From: Kate Elliott
To: Manager"s Office; Board of Trustees
Subject: Proposed pigeon ban
Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2026 9:24:11 PM
Attachments: Pigeon.pdf

To the Mayor and Board of Trustees,

I'm writing because I'm having a hard time understanding the need for a complete ban on keeping pigeons in the Village, and I keep coming back to one basic question:

What specific problem is this ban actually trying to solve?

If the concern is public health, I'd like to understand what evidence shows that responsibly kept domestic pigeons pose a meaningful risk. If the concern is cleanliness, odor, noise, or overcrowding, those seem like issues that can be addressed directly through reasonable rules—sanitation standards, limits on flock size, housing requirements, setbacks, and enforcement of existing nuisance laws.

Those kinds of regulations would address the actual concerns without banning pigeon keeping altogether.

I was also struck by comments from the May 27 work session, where the Village Attorney reportedly suggested that even a temporary moratorium might be excessive given that only one resident had expressed interest in keeping pigeons. If that's the case, it's hard to understand why a permanent, Village-wide prohibition is now being considered—especially one that would impact an existing keeper and his birds.

I'm also concerned about the decision not to grandfather existing pigeons. Tarrytown was mentioned as a nearby example where pigeon keeping is prohibited but existing owners were grandfathered in. That feels like a reasonable and humane compromise here. If the Village believes a ban is necessary going forward, why not allow the current flock to remain?

If the Board is rejecting that option, I'd appreciate an explanation of what specific harm would result from allowing these existing birds to stay under reasonable conditions.

I also want to ask how "pigeon" is being defined. Would domesticated doves be included? Since pigeons and doves are part of the same biological family, that distinction matters, and it should be clearly spelled out in any law.

Finally, I hope the Board will consider the animals themselves. Pigeons are intelligent,

social animals that form strong bonds with each other and with their caretakers. Asking someone to disperse an established flock isn't just regulating a hobby—it has real consequences for living creatures that have formed a home and social structure here.

I'm not arguing for unlimited or unregulated pigeon keeping. If there are legitimate concerns, they should absolutely be addressed. But regulation and prohibition are not the same thing, and a ban should require a clear, well-supported justification.

Before moving forward, I respectfully ask the Board to clarify:

What documented problem requires a full ban?

What evidence supports the idea that responsibly kept pigeons are a risk?

What less restrictive options were considered and why they were rejected?

Why grandfathering was not adopted, as in other municipalities?

What harm would result from allowing the existing flock to remain?

How "pigeon" will be defined in the law?

What consideration has been given to animal welfare impacts?

If there is a specific issue at a specific property, that should be addressed directly. But a Village-wide ban feels like a very broad solution to what appears to be a very limited situation.

Croton is a community that values fairness and thoughtful decision-making, and I hope those values guide this process.

At a minimum, I ask the Board to reconsider grandfathering the existing birds so they can remain with their owner.

Additionally, I am attaching a comprehensive study regarding pigeons and transmission of disease to humans.

Thank you,

Kate Elliott

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Journal of Infection (2004) **48**, 307–313

www.elsevierhealth.com/journals/jinf

Health hazards posed by feral pigeons

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Accepted 17 November 2003

KEYWORDS
Pigeon; Zoonoses; Disease reservoir; Environment and public health; Immunocompromised host; Epidemiology; Mycoses; Food poisoning; Animal viruses

Summary A comprehensive literature search of epidemiological studies and reports of transmissions of disease from feral pigeons to humans was performed. There were 176 documented transmissions of illness from feral pigeons to humans reported between 1941 and 2003. Feral pigeons harbored 60 different human pathogenic organisms, but only seven were transmitted to humans. Aerosol transmission accounted for 99.4% of incidents. There was a single report of transmission of *Salmonella enterica* serotype Kiambu to humans from feral pigeons, and no reports of transmission of *Campylobacter* spp. The most commonly transmitted pathogens continue to be *Chlamydophila psittaci* and *Cryptococcus neoformans*. Although feral pigeons pose sporadic health risks to humans, the risk is very low, even for humans involved in occupations that bring them into close contact with nesting sites. In sharp contrast, the immunocompromised patient may have a nearly 1000-fold greater risk of acquiring mycotic disease from feral pigeons and their excreta than does the general population.

