

PIGEON RACING - STOP THIS SLAUGHTER!

"Sparrowhawks keep down the number of small birds in the garden"

- R.S.P.B. "A.B.C. of Common Birds 1919"

The sport of pigeon racing is seriously threatened by uncontrolled attacks of ever-increasing numbers of hawks/falcons. Pigeons have played their part in both world wars, carrying messages and the locations of downed aircraft-many owe their lives to pigeons donated free to HM Government by fanciers. Of the 53 Dickin Medals (P.D.S.A. animal VCs), 31 were awarded to pigeons.

The main predators of racing pigeons are peregrine falcons and sparrowhawks, the peregrine because it has an insatiable appetite for pigeons and will live on racing pigeons, given the chance, and the sparrowhawk, devastating because of its numbers

SPARROWHAWKS

The B.T.O. states there are 32,000 pairs of sparrowhawks and probably 32,000 unattached (Newton, an authority on sparrowhawks). They are present all the year round and occupy all the possible breeding Sites in the country. They are "now at capacity levels as permitted by habitat and food supply". They are not named in Annex 1 of the E.E.C Directive 74/409, the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive, despite suggestions to the contrary by the protection lobby. Nor are they protected under the Wild Life and Countryside 1981 Act, other than as a wild bird. They do not have Schedule 1 protection. Sparrowhawks eat on average three songbirds a day each, i.e. approximately 1,000 a year each, or 90 million songbirds a year. When they run out of songbirds, they attack pigeons. The sparrowhawk has an inbuilt dock and if wild birds are fed at a regular time, the sparrowhawk will be waiting there to claim its next dinner. The protection lobby who give away bird tables are in fact 'laying the table for the local sparrowhawk'.

The sparrowhawk does not have any attractive features. It eats its prey alive, sliver by sliver; forcing its victim to stand still whilst being dismembered - this can take 20 minutes before a pigeon under attack actually dies. Sparrowhawks are increasing at a rate of approximately 1,000 pairs a year and will therefore be requiring an additional two million songbirds a year, or they will have to eat more racing pigeons.

Prior to the Wild Bird Directive, the sparrowhawk was probably kept down by gamekeepers - now few dare. Under the 1981 Wild Life and Countryside Act Chapter 69 Part 1 Section 4 (3)c



"....authorised persons shall not be guilty of an offence by reason of the killing or injuring of any wild bird other than the birds included in Schedule 1 if he sees the action as necessary for the purpose of (a) b) (c) preventing serious damage to livestock". Racing pigeons are regrettably not considered to be livestock, although pheasants and partridges are D.O.E.).

PEREGRINE FALCONS

The B.T.O. state the peregrine falcon now numbers 1,309 pairs. They do not quote the number of unattached birds but the total is about 4,500. They will, if racing pigeons are available, eat an average of 300 each every year.

Crick and Radcliffe in "Peregrine falcon Breeding Population of the U.K in 1991", state numbers are the highest since records began. The population of 1,283 pairs in 1991 showed an increase of 67 per cent in 10 years. The estimated population level of 874 pairs (1930-39) was probably reached by 1985. The population has more than recovered from the crash in the 1960s and the control imposed during World War two by the government because racing pigeons were at that time being used as part of the war effort. The peregrine seems concentrated in areas of Devon and Cornwall, South Wales, North Wales, Cumbria and both the Highlands and Lowlands of Scotland; where they are

abundant, the tally of racing pigeons killed is unacceptably high.

The peregrine falcon, being on Schedule 1, is fully protected and can only be removed under licence issued by the D.O.E. All applications from pigeon fanciers have been refused. It is a pity because it is probably the concentration of peregrines in small areas which is causing disproportionate damage.

Pigeon fanciers certainly do their bit for charity; indeed, just one organisation, the B.H.W. Show of the Year, has raised nearly £1 million in the last 24 years. The main beneficiaries have been:

A.S.B.A.H.-£ 75,000

British Heart Foundation £68,000

Help the Aged - 7 specially adapted minibuses

Countless charities have always found pigeon fanciers generous, including the Great Ormond Street Hospital (£10,000), Manchester Royal Children's Hospital (£20,000), and Children in Need (£13,000), to name but a few. This Show is only one fund raising event of many organised by the Fancy.

Pigeon fanciers have two real worries - firstly, their pigeons, which have to be exercised daily, are attacked in the vicinity of their home, and secondly, the disastrous effect of the peregrine falcon on pigeons racing home.

FACT SHEET

- Peregrine population is at highest recorded levels - Scotland has **50%** of UK total (pg. 4)
- Sparrowhawk population is **34,500** pairs plus unattached birds - Scotland has **20%** of the UK total (pg. 5)
- SHU members can not legitimately protect their pigeons from sparrowhawks or peregrines (pg. 4)
- Distribution of sparrowhawks and peregrines means there is no safe area in which to keep and race pigeons. (pg. 6)
- **1752** SHU lofts have problems due to bird of prey attacks. (pg. 8)
- **1587** SHU lofts regularly witness attacks by sparrow hawk and peregrine in the vicinity of their lofts (pg. 8 & 9)
- **8368** pigeons returned from training injured. Members easily recognise the classic injuries caused in an attack. **1189** lofts altered training routes in an attempt to avoid attacks (pg. 11)
- In the past pigeons have been safe at the loft and on short training flights. SHU members routinely witness attacks at the loft and in training therefore we know substantial losses result **directly** from these attacks and are not due to other factors.
- Few pigeons now survive to become mature birds competing in longer races. (pg. 14)
- Deterrents do not work. (pg. 15)
- Excluding birds of special value, eg. those "Champions" which, like proved racehorses, can command huge sums of money, a pigeon could be conservatively valued at an average of **£25**.

PIGEONS LOST IN SEASON AND ESTIMATED VALUE:

	LOFTS	PIGEONS LOST	AVE. PER LOFT	EST. VALUE
TRAINING	1,713	33,043	19.3	826,075
RACING	1,643	34,685	21.1	867,125
AT THE LOFT	1,587	7,935	5	198,375

THIS IS A TOTAL OF **75,663** PIGEONS WITH A CONSERVATIVELY ESTIMATED VALUE OF **£1,891,575**

As a follow up to the survey, members were asked to indicate if they still had problems with peregrines and sparrowhawks at the loft.

1,954 lofts stated they did still have problems and they had lost a total of **7,688** pigeons prior to the start of the 1998 racing season.

COMMENTS BOOKLET SUPPLEMENT 2

COMMENTS REGARDING THE LOFT AREA:

This section graphically illustrates the problems fanciers in Scotland face. Hawk and falcon attacks in the immediate loft area are widespread and frequent.

"Both Peregrine and Sparrowhawk attacks:

1989 - Apr & May: 13 birds killed in 6 days

1990 - Apr - June: 9 birds killed in 6 weeks

1991 - Rescued hen from sparrowhawk

1992 - May - June: 1 killed by hawk and one badly injured

1993 Mar - Apr : My 3 best hens all ruined by peregrine injuries

1994 Feb: Dam of National winner killed by sparrowhawk

1995 Apr, May June : 3 killed and two badly injured

1996 June: 9 year old and 10 year old killed by sparrowhawk

I could fill a book about pigeon attacks with hawks, this is only part of the incidents which have occurred. During the beginning of February 1996. I had three pigeons injured, one severely and one killed by a peregrine inside the space of five days. They were exercising at the loft so I was able to witness the attacks. I decided to try sequins. Since then I have not lost any, just two slightly injured."

A ADAMS 100663 KIRKCONNEL (This member has now left the sport)

"When listing the number of pigeons injured due to hawk/falcon attacks. I have only listed those whose injuries are consistent with hawk attacks. Obviously the panic caused by predator attacks leads to many additional injuries so that the total number would be four times the number injured. My loft is visited by a sparrowhawk several times per day."

A & R REID 100226 BEITH

"I am sick of losing good birds. Breeding more every year only to be left with 6 at the most"

T PEDEN 192618 PLAINS

"We have our loft in a wooded area and during spring, autumn and winter our birds are under constant daily attacks. These abate during the summer when the hen sparrowhawk is sitting. This results in the loss of several birds annually but we cannot specify numbers as not all the attacks are witnessed. Pigeons are now kept in from September to March with very occasional exercise periods. We lost five birds this March when exercise commenced. This was over a two week period."

J & R LAWRENCE 101038 ARDLER

"All eight of my young birds were taken from the roof of the loft by hawks. I did not know until I found eight rings and feathers underneath trees 20yds away."

J BRYCE 105345 DOUGLAS WATER

I started my first full season in sport in 1992 with intentions and aims to compete with the SNFC, and I looked forward to this for the 1995!! After two seasons it was all too apparant this was not to be:-

- 1993 11 young birds injured by hawks,
- 1994 14 young birds injured,
- 1995 12 young birds injured,

all by peregrine falcon, some I saw happen others returned racing/training/exercise...During training I have witnessed 2 falcons (+4 falcons sepearate incidents) attack my young birds losing 13 out of 25 on one occassion. During 1996 my old birds were attacked time & time again (around loft) and due to losses and injuries at home I opted not to race my young birds but to train privately, to date 5 have been injured and they have only been to 10 miles three time!! With such a dense peregrine and sparrowhawk population locally, I cannot see club surviving

IAN SWEENEY STRANRAER



"Sparrowhawk attacks in garden were frequent during 1994-95 season. Hawks were attacking birds in aviary whilst we were standing beside it. Hawk attacked loft one evening, it could see birds in loft as the lights were on at dusk, pigeons were behind screen so none were injured. Young birds have been attacked by peregrine this year resulting in injuries. One bird was attacked but escaped, and in fright scrambled under the loft. It was difficult to free the pigeon, which had become jammed in. Only the fact that the attack was witnessed saved it from dying where it lay."

W & L BROOKS 102330 NEWMAINS

"I have to monitor times of day when I let my pigeons exercise as 2 pairs of sparrowhawks nest within 2 miles radius of my loft. I have also had to change my training route and programme because of hawk attacks, without much success."

D REE 100957 BROUGHTY CASTLE

"Our loft is on the edge of town and our birds and those of fanciers close by are regularly frightened or attacked by a hawk. April 1996 one was attacked by a goshawk 60 yards from the loft, returned by a fancier 60 miles south, no tail feathers and one wing completely ripped out. Sept 1996 another (sparrowhawk) pursued at my back step when I was coming out of the loft at that time."

J & J NICHOL 100590 ARDCHOILLE

"I Have been racing pigeons for 33 years and I have never encountered as many losses as I have had in the last 2 to 3 years, both in training and racing. I have witnessed sparrowhawks attacking my pigeons in my own garden. Something must be done to save the sport."

D ARMSTRONG 100207 ARDROSSAN

"I have seen several attacks around my loft by sparrowhawks in particular. March-June seems to be a very busy time for them and in this period I have lost four birds whilst exercising them around the house,. Sparrowhawks have attacked my birds in the garden while I am there and indeed have had a hold of two on different occasions when I was only some 12-15 feet away. They can be seen daily in the vicinity. I have only witnessed a peregrine attack once this year on a lone racing pigeon (not my own) that was passing by into Renfrewshire. However the Peregrine can be seen regularly around the town."

