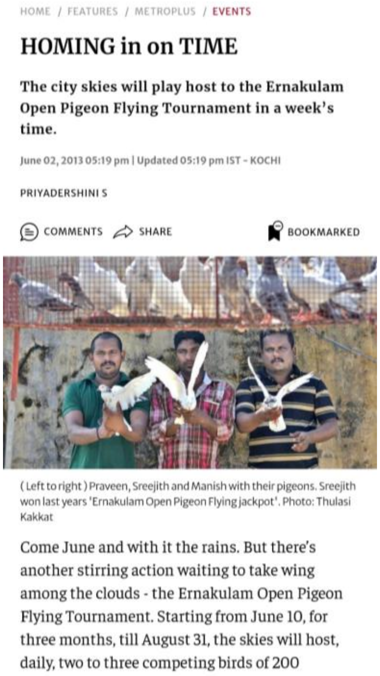
Pigeon racing requires a specific breed of pigeon bred for the sport, the Racing Homer. Competing pigeons are specially trained and conditioned for races that vary in distance from approximately 100 kilometres to 1,000 kilometres. Despite these lengths, races can be won and lost by seconds.

The Romans used pigeons to convey messages throughout the empire, for example Olympic games result for betting syndicates, and ships warning their home port of their imminent arrival.

Carrier pigeons were held in very high esteem in the Arab world, and were called "The Kings Angels", and in medieval times pigeons were brought back to Europe by the Crusaders (Columbidae).

Inexperienced homing pigeons whether they are adults or juveniles never return home. A minimum of four months are required by pigeons in order to reach flying maturity. Tumbler pigeons have no homing ability. Not only the Homer Pigeon and Highflyer Pigeons in the tumbler family are able to return home but also feral pigeons have homing ability. Tumbler Pigeons fly in a circular motion around their loft. From the top of the loft, homing pigeons can easily identify their shelter or landing board. The Lotan Pigeon is a sub-breed of tumbler pigeon and has abnormal flight. If it flies too far away from the loft it normally becomes lost and is unable to return home. The Parlour Roller is another type of performing pigeon which has lost its flying capability. When they attempt to fly, rolling occurs automatically. Racing Homer flies horizontally forward. In contrast, Tumblers or Highfliers fly vertically. The Homer Pigeon has the world long-distance flying record (Kabir et.al 2020).

NEWS ON PIGEON TRAINING AND RACING



HOME / FEATURES / METROPLUS / EVENTS

HOMING in on TIME

The city skies will play host to the Ernakulam Open Pigeon Flying Tournament in a week's time.

June 02, 2013 05:19 pm | Updated 05:19 pm IST - KOCHI

PRIYADERSHINI S

COMMENTS SHARE BOOKMARKED

(Left to right) Praveen, Sreejith and Manish with their pigeons. Sreejith won last years 'Ernakulam Open Pigeon Flying jackpot'. Photo: Thulasi Kakkat

Come June and with it the rains. But there's another stirring action waiting to take wing among the clouds - the Ernakulam Open Pigeon Flying Tournament. Starting from June 10, for three months, till August 31, the skies will host, daily, two to three competing birds of 200

FIGURE 1: THE NEWS ARTICLE TITLED "HOMING ON TIME" WAS FEATURED IN THE HINDU NEWSPAPER

കൊച്ചിൻ ഡവ് ഫ്ലയിങ് അസോസിയേഷന്റെ നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ നടത്തിയ പ്രാവു പറത്തൽ ടൂർണമെന്റിൽ വിജയികളായ പ്രാവുകൾ ടി.എ.ഫാരിസ്, സി.എസ്.ശ്രീജിത്ത് എന്നിവർക്കൊപ്പം.

പശ്ചിമ കൊച്ചിയിൽ ആവേശമായി പ്രാവു പറത്തൽ മത്സരം

FIGURE 2: NEWS ARTICLE ON MALAYALM NEWS PAPER

റെക്കോർഡ് നേട്ടം കൈവരിച്ച പ്രാവുകൾക്കൊപ്പം ബ്രദേഴ്സ് ടീം അംഗങ്ങൾ.

വിജയം കൊത്തിയെടുത്ത് ചാരപ്പിട, സുന്ദരി വെള്ള

• തുടർച്ചയായി 16.33 മണിക്കൂർ പറന്ന് പ്രാവു പറത്തൽ മൽസരത്തിൽ ബ്രദേഴ്സ് ടീം ജേതാക്കൾ

FIGURE 3: NEWS ARTICLE ON RECORD FLIGHT OF PIGEON IN MALAYALM NEWS PAPER

EFFECTIVE ASSOCIATIONS OF COCHIN

In Fort Kochi and Mattancherry, there were three major associations that organized pigeon flying competitions: Cochin Dove Flying Association (CDFA), Old Pigeon Flying Association (OPFA), and Cochin Pigeon Flying Association (CPFA). Other organizations also held competitions during the season, with at least six taking place in the area. These competitions offered cash prizes ranging from Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 100,000. About 600 pigeon fanciers awaited the annual pigeon flying season, and each participant flew a pair of pigeons at their own house as the venue for the competition. A referee was responsible for monitoring the pigeons, and their tails were sealed before flying for identification purposes. The competition started at 6 AM, with the referee sighting the pigeons every 15 minutes during the first and last hours and once every hour in between. If a participant's pigeons were not seen within the allotted time, they were disqualified from the event. ("It was Pigeon Flying Time in Kochi" - Times of India, August 8, 2019).

