

TIPPLER THE MARATHON FLYER

by *Richard Seabridge*

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Purpose

"Little did I think a few years ago, when I undertook the publication of a few articles on Flying Tippler pigeons, that this would materialize. These articles were originally written to stimulate interest in the Tippler breed of pigeons; in hope of fanciers joining the club, and make this breed more popular in the US."

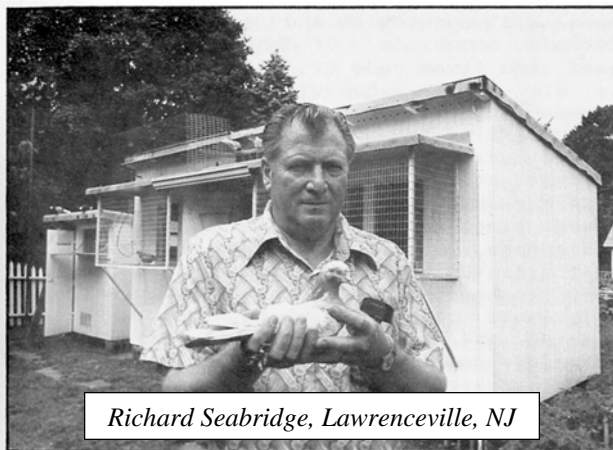
Introduction

Richard Seabridge the Pigeon Fancier

Richard Seabridge the pigeon "Fancier" is the author of this little jewel of a handbook for the Sport of Flying Tiplers. The dictionary defines a fancier as: 1) a person having a liking for or interest in something; enthusiast and 2) a person who breeds plants, animals, etc., especially in order to improve the strain. This describes him to a tee, but there is so much more. He is a past president of the Flying Tippler Association, (FTA) and the Flying Tippler Society of the USA, (FTS) two of the major Tippler organizations in the United States.

He's been raising pigeons for 55 of his 67 years and has a room full of trophies and diplomas to testify to his success in breeding winners. In 1956 one of his racing pigeons became the first bird in 34 years in the Trenton area to make it home in a single day, in a 600-mile race. The racer flew 625 miles, from Georgia to his loft in New Jersey, leaving in his wake closer-to-home competitors from Pennsylvania, Delaware and other New Jersey lofts.

Richard's Tiplers, too, have brought him a measure of fame. In 1975, his birds set a record of 14 hours. It was the best time recorded by any FTA member. The achievement won him an invitation to address a Rutgers seminar on pigeon management. He still remembers with awe sharing a speakers' podium with other breeders, animal science professors and a visiting lec-



Richard Seabridge, Lawrenceville, NJ

turer from London. Richard's best fly in the FTA stands at 15 hours and 46 minutes and was achieved in June of 1983. And, he holds the third best time ever posted in the FTS; 15 hours, 23 minutes. It happened in May, 1988; it was his last fly in national competition.

Second Introduction

The High Flying Tippler Pigeon

Inside Seabridge's loft, Tiplers sit in individual kit boxes waiting for the training that will permit them to fly. Raising Tiplers is, by comparison, a leisurely sport. "With racers," says Dick, "you spend a lot of time just exercising them. They're like race horses - they need frequent workouts to stay in shape. Every four days you've got to truck them 50 or 60 miles away to release them." While the racer speeds home at altitudes up to 700 feet, the Tippler's challenge is height, varying from 5,000 feet to more than 10,000 and endurance, spending hours soaring in kits of three or more birds. The racer is a heavyweight, his 14-16 ounces is beefy compared to the Tippler, who weighs, in flying shape, less than three-quarters of a pound.

"If you like pigeons but you haven't got much yard space," says Seabridge, "Tiplers are ideal." He has about 35 birds in a loft that measures eight by 16 feet, but a loft about half that size is adequate. And the nature of the breed's flight, straight up, straight down to its loft; rarely raises the feathers on anti-pigeon neighbors.

Preface

Observation

The two great factors which determine success or failure in the life of a racing pigeon or high flying Tippler are heredity and environment. When visiting a loft it is easy to see where the master's mind has been. Some fanciers do not work hard enough amongst their birds and do not seem to take that intelligent interest in them all year round. Many successful fanciers cannot maintain a family of winning birds for more than a few years; they deteriorate in their hands. They then try

another family of birds and for a time success may follow again, but they never seem able to perpetuate a family of birds. There is an old saying that like produces like, but as is the case with all generalizations this is only true to a limited extent. Certainly, for instance, rabbits always breed rabbits and dogs always breed dogs, but a good rabbit does not always produce one of corresponding merit and a good dog does not always produce a satisfactory specimen of its breed.

I have no secrets that I can call my own, nor can I describe some revolutionary system of management. On the contrary, many other fanciers have also recognized and put the same things first. All successful fanciers recognize the importance of breeding. As success in breeding is the forerunner to success in long high flying and racing, without the first, the second cannot follow. Most fanciers stress the importance of good stock birds, but not so many indicate that they work to a definite plan to ensure that they have always reliable producers in the loft. In fact, in many cases it comes about as an accidental discovery, instead of confining themselves to the limit of one strain and one family, they add to their problems by attempting a variety of crosses and at the same time are not sufficiently selective. The only proof we can have that a pigeon is a valuable stock bird is the fact that it has already produced first class offspring. The breeding aspect of the sport should afford a keen fascination. The aim is to try to ensure that there are always birds producing what is required for racing or long high flying and a bird's merit as a breeder is judged by the performance of its progeny and not by what it ought theoretically to produce because of its illustrious parentage, or because of its own achievements as a racer or high flyer. The emphasis is always on the best and those that fall short of a very high standard are eliminated. A strain to my mind, is a family of all descendants of one individual pigeon. Success depends upon the individual's potency of reproducing its like, though it is not possessed by every individual. Unless the quality is present, that bird will be a failure as a stock bird. This course is to be pursued relentlessly, to avoid deterioration and to ensure that all the important qualities seen and particularly unseen, that go to make a champion are transmitted and that the standards are raised by the elimination of undesirable traits. Strain, as many previous writers in the sport agree, is the guarantee of a sound base on which to build, but that strain to me must be built from the individual, and the family of birds built around that strain.