R W SHEPHERD 100230 BEITH

"I have found that up to this year, 1996 , that most hawk problems have been between Autumn and Spring. I have had a sparrowhawk hit the wire on my loft when I have been inside it. I also have had birds savagely attacked right in front of my loft, but I found my biggest problem happened days before the first young bird race when my birds started getting very nervous and would fly wildly around the sky and then I started losing birds every day. It has reached the point that you can see the hawks flying over the farm every day and I can only let my birds out when I can be with them all the time."

A GRAHAM 105228 BEITH

"When breaking birds to present loft I lost five in one week.. Four birds I witnessed being struck by sparrowhawks or peregrines."

R SHEPHERD 106294 BEITH

"Varying times of training tosses, irregular times of free flying around the lofts, keep birds in from October to March. Adopt a clear route policy prior to 1997."

J & M MCCANN 100604 HURLFORD

I have trouble with sparrowhawks around the loft. They come right down to the loft chasing my birds. This was witnessed one day by the local beat policeman who was talking to my neighbour at the time. The sparrowhawks have rapidly increased in this area over the last few years. I have had three birds reported this year killed by peregrines and the rings found near their nests in Lancashire."

D WOOD 100614 HURLFORD

"We see peregrine and sparrowhawks every day. We have a sparrowhawk hen that visits us every day for the last three years and at a guess I would say it has killed over 20 birds. We vary the times for exercise as they come every day. Other fanciers in this area get visits from these raptors."

MALCOLM BROS 100577 HURLFORD & DIST

"As soon as the birds are let out of the loft they are not long on the wing before they are attacked."

J WALKER 100578 HURLFORD & DISTRICT

"We are in constant sight of the hawks as they sit on the edge of the church next to us and wait for us to let our birds out. We have had them going into the loft after the birds. At one time the hawk almost hit my husband as he came out of the loft. We are now seeing them in pairs. Last Sunday there were five above our loft, and again today 17 Nov 1996.. At the beginning of this year we were losing one bird per day. Also the chap in the garage next door gave us some of our birds rings which he found on the flat roof of his garage. We are in total fear to let our birds out, which is causing us to think of going out of the sport as we cannot build up a team because of the hawks."

J & R MURRAY 100612 HURLFORD & DIST

"I kept pigeons in the late seventies and early eighties and the hawk problem seems to be 50% worse in the nineties."

CUNNINGHAM & HENRY 100315 IRVINE NEWTON

"I lost two young bird winners to a hen sparrowhawk outside my own loft in September 1995 and every year before have had birds attacked and injured by sparrowhawks and peregrines."

R ANDERSON 100307 IRVINE NEWTON

"As I live in the country and am a working farmer, the hawks seem to hit my loft more often. I can tell when the hawks are about when my pigeons are in the hay sheds or the byres at different times. My pigeons are hit daily."

C McKERROW 100497 KILMARNOCK & DIST

"I witnessed a sparrowhawk kill twice this year in my neighbours garden before old bird and young bird racing began."

J PALMER 100506 KILBIRNIE

"I have three pigeons crippled at present, wing, breast, feet etc. I have five missing. Birds been confined for the last two months due to frequent attacks"

T HAYES 100427 KILWINNING

"I have lost several pigeons off the roof of loft, lifted by hawks."

J & T DAVIDSON 100411 KILWINNING

"In 1996 a sparrowhawk attacked young and old birds whilst sitting on loft, this happened four times."

H McPARTLAND 100462 KILMARNOCK

"My pigeons are under constant attack from sparrowhawks at my loft location almost every day. During 1996 I have had four killed. I have not raced my pigeons for a number of years. There is no enjoyment trying to race and train pigeons under these conditions."

H VERE 100467 KILMARNOCK

"I cant let my pigeons out early because of a sparrowhawk near my loft. There could be more than one. Latest attack Wednesday."

K MILNE 100308 DEESIDE

This year to date we have had two young birds killed outside the loft by a sparrowhawk. Last year was the same. During the winter months the sparrowhawk visits the loft every day."

MR & MRS BRIDGES 100845 BLACKBURN

"This year the sightings of sparrowhawks by most fanciers in our club has increased alarmingly. Also the numbers of pigeons being lost whilst flying around the village during the breeding season."

J MCGINTY 100847 BLACKBURN

"We in Bo'ness have been murdered by peregrines and sparrowhawks over the last ten years. The total amount lost is terrible due to these birds of prey."

J THOMSON & SON 102936 BO'NESS

"The sparrowhawk is our main predator. It has no fear of humans. He enters the loft to kill his intended victim. I personally have lost over thirty pigeons in the last three years around the loft."

MR & MRS DUNSMORE 102894 BO'NESS

"My birds got attacked at the loft in November by a hen sparrowhawk, and I had to shut the pigeons up for a time. I always get sparrowhawk attacks in the spring. One killed by a hen sparrowhawk off the top of the loft. 16/4/97."

McCABE BROS 100721 EAST CALDER

"I have witnessed pigeons being taken from loft top by peregrine and hen sparrowhawk."

J T & I YOUNG 100726 EAST CALDER

"I would like to point out that this old bird season 1997, is the worst old bird racing I have had since I started up the pigeons with my father in 1975. At the present moment I have lost 25 racing and 10 training, altogether 35 birds. Before I paired them up at the start of this season a hawk took a bird from my loft as I was getting them in to feed them."

W DEANS & SON 100771 PHILLIPSTOUN

"I have watched the hawks attack pigeons on numerous occasions. I have had one of my pigeons killed by a hawk in February this year and also two attacked while I was at the loft, in the same week. Last year at the same time (February), I had two pigeons killed by a hawk and one injured. I also see starlings being killed regularly by the hawk in winter."

V BELL 100859 PHILLIPSTOUN

"Between 1995-1996 I have had two birds killed on the loft by sparrowhawks. These birds were devoured alive on the grass at the side of the loft. This is a cruel death for the pigeon. Something must be done to control the number of hawks that are breeding in the area."

T & G WEIR 100870 PHILLIPSTOUN

"I am a new fancier to pigeon racing so I don't have many birds. Pigeon attacks are now so commonplace in my area that my pigeons no longer have an open loft. I tried it at first but quickly wised up as my birds were being eaten by sparrowhawks. I have witnessed numerous attacks, mainly in the early afternoon. Something must be done to reduce hawk numbers."

T KELLY 106600 PUMPHERSTON & DIST

"I personally have witnessed many attacks at the pigeon compound in Craigshiel, two of which were my birds. One Sunday myself and D McCreight were standing outside my loft when the hawk attacked a bird belonging to R Byers. It was about 12 ft away. We ran and got to about 3ft from it when the hawk lifted off the bird. We were still discussing it about 15 minutes after the attack when another attack took place. This time it was a pigeon belonging to T Kelly, we managed to save it."

J CARSON 100917 PUMPHERSTON & DIST

"Every day the hawk passes over the lofts. If the birds are out the hawks will attack them. If we are lucky and see such attacks we can sometimes scare the hawks off the captured birds."

R CROSS 100921 PUMPHERSTON & DIST

"A hen sparrowhawk took a young bird from the top of my landing board right in front of me in May 1996. It landed in a neighbours garden with the caught bird. I scared it away and retrieved the bird which was badly gashed from the neck down it's back. I have curtailed letting birds have open hole due to continued attacks by these predators. Fanciers in my own club continually complain about batches of birds being scattered and panicked by birds of prey."

D BRATCHIE 100772 PUMPHERSTON PREMIER

"On letting the birds out for exercise. I returned to the loft to find one pigeon dead beside the loft, torn to shreds. The second attack I witnessed was a sparrowhawk attack. My pigeon was on the walkway outside my loft, on approaching the loft I was within one yard of the hawk before it took off ;leaving the bird slightly damaged."

S ROBERTSON 105523 WEST CALDER

"Hawks, especially sparrowhawks are becoming more numerous and in consequence much bolder. They are even attacking birds in our garden as we are sitting out watching the pigeons."

LAFFERTY & SIMPSON 100820 WINCHBURGH & DIST

"I lose approximately 12-14 birds every year mostly to the sparrowhawk hen, around the loft between January -April."

T ARTHUR 100802 WINCHBURGH & DIST.

"During the last ten years the problem with hawk attacks has become acute. My birds have their freedom at all times and during last winter 1995/96 and Spring I lost eight birds due to predators."

R CORMACK 100811 WINCHBURGH & DIST.

"We have had a pigeon taken from the loft roof by a peregrine whilst my husband was standing beside the loft. This is in our own back garden, close to the house. There is a quarry 150 yards from the village with five peregrines at the last count in August."

G & H FAIRLEY 100888 BALERNO

"I lose more pigeons to the sparrowhawk attacks at my loft location than I do racing or training. I have given up counting how many birds I have lost to them. One sparrowhawk found in my loft was ringed, and on enquiring found out that they were being released in the grounds of Herriot Watt University. Every time a sparrowhawk kills during the breeding season, the offspring are also lost. I, like most fanciers, have written to the RSPB and received the same negative reply."

D BALD 100871 BALERNO

"Between March/April 1995 I lost 19 birds to sparrowhawks. I suffer attacks from sparrowhawks and peregrines on a regular basis even within the last week I have had one young bird killed by a peregrine. The sparrowhawk has killed pigeons within 6ft of our kitchen. Attacks by both types of birds are too numerous to mention. I could not write them all here."

K COLEMAN 105195 ANGUS



"There is a sparrowhawk nest about 600yds from my loft, on top of a chimney at the hospital where I live. I cant let the birds out in Winter or some of them will go missing, five or six in some years, these are stock pigeons which are expensive. I have had a hawk down on my loft , also a hawk attacked my young birds on the roof one night as they were arriving back from a training toss. A good friend of mine has spent a fortune on deterrents and still has attacks from hawks and falcons. There are people trying to make money out of us. It is time to lobby our M.P."

D & M HARPER 101018 CARNOUSTIE

"We in our area are surrounded by peregrine falcons. We are afraid to train our pigeons as nearly always they come back scattered. I have seen a sparrowhawk kill a bird at my loft and start to eat it in my garden. I chased it away but the bird was dead. Some of the members of my club are afraid to let their birds out."

J DUNN 100386 DALMELLINGTON

"I am sorry I cannot give you dates but I have personally witnessed three of my pigeons killed at my back door by a sparrowhawk in the last two months."

J SLOAN 100457 DALMELLINGTON

"At this moment in time I am unable to let my birds out for exercise due to hawk attacks."

H WALLACE 100656 DARVEL

"I have lost pigeons out having their morning exercise. Peregrine has been in the back garden, he made a kill. It frequently sits on the loft. A sparrowhawk frequently visits too. I have witnessed pigeons being killed during this time . When training have witnessed hawks scattering the pigeons causing them to fly into trees, they then come home injured. Due to the number of attacks at home and in training , I did not race my young birds."

H McKELVIE 100683 DRONGAN

"Hawks and falcons are coming into the gardens and lifting pigeons from the loft roofs and from the gardens."