Introduction

High numbers of feral pigeons live in almost every large city in the world and they are frequently encountered by humans.[1] However, the health hazard that they pose has not been adequately assessed. Clinicians are confronted by the need to educate people about the risk of contracting disease most often when they are clearing feral pigeon excrements or culling them from buildings. However, many people have casual interactions with pigeons that range from feeding them in public parks to handling tamed birds that nest on windowsills. In addition, immunocompromised patients need advice about limiting exposure to potential vectors of zoonotic diseases, even when it concerns seemingly innocuous traditions such as feeding pigeons in the park. Extermination that is intended to greatly reduce pigeons around human populations does not appear to work as well as restricting feeding,[1] are protested by those sensitive to the plight of animals, and most importantly, may pose increased hazards to human health from disturbance of the nesting environment and handling of carcasses. On the other hand, animal protection activists sometimes deny that pigeons pose any health hazard.[2] In spite of the large distribution of feral pigeons and their successful acclimation to humans, there are no reviews of the scientific literature on this topic. This paper aims to give clinicians information that will help them assess the risk to human health from feral pigeons.

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0163-4453/$30.00
doi:10.1016/j.jinf.2003.11.001

Table 1 Pathogenic organisms identified in feral pigeon populations

Viruses
- Western equine encephalomyelitis (WEE)[23]
- Rubella[24,25]
- St Louis Encephalitis[23,26]
- West Nile virus (WNV)[21,22,24]
- Influenza[24]

Bacteria
- *Clostridium perfringens*[12]
- *Listeria monocytogenes*[27]
- *Salmonella enterica*
  - serovar Anatum[28]
  - serovar Anatum var. 15[15]
  - serovar Derby[28]
  - serovar Arizonae[29]
  - serovar 1,4,12:27: g,[m],t:e,n,x[29]
  - serovar Java[30]
  - serogroup E[31]
  - serovar Enteritidis[30]
  - serovar Kiambu[11]
  - serovar Typhimurium[12,16,29–33]
  - serovar Typhimurium Typ 690[25]
  - serovar var. Copenhagen[25,28]
- *Yersinia* spp.[25]
- *Campylobacter jejuni*[13,14,16,17,31,34]
- *Campylobacter coli*[13,17]
- *Escherichia coli* (STEC, VTEC)[35–37]
- *Coxiella burnetti*[24,25,38,39]
- *Chlamydophila psittaci*[8,24,25,30,32–34,38–55]

Fungi
- *Allescheria boydii*[56]
- *Aspergillus* spp.[56,57]
- *Candida albicans*[56,58–63]
- *Candida glabrata*[59,60,63]
- *Torulopsis (Candida) glabrata*[29]
- *Candida guillermondii*[59,60,62,63]
- *Candida humicola*[63]
- *Candida intermedia*[62]
- *Candida krusei*[56,59,60,62,63]
- *Candida lambica*[63]
- *Candida lipolytica*[63]
- *Candida lusitaniae*[60,62]
- *Candida parapsilosis*[62,63]
- *Candida pseudotropicalis*[60,62]
- *Candida rugosa*[60,62,63]
- *Candida tropicalis*[59,60,62,63]
- *Candida zeylanoides*[63]
- *Chrysosporium* spp.[56]
- *Cryptococcus albidus*[62–64]
- *Cryptococcus laurentii*[62,63,65]
- *Cryptococcus neoformans*[29,58,62,63,66–76]
- *Cryptococcus terreus*[62]
- *Cryptococcus uniguttulatus*[65]
- *Debaromyces hansenii*[65]
- *Geotrichum* spp.[59,63]
- *Geotrichum candidum*[56]
- *Histoplasma capsulatum*[77]
- *Hansenula anomala*[63]
- *Kloeckera apiculata*[63]
- *Paeciliomyces* spp.[56]
- *Pichia membranaefaciens*[62]
- *Rhizopus* spp.[56]
- *Rhodotorula* spp.[56]
- *Rhodotorula glutinis*[63]
- *Rhodotorula rubra*[29,62,63]
- *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*[62,63]
- *Saccharomyces oleaginosus*[62]
- *Saccharomyces telluris*[59,60,62]
- *Scopulariopsis* spp.[56]
- *Streptomyces* spp.[56]
- *Torulopsis candida*[62,63]
- *Trichosporon beigelii*[63]
- *Trichosporon capitatum*[63]
- *Trichosporon cutaneum*[56,62,63]
- *Trichosporon pullulans*[63]

Protozoas
- *Toxoplasma gondii*[30,78,79]

Total 60 pathogens as designated by genus and species.