And now we come to the problem of environment and by this term is meant the condition influencing the development, growth and existence of our feathered friends. In other words, it means the circumstances and surroundings under which a pigeon must live and these circumstances obviously may be either favorable or

unfavorable and this is entirely in the owner's OWN HANDS. Amongst these favorable conditions, I may mention here are a well built, suitably lighted loft with ample accommodation to spare for the number of birds kept, efficient ventilation, cleanliness, sound food, clean water, regular exercise and so forth and if I were asked which I consider the most important of all favorable conditions, I should say without question an abundant supply of pure fresh air .

These are some of my thoughts based on over fifty years in the fancy, starting with racing homers. I kept the same family of racers for over thirty-five years, which I had to dispose of in 1973 due to my illness. During the last twenty years in which I was racing I won twenty-nine average speed diplomas in club and concourse, and I won from every station 100 to 625 miles on the day, only day bird. My greatest satisfaction was winning first old bird overall average speed in the Central Jersey Combine, which is one of the largest in the country competing against two- to six thousand birds per race and placing in the top of the Big All American. With Tiplers, I have used the same methods and management with success.

Chapter 1 Tippler the Marathon Flyer

Those of you who are interested in pigeons, who select the Tippler pigeon as a hobby and study them, who try to breed show birds, and condition them to fly as many hours as possible will find an endless source of amusement and real pleasure.

First I would like to provide a brief resume or history on the flying Tippler. As to the origin of the breed, we are at a loss for accurate data. One theory, the Tippler is supposed to have been a cross between the Tumbler and the Cumulet in order to improve their flying qualities and give them a larger range of flight, that is, they rake more, which keeps them longer on the wing. This longtime flying has helped to get rid of the tumbling properties. There is no



doubt that it is man-made through selective breeding. They are of Tumbler decent, but beyond this it is merely a matter of speculation. The breed originated in Congleton and Macclesfield mining towns in England, around the year 1840. The aim of the old time breeders was to perfect a graceful action of the wings, or "Butterfly Action" and it is the ease and grace with which the wings are used that enable the Tippler to attain its marvelous duration of flight. The individual breeder must condition and prepare them for competition.

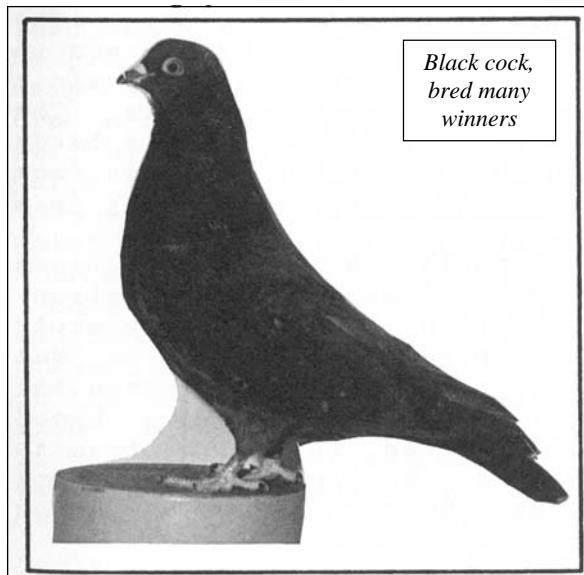
I believe the flying Tippler hobby would have a large following if fanciers only knew how to train and feed the pigeons. The two greatest faults novices make are in giving their birds too much food and too much liberty. If you let birds run about with too much freedom, go on the roofs of houses and just fly when they like, or drop when they want to, don't expect to have any control over them. A bad habit is almost impossible to correct. You must have a system of training and feeding, if you want to see them fly into the teens of hours. A good Tippler should fly slowly and very steadily, if you are flying old birds it is best to fly all hens or all cocks in a kit composed of three to seven birds for best results, all the birds of the kit should have the same wing action and once the kit settles down, the motion of the wings should scarcely seem to move at all.

In the Tippler hobby, there are two types of fanciers. Flying for competition and the pleasure flyer, the latter keeps Tipplers just for his own pleasure flying, as a rule he likes his birds to fly in good style, up in the clouds. He is satisfied, though control is still an important ingredient here .

Flying for competition - the flying birds should be kept separated from the stock birds, also hens and cocks should be separated and it is best to fly either all cocks or all hens. If you fly young birds it doesn't matter about having a mixed kit. One method of preparing and conditioning Tipplers for these flights is to fly them from an individual kit box, as each bird has its own compartment where it is fed and watered. Always try and start all your birds at precisely the same time, they will get up much better. Should any of them settle on the roof on getting out, drive them up at once, and prevent them from doing it again in the future.

