

Practical Dove Keeping: A Comprehensive Guide to Raising Doves for Pleasure and Profit



Practical Dove Keeping a Complete Guide by Joan Hinds

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

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Doves, with their gentle cooing and graceful flight, have captivated humans for centuries. Whether you're a hobbyist seeking a peaceful pastime or an entrepreneur looking to establish a profitable business, dove keeping offers a rewarding and multifaceted experience.

This comprehensive guide will take you on a journey through the practical aspects of dove keeping, covering everything from choosing the right breeds to building dovecotes and understanding their behavior. Dive into the fascinating world of doves and unlock their potential for pleasure and profit.

1. Choosing the Right Dove Breeds

The first step towards successful dove keeping is selecting the right breeds for your needs. There are over 300 recognized dove breeds, each with unique characteristics and purposes.

- **Fancy Doves:** Bred for their ornamental appearance, these doves come in various colors, shapes, and sizes. They're ideal for hobbyists who enjoy showing and exhibiting their birds.
- **Racing Doves:** As their name suggests, these doves are bred for their ability to fly long distances quickly. They're used in competitive races and are highly prized for their speed and endurance.
- **Commercial Doves:** These doves are raised primarily for meat or egg production. They're generally larger than other breeds and have a high rate of growth and egg production.

Once you've identified your purpose for dove keeping, you can research the different breeds and choose those that best suit your needs.

2. Building a Dovecote

The dovecote, or dovehouse, is the home for your doves. It provides shelter, protection from predators, and a safe nesting environment.

When designing a dovecote, consider the following factors:

- **Size:** The size of the dovecote should be proportional to the number of doves you plan to keep.

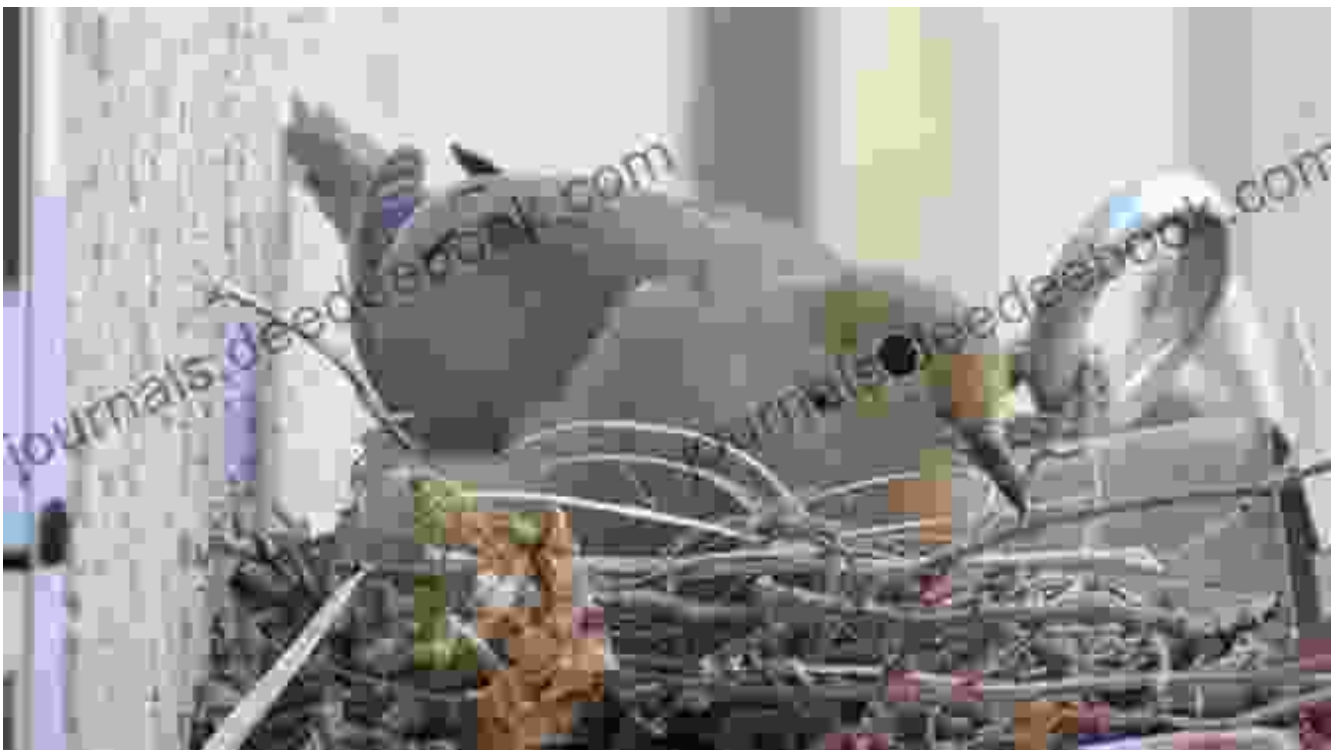
- **Ventilation:** Adequate ventilation is crucial to prevent disease and ensure a comfortable living environment for the doves.
- **Predator Protection:** The dovecote should be constructed to keep out predators such as hawks, owls, and cats.
- **Nesting Boxes:** Provide nesting boxes for the doves to lay their eggs. The boxes should be clean, dry, and sized appropriately for the breed.



