

Common Garden Bird 12: Rock Pigeon (Merpati Biasa) *Columba livia*
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The Rock Pigeon, formerly called the Rock Dove, is a common pigeon, often seen in large flocks in many cities. The original wild Rock Pigeon, domesticated thousands of years ago, has been introduced worldwide. Most of the birds we see are feral pigeons which came from escaped domesticated pigeons.

The original wild Rock Pigeon were uniformly pale grey with two black bars on each wing. They have a very beautiful purple-green iridescence along the neck.

The feral pigeons come in a variety of colours. Some are bred for selective colours. Some pet shops breed especially the pure white variety to be used for religious events. This practice of 'merit release' in Asia, of liberating animals from captivity, is seen as a way to earn spiritual merit. But it is a habit we should not encourage as it goes against the concept of peace and encourages the captivity of birds as a business.



In some countries, a variety of the Rock Dove bred for their strong homing ability, are trained for bird races – sadly may die in these illegal activities.

The Rock Pigeon often breed on the ledges of buildings in the city and are considered a nuisance by some due to their droppings. They are quite interesting to watch and have a lovely flight. The males love to sail steadily in the sky to impress the females. They make soft cooing sounds.