Methods

The review of older literature, which comprises sources not readily accessible to clinicians by standard scientific publication search engines, was accomplished by perusal of bibliographic references in Italian, French, German, Dutch and English publications (Tables 1 and 2). More recently cited sources were collected by searches with key words like 'pigeon', 'dove' and '*Columba livia*' in the medical database PubMed. Only those papers that showed confirmed, or in the case of one large outbreak presumptive diagnosis of disease in humans,[3] are included in this review (Tables 1 and 2). All published reports of transmissions of pathogenic organisms from feral pigeons to humans were included for analysis and tabulation. For the review of food-related infections, the commodity term was used in conjunction with the terms 'food and outbreak and human' (Table 3). Commodities chosen for comparison ranged from extremely common sources, such as milk to infrequently eaten specialty foods such as snake. For this evaluation, each publication was not perused individually for applicability to food related illness in humans, and thus, it only indicates relative frequency of reports of outbreaks for each commodity.

Results

Epidemiological investigations

Seventy-seven epidemiological studies of feral pigeon populations identified human pathogenic organisms coming from 60 cities and regions. Analysis revealed that feral pigeons harbored a

Table 2 Association between human practice and illness contracted from feral pigeons

Pathogen	Number of illnesses[a]	Description of contact
Salmonella enterica	1	Environmental exposure[11]
Chlamydophila psittaci	29[b]	Environmental exposure[41,42,44,45,80–82]
	10	Handling a sick or dead pigeon[40,47,82–84]
	8	Pigeon feeding[42,82,83,85,86]
Histoplasma capsulatum	23	Environmental exposure[3]
	68	Exposure in a hospital setting[77]
Aspergillus spp.	13 (13)	Exposure in a hospital setting[87–90]
Candida parapsilosis	12 (12)	Exposure in a hospital setting[91]
Cryptococcus neoformans	5 (2)	Environmental exposure[67,92–95]
	5 (4)	Exposure in a hospital setting[75,96]
	1 (1)	Wound inflicted by a pigeon[97]
Toxoplasma	1	Environmental exposure[78]
Total cases	176	

[a] Number of patients who were immunoincompetent.
[b] Additional cases are reported, but not enumerated[39,98] (Haag-Wackernagel, unpublished).

total of 60 different human pathogenic organisms (Table 1). Five pathogens were viruses, nine were bacteria, 45 were fungi, and one was a protozoan (Table 1). However, only five pathogens were routinely transmitted to humans (Table 2). There were single case incidences for transmission of *Salmonella enterica* and *Toxoplasma* (Table 2). In general, there was a notable lack of transmission of pathogenic viruses and bacteria to people from feral pigeons.

Confirmation of the link between pigeons and fungal disease

There is a long-recognized link between pigeons and fungal diseases in humans, and, indeed, almost all (17 of 18) investigations of feral pigeon populations were positive for *Cryptococcus* spp. Review of the literature indicated that *Cryptococcus neoformans* and *Chlamydophila psittaci* were the most widespread zoonotic pathogens in feral pigeon populations (Table 2). *C. neoformans* caused diseases in immunocompromised as well as in immunocompetent patients,[4] but primarily in immunocompromised patients (Table 2). *C. neoformans* was acquired by 11 patients of whom seven were immunocompromised (Table 2). The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that in the United States *Cryptococcus* spp. result in 0.2–0.9 cases per 100,000 in the general population per year.[5] However, the CDC also reports that AIDS patients have a 1000-fold higher risk, with an annual reported incidence of 2–4 cases per 1000 persons.[5] The pigeon is not an amplifying host of *Cryptococcus*, but its excrements offer an ideal environment for its growth.[6] Therefore, it appears that the risk of illness associated with pigeons from *Cryptococcus* is now largely a function of the immune status of the human population rather than from people just having contact with birds. This is not a new concept,[7] but the emergence of AIDS over the past 30 years and the associated increase in mycotic disease reiterates that a change in the human population rather than carriage rates by feral pigeons has occurred overtime. Similar to the situation with *Cryptococcus, Aspergillus* and *Candida* infections also appear to implicate a decline in human immune function as the primary risk factor for contraction of illness from feral pigeons (Table 2).