Racing loft

To provide adequate housing for a Racing Pigeon, it is important to have a loft with at least 3.3 square feet of space per bird. The temperature inside the loft should be maintained between 10°C to 30°C and the humidity level should be kept below 65%. Racing Pigeons typically consume 30 grams of feed daily, but this amount can double after hatching. For tumbler and highflyer pigeons, a board should be placed at the front of the loft at a height of 9 feet for them to land on. Sometimes, a red cloth is placed on the landing board to make it easier for these pigeons to spot their loft from the sky. (Kabir et.al 2020).

FIGURE 4: RACING LOFT

FIGURE 5: LANDING BOARD

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this project is to study the flight performance of trained pigeons and compare it with untrained pigeons of the same breed. Specifically, we aim to:

- Compare the flight capacity and endurance of trained and untrained pigeons of the same breed.
- Analyse the effect of training on the homing ability of pigeons.
- Explore the hours of flight required for training and their impact on pigeon performance.
- Identify the differences in the flight pattern and behaviour of trained and untrained pigeons.
- Profile the selected breed of pigeons, including the Serbian Highflyer, Chistoplian Highflyer, and Indian Rock Dove, with respect to their suitability for racing and homing abilities.

Overall, this study aims to contribute to our understanding of the biology and behaviour of pigeons, as well as the best practices for training them for racing and homing purposes.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ashraful *et al.,* conducted a study on “Pigeon Flying in the World”. The paper presented a brief history of homing pigeons and their importance in world affairs, along with information on the types of homing pigeons and the status of homing pigeons in Bangladesh. The study also provided details on the behaviour and various biological aspects of homing pigeons. In Bangladesh, racing competitions using trained Racing Homers and Highfliers fulfilled the mental demand within different age groups. Tumblers were used only for tumbling, and the Lotan Pigeon was reared only for indoor amusements. Many youngsters gained profits by maintaining successful pigeon breeding. The study suggests that in the future, more pigeon enthusiasts would come to these racing competitions with exuberance for the collaboration with other pigeon lovers (Ashraful *et al.*,2020).

Scullion in 2018 focused on “Profiling the flight performance of young racing pigeons”. They trained two groups of young pigeons and profiled flight parameters over a path of approximately 90 km. They developed a number of measures to analyse their flight performances and fitted an aerodynamic model of avian flight to the data to assess its value in predicting flight performances. Although the two groups were trained and flown independently of each other, they had very similar profiles over time. The race speeds home peaked between weeks 5-8 of training and averaged 15.0 (2.0) m/s for Group 1 and 15.6 (2.7) m/s for Group 2. The study found that flight performance in the early stages of training might have been affected by previous health conditions. However, once training progressed beyond 5 weeks, young pigeons appeared to fly at a constant preferred speed. The investigation concluded that trained young racing pigeons appeared to fly at a constant preferred speed, and flight performance during the early training stages might be affected by previous health conditions. The study also suggested that aerodynamic theories of bird flight were useful in investigating racing pigeon flight performance, but further validation studies were required. Finally, the researchers defined a number of measurements, including ground speed, air speed, Flight Performance Ratio, speed at zero wind, and flight efficiency, which were useful for the investigation of racing pigeon flight performance (Scullion, 2018).

Steven Mercieca, *et al.,* (2017) investigated the “Connection between body measurements and flying speed of racing pigeons”. The aim of their investigation had been to prove the impact of outer and inner environmental factors on the flying performances of a racing pigeon flock. The fieldwork involved taking various body measurements of 49 birds, which had been further improved by the collection of racing, meteorological, geographical, and pedigree data. Based on the age-adjusted body measurements, the birds in the actual flock were longer in wing length, narrower in wing width, and lighter in body weight compared to the birds in Horn's study. They calculated the breeding value for flying speed (BV speed) using an individual animal model that considered the proven environmental effects (fixed: year of race, wind direction, rainfall, reproductive status; covariates: distance, temperature-humidity index) along with genetic relatedness. The BV speed showed a significant association only with the real flying speed ($r = 0.71$), and there were no statistically proven correlations with the body measurements and the body condition loss. However, the wing length stayed in a closer negative connection to the loss in body condition. The association of traits was further evaluated by the use of factor analysis, which concluded that the measurement responsible for body capacity, the measurements contributing to the wing surface area, and the speed of the bird belonged to different determining groups (factors). The investigation concluded that the flying speed of the racing pigeon was not clearly determined by their body measurements, live weights, and condition losses. However, the contribution of body weight, chest depth (as breast muscle volume), and wing length to flying success was strongly imaginable and needed further research. (Steven Mercieca, *et al.,* 2017).

In their study, "Kinematics and power requirements of ascending and descending flight in the pigeon (*Columba livia*)", Angela and Andrew tested whether the mechanical power required for steady ascending or descending flight is a simple sum of the power required for level flight and the power necessary for potential energy change. Pigeons were trained to fly at various angles of ascent and descent, and their flights were recorded using high-speed video. Detailed three dimensional kinematics were obtained from the recordings to analyse wing movement, and aerodynamic forces and power requirements were then estimated from kinematic data. The researchers found that the total power output for flight at various angles was not different from the sum of power required for level flight and the PE rate of change for a given angle, except for the steep –60° descents. Additionally, the total power for steep descent was higher than this sum because of a higher induced power due to the bird's deceleration and slower flight velocity. Pigeons flew fastest during –30° flights and slowest at 60°, and the variation in wingbeat frequency was not significant across flight angles. The stroke plane angle was more horizontal, and the wing more protracted, for both +60° and –60° flights compared with other flight path angles (Angela and Andrew, 2008).

