

# Sonny Peace

## Wagga Wagga – NSW

Loft report by  
Barry Trewin

On my recent trip to Wagga Wagga I was able to catch up with Sonny Peace. Sonny was the club aggregate winner for the 2002 season. I thank John Clay for arranging time to visit with Sonny. Sonny lives right along side the river in Wagga Wagga and he has no end to the predators, which thrive in this environment.

Sonny started in racing pigeons back in 1963. He has had a break from the birds which saw him involved in the horse trotting industry, until about 3 years ago when he retired. One day a stray bird landed near the canary cage and the bug was back. His first year back he has flown with new bloodlines, such as Janssens, Busschaerts, Delbars (just introduced) and Fred Burtons, Appleby's and Peddies, he also had some Goodgers. Previously he had flown well with Jack Handley's birds.

All his birds are fed the same mix of grain, stockies and race birds. The mix consists of 2 measures peas, 1 measure maize, 2 measure wheat, ½ measure milo, ½ measure safflower.

Sonny maintains 40 pairs of stock birds and will cut down to his preferred 20 pairs assessing the stock birds on performance of their youngsters. He believes in pairing the best to the best. One pair - out of the old 290 cock (all old long distance blood) produced 3 winners this year. He has around 140 birds in his race team and only has a very few old birds to race each year. All his birds are fed twice a day and they are given as much as they want. The birds are fed heavily in the morning, but he still measures out the grain mix.

He gives his birds apple cider vinegar - 3 mls to 1 ltr, twice per week, which he believes has been excellent for the birds. For any canker related problem he uses flageel, medicating the individual birds.

Sonny's lofts are the old horse stables converted into his lofts. They were well ventilated, with sand floors, and he cleaned each day. He uses an open door trapping system (fly-in), and has never had any problems trapping his birds, he said "they always come straight in". He weans his birds when they are fully feathered and straight away the next day he opens the door to the loft and allows them to go out on their own accord. Once he has his birds in the air working for 40 mins, the training begins. 4 X 5 klms, before moving them to 10 klms and then 20 klms. He likes to have about 25 tosses before the season starts. Once racing starts he tosses every second week from 50 klms, he does some group tossing, but prefers to train his birds on their own.

He stated that his biggest disappointment in the sport so far was in the Nockatunga Open National in 2000. The Wagga Wagga club paid their entry fees and sent their birds with the Victorian birds. Although he had the fastest bird was deemed to be in the NSW section, even though they were released with the Victorian birds, so unfortunately he received no trophy or recognition for the race. This years high light was winning the club aggregate, but he enjoys all the races throughout the season.