M SMITH 100642 LETHANHILL

"Cant let pigeons out to exercise unless somebody is there to watch them. Had three birds killed from top of loft and one taken out of the sky."

FAIRBAIRN & HILL 104015 COCKBURNSPATH

"Unable to leave pigeons outside unattended eg., in bath , because I witnessed black hen (23rd open Rennes) hawk sitting eating her. Also two birds both first club winners killed and eaten. These incidents all took place at loft"

R NISBET 101187 COCKBURNSPATH

"On 15th August ;1996 I had 12 year old pigeon injured by a sparrowhawk in my garden, witnessed by my wife. It died from its injuries. Club mate Peter Virtue also saw this hawk and it has scattered the birds off the loft on several occasions

J FAIRBAIRN 104017 COCKBURNSPATH

" I find sparrowhawks to be the worst killers of pigeons at the loft. It has got to the stage where it is impossible to let birds have an open hole as the hawk will simply clean out if left alone. Over the years I have lost on average about 9 birds per year to the hawks, one kind or another. Peregrine falcons are so numerous they are nesting in places they have never nested before."

H ALLISON 100669 KIRKCONNEL

"Last winter between Sept 1995 and Apr 1996 I lost 23 birds to the hawk (mostly sparrowhawks) birds that had flown 500 miles and were club winners , mostly cock birds. During January a hawk entered my loft then killed and ate a pigeon. I seriously considered giving up pigeons (I have raced for 45 years). This winter I intend to confine birds more.

PS: I have just come from loft - another young cock killed and eaten."

J P JACKSON 101139 HADDINGTON

" I have a sparrowhawk sitting on top of my loft quite often. I have not seen this myself but my neighbours have told me about this as my loft has an aviary. Also several times while birds (sparrows and blackbirds etc) have been eating bread thrown out to them I have seen hawks dive down on them. I witnessed this myself."

W SEMPLE 101654 COALTOWN OF BALGONIE

"In 1997 on 17th March a yearling red hen was lifted from top of the loft by a female sparrowhawk and was never seen again. 18th March a two year old mealy hen was attacked on top of the loft but the bird escaped from the sparrowhawk."

R CUNNINGHAM 106416 AUCHTERMUCHTY

"It is the birds killed when let out of the loft for exercise that is the main problem. In 1992 when on the open loft I had 16 birds killed in 14 days."

B KINNEAR 101418 AUCHTERMUCHTY

"Sparrowhawks do more damage at the start of the year. In 1996 we had seven birds killed around the loft. In 1995 we lost 10 birds to them. We have a nesting pair of peregrines not a mile away and they take quite a lot of young birds every year. This year alone they have taken 9 Y/B's. We can see this happening when birds are exercising."

M McLAUGHLIN & SON 104589 GLENCRAIG & LOCHORE

"I live within 5 miles of Vane Farm RSPB Nature Reserve where over the past few years peregrines, goshawks and red kite have been released. I have only witnessed a strike by a peregrine in the vicinity of my loft once over the past 5 years since restarting pigeons. I have lost 12-15 birds annually, killed in my garden by sparrowhawks. The most dangerous period is March/April. Attacks/kills have been witnessed on many occasions."

J COWIE 104593 GLENCRAIG & LOCHORE

"Over last four years I have had approximately 30 or more birds killed near my loft by sparrowhawks, falcons and buzzards."

C STEWART 104594 GLENCRAIG & LOCHORE

"Hawk strikes have taken place in the garden even though I was standing less than 20ft away"

A SMITH 101725 PERTH & DIST

"In May this year a sparrowhawk entered my sputnik/loft and killed several birds (youngsters). In the area where I live there are lots of sparrowhawks which have become bolder and bolder to the extent that they enter lofts now."

J HANDY 101541 PITTENWEEM

"Having raced birds in Fife for over 30 years we have seen the substantial increase in the numbers of predators in this area. We now have 2 pairs of peregrines at least near the town where none were seen 5 years ago. The increased numbers of sparrowhawks, has now seen attacks taking place on the lofts, with many youngsters missing in the town areas while at exercise."

WALLACE & FERGUSON 101230 NEWBURGH

"I have witnessed sparrowhawks stripping the flesh from a fellow fanciers pigeon, and have also had a sparrowhawk chase two pigeons right under my car, the hawk only stunning herself but one of the pigeons fatally injured, and the other badly hurt. Both these birds belonged to an adjacent loft."

J LENNOX 101744 CAMPSIE

"Lost cock bird in my back garden. The bird had its back torn out and had to be culled. The hawk returned later that day looking for this pigeon."

C FERNS 105647 CAMPSIE

"The hawk is the problem. You are frightened to let your pigeons out for fear of being attacked. On average in 1996 we had about ten attacks, then we found three hawks actually in the loft when it was unattended."

GREN & KING 104810 DUMBARTON & DISTRICT

"So far this year I have lost 6 young birds to a sparrowhawk."

W BILSLAND 101306 KIRKINTILLOCH

"Since 1980, living just below the Campsie Fells, we have lost birds from around the loft, training and racing, due to attacks from raptors. In July we lost a hen from the loft which had scored from SNFC Sartilly."

J & J HOOD 102522 MILTON OF CAMPSIE

"I feel the sparrowhawk is a greater problem as it is more local and attacks are more common during the period October till early May. During the years 60-70 I was on an open door all the year round. Due to the sparrowhawk attacks I cannot do this now in the period October to May. Even then one can only exercise the birds for a limited time i.e. 1 hour."

G A MORRISON 101911 CARRICK & DISTRICT

"I watched my birds being taken from above my loft. At Byrne Hill a pair of these predators have nested there for years. I can see their nest from my back garden. They have their fair share of good pigeons from this club every year."

J DAVIDSON 101864 VALE OF GIRVAN

"Only last week a hen sparrowhawk caught and ate a youngster at the front of my loft. I was only away for about 15 minutes. Peregrine nests on cliffs 2 miles outside Girvan on the Stranraer road and frequently visits the town. Southern Irish Federations do not liberate in Girvan anymore."

DAVIDSON & McINTYRE 101869 VALE OF GIRVAN

"During spring of 1997, January to April, we had 15 killed at the loft by sparrowhawk. These attacks were witnessed. Other birds that disappeared may be assumed to be victims of the sparrowhawk."

A & H EADIE & KELLY 102256 NEWMAINS

"I had five pigeons killed at the loft in Allanton."

R & C SIMPSON 102316 NEWMAINS

"From September to May things are bad with the female sparrowhawk taking pigeons about the loft."

BRIERLEY & BRUCE 101530 LEUCHERS & DISTRICT

"Young birds on the loft, sparrowhawk attacked and scattered birds holding on to one, but let go when it crashed into the side of hut and killed herself. Young birds took hours to return."

W FOREMAN 101672 KIRKCALDY NOVAR

"Peregrines are only a problem for short periods of time as they seem to pass through. The sparrowhawk is seen daily and has been responsible for many more attacks & injuries to the pigeons. In 1986 our loft was in the town and although we do not have statistical records we never saw hawks around the loft at that time."

MR & MRS PURDIE 101693 KIRKCALDY NOVAR

"I have seen pigeons attacked on the loft and in the vicinity of loft. The hawk problem was almost non existent in 1986. The present law must be changed."

J HAMILTON 101543 KENNOWAY

"I have had pigeons attacked in my back yard. I have also had hawks dive at my lofts and I live in a scheme."

G AITKEN 7 SON 101555 KENNOWAY

"The hawks have killed four of my best birds at my loft location."

J HONEYMAN 101556 KENNOWAY

"I have more trouble losing birds around the loft with sparrowhawks than training or racing."

D N DALL 105690 HOWE OF FIFE.

"During 1996 I lost three stock birds, total value £840, all were killed by sparrowhawks. All carcasses were found within 400yds of loft and were classic sparrowhawk kills."

A KEANIE 106305 HOWE OF FIFE

"Falcon attack 10th June 1996 when young birds were sitting on top of the loft in our back garden taking one young bird and injuring six due to them flying with fright into our house and windows. We were in the garden when this happened. On other occasions the birds have been attacked and are frightened to come back to the loft, sometimes for days."

MR & MRS G HUNTER 104928 DUNFERMLINE LRPS

"The majority of attacks from birds of prey occur during late May and all of April when the wild birds start to migrate north. The sparrowhawks are responsible for nearly all attacks around the loft area. The frequency of attacks rises sharply during this period, up to 7-8 attacks per day as witnessed by myself."

H PARK 105828 DUNFERMLINE

"I witnessed a hawk attack one of my pigeons on Wednesday morning 9th April at the back of the loft in a cornfield. I managed to chase the hawk away but the pigeon was badly damaged by the time I got to it."

B JOHNSTON 106602 ORMISTON

"Since 1987 I have lost 108 pigeons at the loft that I have witnessed. It has got so bad that I have to keep my pigeons locked up in the months of Jan, Feb, Mar and April. I have very little problems with peregrines between May and Sept as they seem to be getting enough pigeons from the races and training batches in the hills. I have been to various falcon eyries in the area and it is like a pigeon graveyard all around the vicinity of the nest. People would have to see it to believe the carnage involved."

W JOHNSTONE 102279 KIRKFIELD BANK

"When I first moved to my present address on the outskirts of East Kilbride in 1977 and for several years thereafter my pigeons were allowed unlimited freedom and I could take them on training flights in any direction without fear of them being attacked by birds of prey. I could also restrict the number of birds I bred as I didn't lose many in races. In recent years I have had an increasing number of pigeons killed by or injured in the vicinity of my house by a female sparrowhawk. More recently I have witnessed on two occasions one of my pigeons being killed by a peregrine falcon in the vicinity of my home. In the week prior to the first occasion five other pigeons disappeared and I suspect the peregrine killed them also. In recent years I have lost increasing numbers in racing, and I suspect that some are being lost to peregrine falcons on the racing routes. Nowadays I restrict my pigeons' freedom and confine them to the loft more than in the past. I also curtail their training flights to no more than 14 miles south of my home."

D McDOUGALL 101254 EAST KILBRIDE

"Peregrine falcons attack pigeons approx four days out of seven. There has been three falcons attacking birds at one time around the lofts. In 1995 I lost 50 birds during the winter to falcons, mainly the hen bird. 98% of the time I have witnessed the attacks."

D FRAME 103950

"No matter what time of day I let my birds out to exercise you are guaranteed that a sparrowhawk or peregrine falcon will appear and all mayhem breaks out."

A MEIKLE 103906 COALBURN

"Sparrowhawks took an old bird off the top of the loft in 1995. Peregrine took a bird as it came home from a race 1996. I have witnessed numerous attacks by peregrines this year when training from Coalburn & Abington areas."

K DOCHERTY 103937 COATBRIDGE

"This form does not take into account the number of stock pigeons taken from my loft area. We only started racing pigeons in 1993 and so far we have lost 8 pigeons which cost about £600. We have also lost several young birds from the loft and the house roof. Some I have seen happening."

J & K POLLOCK 106064 HOLYTOWN & DISTRICT

"In March and April, twelve birds killed by hawks at the loft location."