Geoffrey Ruaux, *et al.,* Conducted a study on "The development of flight behaviours in birds". The study discussed how both endogenous processes and environmental factors could affect the development of flight behaviours in birds. Examples were provided to demonstrate this point. The study also reviewed various processes involved in the development of flight in flight-capable juveniles, including practice, trial and error learning, and social learning. Although there is a lack of experimental studies investigating this question at different developmental stages, the study identified several patterns. The authors anticipate that new tracking techniques will allow for a more thorough investigation of this question in more bird species in the future. (Geoffrey Ruaux, *et al.,*2020).

The study on "Pigeon homing" by Charles Walcott focused on observations, experiments, and confusions. It was observed that homing pigeons were capable of returning from distant and unfamiliar release points, even when they were anesthetized and deprived of outward journey information. Airplane tracking had revealed that they flew relatively straight tracks on their homeward journey, suggesting that pigeons had a way of determining the home direction at the release site. Predictable deviations in flight direction relative to home were caused by manipulating the pigeon's internal clock. When the sun was not visible, clock shifts had no effect. This result had suggested a two-step system: determining the home direction and using a sun compass to fly in that direction. Pigeons used a magnetic compass when they couldn't see the sun. The use of compass cues to select and maintain the flight direction was well understood compared to the uncertainty surrounding the cues used to determine the home direction when pigeons were released at an unfamiliar site. It was likely that homing pigeons used some form of coordinate system because they generally returned successfully from any direction and distance from the loft without requiring information gathered on the outward journey. A displaced pigeon probably compared the values of some factor at the release site with its remembered value at the home loft. This factor might have been olfactory, some feature of the earth's magnetic field, or something else. There was some evidence that pigeons might have used several cues, and pigeons raised in different lofts under different environmental conditions preferred one cue over another. The flexible use of multiple cues had led to confusion in experiments on pigeon homing. (Charles Walcott, 1996).

Frantisek Zigo *et al.,* conducted a study on “The changes in enzyme activity and biochemical parameters of racing pigeons during a 300 km race”. The study aimed to monitor the muscular and metabolic strain on the birds during the race. Blood samples were collected from 14 pigeons before and after the race, and the levels of various biochemical indicators were measured. The results showed increased enzyme activity (CK, AST, ALT), elevated ALP, LDH, LAC, serum intracellular protein, and CRE levels, which were good indicators of muscle strain and damage. Recovery time was also determined through these factors. The study also found reduced CHOL values, indicating an increased oxidation of free fatty acids in the serum, which corresponded to a decrease in the level of GLU. (Frantisek Zigo *et al.*,2018).

Dr. M. Ashraful Kabir's study on “The tumbling behaviour of pigeons” found that neck muscles played a significant role in backward tumbling. Flying tumbler pigeons rolled during flight, but parlor tumblers did not have their neck muscles excited. Lateral shaking was responsible for tumbling, and there were two types of tumblers: house or parlor tumbler and flying tumbler. In the tumbler pigeon family, there were many flying tumblers, tippler, highflier, and other varieties. Auto parlor tumblers were excited by any internal or external factors that induced chemical reaction for tumbling. (Ashraful Kabir, 2012).

In 2007, Wiltschko *et al.,* conducted a study on “Pigeons”. The pigeons in the study were housed in wooden buildings with either a roof aviary or a large front aviary. They were fed a standard pigeon grain mixture designed for racing pigeons. During their first year of life, the pigeons underwent a standard training program which involved flying up to 40 km in the cardinal compass directions, as well as additional training releases up to 30 km in the spring of each year. It has been suggested that the urban environment provides an excellent opportunity for route learning due to the high visual information content of the landscape. However, it is possible that pigeons may not be able to process or memorize visual information of such detail. This is particularly true over broad scales, where urban landscapes may all appear very similar, making it difficult for pigeons to recognize a particular site. (Wiltschko *et al.*,2007).

A study was conducted by Charles Walcott on “The navigation system of pigeons”, which does not require detailed vision. Pigeons were fitted with frosted contact lenses that hindered their ability to view landmarks in detail. Ground-based and airborne radio telemetry were used to track the pigeons during their homing trips. A total of 74 experimental pigeons were released from different directions within 20 km of their home. Out of the 74 pigeons, 19 returned to the loft, 18 stopped enroute and were retrieved, and 37 were lost. In addition to the pigeons with clear lenses, 18 experimental pigeons were fitted with frosted lenses and tracked. Despite their restricted vision, these pigeons flew towards the home loft. Most of the pigeons landed near the loft, but none of them landed directly on the loft itself. These findings support the hypothesis that pigeons utilize a navigation system that does not rely on detailed vision, but is accurate enough to lead them within 0.5 to 5 km of their desired destination. (Charles Walcott, 1978).

Robin Freeman conducted an “Analysis of homing pigeon path information using coupled Bayesian Hidden Markov models”. The models were trained on GPS tracks from paired homing pigeons that were released from familiar sites. The results of the analysis showed that the homing paths of the paired pigeons exhibited similar characteristics. However, the analysis also revealed a coupling between the birds, which suggests the possibility of a leader/follower relationship between them. (Robin Freeman, 2003).

Richard and Tim Guilford conducted a study on “The potential role of large-scale terrain features in homing pigeon navigation”. Clock-shifted homing pigeons were tracked using an on-board route recorder, after being released from familiar sites located 17.1 km and 23.5 km from the home loft in Pisa, Italy.

At the first release site, located north of the home loft, the majority of clock-shifted birds exhibited relatively straight tracks that were comparable to those of control birds. However, at the second release site, located south of the home loft, the clock-shifted birds deflected in the direction predicted for the degree of clock shift. Many birds even travelled in the wrong dire.ction for a certain distance before eventually correcting their course. These observations suggest that large-scale terrain features might play a crucial role in homing pigeon navigation. (Richard and Tim Guilford, 1999).

