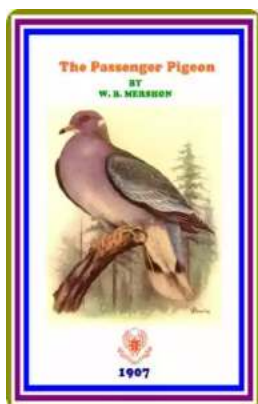


The Passenger Pigeon: Witnessing the Magnificent Flock

The Passenger Pigeon, a once thriving species that dominated the North American skies, has captivated the imaginations of naturalists, scientists, and bird enthusiasts alike for centuries. Known for its awe-inspiring flocks that darkened the skies in a breathtaking spectacle, this now-extinct bird remains a symbol of both beauty and tragedy.

First described by Carl Linnaeus in 1766, the Passenger Pigeon, scientifically known as *Ectopistes migratorius*, had a native range stretching across much of North America, from the eastern coast to the Great Plains. With an estimated population of several billions, these pigeons represented an incredible ecological phenomenon.

Their flocks were massive, often numbering in the millions or even billions of birds. Whole forests would tremble as these birds descended upon them, seeking food and nesting sites. They were incredibly gregarious, and their presence alone was enough to leave witnesses in a state of awe and wonder.



The Passenger Pigeon by Various, edited by W. B.

Mershon by Diane Ackerman (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 1012 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Print length : 252 pages



The Passenger Pigeon is a species that many have heard of, but few truly understand. To delve into their story, we must turn to the work of various individuals who have dedicated their time and knowledge to study and document this remarkable bird. One such individual is Mershon, whose meticulous research has been compiled into an edited collection that provides an intimate look into the world of the Passenger Pigeon.

Mershon's Compilation: A Treasure Trove of Knowledge

Mershon, a renowned ornithologist, has curated a truly outstanding collection of writings about the Passenger Pigeon. His edited work brings together the observations, scientific studies, and personal accounts of numerous prominent figures from different periods of history.

From accounts of early explorers who marveled at the immense flocks they encountered to detailed scientific studies that shed light on the behavior and biology of these birds, this compilation offers a comprehensive perspective on the Passenger Pigeon's astonishing rise and eventual demise.

The Rise and Fall of the Passenger Pigeon

The Passenger Pigeon's story is both fascinating and tragic. Throughout the 19th century, their populations dwindled rapidly due to relentless hunting, deforestation, and changes in habitat. They were targeted for their meat, which was a cheap source of food for many, and their habitat destruction pushed them to their limits.

Mershon's compilation explores the collective actions that led to this catastrophic decline. It provides insights into the societal attitudes towards wildlife during that era, the commercial exploitation of such abundant resources, and the consequences of unparalleled human impact on the natural world.

The Ecology and Behavior of the Passenger Pigeon

To truly appreciate the Passenger Pigeon's magnificence, one must understand their unique ecological role. Mershon's collection includes detailed accounts of their breeding habits, migration patterns, and interactions with their environment.

Lush descriptions of the flocks paint vivid pictures of the skies teeming with life. Witnessing these massive gatherings was a humbling experience, leaving observers awestruck and filled with wonder at the sheer abundance present in our world.

The Passenger Pigeon was not just a bird; it was a force of nature, an integral part of North America's ecosystems. Mershon's curated writings highlight their significance in maintaining the balance of our natural world and emphasize the tragic consequences of their disappearance.

Captivating Photography and Artwork

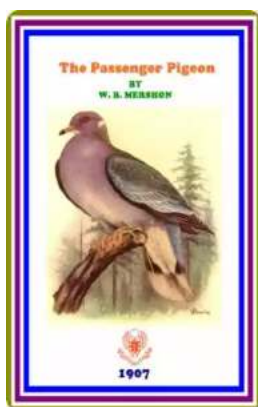
In addition to the written accounts, Mershon's compilation is enriched with captivating photography and artwork. These visuals bring the beauty of the Passenger Pigeon to life, allowing readers to visualize their vibrant plumage, their striking features, and their astonishing flock formations.

