White-crowned pigeon

*Patagioenas leucocephala*

**Taxonomic Classification**

**Kingdom:** Animalia  
**Phylum:** Chordata  
**Class:** Aves  
**Order:** Columbiformes  
**Family:** Columbidae  
**Genus/Species:** *Patagioenas leucocephala*  
**Common Name:** White-crowned pigeon

**Listing Status**

**Federal Status:** Not Listed  
**FL Status:** State-designated Threatened  
**FNAI Ranks:** G3/S3 (Rare)  
**IUCN Status:** NT (Near Threatened)

**Physical Description**

The white-crowned pigeon is a medium size member of the genus *Patagioenas*. This pigeon species can reach a length of 14 inches (35.6 centimeters) long, with a wingspan of 23 inches (58.4 centimeters). White-crowned pigeons have a white head (why they are called white-crowned pigeon) and a gray body with green feathers on the back (dorsal) side of the neck (The Cornell of Ornithology 2011).

**Life History**

The diet of the white-crowned pigeons primarily consists of tropical hardwood tree fruits.

Breeding occurs during the months of May to September, with major breeding periods occurring from May to early June and July to early August. The number of breeding pairs in an area depends on the amount of available food in the habitat (Bancroft and Bowman 2001). Females will lay two eggs per nest and incubation lasts around 14 days before the eggs hatch. Females and males share the responsibility of incubating the eggs and feeding the young. Young white-crowned pigeons fledge around three weeks after birth, but will still be fed by the parents three weeks after fledging (National Audubon Society, n.d.).
**Habitat & Distribution**

White-crowned pigeons inhabit low-lying forest habitats with ample fruiting trees. Its distribution in the United States is restricted to Florida Bay, Biscayne Bay, and the Florida Keys, although a few individuals probably nest inland in Monroe and Miami-Dade counties (Bancroft and Bowman 2001). This species also occurs in the Bahamas, Greater and Lesser Antilles, and the Caribbean coast of southeastern Mexico and Central America.

**Threats**

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, the white-crowned pigeon was threatened by overhunting. However, conservation laws helped the population recover in the U.S. In the Caribbean, the white-crowned pigeon continues to be overhunted. Since white-crowned pigeons are restricted to low-lying areas, the main threat to the white-crowned pigeon presently is habitat degradation and deforestation (BirdLife International 2008). White-crowned pigeons also face threats to their food supply as tropical hammocks continue to be destroyed in the Keys (Florida Natural Areas Inventory 2001). Pesticides and other contaminants, collisions with structures or objects, and direct human/research impacts also are potential threats to the pigeon population (Bancroft and Bowman 2001).

**Conservation & Management**

The white-crowned pigeon is protected by the U.S. Migratory Bird Treaty Act and as a State-designated Threatened species by Florida’s Endangered and Threatened Species Rule.

- Biological Status Review (BSR)
- Supplemental Information for the BSR

**Other Informative Links**

BirdLife International
Birds of North America
Florida Natural Areas Inventory
International Union for Conservation of Nature
The Cornell Lab of Ornithology

**References**