Louis C. Graue conducted a study on “The role of distance in the initial orientation of homing pigeons”. Pigeons were selected from locations in Ohio ranging from 8 km to 320 km in each of the four cardinal compass directions, and two pigeons were released from each site.

The study found fundamental differences in homing behaviour that must involve loft site and release point connected factors. It is possible that these factors prevented a demonstration of a deterioration of initial orientation at intermediate distances for birds flying to the loft. The same factors may have contributed to the examples obtained at other locations, and the cause of this phenomenon may not be a general breakdown of the navigational system in some intermediate zone. (Louis C. Graue, 1970).

METHODOLOGY

In this project, the flight performance of young trained pigeons was compared to homing pigeons and profiled. For this, two groups of young pigeons (*Columba Livia*) were taken for the study for a time period of 6 months. One group of pigeons was trained for racing, and the other was kept as control without being given any training. The selected breeds were Serbian Highflyer, Chistoplian Highflyer, and Indian Rock Dove.

Five pairs of parent pigeons had been selected from the same group, and each pair had laid two eggs each. Within two weeks, ten eggs were collected from all. During the incubation and hatching period, there was a chance of destruction in the shell due to the inattentiveness of the pigeons, which resulted in the loss of one egg. After hatching, the first four days of breastfeeding were carried out by the mother pigeon, and for the next 11 days, the hatchlings were fed with the food consumed by the mother in the form of regurgitated liquid. Hand Feeding began in the second week, and soaked and skin-removed peas, Bengal gram, chickpeas, ground nuts were used for hand feeding, and water was given using a syringe. Hand feeding continued for one month, after which young pigeons began to feed independently and were separated from their parents. From the first month onwards, young pigeons were subjected to a one-hour sunbath to acquire immunity. During this period, one of the pigeons was lost, leaving eight pigeons in total for studying.

FIGURE 6: PICTURE OF EGG

FIGURE 7: PICTURE OF 1 WEEK OLD PIGEON

FIGURE 8: PICTURE OF 2 WEEK OLD PIGEON

The feeds used included Ragi, Bajra, Wheat, Peas, and others. After three months, the young pigeons were separated into two groups: one group for training and the other for breeding purposes. The criteria used for selecting pigeons for training were:

- 3 layers of rings outside the pupil of the eye.
- Presence of equal segments in the legs
- Length of feathers should be roughly equal
- Feathers with required mouldings and arranged without any gap

For breeding pigeons, the criteria used were a galaxy type pattern inside the pupil of the eye, pigeons that were always at rest, and had received sufficient sunbathing at regular intervals for the next 3 months.

FIGURE 9: PICTURE OF UNTRAINEDPIGEON WHITE

FIGURE 10: PICTURE OF UNTRAINED PIGEON ASH

FIGURE 11: PICTURE OF UNTRAINED PIGEON BLACK AND WHITE

FIGURE 12: PICTURE OF UNTRAINED PIGEON GEERI PULLI

The training started in the 3rd month and continued for the next 4 months. New young pigeons were introduced to the loft and allowed to fly with a group of trained pigeons for acclimatization at set time periods. This training continued for the next 3 days, and from the 4th day onwards, all the introduced pigeons, along with the trained pigeons, were allowed to fly. This pattern of training continued for the next 16 days. The newly introduced pigeons were now ready to fly without the assistance of trained pigeons. This training continued until December 8th, 2022.

FIGURE 13: PICTURE OF TRAINED PIGEON WHITISH ASH

FIGURE 14: PICTURE OF TRAINED PIGEON FULL BLACK AND ASH

FIGURE 15: PICTURE OF TRAINED PIGEON BLACK WHITE AND ASH

FIGURE 16:PICTURE OF TRAINED PIGEON DARK ASH AND BLACK

OBSERVATION AND RESULT

The flight performance of pigeons under different training regimes was profiled. The two groups of pigeons were observed for a time period of 6 months. One group of pigeons was trained for racing, and the other was kept as a control without any training. The training started from the 3rd month. Their weight was calculated from the 1st week to the next 6 months for both trained and untrained pigeons. The 2nd batch of pigeons, which was selected for breeding purposes, was always at rest, and enough sunbathing was given at regular intervals for the previous 3 months. The weight of each pigeon was calculated using an electronic weighing machine during regular intervals.

For the training of the 1st batch of pigeons, the training started on the 3rd month on 26th September 2022. The new pigeons were introduced to the trained pigeon loft (Hawaii loft), which was an open loft exposed to sunlight. This helped them to sunbathe and learn about their surroundings and locate the area. They were kept in the Hawaii loft for one week (from 27th Sep to 3rd Oct) for acclimatization. Later on, the feathers were pinned for the next 5 days (from 4th Oct to 8th Oct). They were allowed to ramble and take low flights. One by one, the pinning was removed from each pigeon within a time span of 4 days (from 9th Oct to 12th Oct). Now the pigeons scattered from the loft since they were aware of their surroundings. For the next 2 to 3 days (from 13th Oct to 15th Oct), they were allowed to have a low flight along with their companions.

On the first day of flight training, one untrained pigeon was grouped with six trained pigeons and allowed to fly for one hour in the morning. Four groups were formed, and each group was allowed to fly for one hour. By 10:00 am, the first day of flight training was completed. The second day of training continued with the same training regimen as the first day.

Subsequently, four untrained pigeons were grouped with six trained pigeons on the third day of training and allowed to fly from 6:00 am to 10:00 am for four hours. This was a longer training session compared to the previous two days, and the pigeons were given more time to practice their flying skills. On the fourth day (October 19, 2022), the pigeons took a break from training and were not allowed to fly.

