

Backpacked pigeons report for smog duty

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If you live in northern California and see pigeons wearing tiny backpacks don't worry -- you are not hallucinating.

The pigeons are part of an unusual project, the Los Angeles Times reported Thursday. The birds are carrying miniature smog sensors in those backpacks that will transmit air pollution data to a "pigeon blog" Web site.

Beatriz da Costa, an assistant professor of arts, computation and engineering at the University of California-Irvine, developed the project as a way to get people thinking about the health hazards of smog.

The first flight of pigeons lifted off Tuesday for a 30-minute smog reconnaissance mission over the Silicon Valley, with another flight scheduled for Saturday.

The project is part of a technology and art show that includes a robotic willow tree, a karaoke ice cream truck and a laughing bicycle, the newspaper said.

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