In order to breed successfully, it is best to separate your stock birds at the end of the breeding season so that they will go through a good molt which assures a good breeding season the next year.

The Flying Tippler Society of the USA (FTS) provides fanciers throughout the United States an opportunity to participate in national competitions. The Society issues fly rules and a schedule of fly contests for the entire year. In order to compete for honors,



members must prepare and condition their birds for the scheduled day. A judge or timer must be present at liberation to verify birds and remain at the location for the duration of flight and confirm time. This timer must be a member of the Society or be registered with the FTS, but not a relative or partner and must verify the birds in flight every hour. A fly report with all pertinent flight information must be filled out, signed by the timer, and forwarded to the FTS Central Timer. Anyone interested in joining should please contact the FTS Secretary.

SUMMARY of IMPORTANT INGREDIENTS

1. Get a good strain - Obtain your foundation stock from a reliable fancier whose birds have flown constantly into the teens of hours.
2. Training procedures to gain control -Food and man agreement.
3. Keep loft population down - Culling, disease control and Tipplers that default.
4. Various diets for Tipplers, at various stages - Barley the staple food for flying Tipplers, flying on a very low diet.
5. Bringing out the endurance by training -Recognize the signs when one of the kit is becoming distressed.

Chapter 2 Young Birds

Within the Tippler fancy, there is a variety of subjects that one can write about; Breeding, Feeding, Flying Old Birds, Settling and Flying Young Birds, to name a few. This list can be endless, but in this chapter, I will confine it to young birds. Perhaps the most important aspect of any task is how one commences. This is especially true in training a young kit of flying Tipplers.

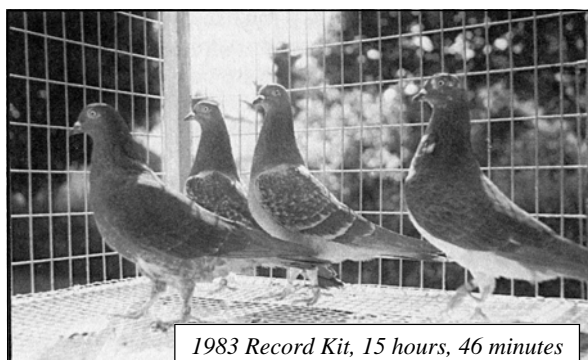
Our aim is to produce youngsters that are robust, strong and healthy, to fly from sun up to sun down. To achieve this, we must see that only the fittest survive,

let nature take its course. Never try to help a youngster out of its shell. A good sound mixture of grains should be fed to the breeders and the youngsters. They should grow steadily and any weakling should be culled. Do not skimp on the feed at this age. The young birds have to develop muscle and stamina. They can't do this on a starvation diet. As the youngsters grow, I place feed pots in the nest box. This way they start to learn how to eat and this also helps to relieve some of the feeding from the parents.

When the youngsters are 24 to 26 days old, they should be removed from their parents and placed in a section by themselves. Also at this time, I place some young droppers with them (I will deal with droppers later). A good guide is when the tail rectrices or tail feathers protrude about one inch beyond the under tail coverts. The first thing a novice should realize is that he is dealing with little babies and it is he and he alone that can make or break them. How they are handled and trained during the next six weeks or so, will decide whether you turn them into competition flying Tiplers or ruin them. The first few days after separation I would advise the novice fancier to check each youngster to be sure they are eating and drinking. Up to now your babies have been eating the same grain mixture as the breeders. As hungry birds are usually easily handled, at this state we start to add malted barley to their diet and gradually the barley will become their staple diet throughout their training. Tiplers for "Great Time Flights" must be trained to strive. Any Tippler that does not have the spirit to continue to fly even though it is extremely tired, hungry, and thirsty will never be good enough to fly for extremely long times. They have to accept flying on a very low diet and those that will accept a few hours on a poor diet are the only ones to fly greater times when their diet is improved. Get the babies to know you, keep them sharp so that when you throw a little barley they will come running.

From the young bird section, I have a trap to a cage on the top of the aviary which is serviceable, for the youngsters to see their surroundings and get familiar with the loft top. Some fanciers prefer a large type aviary but I believe that as long as the young birds can look around the top of the loft it is satisfactory.

In settling young Tiplers, good droppers are essential. Much will depend on how well your droppers work. Almost any white feathered breed of pigeon will do as a dropper. Some prefer white fantails, but I found Elbinger tumblers make good droppers. They are very small and tame. All their extremities, the wings tips, the heads and tails are white, and the Tippler can see the markings from a great distance. First get your droppers settled to the top of your loft and allow them to walk around the top. Only when you are certain you have control over the droppers can you start settling the young Tippler. The droppers are always liberated with



the young Tiplers until they are kiting well and returning to the loft. I like to settle one young Tippler at a time by putting one out the trap, allowing it to walk around and sometimes flutter up and down. Don't be in a hurry to have them take off. The longer they spend on this looking around and getting used to their surroundings the better. When the youngster is eventually coaxed into the loft, I then put another youngster out and go through the same procedure again. Once they are all established and coming to the droppers they can be boxed separately in a compartment kit box or an individual kit box where they are fed, watered and kept. A compartment kit box is three feet square to accommodate three to seven birds.

A kit of Tiplers for flying competition must consist of at least three birds, but not in excess of seven. Once the babies find their wings they usually scatter and fly in all directions. After four or five times out they start to kit or fly together.