Four untrained pigeons were grouped into two groups, with five trained pigeons in each group. They underwent training for the next four days (20/10/2022 to 23/10/2022), alternating between the two groups. They were allowed to fly for one and a half hours during each training session, which took place in the evening starting from 5:00 pm onwards.

From the 9th to the 12th day, the pigeons were trained in the evening. An untrained pigeon was allowed to fly, and after 2 hours of flight, 6 trained pigeons were introduced. They flew together for the next half hour. Metal halide lights were used for training, so the pigeons were able to train to fly in dim light.

For the following four days, the untrained pigeons were allowed to fly alone without the companionship of trained pigeons. Starting from the day after, the total flight time was increased day by day. For one week beginning from the 1st of November 2022, those pigeons were trained to fly from 2:00 pm to 10:00 pm, for a total of 8 hours, beginning from the 17th day. At present, the pigeons are trained.

On November 8th, the feathers of 4 pigeons were trimmed to promote the growth of new, strong feathers and increase their flight capability. The feathers were trimmed in a way that the first 4 feathers were shorter than the next 4 feathers. After two weeks, on November 23rd, the old feathers were manually pulled out to allow new ones to grow. The training was resumed once the new feathers had fully grown, which took approximately 10 days.

The training resumed on December 3rd. For the next six days, the pigeons were allowed to fly in the evening, and the duration of their flight was increased day by day, starting from 4 hours and reaching up to 9 hours of flight.

Two days of break were taken on the 9th and 10th of December 2022, during which the pigeons were allowed to sunbathe for 2 hours and fly for one hour. The training given for preparing the pigeons for racing was completed. Two days before the flight performance test, on the 11th of December 2022, the pigeons were trained from 12:00 pm to 23:00 pm. The following day was given as a break for the pigeons.

On the day of the test, the pigeons were fed with 2 Bengal grams and given one syringe full of water. The test started at 6:00 am on December 13th, 2022.

On December 13th, 2022, the test day for four different breeds of pigeons began at 6:00 am. These breeds were put to the test with their flight capabilities, and it was observed that the Dark Ash, black breed had the longest flight time of 15 hours and 12 minutes, followed by the Black, white and ash breed with 15 hours and 10 minutes of flight time. The Full black and ash breed came in third place with a flight time of 15 hours and 2 minutes, while the Whitish ash breed had a total flight time of 14 hours and 59 minutes. It's impressive to see how each breed performed during the test, with some pigeons flying for more than 15 hours straight. It highlights the training and preparation that went into these pigeons to ensure they could perform at their best.

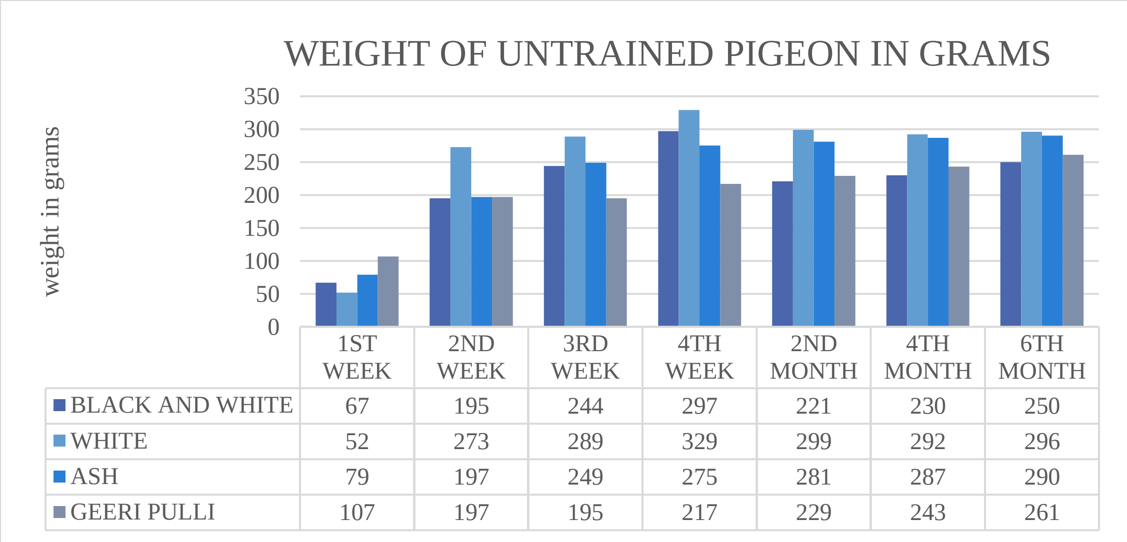
On the 14th of December, untrained pigeons were tested and their results varied. Among the four breeds, the black and white pigeon flew away and landed on a neighbour's house without completing the test. The white pigeon managed to fly for 8 minutes with maximum speed but landed immediately. The ash pigeon flew away and did not return until the next day. The Geeri Pulli breed, with spots, flew away and unfortunately never returned. These results show that training plays a significant role in the performance of racing pigeons.