N ORR 102338 NETHERBURN

"In 1995 I had three pigeons killed by sparrowhawks at my garden location and two taken by peregrine falcons in sight of my loft."

J BUNCH 102305 NETHERBURN

"For the last three years my birds have been attacked on the loft or in the air, this happens almost nightly, sparrowhawks are the problem. This is annoying especially with young birds not yet on the wing, resulting in many lost off the top of the loft, or coming back flown out. My racing results and returns during this time have gone from good to terrible."

R RUSSELL 102428 NEWMAINS

We have had several birds killed at our loft location. It is bad enough that the hawk kills one, the damage it does to the rest of the flock it is worse. Some get so terrified they are never seen again especially the young birds."

MR & MRS CONLIN 102430 BONNYBRIDGE

"In 1996 I was in partnership with J Walker and split up at the end of 1996 young bird season. We suffered 10 attacks at the loft, 9 of which were killed by sparrowhawks and one by a peregrine. The training has been terrible in 1997 as I had 36 young birds and am left with 24 and have not started racing yet."

J McWHIRTER & SON 100633 HURLFORD

"It was on 15/2/96 I let my pigeons out at 12noon. I went back to the loft at 12.15pm and a sparrowhawk was on top off loft eating away at a pigeons neck, there was blood and feathers everywhere. Pigeon was dead and the hawk just flew off when it saw me."

J CALLAN 103437 LESMAHAGOW

"A sparrowhawk took a pigeon down in garden right in front of me and my wife. When I reached the place of attack the pigeon escaped and flew six feet in the air. The hawk then pulled the pigeon back down. When it saw me the pigeon managed to escape, I did not see the pigeon again for two days."

A CAMPBELL 103591 BORDER

"I have witnessed on two separate race Saturdays, a peregrine strike and take a pigeon approx. 50ft. above my loft are(housing est.). Both times it flew off with it without ever attempting to land. Three weeks ago a pair circled my loft and my entire young bird team took off, staying out overnight with a loss of six."

MILLIGAN 104986 CAMBUSLANG

"On the 28/2/96 a peregrine lifted a hen bird off the roof of the loft and carried it 50ft. to a lay out and killed and ate it. I live in a compact housing scheme."

A WILKIE 104996 CAMBUSLANG

"I actually had a sparrowhawk in my loft last year. I have trained my old birds from Glasgow over a number of years as there are few peregrines on that route. I also train young birds from Edinburgh for the same reason. Over the last five years training South/West has been tragic, birds injured/lost almost every time. I have witnessed the peregrine taking my pigeons on release."

G BROWNLEE 102086 CARLUKE

"Two birds killed within two days in February 1997 at my loft, six injured at loft. All attacked by sparrowhawks."

J ELLIS 105407 CARLUKE

"I have lost several old birds off the loft. There are peregrines nesting on the site of the ex Gartcosh steelworks and I have seen pigeons being carried by the peregrines to the nest site."

J BARLOW 102118 CHRYSTON

"I had a young bird injured on Sunday 20th September, one killed two days later and one today while I watched the peregrine take it out of my batch at 9.33 this morning, it has not returned so it must be dead."

L McDONALD 106073 STRANRAER

"We have falcons all around us. In the summer we have attacks by falcons every day by 2 to 4 at times, every toss to 30 miles. You are only lucky if you are not struck with the falcon. It is getting worse every year, so much so that it is a waste of time and money and cruel to the birds."

BOYCE BROTHERS 101792 WHITHORN

DETERRENTS - COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS

"Birds were killed at front of lofts with transfer's on" -

A AGNEW KELSO

"I have tried every~ deterrent only successful for short time until first attack then no good".

J GARRETT DUMFRIES

"Used all methods, mirrors and eyes painted round the loft, but have never had any success with any at all".

D CALLANDERS DUMFRIES

"I have tried the above (sequins, bali bells) and have found that they do not help to combat attacks. I have also tried anti-hawk strike, again this was useless. Most of my birds are killed exercising around home."

J MCCORMICK KIRKCUDBRIGHT

"Found none of them any use after 3 Weeks falcons got used to them."

MR & MRS SEATON ANNAN

"We have tried the transfers and bali-bells but our birds were still attacked. The hawks just seemed to get used to the markings or the noise."

W MCCULLOCH KIRKCUDBRIGHT

ATTACKS DURING TRAINING



"In 1994 I received a phone call from the Pentland hill rangers to tell me they had found a young birds with my address ring (SU 94 CA 5729 grizzle) dead along with, in his estimate 40 - 50 other race rings at a hawk feeding site. I just wonder how many other rangers and gamekeepers come across sights like this every year. The site was in the Dreghorn area of the Pentland Hills."

M & S NOBLE 105270 EDINBURGH

"I am at this moment in time having a problem with a hen sparrowhawk. In fact at any time of the day I am taking a risk letting my birds out. She has taken one and has had another two on the ground. Luckily the local jackdaws see her off. If she persists, I may as well finish with the hobby I have been involved in since 1954. I have in recent years been the club trainer. From April to May, three times weekly, liberating up to 2,500 birds, and very few are the days that there has not been a peregrine attack. These strikes always happen at the

point of liberation. The birds form three or four large batches, the falcon concentrates on one batch with a kill by one falcon. But when there are a pair, they are taking a pigeon, the batch will split but as soon as the kill is made they re-group, but in the case of a small batch, 20-30 birds, they will scatter to the four winds."

G CROMBIE 100106 ABERDEEN CENTRAL

"I take my young daughter with me training. On Wed 21 Aug, I liberated 35 young birds at 5PM from Abington. They were about 30 seconds out of the basket when a peregrine struck. For 20 minutes we watched in horror as it repeatedly dived at the batch injuring many. It eventually caught one, to my daughters great distress. When I got home the birds came in dribs and drabs, with six missing at night. I got five the next day, two injured, one so bad the water was dripping out of its' crop when it drank.

J CULLEN 102392 UDDINGSTON & DIST

"At Abington, June 11th 1996, I had just liberated pigeons, when two hawks came from nowhere into the batch of 30 birds. One of the hawks went to the ground with one of my pigeons. When returning home, I had 29 very nervous pigeons in the loft. The other one returned all burst up."

D SPENCE 106611 COATBRIDGE

"April 96, Moss Road House, attack by a single peregrine, one bird taken by falcon, another two killed by passing van as they tried to avoid falcon. May 1996, Elvanfoot, attack by a single peregrine, one bird taken by falcon, eleven birds took cover in the fir trees and spent the night out. Birds returning singly the next day. One of these birds had raced from France on three occasions. July 96, young birds, hill above rigside. attack by 3 peregrines, 73 birds, one definite kill was witnessed, 7 birds in total lost with the remainder homing over 3 day period. Another 4 had to be culled as they would not eat or drink and just stood on the loft floor"

D GILLESPIE 194521 BLANTYRE

"April 1996 I let birds off at New Cumnock and they were attacked by a falcon. I tried a different location in June but it made no difference. In July 1996 young birds also attacked at Sanquhar by hawks."

I MITCHELL 100703 MAUCHLINE

"The peregrine problem seems to get worse from mid Aug when it becomes almost impossible to have a trouble free training toss and pigeons which have flown over 120 miles fail to return from a 20 mile training spin. From mid autumn until mid May I am persistently troubled by sparrowhawks and the pigeons' freedom from the loft is severely restricted during this period. I get many attacks from the peregrine also during the winter months."

J & I ALSTON 104605 KIRKFIELD BANK

"Daily attacks at the loft 8am and 5pm. July '95 trained youngsters at Sanquhar, 3 peregrines attacked the batch, female adult took 1 out of batch and two others chased losing 3 youngsters in one training toss. August 1996 trained 14 late bred youngsters from Abington, peregrine split the batch at Douglas losing two."

W McGAFFNEY 103961 LESMAHAGOW

"When a falcon or hawk attacks my pigeon when training, I usually lose at least one pigeon, sometimes 2 or 3, through sheer panic and the birds injuring themselves trying to get away. At 20 to 30 miles the birds still have a chance to make it home, even next morning, but when there is an attack at 200 or 300 miles, that's a different story, you get heavy losses. The birds lose body weight overnight and reserves of energy, they then find it very hard to get home.

J HERKES 101961 ALLANTON

"Two peregrines attacked birds at loft, 45 birds missing for five hours and other birds under the loft for 2-3 hours terrified to come out. Liberated 39 young birds from Abington, they were attacked by three peregrines. Birds all dived into woods, we are four young birds short, some came back the next day injured. During the last two years we have lost 25 birds killed at lofts by a sparrowhawk."

JAMIESON & SIMPSON 101348 CARNWATH

"I have had two pigeons this year (1997) injured by hawks, 3 two year olds missing from short flights. It is so bad that every time you train your birds there is a 75% risk your birds will be attacked."

A S ROBERTSON 100096 ABERDEEN CENTRAL

"June 1996 6pm. I watched in horror as a hawk attacked my pigeons moments after release from a training toss just north of Stonehouse. One pigeon was taken and the rest were scattered to the four winds."

J CROMBIE 100106 ABERDEEN

"Most recent experience I liberated forty young birds at Mauchline (9mls). Birds still getting their bearings when attacked by sparrowhawk. The result was 14 were still missing 24 hours later and those that made it home were nervous wrecks."

J STAFFORD 100466 KILMARNOCK INVITATION

"Having raced pigeons since 1994 then, when pigeons were either training or racing, hawk damage was a very rare sight indeed. In the past six years almost every time you train your pigeons you either lose some or they return to the lofts injured. Since 1993 I only train my birds a few times before racing commences and that is a maximum of 25 miles to minimise losses."

H POLLOCK 100348 IRVINE NEWTOWN

"Training from Lanarkshire area M74. Bad results on training due to hawk/peregrine. Visual contact of a great number of these."

J BRYSON 100373 GALSTON

"Have never seen as many hawks in this district. Sparrowhawks are now sitting on hut roof and garden. I lost my best bird to a peregrine when training from Sanquhar last year."

C & E McTAGGART 100271 CROSSHOUSE

"The peregrine and sparrowhawk are rife in our locality. Not a day goes by but they are seen in and around the village. The sparrowhawk has been chased by neighbours while eating one of my pigeons in the back garden. I have had attacks on pigeons from Ballantrae on the coast- Carsphairn- Muirkirk etc. This year we have been getting attacks by hawks which are rung and they are not afraid of humans. No matter where we train, anywhere in Ayrshire, in any direction, down through the valley through Carsphairn, New Galloway to Castle Douglas, the moorlands by Muirkirk, Douglas to the A74, the coastal route from Ayr to Stranraer, every fancier is losing pigeons to attack. This year alone I have lost one two year old and two yearlings whilst training, and six injured. On one training toss I watched two peregrines dive at my team of twelve birds. They seem to swerve away without making a strike, this resulted in my pigeons diving into the trees for cover, two of which returned next day injured."

J BROWN 100675 DRONGAN

"April 1996 let birds off at New Cumnock and they were attacked by a falcon. June; tried different place but no difference. July 1996 young birds also attacked at Sanquhar by hawks."