Chlamydia and *Histoplasma* infections in humans did not necessarily show an association with immunocompromise of the host (Table 2), although it cannot be ruled out without full knowledge of each individual case. An outbreak of *Chlamydophila psittaci* infection involved at least 35 persons and it was due to human contact with feral pigeons that

Table 3 PubMed references returned for outbreaks per food commodity

Milk	168	Goat	18
Egg	112	Juice	18
Fish	96	Hamburger	16
Vegetable	96	Horse	14
Shellfish	92	Rabbit	11
Fruit	79	Wild boar	10
Chicken	79	Deer	6
Cheese	73	Duck	5
Beef	66	Pigeon	0
Dairy	64	Alligator	0
Pork	48	Snake	0
Turkey	37	Ostrich	0

Searched on October 22, 2003 at www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi. Search terms were 'commodity and food and outbreak and human'.

varied in intensity (Tables 1 and 2). According to the literature, *C. psittaci* has a worldwide average seroprevalence of 45.8% as determined by review of 33 epidemiological investigations. An earlier 1965 review suggested a seroprevalence of 28.7% in feral pigeon populations in different cities and regions.[8] In preparation for this review, sampling of feral pigeons in Lucerne revealed a mean prevalence of 56% seropositive feral pigeons (H. Wackernagel, unpublished results). All investigations of feral pigeon populations have been seropositive for *C. psittaci* (Table 1), which suggests that this organism is commensally associated with the pigeon host. However, there was no evidence that a high prevalence rate in pigeons is necessarily associated with a high probability of infections in humans that encounter pigeons. Two reports describe infections in humans with *Histoplasma capsulatum* (Table 1), which was the pathogen associated with the highest number of cases in a single outbreak. Because all of the fungal pathogens, including *Cryptococcus*, *Chlamydophila*, and *Histoplasma*, are known to be transmitted by inhalation of aerosolized organisms, the data suggests that 175 of 176 (99.4%) of described transmissions resulted from airborne excreta, which includes dried feces, ocular discharges, and crop milk.[9] However, other methods of transmission are possible if close contact occurs, as evidenced by one report of primary cutaneous cryptococcosis of a HIV-positive drug abuser following injury inflicted by a feral pigeon (Table 1). Contact is sometimes brief, and the patient does not always recall any encounter with birds.[9]

Pigeons are not reported to be a common source of food-borne illness

Only two reports describe transmission of *Salmonella enterica* (*S. enterica*) to humans from either domesticated or feral pigeons, one of which occurred outside the general time frame of 60 years for this review. Illness in 20 soldiers in the Dutch army occurred in 1933 that clearly implicated *S. enterica* serovar Typhimurium variant Copenhagen as the causative agent that contaminated lemon pudding made with eggs from domestic pigeons.[10] It appears to be the only case of food-borne transmission from pigeons to humans in the literature. Feral pigeons resulted in a case of salmonellosis from *S. enterica* serovar Kiambu[11] (Table 2). Given that *S. enterica* serovar Typhimurium variant Copenhagen and *Campylobacter*, which are common food-borne pathogens, are frequently recovered from feral pigeons as well as from domesticated pigeons used for food,[12–17] it is surprising that there are no other reports of food-borne transmission to humans from pigeons in the literature.

To pursue the idea further that there is a low risk of transmission of common food-borne bacteria between pigeons and humans, an independent risk assessment was performed. A feral pigeon population of around 5000–8000 birds that was sampled in Basel, Switzerland in preparation for this review harbored *C. psittaci*, *Campylobacter* spp., *S. enterica* serovar Typhimurium variant Copenhagen, and *Aspergillus fumigatus* (Haag-Wackernagel, unpublished data). However, records from the Department of Internal Medicine of the University Hospital in Basel showed that there were no direct transmissions of disease from feral pigeons to humans between 1997 and 2003 (Flueckiger and Haag-Wackernagel, unpublished data). In addition, a search of the literature revealed that, other than the 1933 outbreak, there were no reports of food-borne illness from either domesticated or feral pigeons since 1933 (Table 3). This finding is unexpected given that contact between pigeon and human is a frequent occurrence as compared to what probably happens with wild boar, snake, ostrich and alligator (Table 3). Illness was noted to occur in the literature base for rabbit, which is another feral animal that is sometimes domesticated and bred for food and kept as a pet. Therefore, it appears that the risk of transmission of food-borne disease from pigeon to human is comparatively low, in spite of pigeons being frequent carriers of common food-borne pathogens.