TABLE 1: WEIGHT OF UNTRAINED PIGEONS FROM 1 WEEK TO 6 MONTHS IN GRAMS

BREED	1st WEEK	2nd WEEK	3rd WEEK	1st MONTH	2nd MONTH	4th MONTH	6th MONTH
Black and white	67	195	244	297	221	230	250
White	52	273	289	329	299	292	296
Ash	79	197	249	275	281	287	290
Geeri Pulli (with spots)	107	197	195	217	229	243	261

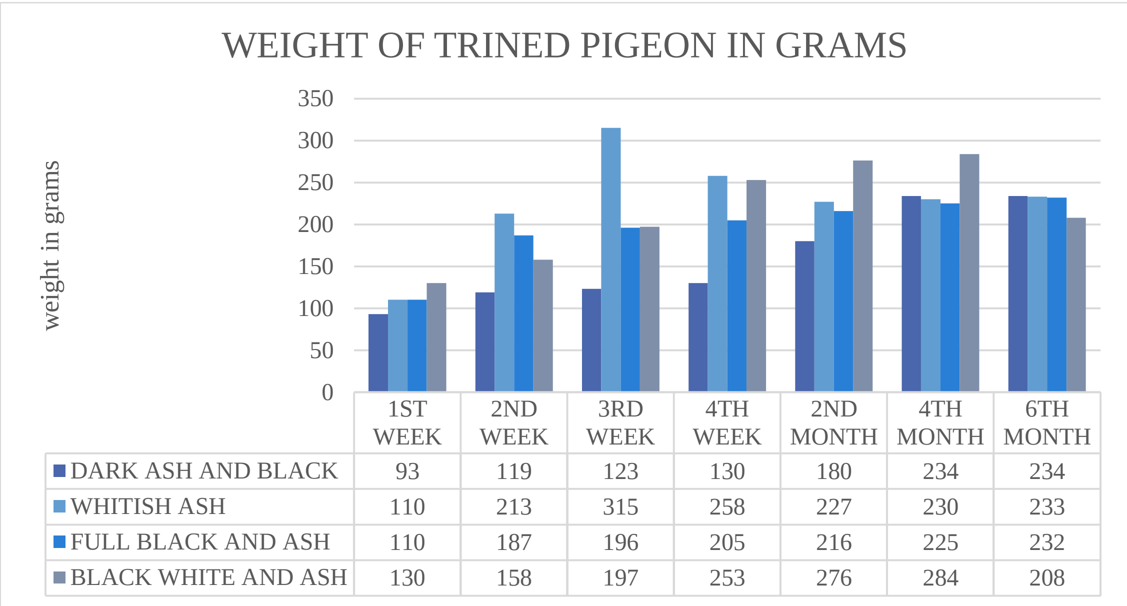
TABLE 2: WEIGHT OF UNTRAINED PIGEON FROM 1 WEEK TO 6 MONTHS IN GRAMS

BREED	1st WEEK	2nd WEEK	3rd WEEK	1st MONTH	2nd MONTH	4th MONTH	6th MONTH
Dark Ash, black	93	119	123	130	180	234	234
Whitish ash	110	213	315	258	227	230	233
Full black and ash	110	187	196	205	216	225	232
Black, white and ash	103	158	197	253	276	284	208



	1ST WEEK	2ND WEEK	3RD WEEK	4TH WEEK	2ND MONTH	4TH MONTH	6TH MONTH
BLACK AND WHITE	67	195	244	297	221	230	250
WHITE	52	273	289	329	299	292	296
ASH	79	197	249	275	281	287	290
GEERI PULLI	107	197	195	217	229	243	261

Figure 17: Weight of untrained Pigeon



	1ST WEEK	2ND WEEK	3RD WEEK	4TH WEEK	2ND MONTH	4TH MONTH	6TH MONTH
DARK ASH AND BLACK	93	119	123	130	180	234	234
WHITISH ASH	110	213	315	258	227	230	233
FULL BLACK AND ASH	110	187	196	205	216	225	232
BLACK WHITE AND ASH	130	158	197	253	276	284	208

FIGURE 18: Weight of trained Pigeon

TRAINING OF PIGEON (26th September)

The training started from the 3rd month. The new pigeons were introduced to the trained pigeon loft (Hawaii loft), which was an open loft exposed to the sunlight. This helped them to sunbathe and learn about their surroundings and locate the area. They were kept in Hawaii loft for one week (from 27th Sep to 3rd Oct) for acclimatization. Later on, the feathers were pinned for the next 5 days (from 4th Oct to 8th Oct). They were allowed to ramble and take low flights. One by one, the pinning was removed from each pigeon within a time span of 4 days (from 9th Oct to 12th Oct). Now the pigeons scatter from the loft since they are aware of their surroundings.

For the next 2 to 3 days (from 13th Oct to 15th Oct), they were allowed to have a low flight along with their companions.

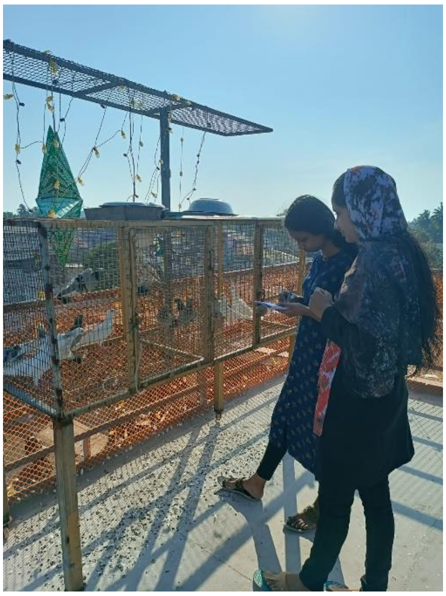


FIGURE 19: PICTURE OF HAWAII LOFT

1ST DAY

TABLE 3:1ST day of training

16/10/2022	Starting(time)	Ending(time)	Total time
1st pigeon with 6 trained pigeon	6:00 am	7:00 am	1 hour
2nd pigeon with 6 trained pigeon	7:00 am	8:00 am	1 hour
3rd pigeon with 6 trained pigeon	8:00 am	9:00 am	1 hour
4th pigeon with 6 trained pigeon	9:00 am	10:00 am	1 hour

