

Group No.	No. in the Group	Time to fly 2400 ft.	Ground Speed
1	—	25.2 secs.	64.8 M.P.H.
2	—	26.0	62.9
3	—	22.5	72.5
4	—	29.0	56.2
5	—	25.2	64.8
6	—	26.8	60.9
7	—	29.6	55.2
8	2	29.6	55.2
9	11	26.5	61.5
10	20	24.0	68.0
11	7	26.0	62.9
12	3	30.4	53.9
Average		26.7	61.5 M.P.H.
Average wind speed (a tail wind)			11.0 M.P.H.
Average air speed			50.5 M.P.H.

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Prating for Passenger Pigeons.—Thoreau's journal records many observations on the Passenger Pigeon and the means used in Concord for catching it, and these observations, all of which are gathered in his 'Notes on New England Birds' (1910), later reissued as 'Thoreau's Bird-Lore,' include several references to the call-notes of the species, especially the *prate*, or *prating*. An imitation of this note was used for luring the birds to the net, and the journal entry for March 29, 1853, tells us that one Dugan had seen two pigeons that day and had 'prated' for them. As the dictionaries appear to have overlooked this use of the word 'prate' and as I do not find it in any of the ornithological literature I have at hand, it may be worth while to put on record what the late Fletcher Osgood, of Chelsea, Massachusetts, an expert in phonetics who was also something of an ornithologist, told me about it some twenty years ago. "Many and many a time," he wrote, "have I heard my father *prate* for pigeons. Father was born and brought up in Westford, Mass., [a town near Concord] and knew all about pigeon netting and shooting . . . Wild pigeon prating consisted of voice delivered through *tightly* approximated lips, with a buzz or vibration of those lips, in two somewhat prolonged, high-pitched monotonous (a very brief interval of silence between the monotonous, of course) followed by a somewhat more prolonged monotone on a decidedly higher pitch, this immediately followed by two scale-descending monotonous, the descent approximately an octave or more, each descending monotone *briefly* uttered, no prolongation. No doubt this formula was individually varied; at times, I think, rising inflections, still high-pitched but of short range, were substituted for the first two monotonous. The formula as given seems at least to be an approximation to orthodox usage in old Westford."

This 'prating,' whether called by that name or not, was probably much the same method of luring the pigeons as that used by Herman Behr ('Cassinia,' 1911, pp. 24-27, quoted by Bent in his 'Life Histories') and described by H. T. Blodgett (Mershon's 'Passenger Pigeon'). The art is doubtless as completely extinct now as the Passenger Pigeon itself.—FRANCIS H. ALLEN, *West Roxbury, Massachusetts*.

An unusual feeding habit of the Black Vulture.—During the past winter, grazing conditions were unusually good in southwestern Louisiana and, as most of the