



John Clements
Euro
Pigeon

A Statistical Analysis of a Long Distance pigeon race

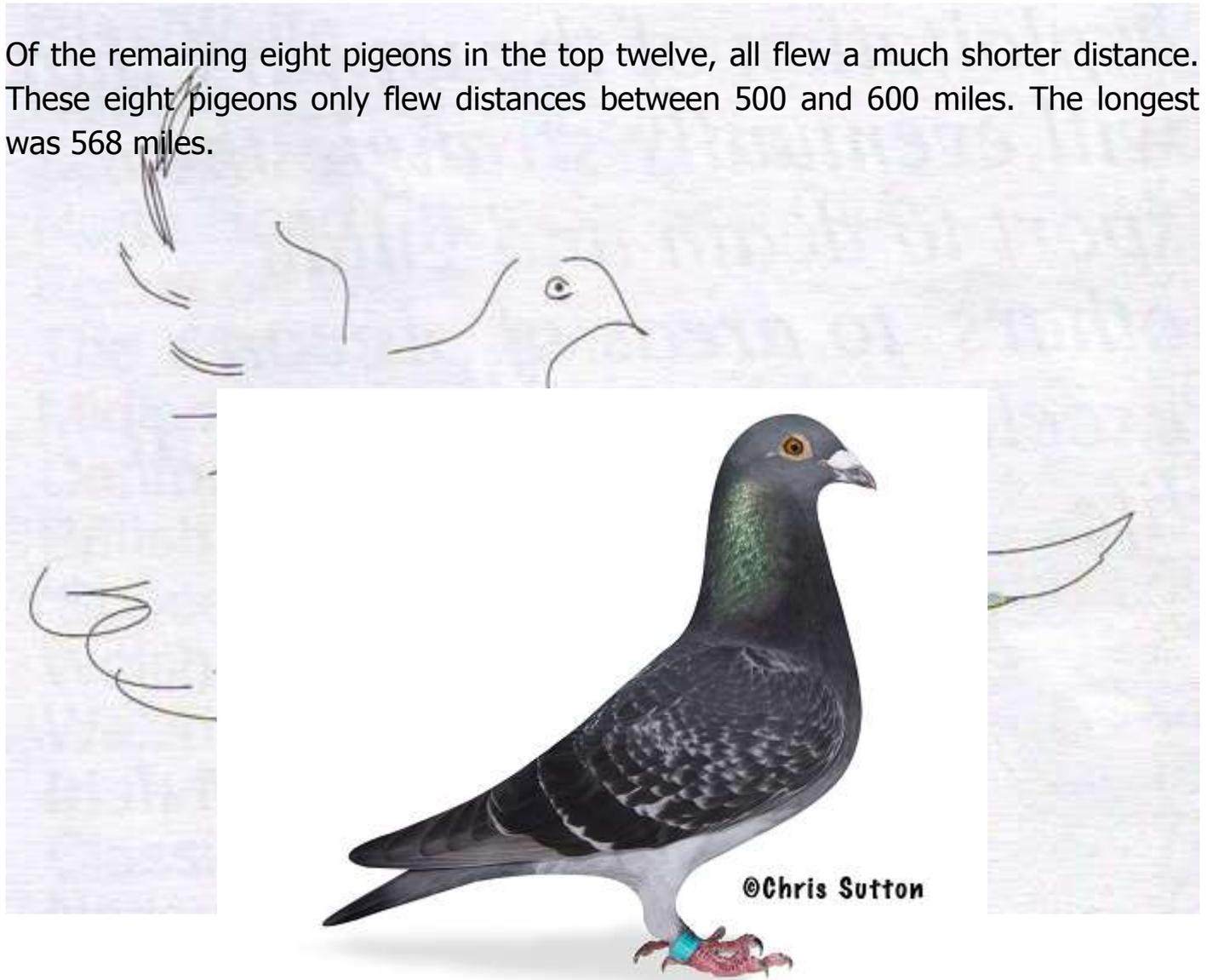
Modern pigeon racing has become a consumer sport and modern fanciers have become consumers. Consumer thinking relies on creating names. These names become so familiar we tend to buy without thinking. Names become brands. A market of buyers whose minds have been trained to buy by brand is a market governed more by fashion than thought.

