

RACING IN SYDNEY

Pigeon racing in Sydney is much stronger than in Adelaide. Two of its five federations are comparable in size with the SA Homing Pigeon Association.

The Central Cumberland Federation is probably the strongest with a membership of about 400, while the National Racing Pigeon Association is about 360 strong.

The three other bodies in the Sydney area are the Southern Federation (100), Federated Racing Pigeon (140), and the Western Federation which has about 100 owners competing.

This makes a total of about 1,200 owners racing to the Sydney area against Adelaide's 700, which also includes juniors.

Two other large groups also operate outside of the Sydney boundary, one at Newcastle which is some 48 air-miles away, and the other, the South Coast Federation with its headquarters at Wollongong, about 36 air-miles from Sydney.

About 200 owners race into Newcastle and 120 to Wollongong.

The secretary-treasurer of the Cumberland group (Mr. E. A. Stevens) said that his federation held 25 races this year. Six early events were conducted at the end of April and were followed by another programme of 19, of which six were major Federation events.

The Cumberland Federation consists of twelve clubs grouped inside of a radius of about 10 miles, and its longest race this year was flown from Murray Bridge, 680 miles.

The total of 487 birds, representing 97 owners, competed from Murray Bridge for 15 birds in racetime.

Released at 6 a.m. on the Saturday, the winner was clocked at 9.44 a.m. on Sunday.

The South Coast Federation had 300 birds released with the Cumberland entry at Murray Bridge and the winner was clocked at Wollongong at 8.6 a.m. second day.

The second bird was timed at 10.7 a.m.

The Newcastle body flew its longest race from Rockhampton (700), and homed three in the day, 6.57 p.m., 7.30 and 8.40 p.m., and all places were filled by 9 a.m. second day.

After the six early races were completed the Cumberland schedule was made of two events from Maraulan (80 miles), two from 114 miles, two from Yass Junction (156), two from Cootamundra (180), three from Narrandera (246), three from Carrathool (320), three from Hay (360), one from Mildura (520) and one from Murray Bridge (680 miles).

The Cumberland programme does not cater for as many long races as the SAHPA schedule. Its 19-race series covered about 5,040 miles in all while the SAHPA programme of 23 races this year covered about 8,200 miles.

The SAHPA's East-West route schedule (12 races including Kelsoe) amounted to 4,990 miles, and the South-East programme of 11 races covered 3,235 miles.

Cumberland's six major races, when its 12 clubs combine together as SAHPA events, comprise of three open and three limit races.

The three open races consisted of one from 114 miles, one from Mildura, 520 miles, and one from Murray Bridge, 680 miles.

The three limit races are one 5-bird young bird derby, one 5-bird old bird derby, and one 2-bird in which both birds must be clocked.

Pigeons for three of the big events are hampered in Granville Showgrounds.

The South Coast Federation at Wollongong held an interesting race this year when 500 birds were air-freighted to Launceston (Tas.) on the Friday for a Saturday release.

The distance is 530 miles with the first 200 miles over water.

Because of bad weather conditions the birds were held over until Wednesday when 58 of the 500 made home in the day.

Latest report was that at least 400 of the contestants returned to give the most successful result of about 80 p.c. home.

The South Coast Federation, which owns its own trailer, holds a

Pigeon Notes By Vin Blanden

lot of its races in which the contestants are carried to the release point by road.

The Cumberland Federation, using the old-style cane baskets, uses rail transport for all of its races.

Mr. Stevens said that the falcon presents no problems, and pointed out that one well-known ornithologist in Sydney knows of only three Peregrine nests in the whole of the county of Cumberland area.

Mr. Stevens believes that the falcon menace is more prevalent along the Murray Valley, and considers that Sydney pigeons meet with little interference on the Sydney side of the Blue Mountains.

While a few may frequent the Katoomba, Goulburn and Cootamundra areas, also Narrandera, he considers the falcon is far more numerous nearer SA.

Although the Cumberland Federation is as large as the SAHPA, it does not own its own headquarters as does the SA Association.

Quite a few of its meetings are held in the Merrylands Clubroom (about the size of the average clubroom here), but in future it is likely that a room will be hired for meeting purposes in Granville showgrounds.

Continental Club

The Vitesse Racing Pigeon Club founded on the Dutch system was formed recently.

The secretary of the new body which has no boundaries, is Mr. L. Duits.

Owners interested in the continental idea are invited to attend the next meeting on November 26, 7.30 p.m. at 6 Dune-din avenue, Hillcrest.

Solomontown

The Solomontown club will hold its annual presentation fixture at Port Pirie next Saturday night.