I MITCHELL 100703 MAUCHLINE

"I train my pigeons up the Nith Valley. There are at least four nesting pairs of peregrines in the first 15 miles of this valley and numerous hawks. There is now a goshawk coming into the town attacking pigeons. This was witnessed on the 25th Aug by former SHU President J McGhee."

D KING 105881 CUMNOCK

"Had to change training route in 1994 because of heavy losses. When releasing from Friockheim and Arbroath which is the direct route for most races in the Angus Federation calendar, but using this route the birds have to cross Montreithmont Woods which are well known in this area for hawks. We now use coast route or further inland."

J H URQUHART 105809 ANGUS

"We had to come off training in a straight line to avoid the hawks two years ago, now it does not matter where we train. They are coming into the town. It is not the one the peregrine kills, some birds hit themselves off walls or go into trees, and I wonder if they ever get over the fright."

JAMIESON & SON 101906 CARRICK & DIST

"Our pigeons are attacked almost every time we liberate in the Nith Valley. The position is now almost impossible. My own pigeons were attacked on 4th Sept at 6pm as I was liberating them on the training toss at Killoch Pit."

A LOTHUIAN 101907 CARRICK & DIST

"Employed at Westfield Open Cast Mine. Three peregrines and hawks nest high up in the rock face and surrounding area. During racing and training season, when young birds are out exercising I see them being pulled out of the sky daily. Sometimes three or four per day being killed. It is pitiful to watch pigeons still fluttering for up to five minutes whilst being torn to pieces. Some of the ones that manage to get away panic and fly under and into machines working on site. I have saved a few over the years, the less fortunate have their rings handed to me and owners are notified on most occasions."

P PATRICK 101221 THORNTON

"I have had pigeons returned from 500 mile races that have been attacked by hawks/falcons. This year I have had good pigeons fail to return from training, one scored out of 500 miles twice, one was lost down the east coast from Berwick and another from Jedburgh, so it does not matter what route you go - they are everywhere."

D GILLON 101182 TRENET

"I have raced pigeons for 35 years. I used to train on my own but if you did that now you would be cleaned out. This year I was working at Cumbernauld, tossed pigeons and lost five that were experienced plus two came back hawked. I have never seen such erratic racing and in my opinion it is only going to get worse due to the hawk and falcon problems."

W FLOCKHART 101181 TRENET

"Along with T McGuire I watched my young bird team being attacked by a peregrine in May 1996. Birds panicked and they came back one or two at a time. Finished eight short and have not seen them to this day."

W O'NEIL 103936 LARKHALL STH

"This year I have lost one pigeon per day training, ten birds in all from the same area in Abington. All of the birds had previously flown the young bird programme and I have had to re-route my training programme."

D STEWART 101267 EAST KILBRIDE

"In training my pigeons I notice the falcons are actually herding the birds for the falcons to join the hunt. Three falcons in the Coalburn/Lesmahagow area behave in the above manner."

I MACDONOUGH 102132 CHRYSTON

"Thursday the 29th August I liberated 500 pigeons at Abington. A batch of five peregrine falcons attacked the birds. One peregrine split the birds up, with the other four chasing to try and catch them. The birds were hiding in the trees. They took seven birds out of the batch, just pinning them to the ground and going for more. The birds were chased onto the motorway. I do not know how this did not cause a smash as they were chased into the oncoming traffic."

GILLON McLELLAND & McPAKE 102233 HOLYTOWN

"I used to train from Abington, Crawford etc., then I tried training from east Peebles, but I still lose them to the hawks."

A RAMAGE 103928 LANARK

"I have seen pigeons scatter in all directions after being released at different training points. Birds take hours to home, sometimes taking all day, and many not coming home until next day after being attacked by peregrines. Sparrowhawks fly quite often over my own loft. It has got to the point where you cross your fingers after letting the birds out for exercise."

J & J SMITH 102319 NETHERBURN

"Jedburgh was always an area where pigeons were tossed, now both I and other fanciers have experienced losses of old birds liberated in that area. The only way pigeons can be trained now is in bulk where the chances of ones own birds being hit are reduced."

S YOUNG 103336 BONNYRIGG

"Training toss 28/8/96 at 12.25pm. (Meldons via Eddleston Peebleshire), pigeons released, peregrine attacked at 12.30. Dead pigeon retrieved from the kill. The kill was witnessed by a fellow fancier. There are several pigeons missing from training toss. I had pigeons attacked and killed when training at Peebles-Leadburn-Carter Bar 2/5/97."

M & D WINTER & DAUGHTER ROSEWELL

"I have witnessed 2 peregrine attacks on our young birds at training point in Stow. One in 1994 when 1 peregrine attacked our young birds while three of our members looked on. The other peregrine attack was a year later when 3 falcons attacked my young bird team. It may have been a mother with two young ones as only one bird killed. I have also witnessed sparrowhawk attacks around the loft and once at the same training spot."

F PERRING 105869 GILMERTON

"I witnessed a peregrine attack on my team of 43 young birds in 1995. The peregrine killed one pigeon bred from my famous pigeon "Sir Colin". This attack was at Carter Bar at approx. 9am. in July, the other 42 were so terrified that they flew into the forrest. I eventually, after three days, got 25 of these pigeons back. Most of these birds were then terrified to leave the loft."

J WHITE 104638 GILMERTON

"While single tossing my pigeons at Laurencekirk, I had let eight go successfully, and the ninth one was dead within twenty seconds of leaving my hand, killed by a peregrine falcon. By the time I crossed the road and entered the field, my pigeon was dead, with it's neck ripped out."

G McBAIN 102833 INVERURIE

"I have trained my club's pigeons for six years. This year I have witnessed six hawk attacks, four times during the old bird season, two in the young bird season. Also this year the members have found that the young birds are returning to the loft in ones and twos, with a break of perhaps two hours before they get anymore."

A SHANKS 103203 AIRTH

"In 1995 my young birds were liberated at Breich, they were circling when a sparrowhawk dived in among them, every one of them dived into the trees, then they struggled home over two days. I lost one. This was a week before the first young bird race, which I missed because of this. In 1996 the same thing happened twice while training birds from the same area, we have now changed our training route, I lost two this time."

C HOGG 103177 STENHOUSEMUIR

"Because of the increase of hawks/falcons in our area I only train pigeons with other members, but still suffer heavy losses. Pigeon racing is now at a low in our area because of the falcon attacks."

A DODDS 101817 STRANRAER

"I have stopped training old and young birds from Abington, Beatock, Lockerbie and Ecclefechan due to the heavy losses and peregrine attacks when birds were liberated. We can see peregrines above the town of Armadale daily and also a larger type of hawk, usually a pair circling higher up (1/2 to 1 mile) high."

T & M McCracken 104443

LOSSES DURING RACING

These rings came from racing pigeons killed by birds of prey. Over 500 rings from various unions were found in the areas of nests of birds of prey and reports were sent to the owners. The following is information they gave concerning the breeding, experience and performance of the dead birds.

SU 91 S 5880 and SU 94 S 3120.

Both these birds were lost racing, 5880 was a Decroix cock that won three 1sts racing. The other one 3120 is a son of my Nantes Winner "Clintpark Lass". At the moment I have lost 4 birds to the sparrowhawk, all since 30/12/97. "5407" killed "5817" killed "10217" killed "10249" still alive. There seems to be a few of them about, I cannot let them out unless I am about. Gone are the days when you could leave them out all day.

J GRAHAM 104318 LOCKERBIE

SU 91 S 6609

Bird flew in races listed:- 1992 Carlisle, Haydock, Worcester, Cheltenham
1993 Lancaster, Stafford, Carlisle
1994 Carlisle, Stafford, Carlisle, Cheltenham - Lost

The pigeon in question was a three year old chequer hen and did not return from Cheltenham in 1994, but at least now I know what happened to her, so I would like to thank you for passing on this information.

G MUIR. 102427 BELLSHILL, LANARKSHIRE



SU 94 M 2991

The above pigeon was lost as a young bird in the third race from Penrith (Aug 1994). The previous two races from Locharbriggs seen this young check hen being timed in each week and taking club pools. This bird was bred from stock I purchased and looked to be a very good prospect for myself I hope these details will assist you in your survey

H CASSIDY 105944 AIRDRIE, LANARKSHIRE

SU 94 L 20275

Above pigeon blue cock flown:- 1994 5 Y/B races 1995 6 races to Worcester
1996 All races to Salisbury
1997 5 races to Sartilly

Blue cock took various prizes in racing including 1st club all pools Salisbury 1996. Never returned from Lanark

A KERR 102349 STRATHAVEN, LANARKSHIRE

SU 92 CA 9448

The pigeon was lost from Leicester 2. It was 4th bird to the loft from the same racepoint two weeks before, the distance 256 miles in the 1994 race season. I know about the pigeon being hawked as it was in the Racing Pigeon about two years ago. Check pied hen.

W DOUDIE 102890 BO' NESS, WEST Lothian

SU 94 F 3062

This bird was flying home from a race - a 3 year old at the time of loss and quite experienced

T BERWICK 101223 FIFE

SU 94 G 3057

This bird was lost in 1996. Thought to be from Appleby in mid May. Was not greatly experienced but had flown Appleby twice the previous season

J T MUIR 101313 GLASGOW

SU 92 E 5332

This bird was competing in a race from Stafford after racing the whole programme. I wrote to D Parkinson (Kelso) when he published the numbers last year in the B.H.W. He told me that the bird had been right on line for home when it had been killed.

J FAIRBAIRN 104017 BERWICKSHIRE

SU 94 L 24867

As a young bird trained to Peebles, raced programme to Appleby 2. As a yearling pre-season training to Peebles. Sent to Lancaster where it failed to return. Hope this is of some help.

C CUPPLES 102008 LANARKSHIRE

SU 92 KD 0004

Concerning the pigeon SU 92 KD 0004. It was a well reared bird from expensive stock birds I purchased from Fountainhead Lofts. It was sent to its first race after being well trained and from these training tosses it looked to have good prospects if training tosses are anything to go with. It's first and only race as a young bird was Annanhill which is 61 miles and it was liberated on 01/08/92 at 3.40pm into a west south west wind. Needless to say it never returned, now I know why. At this race I sent 21 birds, I got 2 birds on the day, the velocity of the first bird was 646.45. I got another 3 birds on the Sunday and another 6 returned from the stray centre. In all a total of 11 out of 21 sent. This was the end of my Y/B racing for 1992.

R McCARRELL 101871 MOSSBLOWN, AYRSHIRE

SU 91 E 3032

I lost this pigeon at a race 6 years ago as a young bird which was very well bred. Father flew the water races 5 times, mother timed in 4 races, twice 2nd Worcester & Leicester and once 3rd Stafford.

J RENTON 101160 EAST LOTHIAN

SU 95 B 1109

This pigeon was lost from Appleby in 1996. It flew 4 races as a Y/B in 1995.

