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# Newcastle Disease Here

*Newcastle disease is now in Australia and its impact on the pigeon world could be most resounding in more ways than one.*

Apart from the most important factor of all, the health and welfare of our birds, certain restrictions could follow which would influence race programmes and the movements of pigeons in general.

Restrictions already imposed prevent the export of pigeons from SA into Tasmania and WA—birds can still be consigned to Victoria, NSW and Queensland.

There is little doubt that the wise precautions taken by the Australian Government's poultry authorities in prohibiting the importation of poultry and pigeons from overseas, was responsible for keeping Australia free of the disease for so many years.

It has been reported that all forms or varieties of birdlife are potential victims of the disease.

## ENORMOUS TASK

If this is so it could be possible that the disease was introduced into Australia by migratory birds which visit here from season to season.

The authorities' task in confining it to certain States by means of import and export restrictions may be an enormous one as very little, if any measure of control can be taken against the border-hopping native birds.

It is up to all keepers of pigeons to play their part in the effort to keep the disease under control by complying with the restrictions.

We have contributed greatly in maintaining the general health of our birds with the measures imposed by the

SAHPA in its struggle against pigeon pox.

The compulsory use of the vaccine has kept pox out of the lofts of association members.

One recent press report on the outbreak of Newcastle disease in Australia stated that some success had been gained by poultrymen overseas with vaccine made for the purpose.

If the disease can be controlled in poultry, it is likely that the use of a similar vaccine will provide protection for pigeons.

Enquiries should be made without delay to the proper authorities for advice on the matter.

If a pigeon vaccine is available, its source of supply should be noted so that stocks can be obtained immediately vaccination is considered necessary.

Another recent restriction imposed by the Department of Agriculture concerns peaweil, and certain regulations to prevent the spread of the pest have been adopted.

The SAHPA took the necessary steps in compliance with the restrictions immediately notice of the regulations was received.

Arrangements are now well in hand to ensure that the Department's instructions are carried out.

## EAT ACORNS

Pigeons relish nothing more than a change of diet, once they really become used to the strange food, and on a recent visit to a hill's fancier's loft, it was noted that the preference for acorns was strong with the batch which were given the freedom of the open loft.

The loft stands in the shade of several old English oak trees, and due to the birds' liking for acorns, the ground was kept comparatively clean of the fallen fruit.

Their hunger completely satisfied by the newly-found food, many of the birds fail to eat the usual mixture of field peas and wheat when they re-enter the loft at evening.

In comparison with peas and wheat, the size of the acorn is enormous, but the birds swallow the fruit whole after pecking off the knobby end at which

## Pigeon Notes By Vin Blanden

the fruit is attached to the tree.

Pigeons which frequent the city buildings and unfed, are forced to fend for themselves, will eat almost anything at all to survive.

They can be seen in hundreds on newly ploughed paddocks busily eating sour sob bulba and often survive on artichoke seed, star thistle seed, and many varieties of smaller grass seeds which are available at the time.

While they serve some useful purpose in this respect, there are times when they become a menace to the farmer and market gardener.

One gardener used to prepare his ground for an ensuing crop by sowing tic beans and ploughing the resultant growth back into the ground.

One year more than half of his beans were eaten by the "paddockers" before they had the chance to germinate.

Farmers, too experience a lot of trouble at wheat, barley, oat and pea sowing time.

It was noticed that acorn eaters were a real batch and enjoying a normal moult.

It will be of interest to know that acorns provide about 100 digestible calories per ounce and peas and wheat 90 and 80 calories respectively.

## JUNIOR RACES

Junior bodies interested the Hampstead junior club idea to hold events in combination with other junior clubs are advised to contact Richard Müller, 27 Koolaman street, Josita (63 2286) for further information.

The Oaklands Club will hold a cabaret in aid of club funds at The Castle Hotel, South rd, Edwinstown next Saturday at 8 p.m.