Passenger Pigeon Timeline

Lesson Title: Passenger Pigeons: Nomads Lost

Name:____________________________

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1800 1810 1820 1830 1840 1850 1860 1870 1880 1890 1900 1910

**Slow decline**

- **1806**: Flock estimated at 2.2 billion birds over Kentucky
- **1813**: Flock estimated at 1.1 billion birds over Kentucky: “the sky was black with birds for 3 days” (Audubon, 1831)
- **1865**: Eastern railroad network complete: Every colony within 1-day buggy drive
- **1866**: Flock estimated at 3.7 billion over Ontario
- **1869**: Van Buren County, Michigan alone sent 7.5 million birds to markets in East
- **1840s – Rail and telegraph**
- **1870s – portable saw mill**
- **1878**: Last huge nesting, Michigan. ~10 million slaughtered
- **1888**: Last “large flocks” reported. Population likely beyond point of recovery.
- **1900**: Last wild specimen shot
- **1914**: Last Passenger Pigeon died in captivity

**Catastrophic decline**

- **1806**: Flock estimated at 2.2 billion birds over Kentucky
- **1813**: Flock estimated at 1.1 billion birds over Kentucky: “the sky was black with birds for 3 days” (Audubon, 1831)

**Extinction**

- **1870**
- **1880**
- **1890**
- **1900**
- **1910**

**I have seen flocks streaming south in the fall so large that they were flowing over from horizon to horizon in an almost continuous stream all day long, at the rate of forty or fifty miles an hour, like a mighty river in the sky, widening, contracting, descending like falls and cataracts, and rising suddenly here and there in huge ragged masses like high-splashing spray. (Muir, 1913)**