R McDOUGALL 102458 CUMNOCK

SU 90 CA 5898

This pigeon went missing in the S.N.F.C. race from Frome, this was to have been his last race prior to SNFC Nantes. He topped the federation the previous year from Niort and had been raced from various French racepoints in previous years so he was a very experienced and reliable bird. Referring to the hawk problem, I lost a good bird to the hawk only last week from the loft roof. On a previous occasion the hawk only missed my daughters head when it dived at my aviary.....

R LAFFERTY 100820 WEST LOTHIAN

SU 91 S 4564

This pigeon was lost racing from Rennes in 1994. He had won a 2nd, 8th and 9th prize club racing. It was also well bred, being bred from a son of "John James" SNFC Rennes winner for E Hodgson & Sons.

R V GRAHAM 104348 LANGHOLM, DUMFRIES

SU 93 SB 1489

Lost traing - this was a very experienced pigeon which had been to the south coast of England on 3 occassions and always reliable. Lost from Carlisle cattle market on a perfect training day, 15 birds were released only 3 made it home, none on the day. They were released at 9am S W light wind, very little cloud cover.

T ARNOTT 104045 KELSO ROXBURGHSHIRE

SU 93 M 10041

1st club Locharbriggs 1993, 4th club Leyland, sent to Y/B national, never returned.

T WILSON 103192 DENNY, STIRLING

SU 96 AF 2232

This bird was en route from Ripon on 31/05/97 (race). It had previously returned from 2 races this season and had done the full young bird programme last season. Nest mate still in loft after flying 380 miles.

D FERRAR 100036 ANGUS

SU 91 M 1023

This year I have had two pigeons killed with a sparrowhawk in front of my loft. One was my national winner and the other was one I had bought in at great expense.

G HARRIS 103157 STIRLING

SU 94 S 4129

The above bird flew the young bird programme in 1994 and was lost at the Y/B national

J D ELLWOOD 104347 ELLWOOD

SU 95 B 5028

The above pigeon was lost on it's 3rd young bird race in 1995 from Penrith. The pigeon had a lot of training as well as two races prior to Penrith in which it proved to be a steady bird.

F JOHNSTONE 100697 MAUCHLINE, AYRSHIRE

SU 95 L 29390

This bird was lost en route from the 1995 Y/B national race from Worcester. Metal ring found at peregrines nest by D Parkinson of Kelso. I wrote to him at the time, but no further contact from him. I hope this information is of some use.

A DEANS 102415

SU 96 L 7818

Lost racing from Appleby in 1996 as a yearling.

W REID 103697 HAMILTON, LANARKSHIRE

SU 96 ML 2493

Lost this pigeon mid June 1996 off loft while out on morning exercise.

T PEARSON 103504 MIDLOTHIAN

SU 94 ML 1420

Bird lost old bird race Peterborough 03/06/95.

GAUSDEN BROS 105021 EDINBURGH

SU 91 F 17652

This bird was lost racing as young bird.

C WOODCOCK 101539 DUMBARTONSHIRE

SU 95 G 868

I lost this bird in a race from Lancaster. I cannot give any further information as my partner is deceased and he had most of the paperwork.

J QUINN 101365 DUMBARTONSHIRE

SU 93 NW 2766

Bird was lost as Y/B racing.

HUNTER & SAUNDERS 103100 CRIEFF, PERTHSHIRE

SU 96 CA 3534

Young bird raced to Charnock Richard, as yearling went to Appleby. On 06/05/97 he went missing on training flight from Peebles.

ROACH BROS & BLACK 100729 WEST LOTHIAN

SU 95 S 10830

Young bird lost training from Penrith

B TOWNSON 104420 GREтна, CARLISLE

SU 95 S 5019

Pigeon was in a race from Appleton but didn't arrive home.

B WALLACE 105806 KIRKCUBRIGHTSHIRE

SU93F 11461

This bird was on it's first race from Longtown as a young bird.

R S DAVIDSON 101713 CRAIGIE, PERTH

SU92 NW 1105

Bird lost at Charnock Y/B open. Fully pooled bird(blue cock).

MR & MRS GRAHAM 102952 FALKIRK

SU 91 ML 3959

This was an experienced pigeon lost from a race in 1993.

J HAIG 104629 EDINBURGH

SU 93 F 7271

Thank you for giving me this information about my pigeon.

This bird was lost during the

1993 young bird racing from Lancaster.

G WILSON 101233 NEWBURGH, FIFE

SU 93 ML 5515

The above 'pigeon was lost as a young bird from Midlothian Stafford race.

R HALLEY 103455 MUSSELBURGH

SU 95 P 1126

This pigeon does not appear in my books for 1996 so it was killed in a training toss or from a race as a youngster

R FORD & SON 103233 EDINBURGH

SU 96 L 20336

Re the above:-

Dam of 20336

SU 91 L 28784 bred by Sam Owen, Cleghorn. 28784 bloodlines same as Sam's two section winners 1st section Avranches & 1 st sect Rennes.

Sire of 20336

Unrung (late bred) bred by D Hamilton & Son, Bellshill flew Sartilly as a yearling

G. Sire

Goes back to McCully & Graham, 22nd open Rennes

G Dam

A full sister to D Hamilton's pen blue cock SU 90 L 5766 1 st Dorchester and scored 4 times across channel

20336

Flew very steady as young bird and old bird up to Stafford 24/05/97 when she went down.

S BROWN 101990 BELLSHILL

SMALL BIRDS

The SHU survey did not ask members any question regarding small birds, we think the concern of our members regarding over population by raptors reaches far wider than their own immediate problems.

"I have lots of problems with the hen sparrowhawk. It has injured 3 cock birds, being big strong pigeons they managed to get away. 2 hen birds being smaller failed to return. The male hawk is decimating the small bird population. Blue tits, finches and blackbirds are disappearing fast. The trees used to be full of birds, now things are very quiet."

W HUTCHISON 101683 KIRKCALDY NOVAR

"From mid September till May if my birds were out of the loft they would be attacked every day by sparrowhawks. If there is no sympathy for the pigeons, why does the RSPB not take a closer look at the decline in numbers of the thrushes, linnets, larks. When was the last time anyone spotted a yellow hammer. All the song birds are on a decline, just look at your bird tables."

K BUCHANAN 106196 HAMILTON

"Locally sparrowhawks are the worst offenders, as in my area there are hardly any small birds left due to the sparrowhawks, so now they are preying on pigeons to feed their young and it is getting worse."

W ROBERTSON 101695 KIRKCALDY NOVAR

The hen sparrowhawks and peregrine are the main problem in this area. In five years time there will be no song birds or racing pigeons. They are now taking birds from the garden just yards from where I am standing."

D KING 101585 KENNOWAY

"Sparrowhawks are attracted to local garden bird tables and they are taking the small birds. It is then when unsuccessful they turn to the pigeon loft. Worst months April to late-June (nesting time)."

I CHALMERS 101427 GLENROTHES & LESLIE

"I do not have dates of the attacks but my pigeons have been subjected to attacks by both peregrine and sparrowhawk. They come into my back garden and kill the robins and hedgesparrows. When I joined the sport in 1984 I did not seem to have hawk problems, but now these predators are killing our sport. Something has to be done quickly or we will no longer have our hobby. Next year our problem will be doubled with their young coming up."

J HERD 102119 CHRYSTON

"We feel there are too many hawks in the district now. Aside from pigeons, we no longer see blackbirds or thrushes to the extent we used to. It's all very well protecting the hawk but for pigeon fanciers it has now become a disaster. In our opinion it is time there was a case to be made not only for the racing pigeon but for other species that are suffering due to the hawk."

"In the past 3 years I have not had a song bird nest in my boundary hedge. They have all disappeared"

I SCOPE 100465 KILMARNOCK

"When did you last hear a skylark? May I suggest the RSPB protect the song birds and get rid of the birds of prey. During the war when fanciers were asked to supply pigeons for the National Pigeon Service, you were allowed to shoot birds of prey, now they are no longer required nobody seems interested."

S CASSELS 100454 KILMARNOCK

"In Pumpherstons wild birds are near enough extinct. There are at least 6 hawks and 2 falcons. You see the birds scattering everyday as they are struck."

A COWAN & SON PUMPHERSTON

"We have all heard the saying as dead as a dodo. If something is not done soon, that is what we will be saying about our garden birds. The blackbird, thrush, buntings, finches, doves, pigeons, sparrows and the robin have all but disappeared in some areas. The dawn chorus is getting weaker as the hawks and falcons get stronger in number. The RSPB protected the magpie only to find they had over protected it, they are going to make the same mistake again. In this area we have had an explosion of sparrowhawks. They attack the song birds and the pigeons daily. I have witnessed six sparrowhawks in the sky at the same time. They will attack even if you are standing in the garden."

R DOCHERTY 106039 PUMPHERSTON

"From our garden we witness daily attacks on wild birds and pigeons. In 1992 we had four blackbirds nests, two greentits in a nest box, and were visited by numerous other species. This year there are no nests at all, with the bird table never in use. We are bird lovers first, pigeon fanciers second. We do not want to see widespread persecution of raptors, we just want to see some sort of control of them"

MR & MRS A CLAFFEY 105336

"When we moved here in 1983 there were many song birds nesting in and around the farm, now we rarely see any and have seen hawks taking the birds. Many panicked birds have flown right at our windows and been killed. I used to be able to let my pigeons out all day without being harmed by hawks and falcons, but now, any time they are out, a hawk or a falcon appears."

C GIBSON 100046 ARBROATH

"This week alone my loft has been attacked four times. Once by a peregrine, other three times by a sparrowhawk. They have also lifted blackbirds, bluetits and sparrows from the garden. The hawks seem to have no fear of man. As stated above, I have been present when they have swooped past my loft to take one of the songbirds."

J BAIRD 105659 KIRKCONNEL

"Wild life ie., thrushes and blackbirds have been decimated by hawks."

D BAXTER 101195 COALTOWN OF BALGONIE

"I have witnessed hawks taking birds as they fly around the loft. The number of garden birds etc have suffered as the hawks and peregrines take them daily."

PENMAN & BINNIE 101652 COALTOWN OF BALGONIE

"When I moved here in 1983 there were many song birds nesting in and around the farm. Now we rarely see any and have seen hawks taking the birds. Many panicked birds have flown right at our windows and been killed. I used to be able to let my pigeons out all day without being harmed by hawks and falcons but now, any time they are out a hawk or a falcon appears. There only seems to be sparrowhawks and falcons in our area."

C GIBSON 100046 ARBROATH

"During the last few months I have had a sparrowhawk catch songbirds in my garden on at least three occasions. One of the small birds escaped through my intervention. Although none of my pigeons have been caught by the hawks to my knowledge, they have been frightened enough to have some of them stay out all night."

J SLAVEN 101631 METHILHAVEN

"It is now commonplace to see peregrine falcons fly past my house window. Ten years ago it was common to see goldfinch and greenfinch etc., in this area. Now it is much more common to see peregrine and sparrowhawks."

I ROSS 101299 KIRKINTILLOCH

"Sparrowhawks are attracted to local garden bird tables and taking the small birds. It is then when they miss they turn their attention to the pigeons loft. Worst months April to late June (nesting time)."