As soon as the youngsters are settled and kiting and flying a little, they should be taught to fly to dusk. Then the loft landing lights are turned on and the droppers are put out on the loft top to signal them down. Always fly the birds without food or water. When they are dropped after a workout, get them in immediately and let them settle down for half an hour before feeding them. Then, give them feed first and grit and water when through feeding, once a day in the evening.

In settling young Tiplers this method has proven to be successful. In closing, I would like to reiterate the importance of patience when working with young Tiplers.

Chapter 3 Old Birds

It is really surprising how little has been written about this subject of feeding, training, et cetera of Tiplers. It is not that experienced fanciers are unwilling to part with their knowledge, I think, as with myself, it is a case of finding the time to write. Tippler flying is such a technical hobby and so underrated, it is a pity, really. We hear of "feeds," low diet, and build ups, vitamins, et cetera. I suppose it is confusing to some new starters and some not so new.

Even if top fanciers write down how and what they feed their birds on, for a particular event it doesn't mean that the same method would suit a second time.

There is no hard and fast rule about feeding. There are such a lot of variations between when the birds enter the loft after finishing training to when they are liberated. There are quite a few different opinions as to how often, when to feed, apart of course from what to give and when. Conditions can also make a difference. Feeding for early spring fly competitions is different from feed for a long day. Feeding of old birds is different to feeding youngsters. Feeding cocks is slightly different from feeding hens. So you can see what I mean by being technical. We also hear of secrets and secret feeds. This is rather exaggerated too.

Many people believe that our feathered friends are bred for high and long flying, but fail to believe that a bird is only going to do what it is trained for and for some, if not most, of the blame belongs to the handler. Some youngsters seem to have a will of their own, ignoring droppers pitching away, this of course, was due to lack of understanding. Here the handler must have patience. In my experience one cannot get anything like contest times out of a kit unless its flying program is restricted to preparation and conditioning to a "peak." When I start to resettle my old flyers after they have been confined to the loft over the winter, I start them one at a time like I would youngsters. Make sure they are really hungry, and have the droppers out with them. When it drops onto the loft get it in nice and gentle which is important. When in, I then give it a little bit of canary seed. This helps them to look forward to a tidbit for having come to the loft. I will repeat this with the rest of the kit, and when they have all come to the loft as they should I will then put them out together. Keep a very keen eye on them, when one shows to the loft, legs down, tail spread open, out with your droppers, call them down, and get them inside the loft. This may seem like a lot of trouble, but believe me it is worth it in the end. One thing I must mention at this time, when the kit is signaled down they must land on the loft. If they land out of your area, on a neighbor's nearby tree or television antenna, it is a default and a disqualification from the fly. At this stage they should be boxed off separately which is most important especially with hens. I will then have them out every night until they know what is expected of them and feed just malted barley, three-quarters of an ounce per bird at this point. Time on the wing does not matter for my aim is to have them really settled, then gradually I increase their flying time to suit them and myself, depending on what I can spare.

Once you have control of the kit, feed one ounce of malted barley per bird, and give them a small teaspoon of linseed (flax) three times a week. They should be flying four to five hours Monday, Wednesday and Friday on this feed, weather permitting. Do not forget, clean water after each feed. Also have grit available. Barley is one of the main grains used by the flying Tip-

pler fancier, mainly for conditioning their kits. Nothing upsets your birds more than bad musty grain. All grains should be well dried and stored in a dry place, out of reach of varmints et cetera. Do not overfeed your birds, it is easy to put weight on but hard to take it off. This is a fault we have all been guilty of at sometime. Here is a selection of grains and seeds, and their nutritious value, which most flying Tippler fanciers will use during breeding, flying and molting of their birds.

Protein - Builds strong body and bone structure and good feathering.

Grains - Canadian peas, maple peas and Austrian peas, vetch and lentils.

Carbohydrates - Energy grains, canary Seed, millet, milo, wheat, barley, rice and hulled oats.

Oily Seeds - Flax, rape seed and hemp.

Chapter 4

Winter the "Off Season"

Possibly a word or two on keeping records would be helpful to some of my readers. These are the months when there is less activity than any other period of the year in pigeon flying and during some of the nights there should be an opportunity to get the records caught up for the year.

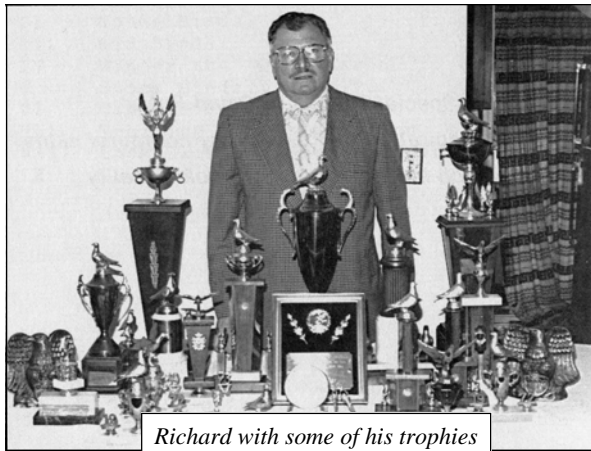
A great problem to many fanciers is getting a pedigree made out. There is more to making out a pedigree than is seen on the pedigree itself by a long way. The first step in keeping pedigree Tipplers is to have the right stock to start with. Oddly enough here in the USA we are sticklers for detailed pedigrees, but many of the pigeons imported have only the parents of the birds listed, some not that much.