Through these images, we can almost imagine standing beneath a darkened sky, surrounded by the rhythmic sound of their wings beating in unison, and feel the power of witnessing such a majestic display of life.

The story of the Passenger Pigeon serves as a stark reminder of the impact human actions can have on the natural world. It stands as a testament to the importance of conservation efforts and the need for responsible stewardship of our planet.

As we read about the Passenger Pigeon's plight, we are left with a sense of urgency and a responsibility to ensure that no more species meet a similar fate. Mershon's compilation serves as a wake-up call, igniting a passion within us to protect and preserve the wildlife that remains.

The Passenger Pigeon, with its long-lost beauty and grandeur, will forever be etched in our memories. Through Mershon's edited collection, we have the opportunity to connect with this lost avian wonder, learn from our past mistakes, and pass on the knowledge to future generations.



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FOR the last three years I have spent most of my leisure time in collecting as much material as possible which might help to throw light on the oft-repeated query, "What has become of the wild pigeons?" The result of this labor of love is scarcely more than a compilation, and I am under many obligations to those who

have so cheerfully assisted me. I have given them credit by name in connection with their various contributions, but I wish that I might have been able to give them the more finished and literary setting that would have been within the reach of a trained writer or scientist. I am merely a business man who is interested in the Passenger Pigeon because he loves the outdoors and its wild things, and sincerely regrets the cruel extinction of one of the most interesting natural phenomena of his own country. If I have been able to make a compilation that otherwise would not have been available for the interested reader, I need make no further apologies for the imperfect manner of my treatment of this subject. It is hard for us of an older generation to realize that as recently as 1880 the Passenger Pigeon was thronging in countless millions through large areas of the Middle West, and that in our boyhood we could find no exaggeration in the records of such earlier observers as Alexander Wilson, the ornithologist, who said that these birds associated in such prodigious numbers as almost to surpass belief, and that their numbers had no parallel among any other feathered tribes on the face of the earth; or that one of their "roosts" would kill the trees over thousands of acres as completely as if the whole forest had been girdled with an ax.

Audubon estimated that an average flock of these pigeons contained a billion and a quarter of birds, which consumed more than eight and a half million bushels of mast in a day's feeding. They were slain by millions during the middle of the last century, and from one region in Michigan in one year three million Passenger Pigeons were killed for market, while in that roost alone as many more perished because of the barbarous methods of hunting them. They supplied a means of living for thousands of hunters, who devastated their flocks with nets and guns, and even with fire. Yet so vast were their numbers that after thirty years of observation Audubon was able to say that "even in the face of such dreadful havoc nothing but the diminution of our forests can accomplish their decrease."

My Boyhood Among the Pigeons

MY boyhood was made active and wholesome by a love for outdoor pastimes that had been bred in me by generations of sport-loving ancestors. From which side of the genealogical tree this ardor for field and forest and open sky had come with stronger influence I cannot say. While my father was the one to use the fowling-piece and cast the fly for the glorious speckled trout, my mother was a willing conspirator, for it was she who packed the lunch basket, often called us for the start in the gray morning, and went along to "hold the horse" while we shot pigeons. And when we were bent on a day in the woods in bracing October weather she drove old Dolly sedately along the winding trail, while I hunted one side of the woods and father hunted the other.

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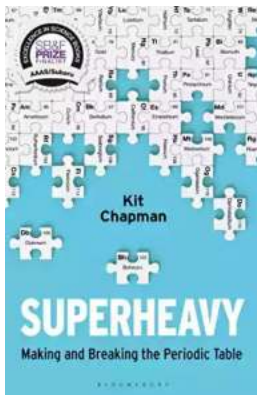
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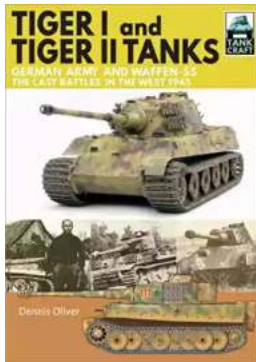
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