I CHALMERS 101427 GLENROTHES & LESLIE

"There is a lack of small birds in the area ie., sparrow, bluetits, blackbirds, greenfinch and goldies. There has been a nest of peregrines on the Law for three years. I have seen them dive at young duck down at Preston Mill, East Linton."

A BISHOP 101132 NORTH BERWICK

"I am particularly concerned about the reduction in the wild bird population. In particular a pair of mistle thrushes which for several years nested in close proximity to my loft. They have now disappeared. Yellow hammers are now more rare than hawks."

D STEWART 104617 KIRKFIELD BANK

"As A farmer and a very serious student of nature, I have a great fondness for all wildlife and in all nature the hawks have to kill to live (fair enough) but in the old days there were many gamekeepers that kept birds of prey at a fair level. This helped everybody, the small birds and the game birds. In 1996 the level of hawks and falcons is away out of order. We all know what (D D T.) did to the raptors but that is in the past and the hawks are back as strong as ever."

W BAULD 101268 EAST KILBRIDE

"There are two sparrowhawks always flying together in the Gorebridge/Arniston area. I have seen them attacking my pigeons, also doves and blackbirds being eaten alive Apr/May 1997."

J PRYDE 7 SON 103289 ARNISTON

"The peregrine problem is rife in this area throughout the year and pigeons are chased on a regular daily basis. There is occasionally a short respite when other fanciers north of this location start training and this acts as a diversion. Obviously these pigeons are not street wise at the start. The sparrowhawks, both male and female, are a big problem from Feb - end of Apr being the worst months. The problem is then in abeyance until about mid Nov when the odd pigeon is caught during the winter months. The sparrowhawk appears every day in my garden throughout the summer months and has decimated the thrushes, blackbirds and chaffinches in my garden. Over the last five years no nests have survived. These were usually 4 - 5 every term up to 1990 successfully fledged."

K STAINTHORPE 103965 LESMAHAGOW

"There are hawks everywhere you go. There is also a vast decline in small songbirds etc. Due to these killers there will be no small birds left unless something is done."

W & A KERR 103610 BORDER

"Not only are our race teams suffering due to the raptors being allowed to get out of order in numbers, but the songbirds ie., skylark, thrush and finches are dwindling badly."

J SHARP 102139 COATBRIDGE

"With the ever increasing, unrestricted number of hawks and falcons throughout the UK, so in turn the fanciers have increasing problems as to where our birds are raced and trained. In a recent article in the Scottish Daily Mail headed - "Where have all the song birds gone" - blame was attributed to "changes in farming methods". What rubbish. I duly wrote and told them so. However, my letter was never acknowledged, far less published. It is a well known fact that the sparrowhawk is responsible for the decline in the small bird population and I feel that this point should also be pressed home in any representations which we duly make re the hawk/falcon problem which is having such dire effects on our popular hobby."

R COOK 105387 HOLYTOWN & DIST

"There has been a dramatic decline in the number of garden birds during the last two years in this area. Having witnessed sparrowhawks attacking them, I can only conclude that this is the reason. In another two years there will be very few left. Urgent action is required to curb the sparrowhawk menace."

W FOSTER 102274 LANARK & DIST

"Almost every day I see sparrowhawks taking blackbirds, sparrows and starlings. I also saw a sparrowhawk take one of my young birds and was eating it alive in my neighbour's garden. I had to kill this young bird."

H HIGGINS 102735 CALDERCRUIX & DIST

"I welcome this survey and await its findings with interest, not just as a pigeon fancier but as a bird lover. My chief concern is on what controls and limits, if any, are being observed in the re-population of raptors. These creatures and their subsequent offspring require quite large hunting area and I think this survey, and one on the songbird populations are very important. As a fancier, I am finding it more difficult each year to find areas free from raptors for training purposes, never mind the larger picture for racing. My main problem areas this year have been out of Peebles, Abington and Tinto Hills, which narrows my choices to educate and train both young and old birds. This year I lost a promising yearling that won prizes for me as a young bird. I left my loft for two hours, to find on my return, the half eaten carcass, and the remaining birds in a state of fear."

R MCGRORY 102711 NEWMAINS

"The wild birds and feral pigeons in my loft area has almost halved in recent years."

T KANE 102582 KILSYTH

"I moved here in 1968 and the hedgerow next to me was moving with small birds. Hundreds of sparrows and dozens of other types, so much so that I had to keep the sparrows out of my loft. There are now only a handful of sparrows and no others at all. This is due to the sparrowhawks that patrol this area, with the lack of sparrows, the hawks are now taking the pigeons."

MR & MRS PENTLAND 103379 EASTHOUSES

"I moved to my new house in 1994 and I have not had any pleasure in my birds because of sparrowhawks and other raptors. The hedgerows at the farm where I live have just about had it. I miss the finches, blackbirds, skylarks and so on, they don't seem to be there any more."

A FERGUSON 103387 EASTHOUSES.

"I keep aviary birds and on a number of occasions a sparrowhawk has made strikes at the aviary. The sparrowhawks are breeding in my area which has four other lofts within 400yds of the nest site. This year I lost two young birds off the top of my loft."

J PATERSON 101060 BUCKIE & DIST

"There are so many peregrines now in the stone quarries in Aberdeenshire, not to mention the cliffs that in effect pigeon racing as you and I know it is finished. The chaos that even one falcon has on a team of pigeons has to be seen to be believed. All the wild birds are in decline, thrush, skylark lapwing etc., while the peregrine is increasing by 4% yearly. The RSPB blames chemicals but no one sprays woodlands or moorland, the domain of birds of prey."

P MORRISON 102820 INVERURIE

"There are far too many pigeons attacked by hawks and peregrines, they are growing in numbers and there is no control over them. There are no songbirds left in this village area."

R URE 102945 AVONBRIDGE

"One very noticeable comment, at this time of year there is not one house sparrow near here, there used to be dozens. Have not seen a thrush for at least three years and as for skylarks, they are non existent. They are hawked in my opinion, being killed for food."

W HALLIDAY & SON 104688 PENICUIK

"If birds like the hawk/falcon are not kept under control it will be the end of the songbird population as we know it. Pigeon racing will decline and only the die hards will be left."

HURST & GOLD 104057 EYE VALLEY

"The songbirds are being decimated by these predators and there is no doubt they take a large amount of racing pigeons."

C & P ANDERSON 104049 EYE VALLEY

"Daily attacks around the loft. If one's garden contains good habitat for the songbirds and general bird population, the sparrowhawk is never far away, even when the race birds are locked up."

BURNFOOT COMMUNITY SCHOOL 106562 HAWICK

"I feel too many species of raptors are becoming too common. I frequent the countryside day and night as a place of work and for various hobbies. Not only are pigeons suffering, the song bird population is depleted, as are several species of waders. I have witnessed several hawks, as many as six, in a one mile radius, possibly sparrowhawks. Peregrines frequent our coastline and inland every few miles, I also believe grouse are killed on occasions."

J MCGREGOR 103536 THURSO."

"I have noticed over the past six years a big decline in the amount of small birds in my garden ie., yellow hammers and finches."

K MELVIN 105414 MONTROSE & DISTRICT

MEMBERS LEAVING THE SPORT

Fanciers all over Scotland are now in a situation where they find it almost impossible to sustain a team of racing pigeons. In the past, members would fly the entire race programme with their old bird and young bird teams, in recent years this has proved difficult and often impossible.

"It is getting so bad in all areas that we cannot let our birds fly around the loft without fear of an attack from these hawks. This is what makes it a very bad day for our sport."

STEWART & RODGER 102165 COATBRIDGE

"I have had pigeons for more than 50 years, this could be my last year."

OWEN 102108 CARNWATH

"Birds are attacked at almost every training toss and has taken the pleasure out of our great sport. I now feel like packing it in."

BOSWELL & McCORMICK 103647 HAMILTON

"I feel if something is not done to control the hawks we will lose a lot of pigeon fanciers."

G HILLAN 103957 LESMAHAGOW

"I have had enough of this sport due to pigeon men supplying feeding for these hawks and falcons so I am finished in pigeon racing."

H FREEMAN 105229 HURLFORD

"Through the great loss over the years due to the hawks/falcons, I have decided not to carry on in the pigeon sport and have given young birds which are left to other fanciers."

T RANKIN 105186 HURLFORD

"After 27 years in the pigeon sport I have 12 young birds left out of 25 and I am ready to pack it in."

J O'ROURKE 100631 HURLFORD

"Over 25 years in the sport I am now finished in it. My losses to hawks and falcons is such that I can no longer afford to lose all these birds."

J STEEL 100620 HURLFORD

"By now the government must realise that the hawk problem has increased so let us cull them back. If allowed to go on breeding as they are there will be fewer people and pigeons in the sport."

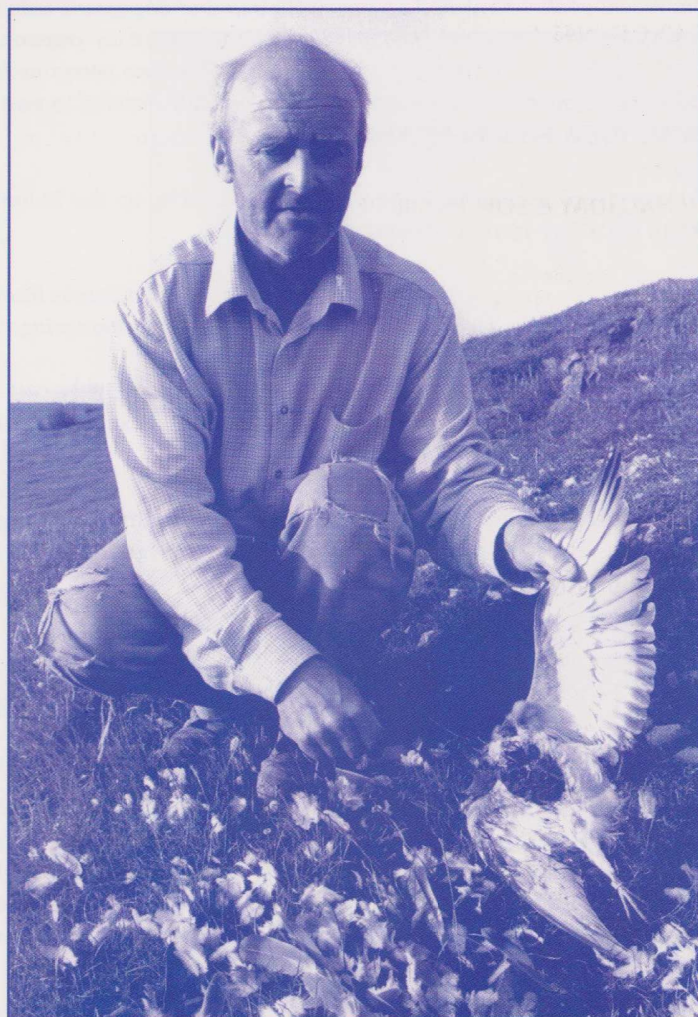
K DICK 103418 EDINBURGH PREMIER

"The sport of pigeon racing in my opinion is finished. If you cannot enjoy the sport due to the massive increase in hawks and falcons."