2nd DAY

TABLE 4:2nd day of training

17/10/2022	Starting(time)	Ending(time)	Total time
1st pigeon with 6 trained pigeon	6:00 am	7:00 am	1 hour
2nd pigeon with 6 trained pigeon	7:00 am	8:00 am	1 hour
3rd pigeon with 6 trained pigeon	8:00 am	9:00 am	1 hour

4th pigeon with 6 trained pigeon	9:00 am	10:00 am	1 hour

3rd DAY

TABLE 5:3rd day of training

18/10/2022	Starting(time)	Ending(time)	Total time
All 4 pigeon with 6 trained pigeon	6:00 am	10:00am	4 hours

4th DAY

On the fourth day, they took a break. (19/10/2022)

NEXT 4 DAYS (5,6,7,8)

Four pigeons were grouped into two groups with 5 trained pigeons. They were trained alternatively for the next 4 days for a total of 4 days.

TABLE 6: Training from 5th day to 8th day

20/10/2022 to 23/10/2022	Starting(time)	Ending(time)	Total time
2 pigeon with 5 trained pigeon	5:00pm	6:30pm	1 and half hours
2 pigeon with 5 trained pigeon	6:30pm	7:00pm	Half an hour

9th day to 12th day (4 days)

TABLE 7: Training from 9th day to 12th day

		Starting(time)	Introduction of trained pigeon	Ending(time)	Total time
4 pigeon	24/10/2022 to 27/10/2022	5:00pm	7:00pm	7:30pm	2 and half hours

From the 9th to the 12th day, the pigeons were trained in the evening. Metal halide lights were used for training, so the pigeons were able to train to fly in dim light.

NEXT 4 DAYS

TABLE 8: Training from 13th day to 16th day

			Starting(time)	Ending(time)	Total time
13th DAY	28/10/2022	4 PIGEON	4:00pm	8:00pm	4 hours
14th DAY	29/10/2022	4 PIGEON	4:00pm	10:00pm	6 hours
15th DAY	30/10/2022	4 PIGEON	3:00pm	10:00pm	7 hours
16th DAY	31/10/2022	4 PIGEON	3:00pm	10:00pm	7 hours

17th day to 23rd day (7 days)

TABLE 9: Training from 17th day to 23rd day

		Starting(time)	Ending(time)	Total time
4 pigeon	1/11/2022 to 7/11/2022	2:00pm	10:00pm	8 hours

The pigeons have been trained

Feather cutting

The feathers of 4 pigeons were trimmed on November 8th to promote the growth of new, strong feathers to increase their flight capability. The feathers were trimmed so that the first 4 feathers were shorter than the next 4 feathers. After two weeks, on November 23rd, the feathers were dragged and dropped to allow new ones to grow. The training was restarted after the new feathers were fully grown. Which took about 10 days.

FIGURE 20: PICTURE OF PIGEON WING

FIGURE 21: PICTURE OF PIGEON WING AFTER FEATHER CUTTING

<u>Training re starts (3RD DECEMBER)</u>

TABLE 10: Training from 3/12/2022 to 8/12/2022

			Starting(time)	Ending(time)	Total time
4 pigeons	3/12/2022	4 days	7:00pm	11:00pm	4 hours
4 pigeons	4/12/2022	5th day	6:00pm	11:00pm	5 hours
4 pigeons	5/12/2022	6th day	5:00pm	11:00pm	6 hours
4 pigeons	6/12/2022	7th day	4:00pm	11:00pm	7 hours
4 pigeons	7/12/2022	8th day	3:00pm	11:00pm	8 hours
4 pigeons	8/12/2022	9th day	2:00pm	11:00pm	9 hours

2 days of break were taken on the 9th and 10th of December 2022, during which the pigeons were allowed to sunbathe for 2 hours and fly for one hour. The training given for preparing the pigeon for racing was completed. Two days before the flight performance test, on the 11th of December 2022, the pigeons were trained from 12:00 pm to 23:00 pm. The next day was taken as a break for pigeons.

On the day of the competition, the pigeons were fed with 2 Bengal grams and one syringe full of water. The competition started at 6:00 am.

TABLE 11: Result of Test for Trained Pigeon

13th DECEMBER 2022			
Breed	**Starting(time)**	**Ending(time)**	**Total hours of flight**
Dark Ash, black	6:00 am	9:12 pm	15 hours and 12 minutes
Whitish ash	6:00 am	8:59pm	14 hours and 59 minutes
Full black and ash	6:00 am	9:02pm	15 hours and 2 minutes
Black, white and ash	6:00 am	9:10pm	15 hours and 10 minutes

TABLE 12: Result of Test for untrained Pigeon

14th DECEMBER		
Breed	**Starting(time)**	
Black and white	6:00 am	Just flew away and land on neighbour's house
White	6:00 am	Flew for 8 minutes with maximum speed and landed immediately.
Ash	6:00 am	Flew away and come back next day
Geeri Pulli (with spots)	6:00 am	Flew away and never come back

DISCUSSION

The study aimed to investigate the effect of training on the flight performance and homing ability of pigeons, and the selected breeds were Serbian Highflyer, Chistoplian Highflyer, and Indian Rock Dove. The study spanned over 6 months, during which one group of pigeons was trained for racing, and the other group was kept as a control without any training. The criteria for selecting pigeons for training were based on their physical characteristics such as the presence of equal segments in the legs, length of feathers, and feathers with required mouldings.

