

North American Old Bird Record

18 hours 5 minutes - June 21, 1992

Michael J. Beat

Joe Kelley has been coming up from San Diego for several years now. I must extend my greatest thanks to a devoted Tippler enthusiast who has been full of determination. In the past, he seems to come up and time either Rex Leon or myself whenever we have a good team that appears to have a chance at doing well. However, it seems that Joe never gets to see the real good times, as he's always quick to disqualify us whenever he can. Last fall he got me for the team being out of sight over the limit. Yet the team of five birds did continue and ended up flying into the dark on that day. But finally, his efforts paid off; Joe was well rewarded. This is how the day went:

Joe tried to get me to release the birds one hour before sunrise. I didn't want to do that because the FTA is still on a 1/2 hour before sunrise rule. I told him that I'd make up the time in the night flying at the end of the day. The last feed, which consisted of only canary, was given about 10:30 PM on Saturday 6/20/92. I had flown some young birds for Joe on Saturday and they had flown into the dark until 8:54 at which time we dropped them. On this night the sky was dark but we could spot them well. The temperatures throughout the day made us wonder if the Old birds would fair well. I gave the team a drink and went to bed.

At 4:30 AM, Joe got me stirred up and out of bed. I went to the loft and turned on the lights. I then placed the individual water bottles into each of the three kit boxes and watched them through the wire. Each bird eventually took a drink. I gave them each about 5 peas to stimulate their appetite if they were inclined to eat more. But they only gobbled up the peas and barely touched the canary

seed, which was still in their feed cups. I thought they were ready. Joe read each of the band numbers individually and then I turned off the lights. I held the kit in my hands for about 5 minutes while the birds adjusted their eyes to the darkness. There were clouds above; it was 100% overcast. When Joe said that 5:13 AM had been reached, I tossed the three at once directly straight up. They rose up together and then took off. Sunrise, as listed in the Los Angeles Times, was 5:43 AM. This would be my start for both the FTA and Flying Tippler Society of USA.

Throughout the day, the birds remained in sight the entire time. If anyone has seen Joe's zealous timing techniques,

you would see that he records sightings about every 15 to 30 minutes--sometimes more often. The birds flew very high all morning long. As the temperatures rose, I was anticipating that they would drop to a lower altitude. But they did not. The clouds were almost completely gone by 9:10 AM and the sun shone brightly. However, the birds did not

come down. They remained very high until late afternoon at which time they dropped to medium height. There never was a strong breeze but only a mild one. One very nice thing about their style was the fact that they never were apart from each other. They kitted superbly! About 6:00 PM they did come low a few times to "look" at the loft, but their tails were still tight and they never faltered or spread their tails. Early evening, they did set to raking but only short distances. As darkness fell, the birds stayed very close to the loft and remained directly overhead most all of the time. They flew medium height but would sometimes yo-yo to lower altitudes and higher altitudes. They flew very typical to their normal routine.



The night was better than Saturday for night flying. The birds were clearly seen the entire time making it enjoyable to sit in the driveway and watch them fly. It was quite apparent that these birds were going to fly well under these conditions so Joe and I quickly grabbed the record lists and started to calculate how much time I needed to break the 17:00 mark. With the birds doing well when the 17:00 mark was hit we began to entertain thoughts of the United States record. We called Rex Leon and he told us over the phone that it was 17:18. But even when this was approached we could see that the birds were doing too well for just that. In fact, the cocks were clapping at the hen even this late. I could hear them make this sound from time to time. To me, I felt that the birds stilled had much energy. Soon thereafter we passed the North American record and we were ecstatic! Joe suggested that I drop them and take the record. I, however, felt that because the birds had not faltered in anyway, they should be allowed to continue until one of them shows signs of fatigue or the like. I was ready with a remote control switch to turn on the lights and two droppers in my hand, poised ready to go. The small hen began to lag behind the kit twice but always managed to catch up on the turns. I finally saw that one bird had separated and was not with the other two. At this time I did not hesitate for even a minute but informed Joe that it was time. I switched on the lights and released two droppers. I then released the rest of my dropping staff and began to pull the birds in. They behaved like in normal dropping patterns. I even told Joe which birds to expect first. It happened just so. The Red Bar Spread was first down and the small Light Print hen was last down. The birds preened themselves for a few minutes and then I trapped them all without difficulty. We then checked the band numbers. Surprisingly, the birds still had energy left in them. Between Joe and myself, there should have been at least one heart attack. I cannot express how truly excited I was and how pleased my birds have made me. The countless hours of night training have finally paid off.