A pedigree does not make a pigeon, but should be of some value or else there is no use having it. A pedigree is never any better than the man or men behind it, so there must be good records kept by the fanciers who give detailed pedigrees on their pigeons.

Once a fancier has the right stock to start with he then has to keep detailed records from the time eggs are laid until the pigeon dies to have a complete record, or if he sells the pigeon, until it has been sold to whom.

The handiest means we have found to keep records in, is the Loft Record Book. This can be easily carried in the pocket and all the information which is needed can easily be jotted down for each pair as one spends time in his loft. This information can then be transferred to another book in this season of the year or some fanciers just keep these small record books and refer to them for whatever information they need.

Many fanciers like to have records and pedigrees of their birds, as it gives the pigeons much more value when a fancier will take the time to do this with his pigeons. There is much value to pedigrees when one begins to plan his mating program for the next year. I have always believed that the really successful fancier



Richard with some of his trophies

does plan his mating program and pigeons are mated just as he wishes.

There is more interest in the breeding of pigeons when one knows the exact parentage of his pigeons. Some fanciers like to make sure of the exact breeding of the youngsters by having individual compartments for each pair, but there are few fanciers who go to this added trouble and expense, but every man to his own likes and dislikes.

Very often in looking at a pedigree, it simply lists the year the pigeon was bred in, to us this is poor record keeping. The band should verify the year the pigeon was hatched. There is no excuse for a fancier using old bands on young birds. Each year, the old bands left over should be destroyed rather than kept for a few years then placed on some late youngster.

The number of the bands being placed on a pair of youngsters should be marked in the book you carry with you, or nest card attached to the nest, whichever method you use as they are placed on the squeakers. The date they have been hatched can easily be marked at the same time. Once this information is written down, one has records to start with. When the youngsters are old enough to be taken from the parents then the color of the bird should be marked down. If they are kept for flying, sold or otherwise disposed of at this age you should make notes of it in your records.

When I start my Tiplers in training, I keep a day by day record. I mark the time of liberation, temperature, humidity, wind speed and direction, how the kit performs in flight, time of signal to the kit and time of kit landing. As I fly my Tiplers from individual kit boxes, I also note how they are being fed day by day, and what grains and how much, for the amount of flying time I expect of them.

Concerning the daily rations during the so called "dead season." As soon as the last primary flights are fully grown in, winter regime goes into effect. At this time the body demands less for its upkeep, thus, the food should not be too rich. Gradually barley is added to the molt mixture until the feed is suited to the winter period of rest. It is nevertheless necessary that the winter feeding conform with the manner in which our birds

go through the cold days. Barley is an excellent winter feed, the birds are not crazy about this sort of grain. It is certain they will not overeat themselves on it and will not be fat and are in tip top winter condition. As the United States is so large, fanciers in different parts of the country will have to adjust their winter mix accordingly.

Chapter 5 Stock Birds

Many beginners fail because they won't patiently try the birds, they have started with questionable stock, they keep too many birds, or they are forever changing the management, the curse of many lofts. The loft which will keep and fly a limited number of birds will have much more success than the loft which always has a large number of birds to handle. With a small team, the fancier has a much better opportunity to know his birds well, than the fancier with the large team. There must be that constant selection in one's loft if he is going to rise to the top in Tippler flying, to breed, to maintain his high quality of pigeons. A knowledge of breeding must be had by the fancier who wants to remain in the top bracket year after year. Continued inbreeding is not the answer to success, but neither is constant out breeding the answer. There has to be both by the fancier who remains on top. He must retain his original blood that is the base of his loft, yet he must keep enough new blood in the birds to retain their strength. The fancier who is able to breed his birds in this manner is the man who will remain a serious contender year after year. The master breeder knows how to prepare his birds and how to blend birds to get the best from them. When they get in other hands, it is a different story.

January is the month that the stock birds start getting active after a long separation. Some fanciers who like to breed early would have mated their birds in December so that the young will be ready for banding when the bands are issued in January. Some breed youngsters early because they like them to have plenty of age on the bird when the young bird flies come along. There are many fanciers who will not mate their birds until February 22 each year, and mating them at this time gives them the youngsters the age they want them as the first eggs will hatch about the end of March, unless a severe cold spell hits the youngsters, there is little trouble raising them during this time of the year. I usually pair the breeders up in February around Lincoln's Birthday, weather permitting. If the weather is still cold and temperatures are in the low teens I'd rather wait another week or so. Many fanciers wonder how to select birds for mating and the best breeding. These questions are as old as Tippler flying and we don't think there can be any set answer to them.

The fancier who has been breeding his same family of pigeons for several generations usually has a set idea on which birds mated together will give him his best young. When mating time comes along the pedigree will prove of more value than any other time of the year. They give the fancier the lines to follow in his search for good mating.

A fancier just starting wonders what to look for in selecting Tiplers to start with. This depends to a great extent on the fancier he is acquiring the pigeons from. He has to rely on his judgment and honesty in helping him with the right pigeons. A new fancier will be wise to visit several lofts before he makes any selections. By doing this, he will have a general idea of what type pigeon he is going to want and the birds he gets to start with should be of this type.

Some fanciers like small Tiplers, some medium and some large. There are good pigeons in every size and it depends greatly on the fanciers likes and dislikes as to what size he wants his family of Tiplers to be. It has been our experience, that Tiplers of various sizes and type require different handling and it is important to consider these variables in selecting your pigeons for breeding. The size and type of your breeders will surely determine the size and type of your youngsters. Many fanciers also like certain colors, good Tiplers come in every color.