3. Understanding Dove Behavior

To become a successful dove keeper, it's essential to understand the behavior of your birds. Doves are generally gentle and peaceful creatures, but they have unique characteristics and communication methods.

- **Cooing:** Doves communicate through cooing, a soft, guttural sound that serves a variety of purposes, including attracting mates, defending territory, and bonding with their young.
- **Nesting:** Doves typically build nests in trees or on sheltered platforms. They use twigs, leaves, and other materials to create a cozy and comfortable nesting environment.
- **Migration:** Some dove species are migratory birds, meaning they travel long distances during the winter months to find warmer climates and food sources.



4. Feeding Doves

Providing a balanced and nutritious diet is essential for the health and well-being of your doves. Their diet should primarily consist of the following:

- **Seeds:** Doves are granivorous birds, which means they primarily eat seeds. A good quality dove seed mix will contain a variety of seeds such as corn, wheat, millet, and sunflower seeds.
- **Pellets:** Dove pellets are another option for feeding your birds. They are formulated to provide a complete and balanced diet.
- **Grit:** Doves need grit to aid in digestion. Grit is small, hard particles that help break down food in the bird's gizzard.



5. Dove Health and Care

Maintaining the health of your doves is paramount to their well-being and longevity. Regular checkups with a veterinarian are recommended to ensure early detection and treatment of diseases.

Some of the common health issues to watch out for include:

- **Canker:** A fungal infection that affects the mouth and throat of doves.
- **Coccidiosis:** A parasitic infection that affects the intestines.
- **Respiratory infections:** Doves are susceptible to respiratory infections such as avian influenza and mycoplasmosis.

By observing your doves for any unusual signs or symptoms and seeking veterinary care when necessary, you can help ensure their health and longevity.

6. Breeding and Racing Doves

Breeding and racing doves require specialized knowledge and skill. However, for those interested in pursuing these activities, here are a few key points:

Breeding Doves

- Select the right breeding pairs based on desired traits.
- Provide appropriate nesting boxes and ensure a quiet and undisturbed environment for successful breeding.

- Monitor the eggs and young during incubation and brooding periods.

Racing Doves

- Choose birds with exceptional speed and endurance.
 - Train the doves through gradual and increasing distances.
 - Participate in races with other fanciers and compete for prizes.
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7. Commercial Dove Keeping

Raising doves on a commercial scale requires meticulous planning and execution. Here are some key considerations:

- **Breed Selection:** Choose doves bred for meat or egg production.
- **Facility Design:** Design dovecotes that meet the specific needs of commercial production, including adequate space, ventilation, and nesting areas.
- **Feeding and Nutrition:** Provide a high-quality diet to maximize growth and egg production.
- **Disease Prevention and Control:** Implement strict biosecurity measures to prevent and control disease

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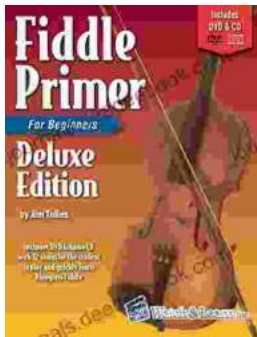
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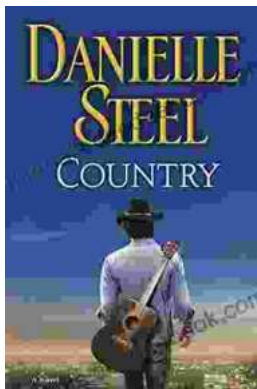


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