

# SEXING BY COLOR

Unlike chickens, which can be sexed upon hatching, in most cases the sex of pigeons cannot be determined with certainty until they begin to mature.

Most experienced fanciers make few mistakes when sexing their young birds, but even the most able fail in their diagnosis, and discover they have been racing a hen as a cock, or vice-versa, before the racing season has ended.

When Dr. Nuttall of England formulated his color chart many years ago, he claimed that a true red-colored female would not produce a blue-colored male.

The true red color is just mealy, red checker, peds in both, and red grizzles — the peculiar brick reds should be discounted.

The color of the male to which the true red female is mated makes no difference — all the blue offspring are hens. When the male is blue all the red produced are cocks. However, when both parent birds are red, blue and red-colored hens will result.

In the main, Dr. Nuttall's chart has stood the test of time, the only variation perhaps is that on the rarest of occasions a red female has eventuated from the blue male to red female pairing.

The novice can take it for certain that every blue squeaker bred from a red-colored hen is a female.

He can also be assured that 99 p.c. of reds, mealties, peds in both, and red grizzles which have black flecks in the tail and wing feathers are cocks. Hens which carry the black splashes are very rare.

On the other hand, many red colored males are not black flecked; it is a mistake to classify those without the splashes as hens.

When sexing by color, the only certainty is that all blue offspring from red-colored females are hens.

Another finding by Dr. Nuttall concerns color, but it is not related to sex. When two bars are paired together, mealy to mealy, blue bar to blue bar, or mealy to blue bar, all those produced are bars. Checkers will never result.

Yet bars often result from checker to checker matings.

If the beginner keeps proper records, he will find much to interest him in his observations on color during the breeding season.

## NUTRITION

David Cardin PhD, manager of the game bird and pigeon research division, Ralston Purina, USA, provided some interesting information on nutrition when he addressed the recent convention of the American Pigeon Fanciers Council.

In an article published by the American Racing Pigeon News Dr. Cardin gave some of

## Pigeon Notes

By Vin Blanden

his findings resulting from many years of research in developing the best possible feeds for pigeons.

Dr. Cardin writes: "The object of formulating any pigeon diet is to combine ingredients in a form that will supply all the nutrients that the pigeon requires. No one ingredient contains all the required nutrients.

"For instance, corn (maize) is an excellent source of energy, but it is deficient in vitamin B-12. Soybean meal is commonly used as a good source of protein, but it is deficient in one or more critical amino acids.

"Time and again a man will mix his own feed, using ingredients with high protein and energy levels, and not realize this diet is deficient in some nutrient.

"In many cases the missing factor is proper amino acid balance."

Dr. Cardin added that the chance of arriving at the optimum amino acid balance by mixing a high protein ration of grains was like playing Russian roulette, with five of a pistol's six cylinders containing a bullet and five out of six times get killed.

He continued: "To make the most beneficial diet, you must not only know the requirements of the pigeon, but you must know the chemical and nutritional make-up of the ingredients you are missing.

"Many natural feedstuffs must be processed if the best nutrition is to be obtained.

"In our research tests we have compared balanced mixtures of grains to complete rations (pellets) in many, many cases. Invariably, we are able to produce more eggs, better hatchability, better feathering and a uniformly better bird with a complete ration than with a mixture of grains. These good results come from supplying the pigeon with research proven feeds that fulfill his nutritional requirements."

## NEW CLUB

The Marion Associated Homing Club will be formed soon.

Officers will be elected at the inaugural meeting to be held in the Toc H hall, Oaklands railway station on Wednesday, January 26, at 8 p.m.

Owners interested in joining the SAHPA can obtain further particulars from J. Aldritt, 9 Celtic avenue, Clovely Park (phone 764550).