The final test of breeding results is always the youngsters produced. The loft for the breeding should be right for this purpose. There should only be the number of birds in the loft that you are going to breed, the same number of each sex. When an odd bird is in the loft it so often upsets or splits several pair in addition to breaking eggs and causing fights. Only place in any breeding loft just the number of birds that you are going to breed. One nest for each pair, should be large enough that two nest bowls will fit in the box easily, and there should be a front on the nest that will permit

the birds to be closed in the nest or left out whichever the owner desires.

If one starts with unhealthy birds or pigeons that are not in condition, he is bound to meet with failure in his breeding for the year. It is far better to hold up on mating and get one's birds in good condition before starting to breed than to start and then have the birds fail to breed or breed sick youngsters. Many lofts have sickness year after year in their youngsters and we believe this is mostly from the disease being bred in the birds from one generation to the next. It does happen. There is little use coddling sick birds. It will be far better to eliminate these and rest your hopes on the healthy birds in the loft.

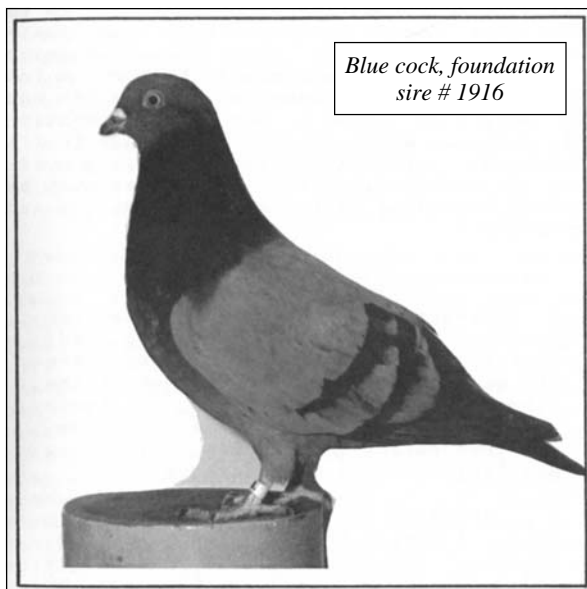
In selecting your birds for breeding, try to mate two birds near the same size and type as possible. See that your birds are healthy before you mate them. Just place the number of birds in the breeding loft that you are going to breed from. Take the right care of your birds daily. Don't overfeed, but feed them what they need each day. Spend time with your birds, just watching them if you have the time, you will learn many things about them.

Chapter 6 Tippler Feed

By March, many Tippler fanciers would have had their breeders on eggs or with young. Also in March, I will usually begin training the old birds, weather permitting, I like to have old birds placed back in their individual kit boxes three to four weeks prior to training and place them on a low diet of barley. Tiplers tend to get fat and put weight on after a winter of separation and rest in order to get them back in fit condition, preparation and diet is a must. Once in training, the Tippler diet must be varied depending on the birds' condition and performance.

SEED and GRAIN

1. Carbohydrates - Sugar and starches (corn, wheat, barley, canary seed, millet, milo, hulled oats) - they are the main source of calories; which the birds burn up during all of their activities. Calories are a simple way in expressing how much energy is available for the body to burn.
2. Proteins - (Canadian peas, maple peas, Austrian peas, vetch, lentils, beans) - are needed for the growth and for the repair and maintenance of tissue, such as muscle, organs, bones, feathers, etc. They also supply energy and calories.
3. Fats - (Oily seeds, flax, rape, hemp, thistle, safflower) - are a source of certain vitamins as well as energy. Fat is a kind of stored energy like a reserve fuel supply.
4. Minerals help to control and regulate certain body activities. They also play a role in the building and repair of tissue. Among the most important of



he minerals is iron which is necessary for the formation of healthy red blood cells. Some other minerals the body requires are copper, manganese, sodium, and potassium; all are involved in muscle contraction and expansion and in nerve stimulation.

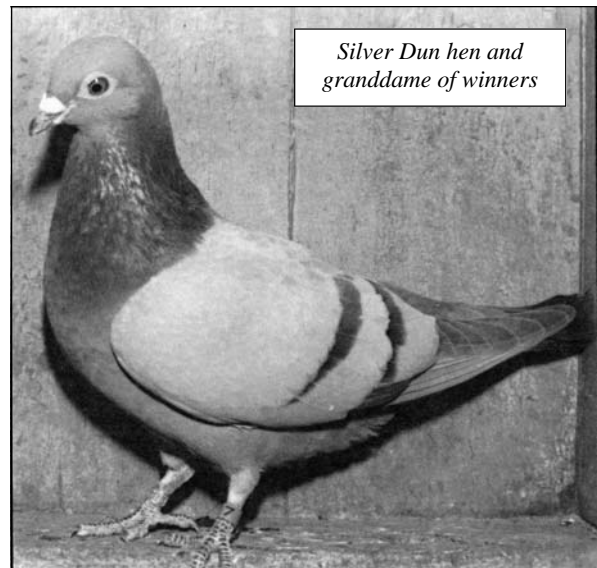
5. Vitamins do not supply energy. I thought I would mention them as they help control and regulate various processes that take place in the body.

