

Pigeons



On the Watch
June Hitchcox

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Kudos to the Apsley Voice for its municipal election coverage.

Letter to the Editor:

Dear Apsley Voice:

In my opinion it's crucial that issues be aired, not buried in the service of "polite conversation." I believe that when media acts as a gatekeeper, people justifiably feel that there are things going on that they are not aware of, which raises mistrust of the entire democratic process.

If a publication can't run somewhat controversial articles, then it's just an excuse to distribute advertising and has no business calling itself a newspaper.

Sincerely
Scott Hughes

Let's learn more about Pigeons - a bird that we all recognize, up to 13" long, with its reddish feet and many variable-coloured feathers.

It is also known as "Rock Dove": "Rock" because in the wild, its nesting choice was to build in crevices on rocky cliffs and "Dove" because of the cooing sound that it makes by inflating its esophagus with air and as it expels the air, it makes the co-roo-coo sound. Now it has transformed its habit of nesting on a cliff to using buildings, bridges, barns, windowsills - any ledge that it can find.

Colonists brought Pigeons to North America in the 1600's and now these birds are found world-wide - in Ontario, almost to James Bay. They enjoy being near people. In North Bay, where I grew up, I would feed them year-round and they became so tame that they would sit on my head or shoulders.

Besides being year-round residents, they are in breeding condition year-round! Doug Saddler, Peterborough, found a pair nesting on a ledge in downtown Peterborough on December 18, 1969! The female lays two, sometimes three, glossy white eggs in a crude nest that is lined with sticks and debris. Incubation is two to three weeks, shared by both parents as is the seven weeks of nest-feeding. The first food for the young is called "pigeon milk" - a substance which is produced in the parents' crops.

Later, they are fed regurgitated grain. Again, their distended esophagus is used to store the food for their young. I will write more on Pigeons in a future article - as I believe that they are fascinating birds!

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