

#142

Topic: love, animals, philosophy

## Jail-Bird Watching

by Nate A. Lindell, created 8 May 2013

After being moved to C-wing of W.C.I.'s seg unit, I was disappointed to find that the bright night prison lights wholly smothered the twinkling of any stars, even a pulsing red/white/dim one in the Eastern horizon I'd dubbed the "Waupun star." Only several times did I see the moon, which was the limit of my night watching.

There were, however, a couple of r k pigeons who claimed the back of the prison chapel and an extended subsection that probably houses the building's heat exchanger. One of the pigeons was a darker slate blue, typically carried himself erectly, and typically stood on a ledge under the main chapel building's roof, above the crude nest in a ledge under the roof of the subbuilding, where a pale-blue pigeon spent most of its time. The darker pigeon often spent its time fetching pieces of dessicated grass, twigs + such, flying them up to the paler bird, who impressively yet gently placed them around herself. The few times I saw the paler one away from her ring of plant debris, she carried herself more demurely than the male bird: once, when she was waiting for the male, after a few minutes she began to tuck her neck down into her shoulders + fluff out her feathers, particularly her breast feathers.

Led Zeppelin's "Fool in the Rain" came to mind when, one day, I watched the male wait with a high head, as it rained, for a least a half an hour. The female never showed; and, eventually, he flew off.

Obviously I concluded that the paler bird was a female + the darker one her mate. This was confirmed when I saw the darker one mount the paler one on two different occasions, where she flitted up her tailfeathers. It took less than two seconds + they were done.

Before and after the first mounting I witnessed, they circled around each other, as if she was teasing him and he was trying to get on her back. Afterwards, as if they were two Eskimos trying to rub noses or kiss with their beaks, they softly pecked at the base of the sides of each other's beaks, and occasionally picked at their rears with their beaks. It's not like they had hands....

Before the second mounting I witnessed, they again circled around each other, but also kissed at each other. After the mounting the guy bird adjusted his crotch with his beak a couple of times; and, although they were within two feet of each other, they didn't engage in any "cuddling" nor kissing.

behavior. The dude bird seemed to be looking off into the distance, while the chick behind him fluffed her feathers & tucked her neck into her shoulders.

You might think that old age has finally made a bloody romantic out of me. Mais non. This is literally what I saw. Sure, I found it cute, a steady source for smiles, while keeping in mind they were birds, not people.

But those two love birds had & have me wondering....

Why do so few people have romances as smooth as those birds?

Did people get the idea for kissing from watching bird behavior (rock pigeons surely must have lived close to our cave-dwelling ancestors, just as they now live amongst our concrete structures), or do we & rock pigeons have some biological similarity that impels us to kiss our lovers?

Pigeons seem far more sentient, even sentimental, than I previously realized. Yet their brains are so small (Voltaire too had a relatively small brain...)! How could such small brains create a mind big enough to accommodate love & romance (do not try to persuade me that those birds aren't in a romance)?

Bird brains indeed!

Maybe size matters less than I thought I already knew? Those birds may only have a thimbleful of neurons to our bowlful, but those bird neurons might have much more interconnectivity between their fewer neurons & thusly create a deceptively large, complex mind. And what do we do with all the surplus neurons we have? War, violence, hate... & not much love to go around!"

After watching these birds, I have new reasons to doubt the superiority of my species, a species that many of its kind think to be unique in its ability to feel emotions and harbor souls. Right below those pigeons' love nest I have also watched prison staff & captives walking into & out of the seg. complex, looking oh so like crude, surly, haughty "damned dirty apes."

Still, I love some of our females!

- finis -

Henchpeople,

please share this with: [www.wildanimalsanctuary.org](http://www.wildanimalsanctuary.org)

Thanks

& [www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com)