About the team:

The three birds were made up of 2 cocks and 1 hen. They are all 1991 spring hatched birds. They have been flying very well and consistent in 1992. After the disqualification from the previous fall, I lost one of the team that I felt was the best bird I had ever raised (1053--Silver Bar). So then I decided to stock the birds until the spring of 1992 at which time I could then break training once again. I flew four birds throughout the spring, removing one bird before the spring competition. On that occasion, the birds flew over 15 hours and were dropped in the dark. I didn't do as well as anticipated. I put the fourth bird back into the kit as insurance and continued to train for the Long Day. I finally removed that same fourth bird two weeks before Long Day and flew the

three only the last few times out. They were fed malted barley in training with a small amount (less than 10%) of regular mix added because I had run out of wheat. (I usually add 1/3 wheat to barley whenever flying old birds or whenever flying over 5 hours.) In training, the birds regularly fly 8 to 10 hours with no special feed. I flew them every fourth day. I would put them into a releasing box, of which they were quite accustomed, and would call a neighbour from my place of work to put them out at the desired release time. They always flew into the dark for about 2 hours.



Michael Beat – North American Old Bird Record Holder

Some background on Michael's Flying Tipplers:



Foundation hen

This hen 3795 FTA 85 was raised by Rex Leon. She was out of a pair of Lovatts from Richard Seabridge. Father was a Red and the mother was a Grizzle #10. Although as a young bird she had flown 10 hours herself before Rex stocked her, she proved to be the most prolific producer of top flying birds in my entire loft. Her blood could be found in almost any of the pedigrees you would come across. She was related to two of the birds which

flew 18:05 but not related to the Red Bar Spread 1151 which was also in that 18:05 kit.



This hen (157 Red Bar) was raised by Richard Kehrer and as the mother to the Red Bar Spread that flew the 18:05 minutes. She was from a red bar "mealy" marked cock that Suki Bains had raised in his loft. One day while visiting the loft of Richard, I spied this young bird flying in his team of a color I had never seen in tippler before. This red bar hen was very shallow keeled and different in type to my Lovatts. However, every youngster she produced was not only of unusual color and character, but also a sound flyer.



This Cock, #950 FTS 1990 flew a good 16 hrs 03 min on the long day of 1991. This bird flew with its half-brother 935 & half-sister 1001 pictured below. All three were from the 3795 foundation hen also pictured on another page.

This Hen, #1001 FTS 1991 was a flying machine. Although the photo here is not a very good one, it shows how strange this bird came out. Rather "storkey" if you



ask me! She was only a young bird in 1991 when I needed a replacement for my 3 bird kit. I choose this hen because of her non-stop flying habits. She joined the team well. On that Long Day of 1991 (although she was only a young bird of which I didn't even know her gender) she flew with her full brother and half-brother proudly for the full term (16:03) including an hour in the dark. Of course, she was the one who gave out at the end of the fly, but for a young bird, flying with two older cocks, she was remarkable!

Michaels loft and set-up:

Clear and unobstructed area proved to be invaluable. The two "Blue Cypress" trees on the left may have been a little bit of a problem but they were in bounds for dropping (<100') if the birds should settle on their tops. However, they rarely did.



Actually, I always felt that the two trees proved to be more of a landmark for the team when they raked. The pole on the right was a floodlight. This is a pigeon loft that was built to my specifications as a Tippler Flyer. (I researched many designs from

experienced flyers first.) The large box on top was for holding youngsters when training. The trap consist of several swinging welded wire doors that were progressively opened and closed via strings. All wire was 1/2" x 1" galvanized welded wire.



Notice in the fly pen consisted of two doors for entry. The swinging door on the backside and the swinging door on the front side (which was held open for this photograph). This would enable birds to freely walk about the roof and enter the fly pen area. By having this "open door policy" the birds were never afraid to trap. Another wire-doorway on the left wall allowed birds to enter the loft. After the birds were enclosed into the fly pen, the door to the loft was opened and the birds driven or raced down inside for their tid-bits of malted barley. When the young birds were about 4 weeks old they can be placed into the fly pen situated on the roof. The birds could then observe their surroundings and learn their home.



Here was my 16:03 team. Notice that the birds are poised and ready to be released. By placing them in these kit boxes early morning, I was able to have a neighbour (and later I devised an automatic timer) to release the birds at a predetermined time so that a good 7- 10 hours of flying could be accomplished in a practice fly. That's the El Segundo bird in center box.



Pictured here are several of my droppers (Helmets in this case) in a "release box" that was used to release the Tippler Teams later afternoons during the day when I was at work. There were two ways of accomplishing this. At first I used a neighbour of whom I called from a telephone to release. Later I devised an automatic timer (with battery back-up) to automate the process. Later the release boxes were mounted on the wall. Bottom row shows door after being opened.



That's me dropping birds from my perch. This is where I stood when dropping the team. I coached them into the fly pen from this position and had all the wires to control the doors at my fingertips. This particular photo shows me holding out some grain, while a bird perches onto my hand to get at it. It's important not to let the birds be frightened of their trainer. After all, one spook up after the tippler team has landed could spell trouble if the team can't be coaxed down within the hour. The chair on the lower left sat directly in front of the young bird kit boxes. This is were I spent many hours sitting in front of the loft watching and observing, calculating & dreaming....**California Dreaming**--that is. *MJB*