

Bob & Casey Doherty

Cessnock – NSW

Loft report by
Barry Trewin



Bob and Casey are a father and son partnership, which I visited on the Friday afternoon upon arriving in Cessnock for my week long stay with Trevor and Rhonda Barker. We were greeted at the gate and invited in for a cool drink and a discussion on varying pigeon topics. Bob and Casey won the Overall Club Aggregate this year in the Cessnock Club. Cessnock is located in the Hunter Valley region of NSW, which is approx. 1 ½ hours north of Sydney. There are approx. 22 members in the Club and is affiliated with the Newcastle & Coalfields Federation. The area is surrounded by the Watagan Ranges, which are very heavily timbered. The area where these guys fly their birds must be seen to be believed!

They normally only keep 10 pairs of stock consisting of his own Pied Blood and some Appleby's, but this year he will try some imports from Bill Eastcott in Sydney. The birds I mainly viewed were Dordins and Bob stated that they would try them for 12 months and compare them against his own birds. The Pied Blood were a very nice to type bird and very well presented and the Appleby's were the Black Prince line. These birds have been an excellent cross. Bob's father William Doherty developed the family of birds, which they now continue to race and Bob and Casey also thanked Bert Vidler from Sydney for all his assistance over the years.

They normally race around 80 birds. They toss 3 times a week from no more than 30 Klm's and feed and water the race birds twice a day. They prefer racing up to 400 miles, but this year continued and flew the distance races with success. They prefer the 1day racing, but also this year introduced some of Alan Bailey's birds into the lofts, mainly Wickhams, Alan encouraged them to fly further! Bob thanked Alan and his father Ray for their support and assistance since moving to the area a few years ago. It was one of Alan's birds, which won the bird of the year in the Cessnock Club. They also believe in culling birds, which are late comers to the lofts, this way they will only be keeping their better birds. Bob stated that if more people used Dr Colin Walker everyone would be better off, a lot of people don't medicate and when our birds are together in the race baskets that's how things are spread. When people talk about keeping their birds in deep litter they only mean deep shit! You cannot race competitively doing this and it also leads to disease within these lofts, which can be spread to other birds in race baskets.

The lofts were well suited to the racing and the number of birds the guys maintain. There was ample perching and ventilation. One section had larger box perches where the birds could hide themselves and feel very safe and secure in their home loft with the trapping section in the middle and another section to the right with normal box perches. They like their birds very tame and insist if they have a bird which is wild, it is removed from the loft as it will only upset the other birds. The hens I saw were paired to them and would show themselves at the front of the loft trying to get to Bob and Casey.

The birds are fed a high carbo mix consisting of a lot of wheat. Bob also commented that he felt when birds are transported for longer races if they fed the birds on the transporter just wheat and milo instead of heavy (protein) mixes, which only weigh the birds down, they would get better returns as the birds can digest these grains quicker. The birds must also be given ample water, as they can dehydrate very quickly.

The new conveyor for the NCF, Peter and Debbie Fields do a magnificent job, they have been a great improvement! They take of the birds, provide photos of the releases and full written reports. The birds are watered on the journey to reduce dehydration. They only started this year and our birds are no longer returning gulping down water. People do not realise how dehydrated birds become in the transporters and if they are not given water, your birds will be finished before they start.

Bob & Casey's thoughts:

- Proper and regular use of medication is now vital for a competitive racing team.
- Cleanliness of the lofts is a high priority.
- Poor quality grain leads to poor racing performance.
- Give the birds fresh clean water twice a day.

Main results in 2002:

Winner 1st Round Point Score

Winner 2nd Round Point Score

Overall Club Aggregate Winner

Bird of the Year

1/6 Port Maquarie – 2nd Club

15/6 Coffs Harbour – 2nd Club

29/6 Yamba – 1st Club 10th Fed

6/7 Old Bar – 1st Club 10th Fed

10/8 Yamba – 1st Club

24/8 Byron Bay – 1st Club 1st Fed

31/8 Byron Bay – 1st Club 5th Fed

14/9 Deception Bay – 3rd Club 10th Fed

15/9 Deception Bay – 2nd Club 2nd 5 Bird National

22/9 Tin Can Bay – 1st Club 2nd Fed

Main results in 2001

12/5 Eastern Creek – 2nd Club

19/5 Bathurst - 1st Club 10th Fed

2/6 Cowra – 1st Club

23/6 Eastern Creek – 1st Club 1st Combine

28/7 Wyalong Raffle Ring Race– 2nd

11/8 Rankin Springs – 2nd Club 5th Combine 5th Fed

11/8 Young Bird Derby – 2nd

Winner of First Round Point Score