P O'DONNELL & SON 105079 ROSEWELL

"We have attacks by sparrowhawks in our village. The loft of our neighbour H Montgomery was often attacked and pigeons killed within feet of his loft. He has now finished in the sport. My own loft was visited often by a sparrowhawk and nowadays they are not afraid of people. I could approach within 10 yards when it was sitting on my aviary."

G ASHER 101382 VALLEYFIELD



" In over 50 years in the sport the last 5 years have been an effort to keep an interest anymore as the losses in birds have become terrible. By paying big money for birds feeding and training, it is only the love of the birds and sport that keeps me flying."

G GORDON 101110 GLADSMUIR

" Since the eighties we have lost 9 birds from the top of the loft by hawks. Also I myself have seen batches of pigeons attacked and scattered all over the place by hawks. The sport is in such a bad state I am seriously thinking of stopping."

J & T BROWN 100269 CROSSHOUSE

"In recent years I have had an increasing number of pigeons killed by predators, particularly sparrowhawks. On one occasion a female sparrowhawk entered my loft and killed one of my pigeons. On my first young bird training flight from Darvel in July this year, I witnessed my young birds being attacked by two peregrine falcons. I lost 4 pigeons in the attack. Because of the increasing problems caused by birds of prey I have reluctantly decided to give up the sport this year."

W McHUGH 101269 EAST KILBRIDE

" Having kept pigeons for 60 years I am now packing up due to the hawks and losses from races."

KERR & DERRY 104171 SELKIRK

" I had to give up pigeon racing owing to the continued attacks from peregrines and sparrowhawks. Last pigeon I had killed was by a goshawk, I live about two miles from Craig Fell. Once the racing stops, I cannot let my pigeons out until the training commences."

R ROSS 104131 INDIVIDUAL

"because of the increase in hawks and falcons, the heavy losses have been evident. I no longer race in club competition."

J M WATTS 104289 INDIVIDUAL

" The hawk situation is so bad in my area, that to try and race pigeons would be impossible. The sparrowhawk has done so much damage to the song bird population , tits and finches etc., over the last few years. I am not prepared to feed them my racing stock as well."

P M SPENCE 106432 INDIVIDUAL MEMBER

" I have stopped racing these last few years. As for the hawks, There are far too many of them in Caithness. It has put the sport in a state. When you see your best birds coming home in the state that they come in, it sickens you."

R McCAULEY 103607 INDIVIDUAL MEMBER

" From 1979 to 1996 I have had 176 birds killed by birds of prey at or around the loft. I returned to the sport 4 years ago and had only 2 birds left to race. Myself and D Callender have previously sent details to the SHU i.e.newspaper articles and photographs. If we are to continue in our hobby something has to be done concerning the continual attacks by birds of prey. Since completing this form I have found a further 3 birds killed on 10th, 13th and 15th of September. These birds were bought recently from Louella Pigeon World for £50 each. Something has got to be done or I will just have to give up my hobby."

J McCORMICK 105516 KIRKCUDBRIGHT

" This is my last year racing due to the losses I have had through hawks. It is my thinking that we only keep pigeons to feed the hawks"

W FLETCHER 100658 KIRCONNEL

" This year alone I have had four birds severely damaged by raptors handed into me by members of the public-three survived stitching and care, the fourth succumbed. I only raced five old birds races and no young bird racing was undertaken. Sparrowhawks(2 pairs) nested in immediate area and both persistently haranged birds. I found it was impossible to allow open hole and train early in the day. Occasional peregrine attention was evident in wood pigeon and feral pigeons. My birds could not bathe outside. My presence while they were out prevented some attacks but not all, four birds being damaged requiring stitching. Last year seven died and one had to be killed. Five did not return after peregrine attacks. The pleasure has gone for me, and I am finishing the sport (after 10 years)."

J SINCLAIR 105094 STRATHEARN

"I had one pigeon killed, I could not put a price on it. It had won a lot of money from Worcester, Cheltenham and Fareham. e.g. Yearling, 25th section, 3rd club, Cheltenham; in Worcester open result; in open result Fareham 4th Open. As a 2 year old many club positions plus topping Fed from Cheltenham and scoring again from Fareham. If you start to lose pigeons at the loft like that, what chance do you have in the sport. It knocks the heart out of you and you feel like packing in the sport"

J LONEY 103172 DENNY

SUPPLEMENT 3: *Pigeon fanciers are, and always have been valued members of the community raising vast sums of money for various charities including medical research. Their contribution in both world wars was vital and recognised widely.*

Lest we forget....

THE RACING PIGEON.....

"the only munition of war which was provided free of charge.."

Pigeons in Two World Wars. Lt Col A H Osman OBE, Maj. W H Osman, C Osman.. The Racing Pigeon Publishing Co. Ltd. 1976.

Over **300,000** racing pigeons were supplied for use by the armed forces during the First and Second World Wars.

THE DICKIN MEDAL

This medal was awarded to pigeons in recognition of their achievements in delivering messages of the utmost importance for the war effort, many lives were saved as a direct result of these messages getting through. Pigeons brought information locating servicemen trapped behind enemy lines. Pigeons also brought news of ships and crew in difficulties at sea which resulted in their rescue, they were invaluable for the work they did in providing intelligence. The following are a list of those birds receiving the Dickin Medal:-

A complete list of pigeons awarded

THE DICKIN MEDAL

"Winkie" NEHU40NS1
"George" MEPS43.1263
"White Vision" SURP41L3089
"Beachcomber" NPS41NS4230
"Gustav" NPS42.31066
"Paddy" NPS43.945
"Kenley Lass" NURP36JH190
"Commando" NURP38EGU242
"Flying Dutchman" NPS42NS44802
"Royal Blue" NURP40GVIS453
"Dutch Coast" NURP41A2164
"Navy Blue" NPS41NS2862
"William of Orange" NPS42NS15125
"Ruhr Express" NPS43.29018
"Scotch Lass" NPS42.21610
"Billy" NU41HQ4373
"Cologne" NURP39NPS44
"Maquis" NPS42.36392
NPS42NS2780
NPS42NS7524
"Broad Arrow" 41BA2793
"AllAlone" NURP39SDS39
"Mercury" NURP37CEN335NURP38BPC6
DD43T139
DD43Q879
"Duke of Normandy" NURP41SBC219
NURP43CC2418

OTHER WINNERS

"Mary" NURP40WLE249. Bred by C. Brewer, Exeter.
"For outstanding endurance on war service in spite of wounds."
"Tommy" NURP41DHZ56. Bred by W. Brockbank, Dalton-in-Furness. *"For delivering a valuable message from Holland to Lancashire under difficult conditions."*
"Princess" 42WD593. Bred by M.E.P.S.
"For carrying valuable information 500 miles from Crete to Alexandria in April 1943. Posthumous award."
"G.I. Joe" USA43SC6390. Bred by U.S. Army.
"For prompt delivery of a message to XII Air Support Command, thereby preventing the bombing of advanced elements 56th (London) Division."

Home Office,
Whitehall, London.
10th May, 1945

Sir,

Now that hostilities have ceased in Europe, and the immediate danger to the security of our country has been entirely removed, the Secretary of State would like to take the opportunity to express his appreciation of the co-operation given to the police by the local representatives of the National Pigeon Service throughout the war years.

From the outbreak of war, the police have been faced with many duties relating to pigeons, which have been rendered necessary in the interests of national security; the execution of these duties was no easy matter for those unfamiliar with the technicalities of pigeon flying. By generously placing their time and experience at the disposal of the police, the National Pigeon Service representatives have enabled them to carry out their tasks with a thoroughness and consideration which would not otherwise have been possible.

Although happily never called upon to assist against invasion of this country by the enemy, the readiness of the National Pigeon Service representatives' help in preparations for such a contingency and to give further assistance if it were needed, was of the very greatest value to both the police and the other authorities concerned.

The Secretary of State for Scotland desires to be associated with this expression of thanks and wishes his appreciation to be conveyed to the National Pigeon Service representatives in Scotland.

I am to ask that you will bring the contents of this letter to the notice of all National Pigeon Service representatives with a request that they will accept the grateful thanks of the Secretary of State and the Secretary of State for Scotland for the contribution they have made to the security of the nation.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,
J. M. Ross

The Secretary,
The National Pigeon Service
22 Clarence Street, Gloucester

BRITISH PIGEON FANCIERS MEDICAL RESEARCH

The Research Trust found its origins in Scotland in 1976 under the auspices of the Scottish National Flying Club and aided by the Scottish Homing Union. The Trustees and Honorary Accountant to the Trust continue to this day to administer the British Pigeon Fanciers Medical Research Trust. Its aims are the study of allergic lung conditions in general and allergy to pigeons in particular (pigeon lung).

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In the same way as some dog, cat, horse owners etc are allergic to their pets, some pigeon fanciers are allergic to their pigeons and this causes an allergic lung condition called "pigeon lung". It is NOT an infection.

Pigeon fanciers in the U.K. have raised approximately £250,000 over the years and have donated thousands of samples of blood to research this allergic condition under the leadership of Dr Gavin Boyd, consultant physician, based in Glasgow. The doctors in the team have worked free of charge from the very beginning of the research. The knowledge gained has helped unravel the allergic phenomenon with benefit to the public at large, eg farmers lung, malt workers lung and wooded turners lung, these are examples of identical conditions to pigeon lung. An understanding of these conditions and others has been gained by the large number of pigeon fanciers who have co-operated in the research. Members of the public continue to have free access to lung equipment and expertise donated to the research team by pigeon fanciers and used routinely in N.H.S. hospitals.

The research has a firm academic base with numerous articles and research results published in medical and scientific journals world-wide over the years. The research has been responsible for four M.D. doctorates and two P.H.D.'s in immunology and two others are being presented at the moment. A direct benefit to the public at large is the fact that these former doctors and scientists who gained their early training and experience in the research team are now consultants and immunologists actively working and carrying on research and service to patients in N.H.S. hospitals and N.H.S. scientific laboratories.

The co-operation and support from the pigeon fraternity has created a situation where large numbers (literally thousands) of pigeon fanciers blood samples have provided a research data base that is ongoing and is not to be found, in the terms of size, quantity and quality, anywhere else in the world.

The pigeon fraternity have initiated the Research Trust, financed it and given of their very blood to make it a success. This underlines the pigeon fanciers sense of responsibility, generosity and care and concern for his fellow pigeon fanciers and the public at large by ensuring that all of society benefits from their research.

The Research Team and research of lung allergy in general are greatly indebted to the vision and efforts of pigeon fanciers. There is no other group of lovers of pets/animals on land, sea or air anywhere in the world who have created and financed such a research activity for their members and the public.

The team totally endorse this "Save Our Sport" initiative.

**HON SECRETARY
TREASURER
& TRUSTEE**

W.B. Johnston, CAF.C.C.A.

**MEDICAL ADVISER
Dr Gavin Boyd B. Sc(hons)
M.D. (hons) FRCP (Glas)**

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