Other suggested associations between pathogens and feral pigeons

One case of *Toxoplama gondii* is reported (Table 1), which occurred in an elderly woman. Therefore, all immunocompromised patients, including pregnant women who are at higher risk for contracting toxoplasmosis, should be advised to avoid feral pigeon populations and their nesting sites. Currently, there is no experimental evidence that pigeons are an important vector for the recently emerged viral disease of human pathogenic avian influenza[18] and the epidemiological association between feral pigeons and humans in regards to this disease is only speculative.[19] Although it appears that feral pigeons are seropositive for West Nile virus, there is no epidemiological evidence that they are an amplifying vector as are crows.[20–22]

Discussion

Epidemiological screening programs of animal reservoirs often identify pathogens that have never been, or are seldom, transmitted to humans. In regards to zoonotic disease transmitted from the feral pigeon to humans, all viruses, *Yersinia*, *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter* and *Toxoplasma* are in this category. Therefore, the results of many of the epidemiological investigation herein reviewed were only relevant for assessing the health of the feral pigeon populations rather than for assessing their hazard to human health. Thus, the mere isolation of a pathogen from pigeons does not justify their extermination, although people should be educated about the risk factors for acquiring mycotic disease. The low number of 176 reported transmissions in the literature that spans approximately 60 years underestimates risk, because many cases are not published or the sources of the infections are not recognized. However, in spite of the worldwide distribution of feral pigeons, the close and frequent contact they have with humans, their use as food, and the high prevalence of carriage of human pathogens, zoonotic disease caused by feral pigeons is infrequent. Healthy people who are exposed to feral pigeons and their nesting sites, or who have increased exposure from hobbies or occupations involving feral and domesticated pigeons, should be informed of these risks and advised of appropriate ways to protect themselves. These methods include wearing coveralls, face masks, other respiratory protection, washing hands and by disinfection against excreta dust with antiseptics. If possible, sick pigeons should be avoided, or at the very least, handled with great care to prevent exposure to excreta. The literature reiterates that the immunocompromised patient is at considerably higher risk for contracting opportunistic disease from feral pigeon populations. Since opportunistic pathogens have a multitude of vectors besides feral pigeons, disease prevention is probably best attained by educating the immunocompromised patient to limit contact with all avian sources and to follow guidelines for maintaining hygiene under any circumstance where close contact with pathogenic organisms might occur.

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From: Doug Simmons
To: Brian Pugh; Manager"s Office
Subject: Regarding proposed pigeon ban in the village
Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2026 4:49:33 AM

Dear Mayor and Board of Trustees:

I'm deeply concerned that the motivation driving the proposed pigeon ban is being personally directed at my neighbor. He followed the rules in building his coop in which he currently and immaculately cares for his beloved pets. They are beautiful creatures. It's wrong to use the law to deny a single citizen the right to pursue his happiness in a legal manner.

I've just learned there's an agenda item on tomorrow's board meeting to schedule a public hearing on this issue. I'm curious to hear the board's thoughts on the sudden need for this law. If the law is to become a reality he must be grandfathered in as has happened in similar circumstances in Westchester County.

Thank you,
Doug Simmons
Finney Farm Road

From: Gem Mitchell
To: Manager"s Office; Board of Trustees
Subject: In support of grandfathering the pigeons
Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2026 1:53:22 PM

Dear Mayor, Manager and Board of Trustees:

I'm deeply concerned that there may be personal motivation driving the proposed pigeon ban on our neighbor. He followed the rules of record in building his coop in which he currently and immaculately cares for his beloved pets. They are beautiful creatures who have a long history of helping humans and are highly intelligent! It's wrong to modify the law to deny a single citizen the right to pursue his happiness in what has been and should remain a legal pursuit in our village.

It’s recently come to light that there's an agenda item on tomorrow's board meeting to schedule a public hearing on this issue. Why is there a sudden need for this law? If the law is to become a reality, he **must be grandfathered** as has happened in similar circumstances throughout Westchester County.

