

Digivol Tutorial: JCU Pied Imperial Pigeon NestCam Study

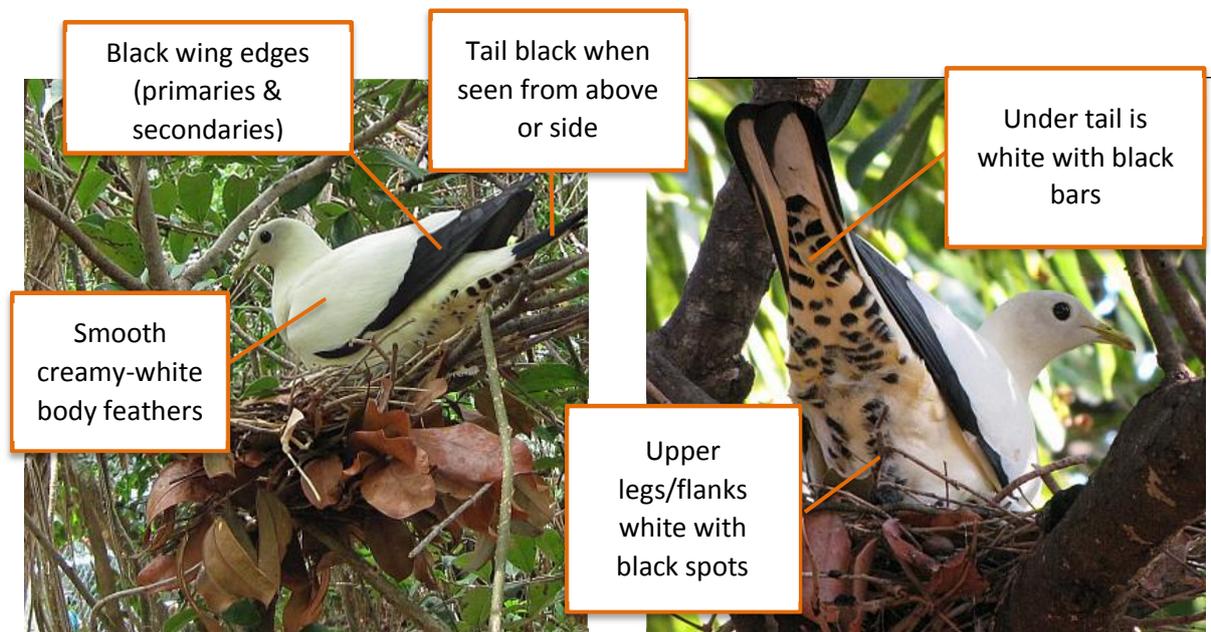
(Update 10 August 2016)

Thank you for joining this Digivol expedition! We are seeking volunteers with a good eye for detail, to help with analyzing images from automated cameras. The cameras are placed at bird nests on remote islands off the north-east coast of Australia. The focal birds are Pied Imperial Pigeons (PIPs). They are also known as Torres Strait Pigeons or Torresian Imperial Pigeons.

The procedure is simple: complete steps 1 to 6 on the screen. But some images make it really **challenging to pick important details!**

PLEASE read on.

Adult PIPs – very important to identify correctly



Tips:

Body feathers of adults are usually smooth (juveniles less smooth). Adult body usually looks whiter than juvenile (juvenile very slightly creamy or greyish-white tint).

Adult wing and tail have wide black edges (juvenile has narrow grey edges).

If you see them together, the adult is much bigger than a small and medium juvenile. A large juvenile will be almost the same size as an adult.

Caution:

An adult sometimes has its body feathers 'fluffed up' and then it looks less smooth than usual.

Take care with sun and shadow: A juvenile in bright sun looks whiter than usual. Any bird in shadow may look greyish.

Juvenile PIPs

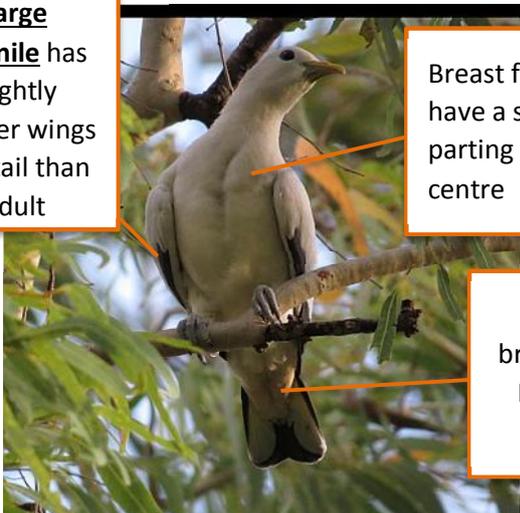
Small juvenile has fine grey fluff at first, then creamy-white pin feathers start to appear



Medium juvenile has body feathers white with pale buff tips. Pin feathers remain on head. Wing edges and tail tip grey and very much shorter than adult.



Large juvenile has slightly shorter wings and tail than adult



Breast feathers have a slight parting in the centre

Under tail is light brown, no black bars
No black spots on upper legs/flanks

Tips:

Often the adult partly covers the juvenile. Please zoom in, look closely, and make the best assessment you can.

Please select the smaller size when in doubt about a juvenile size category. The juvenile grows slowly. That means, for several days it will be on the borderline between two size categories.

When being fed, the juvenile inserts its head deep into the parent's gaping mouth. This is fairly easy to see with a medium or large juvenile, tricky with a very small juvenile. If the adult PIP in the nest is bending forward, look closely at its head, to see whether it is feeding a small chick.

If uncertain, please write a note at question 5.

Please see next page for examples and more tips for challenging images.



Q: Is this an adult?

A: Adult and *Small Juvenile*

Important details:

Adult is big with smooth, white body.

Under and beside the adult we need to search for anything that is neither twigs nor part of the adult.

Right of the blue marker, we spot a patch of not-quite-parallel feathers. They are nearly horizontally oriented, creamy colour (in contrast to adult feathers, white and more-or-less vertically oriented).

So, that patch of feathers would not be part of the adult's breast or belly. We can be confident we have a juvenile present in this image.

Only a small part of this juvenile is visible, not enough to decide 'small' or 'medium'. We follow the guideline: pick the smaller size in any borderline case.



Q: Is this an adult or juvenile?

A: Medium Juvenile.

Important details:

How we decide this is a juvenile: Narrow grey edges on wings and tail (where adult would have wider blacker edges)

Not-so-smooth ("lumpy") appearance of body and wing feathers (where adult usually sleek and smooth)

Hint of creamy colour on body and wing feathers (where adult usually nearly pure white).

We cannot see any pin feathers, so this juvenile is not 'small'. It could be medium or large. When uncertain, we pick the smaller size, in this case 'medium.'

We can also notice this juvenile has narrow dark edges on wings and tail, whereas a large juvenile would have somewhat wider dark edges on wings and tail, but not quite as wide as an adult.



Q: Is this two adults on the nest?

A: Adult and medium juvenile.

This dark image is very challenging. It is helpful to use a big, bright screen if possible.

Important details:

Bird on the left is adult – white body, wide dark edges on wing and tail.

Looking very closely we can see the bird on the right has short/stubby wing, body size and head size slightly smaller than bird on the left, body feathers less smooth. So we know bird on the right is a juvenile.

It is not a 'small' juvenile. Could be medium or large. When uncertain, pick the smaller size, in this case 'medium'.

Feedback and questions are very welcome in the Digivol forum for this expedition.

Many thanks to all volunteers!