Feed has a very important part in the success of a loft. My recommendation is always feed the best feed that you can secure. There is no substitute for good feed. This is another advantage of a small loft which keeps a limited number of birds, the feed bill is a lot less and the best feed can be fed with no regrets. When they are breeding and raising youngsters the food consumption will double. Introduction of special food and seeds must always be done gradually, any sudden change of diet could be harmful. Seed eating birds in the wild will consume various kinds of seeds in different stages of a seed's development. Seed in the milky stage, seeds which have become soaked from rain and sprouting, plus seeds in the dry stage, all will be eaten at various times in a year.

Soaked and sprouting seeds are one of the most valuable foods we have for our birds, young, feeding parents and birds of any age will all enjoy soaked seeds. If you are not presently feeding soaked seed, try supplying your birds with a portion everyday and watch them thrive and enjoy this addition to their diet.

Soaking seed is easy and the following method will insure a daily supply for your birds. The following items are needed: two glass jars with lids and a strainer. On the first evening, place the desired amount of seed in one jar, cover with water up to one inch below the top, place lid on jar and let stand at room temperature. On the second evening repeat the process of adding seed and water to jar number two. On the second morning the seed in jar one, which has been soaking for about 36 hours is ready for use. Wash the seed in warm running water, in the strainer, to remove dust and small particles. Let drain and feed a teaspoonful to each bird. That same evening, (third day) again fill jar one with seed and water which will be ready for feeding in two mornings. The next morning use seed from jar number two and repeat the process. Feeding soaked seed each morning and placing seed to soak each night will provide you with a daily supply. Never soak seed longer than 48 hours and not less than 24 hours. Your pigeons will love soaked sprouting seed.

As with all moist foods, never overfeed. A small amount each morning for non breeding birds will allow for all seed to be eaten before it becomes sour. Uneaten soaked seed must be removed before the end of the day. During the breeding season soaked seed should be



available for the feeding parents. Small amounts supplied often is the rule. The parents will select dry grain and seed, greens, soaked seed, et cetera, for the young, they know what to feed and when. Less waste will probably occur if soaked seed is supplied individually for parents with young. Discard uneaten food before giving the birds fresh food and never mix uneaten moist food with fresh. A good soaked seed mix for Tiplers is made up of the following kinds of seeds: milo, wheat, buckwheat, canary, rape, millet and thistle. Try soaked seed and watch your birds really enjoy it.

Chapter 7

Training for Competition

Over the years much has been written about the flying Tippler and its flights of long duration. From time to time I have been asked for advice on how to prepare a kit of Tiplers for a long time fly. Success very much depends upon the fancier himself, upon his conviction and confidence in his methods and birds. Of this I am certain a hard and fixed code of loft rules applicable to all is an absolute impossibility. In approaching this subject I shall of necessity be referring to my own personal experience and methods.

First select three to seven of your best flyers, preferably of the same sex, but if young birds are chosen it does not make any difference. Cocks or hens will fly equally well. As the birds you wish to train must be kept in a compartment by themselves or an individual kit box where they are fed, watered and kept. The usual size of the training compartment is approximately three feet square and three feet high to accommodate three to seven birds. I prefer the individual kit box which provides enough room for the bird to stretch their wings to exercise. It also enables you to know exactly what each bird is consuming, also at this time the birds are put on a low diet, straight barley, one ounce per day, any left over take away and replace pot with grit, and give them a drink of water, after half an hour remove water and

grit. I also give birds a small teaspoon of linseed (flax seed) three times a week.

I have always believed that the single most successful method of training Tiplers has been to work backwards in time from nightfall. This impresses on the birds that they are expected to fly until darkness regardless of the release time. It creates a well defined goal for the finish of these flights as it has been close to twenty-four hours since they were last fed and their hunger increases as darkness approaches. The birds are to be flown every other day until sunset, then loft landing lights are put on and droppers thrown to signal the kit down. When the droppers are thrown, if the birds respond and drop in a few minutes you will know that they have had enough flying; however, if they take 15 or 20 minutes to get down, the next time they should be put out a half hour earlier.

Always fly the birds without food or water, this will get them in good lean hard flying condition. After you have dropped the birds return them to their kit box and let them settle down for a while before feeding. Then give them their feed first, grit and water, always once a day in the evening. After three weeks in training and on this diet the birds should be in good hard flying condition. In handling some may feel like feather and bones, but it is surprising how well they fly in this lean condition for these short training flights. Before turning them out to fly, handle every pigeon, feel for body condition, no two pigeons handle the same. Some pigeons handle good even being fed on barley which is the competition flying staple feed during training. All fanciers have their own method of training and feeding for that day. Having arrived at this point in order to accomplish flying time, the team must be placed on a second diet known among Tipler flyers as the feed-up.

TYPICAL FLY FEED-UP

Sunday: Before scheduled fly contest, I usually purge the birds. After the evening fly. one tablespoon of Epsom salts in one pint of water. Feed barley, one ounce and one teaspoon of flax.

Tuesday: After training toss and birds return to their kit box I start the feed-up. Half barley and half grain and seed, in equal parts of millet, flax, oats, groats, canary seed, rape seed and six peas .

Wednesday: One-third barley, two-thirds equal parts of flax, millet, oats, groats, canary seed, rape seed and six peas.

Thursday: One-quarter ounce barley, three-quarters equal parts of flax, millet, oats, groats, canary seed, rape seed and six peas.

Friday: No barley, equal parts of millet, oats, groats, canary seed, rape seed and ten peas.