The study found that trained pigeons demonstrated higher flight capacity and endurance compared to untrained pigeons. The different methods of training were evaluated to determine their effectiveness, and positive reinforcement was found to be the most effective training method. The hours of flight required for training had a significant impact on pigeon performance, and trained pigeons exhibited different flight patterns and behaviours compared to untrained pigeons. The study also explored the homing ability of pigeons and found that training had a positive effect on their homing ability.

The results of this study have significant implications for the breeding and training of pigeons for racing and other purposes. By identifying the most effective training method and the hours of flight required for training, pigeon breeders can improve the flight performance and endurance of their pigeons. The study also provides valuable insights into the flight patterns and behaviours of trained pigeons, which can aid in developing new training techniques and strategies.

Overall, this study contributes to our understanding of the biology and behaviour of pigeons and provides valuable insights into the best practices for breeding and training pigeons for racing and homing purposes. The findings of this study can have practical applications in the pigeon breeding industry, and future research could build upon these findings to improve the performance and well-being of pigeons.

The study titled "Profiling Flight Performance of Young Racing Pigeons (Columba Livia) in Training" by F.T. Scullion in Feb 19,2018. It described the results of a training program for two groups of young birds in terms of flight performance, flight efficiency, and losses. The birds were trained over a period of 10 weeks, during which they were given 43 tosses each, covering a total beeline distance of 1027 km. The study found that both groups of birds generally performed similarly during training, with only occasional differences in flight times. However, a few tosses resulted in significant differences in return times, which were attributed to poor weather conditions or hawk strikes.

It was also found that losses were highest in the first four weeks of training, with a total of 21 birds lost during training, which represented 2% of the total number of individual flights (951) over the training period. Slow returns were also observed during the training period, with 5% of individual flights classified as slow returns. The study found that both groups of birds had similar airspeed patterns during training, with air speeds exceeding the mean Vmps after the first three weeks of training. Both groups also had air speeds within the mean Vmps and Vmrs of the respective groups between weeks 4 and 9 inclusively.

The flight performance ratio (FPR) was used to compare the performance of the two groups of birds, and it was found that Group 2 outperformed Group 1 overall, with an average performance ratio of 13% compared to 6%. Flight efficiency was also calculated for each week, assuming that the birds were flying at Vmps or Vmrs. During weeks 5-7, the birds had a flight efficiency that was near 1.0, which would mean they were flying straight home.

Furthermore, it was observed that the birds began to moult in the 10th training week, with a few birds losing some primary wing feathers and tail feathers, which are vital for flight. As a result, training was halted at this stage to prevent further loss of birds.

Overall, the study provided insights into the performance of two groups of young birds during a 10-week training program. The results suggested that both groups performed similarly, with occasional differences in flight times, and that losses were highest in the first four weeks of training. The study also highlighted the importance of monitoring flight efficiency and performance ratios during training, as well as being aware of external factors such as weather conditions and predation.

Our study on the effect of training on the flight performance and homing ability of pigeons has similarities and differences with F.T. Scullion's study on profiling flight performance of young racing pigeons.

Both studies focused on the flight performance of pigeons, with Scullion's study exploring the flight performance of young racing pigeons during training, while the other study examined the flight performance of different breeds of pigeons trained for racing and homing purposes.

Both studies used flight performance as a metric to evaluate the effectiveness of training, with Scullion's study measuring flight efficiency, losses, and airspeed patterns, while the other study examined flight capacity and endurance.

However, the two studies differed in their methodology, sample size, and focus. Scullion's study had a larger sample size, with two groups of young racing pigeons undergoing a 10-week training program, while the other study had a smaller sample size of eight pigeons trained over a period of 6 months.

Moreover, Scullion's study focused on racing pigeons, while the other study examined different breeds of pigeons trained for racing and homing purposes.

Overall, both studies provide valuable insights into the flight performance and training of pigeons, with Scullion's study focused on young racing pigeons during training, and the other study exploring the effect of training on different breeds of pigeons for racing and homing purposes.

CONCLUSION

The study aimed to investigate the effect of training on the flight performance and homing ability of pigeons. To achieve this objective, two groups of pigeons were selected, with one group trained for racing while the other remained untrained as a control group. The flight capacity and endurance of both groups were analysed, and the different methods of training were evaluated to determine their effectiveness.

The results of the study indicated that trained pigeons demonstrated a higher flight capacity and endurance compared to the untrained pigeons. The training had a positive effect on the homing ability of the pigeons, and the most effective method of training was found to be positive reinforcement.

Furthermore, the study showed that the hours of flight required for training had a significant impact on the performance of the pigeons. Trained pigeons exhibited different flight patterns and behaviours compared to untrained pigeons, indicating the effectiveness of training in shaping the behaviour of the birds.

The study demonstrated the positive impact of training on the flight performance and homing ability of pigeons. The results provide valuable insights into the different methods of training and the hours of flight required for optimal performance. The findings of this study could have practical implications for the breeding and training of pigeons for racing and other purposes.

Additionally, the study highlights the importance of proper pigeon care, such as providing adequate space and temperature conditions, as well as appropriate nutrition. Pigeon fanciers and trainers can use these insights to develop effective training programs that optimize the performance of their birds.

The Experimentation underscores the potential of pigeons as a model for understanding animal behaviour and cognition. Pigeons are known for their remarkable homing ability and have been used extensively in research on navigation, memory, and learning. The findings of this study contribute to our understanding of how pigeons learn and adapt to their environment, which could have broader implications for the study of animal behaviour.

Overall, the Profiling provides valuable insights into the flight performance and homing ability of pigeons and the impact of training on these factors. The findings could have practical applications for pigeon racing and other related activities, as well as broader implications for the study of animal behaviour and cognition.

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