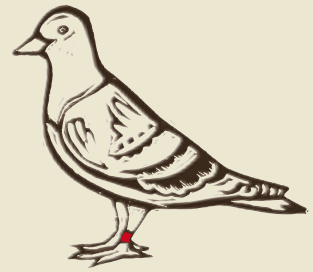


# PIGEON FACT SHEET



- Race pigeons have evolved and been specially bred over hundreds of years in a similar fashion to horses and dogs.
- Champion race birds have a pedigree of performance that can span decades (the same as horses).
- Birds are now being bred for specific speeds and distances - sprinters (up to 300kms), middle distance (300-600kms) and long distance (700-1200kms).
- The birds can sprint up to 140km/hour, but generally have a race speed of 70-100km/hour, depending on the wind and other weather conditions.
- Most fanciers will keep 50 -100 birds to race each year and send 10-25 to the race.
- The race program covers about 20 weeks, starting in May (summer is too hot in Australia).
- Racing starts at distances of 70-100 km and there are normally a couple of races from each race point. The distance steps-up by 50-100kms for each race point.
- Two eggs are laid in each nest, a pigeon pair. Some three to four pairs are bred off each set of parents. Dad sits on the eggs during the day, Mum at night and both parents feed and raise the young.
- The life span of pigeons is up to 20-25 years.
- Pigeons are homing birds that race home. That is what they are trained to do and are bred for.
- The boomerang system refers to the birds being homed to a mobile loft. The loft is moved a small distance, the birds can still recognise it from the air and will return to it. They never race from the loft back to the loft like a boomerang. They are always taken away and will return.
- In the war times they used mobile lofts. As the battle fronts moved so did the lofts for the birds to return to after being released from the front line.
- Research indicates that maybe pigeons don't follow a direct line but may follow geographic features (hills and valleys) and even major roads.
- The predation of peregrine falcons is a significant danger.
- Pigeons have been imported into Australia since before 1900. Importation was stopped for 40 years from the 1950's. But now there are imports allowed after passing through Australian Quarantine Inspection.
- Some birds can fetch \$20,000 to \$100,000 or more.
- There are pigeon racing federations in all States and Territories. The South Coast Federation has been in existence since 1923.