The sounds of cooing doves and pigeons is beautiful to the ear and calming to the soul. Surely our precious village can accommodate a few of these special residents! I know many others in our village feel as I do on this matter. I trust our elected officials will operate in a balanced and fair way.

Thank you for your attention,
Georgiana E Mitchell (GEM)
12 Prickly Pear Hill Road

From: Croton-on-Hudson NY via Croton-on-Hudson NY
To: Manager"s Office
Subject: Form submission from: Send Us Comments
Date: Wednesday, August 19, 2026 11:31:25 AM

Submitted on Wednesday, August 19, 2026 - 11:31am
Submitted values are:

Choose One: Public Comments for Board Meeting
Please include any questions or comments: Shouldn’t trustee Len Simon recuse himself from any deliberations regarding the “pigeon coop” law? This law seems specifically designed to address an issue with Trustee Simon’s neighbor and it is my understanding that some of the impetus for this legislation is a complaint by Trustee Simon regarding the pigeon coop
==Please provide the following information==
Your Name: James C. Miller
Email Address:
==Address==
Street: 18 wolf road
City: Croton
State: New York
Zipcode: 10520

Organization:
Phone Number:

The results of this submission may be viewed at:
https://www.crotononhudson-ny.gov/node/2/submission/45756

From: Croton-on-Hudson NY via Croton-on-Hudson NY
To: Manager"s Office
Subject: Form submission from: Send Us Comments
Date: Wednesday, August 19, 2026 10:45:36 AM

CAUTION: External sender.

Submitted on Wednesday, August 19, 2026 - 10:45am
Submitted values are:

Choose One: Village Manager's Office
Please include any questions or comments:
Dear Mayor, Village Trustees and Village Manager,

We appreciate your dedication to the village and its residents. This note is regarding Local Law 10. We are not able to attend tonight's meeting but feel strongly that you are overreaching when you decide to reshape a law to specifically target an individual community member and his pets especially since he has complied with all Village rules and regulations. There has been no credible information brought forward to indicate that there is a health hazard being caused by this individual and his pigeons, or that he has been slacking off on their hygiene or care. To have them unilaterally removed by trustee vote, pitting the rights of one community member against another in this way seems arbitrary, troubling and frankly, scary, especially since there are so many other ways in which the situation can be handled. To abruptly remove this individual's pet birds is putting them at risk and is astonishingly cruel. You are literally breaking the heart of a community member and putting his flock in harms way. You are probably familiar with how difficult it is to re-home pets. If there is such a ground swell of support a new law, then by all means change it in away that seems democratic and without favortism and let the situation of this one person and his pigeons be grandfathered.

Sincerely,

Andrea Furey & David Cohen
==Please provide the following information==
Your Name: Andrea Furey & David Cohen
Email Address:
==Address==
Street: 14 Morningside Drive
City: Croton on Hudson
State: New York
Zipcode: 10520

Organization: residents
Phone Number:

The results of this submission may be viewed at:

From: Croton-on-Hudson NY via Croton-on-Hudson NY
To: Manager"s Office
Subject: Form submission from: Send Us Comments
Date: Wednesday, August 19, 2026 8:50:36 AM

CAUTION: External sender.

Submitted on Wednesday, August 19, 2026 - 8:50am
Submitted values are:

Choose One: Public Comments for Board Meeting
Please include any questions or comments:
Dear Mayor and Trustees,

I am appalled that this town is considering a ban on keeping pigeons. As a child growing up in Suffolk County, LI there were many neighbors in my community that kept pigeons and there were NEVER any issues. Pigeon keeping is an age old practice that has never caused any harm to people or the environment. During World Wars pigeons were war heroes delivering messages of importance. Today, the keeping of these gentile creatures is the same as having any other household pet. I will be totally ashamed of this Village if a ban is put on such a peaceful practice.
What NEEDS to be put under review is the keeping of BEE HIVES as non-native honey bees compete with our native pollinators and put them at risk. I do wish you could all get your priorities in order!!

-Amy Gardiner
Cleveland Drive
==Please provide the following information==
Your Name: Amy Gardiner
Email Address:
==Address==
Street: 224 Cleveland Drive
City: Croton on Hudson
State: New York
Zipcode: 10520

Organization:
Phone Number:

The results of this submission may be viewed at:
https://www.crotononhudson-ny.gov/node/2/submission/45746