

Hawks Are Protected

Fanciers in SA are reminded that it is an offence to destroy any variety of hawk other than the Goshawk and the Wedgetail Eagle.

The greatest menace to pigeon racing, the Peregrine Falcon, has enjoyed this protection for many years, and back in the war years a special permit was granted to permit the shooting of the Peregrines which were constantly attacking Army Signals pigeons operating at a hills station near Adelaide.

At one time, racing pigeon bodies in NSW paid a cash bounty of \$1 a head in order to keep the Peregrine under control, but the Peregrine is now on the protected list in that State.

Apart from the Peregrine and the Black Falcon, which are a proven menace, the other two falcon varieties, the Little Falcon and the Grey Falcon do not present much of a problem.

Because of its size, the Little Falcon is almost harmless and the Grey Falcon is likewise because of its rarity.

The Goshawk takes most of its prey on the ground and is not responsible for losses on race days, but it can be a menace around the home area.

It is noted for its furtive raids on backyard lofts where it sometimes pounces suddenly on its prey from the cover of a nearby bush or tree. It will even enter the loft in search of a victim.

It also has a great liking for chickens, and perhaps it remains unprotected because of the havoc it creates around the poultry farms.

The various species of kites and kestrels are an asset to the community and pigeon owners should realise that apart from it being unlawful, the shooting of these hawks serves no useful purpose.

Their diet consists mainly of rodents and insects with perhaps a sparrow or two here and there. The destruction of these useful birds is a thoughtless and wanton act.

While we do not know for certain how much blame for our losses of pigeons, if any can be given to radar, TV and

other electrical advances in science, we do know that the falcon can be blamed for a lot. Evidence of this has been gained by on-the-spot observations made of falcon attack at release points and the numbers of metal rings found in and around various Peregrine nests.

There is no doubt that the falcon is a natural enemy of the pigeon and it is evident that many accept it as a hazard. However, it is mainly a hazard because we release our birds where it abounds and sold races where the line of flight forces the pigeon to fly over falcon territory.

Because of its protection and because no other bird can destroy it, the falcon is multiplying year after year.

Because of terrain and the abundance or scarcity of wild birdlife, the falcon is more numerous in some areas than in others.

The time must come when more consideration will have to be given to the selection of racepoints if maximum safety from falcon attack is to be afforded our pigeons.

LIFE MEMBER

Messrs G. H. Downes and A. W. H. Pearce were made life members of the SA Homing Pigeon Association last week.

Both have contributed much to the association during their participation in the sport.

As a member of the SAHPA clock committee for about 20 years, Mr. Downes's assistance to pigeon racing has been very valuable in many ways.

Apart from his work on the clock committee, he has made his property available to the East Suburban Club.

The clubroom has stood on Mr. Downes's block, rent-free, for the past 25 years.

Winner of the SAHPA aggregate twice, he is also one of only two owners to win three major association events in the one year.

Mr. Downes's family of pigeons, based mainly on the Baker, Jurion, Harrison and Logan strains, has been responsible for many fine successes for others over the years.

Mr. Pearce, present chairman of the Association's clock committee, has also proved to be a valuable asset to the sport.

Pigeon Notes By Vin Blanden

He has given his services freely and willingly for many years to any project likely to further the interests of pigeon racing.

It is pleasing to note that the contributions of Mr. Downes and Mr. Pearce have been duly recognised.

EDITOR DIES

Vincent D. Snyder, publisher-editor of "The American Racing Pigeon News" died recently.

In a letter just received Mrs. Snyder advised that her husband died of a heart condition on February 21.

Mrs. Snyder was co-publisher-editor with Mr. Snyder, and writes that she intends to keep the "News" in print.

Now in its 31st year of publication, "The A.R.P.N." is one of the finest of its kind in the world.

If its production was to end, it would be sadly missed by all American fanciers and many owners overseas.

Devoted entirely to pigeon racing, its loss would be a serious one to the sport in the United States.

New members of the association are advised that it is compulsory to vaccinate their pigeons each year against pigeon pox.

The compulsory vaccination has been a part of the SAHPA rules for a number of years, and all club secretaries must provide a certificate stating that the rule has been adhered to before their club members pigeons will be accepted for association races.

The Vitesse club held its second series of races from Freeling, 30 miles, when 69 birds competed without loss.

The eleven bird one prize special was won by C. Kolenberg in 54 min. 15 sec., and the one prize for every four birds entered (58 birds) event went to J. Laatum (52 min. 35 sec.).

L. Duits (53 min. 40 sec.) and L. Falkai (53 min. 47 sec.).