This is why any intellectual analysis of pigeon racing based on what actually happens in races is not thought to be a good. Many clever purchases are completed with market brands in mind. Racing statistics or racing information is hardly ever taken into account. Winners are taken into account but difficulty is not. The strain name is taken into account but performance is not.

The 2013 Tarbes National

Take for instance the Tarbes National of 2013. This was a hard and difficult race where pigeon quality counted above all else and where every pigeon in the race was obliged to have at least one night out. Of the first twelve pigeons four of them (including the winner) were flying over 700 miles. That is four of the first twelve pigeons were 700 millers. Of these four pigeons, three of them were of home created families not of recent imports.

Of the remaining eight pigeons in the top twelve, all flew a much shorter distance. These eight pigeons only flew distances between 500 and 600 miles. The longest was 568 miles.



Cheq Cock belonging to B and P Winter Howden
1st Section K, 1st Open NFC Tarbes 2013 - 728 miles

Taking time to study

If we take time to study this result (which is freely available on the NFC Website) this fact can be verified. The question is why is there such a big gap in distance flown and why did not a single pigeon flying a distance between 568 and 718 miles get into the top twelve in the result? We can justifiably ask further questions and come to further conclusions. We can ask about the sex of the four 700 milers in the top twelve – We can ask were the four 700 mile pigeons superior to all the 600 mile pigeons in the race and if so why? We can also ask - did the extra distance give advantage or did the extra distance handicap these pigeons?



Dark Cheq Cock belonging to Brian Denney York
2nd Section K, 6th open NFC Tarbes 2013 – 748 miles

There are many more questions we can ask – What were the ages of the four 700 mile pigeons or even more searching questions such as how many of the eight 500 to 600 milers were relatively old pigeons and how many were two year olds? We can speculate if two year old pigeons exposed at this age to a hard fly will appear again next year and do it again?

We cannot answer the last question until 2014 – We can all make our minds about this beforehand but only time will tell if we are right.

Conclusion

My basic conclusion is that the four 700 mile pigeons were indeed of better quality and that the extra distance did not give them advantage. In fact it may have gone against them.

Because the UK has boxed itself into a commercial corner where we no longer produce our own strains the UK sport is becoming worse in the quality of the pigeons we produce. This 2013 Tarbes race was a rare exception. All top 700 mile UK pigeons are an exception. Those who organise events should do all in their power to publicise pigeons of this type for they represent the best of Britain and a type of pigeon Continental Europe cannot produce.

The four 700 mile pigeons that did get into the top twelve in the open result were

1. B and P Winter Howden 1st Open
2. B Denney York 6th Open
3. R and D Brindle Blackburn 9th Open
4. M/M N Bush Scunthorpe 12th Open.

As you can see their locations and distances these four pigeons were racing to lofts were spread across the country from East to West. This fact means undue advantage or gain to any one particular location did not take place.

Simply put these pigeons were just good brave fit and capable pigeons. They are the best we in the UK can produce. Flying 700 miles is never easy but in this case it required something extra special and these pigeons proved it.



**The Brindle Family of Blackburn holding their Blue Hen
1st Section L, 9th Open NFC Tarbes 2013 – 736 miles**

So far, the details of how the 700 milers outperformed all the 600 milers in the race, has largely gone unnoticed by officials. The big trouble with the modern sport is it rests on the unfortunate fact that National competition is seen as being not very commercially clever.

What we are really doing by adopting this way of thinking is encouraging fanciers to avoid races where pigeons are physically tested to their limit so only the best survive.

We can only be glad that the four fanciers who raced these 700-mile pigeons did not think in this way.

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