Saturday: Liberation day, see if they will eat any small seed (canary or rape seed), so that birds will take a drink.

With the above method I have won 28 first place diplomas in national time flying Tipler competitions.

Chapter 8

Look Back and See the Future

As the "old year" draws to a close, many of us can look back upon it with a certain amount of satisfaction in the things we have achieved in flying and breeding our pigeons. The ardent Tipler fanciers will start to give really serious consideration to their breeding plans now for the coming year. Mating will be made over and over again on paper to try to work out the best possible pairings. Birds will be checked and handled for type and conformation to try and bring together the birds that will give the type of youngsters desired in the flying loft. Every possible observation will be used to get the best results in breeding.

The success one has in his breeding will determine the future success of his loft for a time. Some years seem to give better youngsters than other years. There has to be something in nature which controls this that is not generally known to man in his breeding efforts. Theories of various kinds are expounded by many as being the best. If we are to believe some ads, all one has to do is buy some of the products advertised and success is assured.

Needless to say the pigeon should be in the very best of health when your matings are being planned. Anything noticed wrong with the pigeon should be treated immediately, rather than let the condition continue. If a pigeon is not in good health at the outset of a breeding season, it surely is not going to get better, but rather weaker under the strain of breeding. This is the reason I have tried to emphasize on so many occasions that health is so important to success. Without good health, there just cannot be any real success in breeding and flying. Some fanciers say they can do well in young bird flies but not so well in old bird flees and vice versa. This condition often comes about through the method of training being used. The birds are keyed up at a certain time and after they have reached and passed their peak they are finished for the season.

Some fanciers just do not have the success that other fanciers enjoy. They can not understand why. Many times, this is caused by just some small detail in their loft management and when it is corrected, they will have better success than they have ever enjoyed before. We are all so apt to blame the pigeons first of all, however, often it is not the fault of the pigeons, but the handler and one must always be willing to study all the facts of this sport if he wants to get the best from his pigeons. The fancier does have to do his share if he is going to have any degree of success with his pigeons .

As you plan your matings this year, exercise care in the number of pairs that you place in the breeding

loft and your nest arrangements. Every effort should always be made to place the cock birds in the same nests they had last year. When a hen is being bred that no longer has her former mate in the loft, she should be placed in the nest she occupied last year.

These little things will help cut down on fighting in the breeding loft, it will save eggs from being broken, pecked youngsters and will bring quietness to the loft, which will result in contentment for the breeders.

We have never felt that it was wise to place too many pairs in one breeding loft. The fancier who has only a few pairs of breeders has no worries on this point, but, when a larger number of breeders are kept, one should have the proper facilities for breeding them. Unless he does, there will not be any degree of success with breeding.

The man who is able to get his pigeons mated and settled into their nests will see his birds getting to work fast and will be headed for breeding some good youngsters.

Chapter 9

The Off Season Revisited

Barley is most highly recommended during the winter months to keep the weight off the birds and keep them in trim.

Much is written about the correct feed to use for each season of the year, and each of us who write these facts believe that it is helpful to the pigeon to feed them in the manner we recommend. Aside from all this advice, there are many fanciers who continue to feed whatever they are able to get for their birds the year around.

In my loft I separate the hens and cocks, and do not exercise or fly the Tiplers during the winter season and yet, when the breeding season comes along, the birds will start to breed with little trouble. They mate easily and start to work right away. As soon as the last primaries are fully grown the winter regime goes into effect. At this time the body demands less for its upkeep, thus, the feed should not be too rich. Gradually barley is added to the molt mixture, until the feed is suited to the winter period of rest. It is, nevertheless, necessary that the winter feeding conforms with the manner in which our birds go through the cold days. This differs from loft to loft. Pigeons that fly out daily need richer and more feed than birds kept in.

It is advisable to handle the birds weekly and judge their body condition. They should not be too fat or be too light. If we should find, in spite of our carefulness, they have become somewhat heavy during the period of being locked up, lighten up some on the winter mixture for a few days without letting them suffer from hunger. As soon as a few birds go to drink, stop feeding. Barley is an excellent winter feed. The birds are not crazy about this sort of grain. It is certain that they will not overeat themselves on it, they'll not get fat

and will stay in tip top winter condition. We must never forget that the winter plays one of the most important roles in the future results on the flyers. In the pigeon sport everything depends on the skill of the fancier, because it is those who have the good strain of birds and, aided through their good qualities, put everything to work, who solve all the problems all through the entire year without leaving anything over to circumstance. These are the ones who book the best results. From the beginning of November until the beginning of February and in normal winter weather, my birds get a half ration (barley) in the morning and a pinch of flax seed per bird. In the afternoon the usual winter mix. I feed a little early, for instance, one or two hours before darkness sets in. After feeding, they should be able to move around a little and visit the water fountain a few times. Of course, some fanciers do not always have the time in the short days to care for the pigeons in this manner. For the fanciers who find themselves in this position, the winter season is the hardest period. With adjustment and skilled leadership the birds will not suffer too much through it. I used artificial lights for years due to my work. Those who are forced to feed with artificial lights should leave the lights on for an hour so the birds have time to drink.

In the sport of Tippler flying there are bound to be ups and downs and it is only the man that can take the bad with the good that is going to stick it out. The path that is strewn with roses each year is indeed rare, and those who travel it have a harder job on their hands each year to retain their hard won laurels.

