

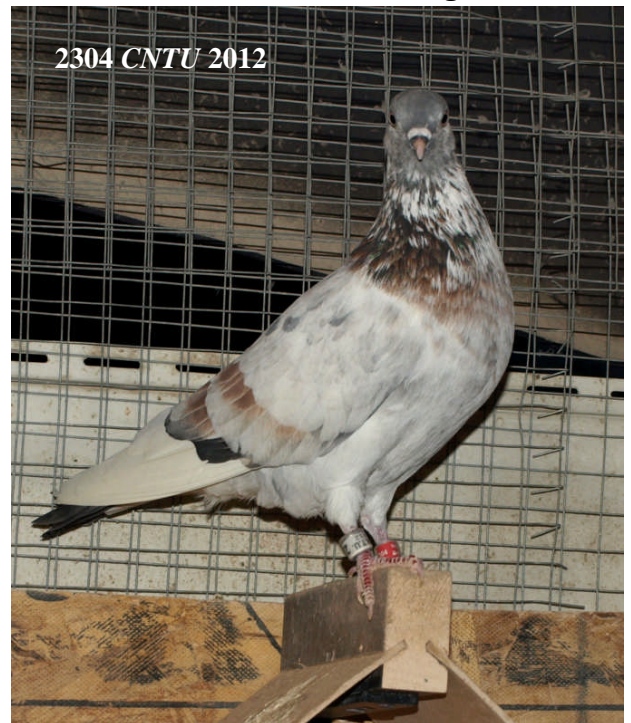
# Canadian and North American Old Bird Record

## Sikandar Bal - 18 hrs 19 mins

June 8, 2013

On the evening of June 7<sup>th</sup> 2013 I was getting ready for the big day ahead. I did not put any birds out for flying that day because if any bird not trapped that night could have created a problem for me the next day. I wanted to have smooth fly with no problems. So I fed all the birds around 7:30 pm and ignored the droppers, I felt sorry for them but that's the way it goes. Then Around 8:30 pm I fed my three cock birds, I fed them about 3 grams more then what I fed them for the previous fly when they flew 17:42. The print cock (12-2305) left one kind of particular seeds behind. I picked all the seeds in my hand and offered him from my hand and he showed his respect and loyalty to me and ate all the seeds, then at 9:30 pm I gave them boiled cold water with some B complex vitamin and turn off the lights. I made sure I unplugged the light which comes on at around 8:30 in the evening with the timer. I locked the loft and went inside the house. I set up 3 alarm clocks for 4:00 am and went to bed at 10:30 but couldn't sleep until around midnight. I woke up and looked at the alarm clock it was 2:58 am and couldn't go back to sleep.

Finally I got up at 3:45 am freshened up myself and went out to the loft, turned on the lights, offered the left over water from last night to the kit. They did not drink. I pulled them out from their individual kit boxes, put them into a wire mesh cage, set the cage on a table outside the loft and turned off the loft light. The time was 4:25 am now, I called my morning timer (Ujjal Grewal) on his mobile phone to find out if he was on the way to my place, he said he is about 2 minutes away from my place. I filled out the fly sheet and double checked the band numbers. Then I came to the front of my house and at the same time Ujjal showed up. I showed him the birds he checked the bands and check marked at the front of band numbers on the fly report. And I told him that I have a copy of the fly rules printed and kept in the binder on the table. So the time had come, it was 4:37 am, the official sunrise time was 5:37 am that day. I held all three birds in my hands (CNTU12-2304,12-2305 and 12-2319)and waited until the time changed from 4:37 to 4:38 am on my cellular phone and I threw them in the air one by one very quickly and very high from the grass land between my house and the loft. Then I recorded the release time on the fly report and showed it to Ujjal.



It was still dark but the birds were very comfortable and started to fly beautifully in a tight kit. At around 5 am I saw a marlin hawk passed above our heads but did not bother the kit. Then I went inside the house to make breakfast for us, we had breakfast with hot tea in the backyard while watching the kit flying. I also showed Ujjal my birds in the loft because it was his first visit at my place. We kept chatting about the birds all the time and kept looking at the kit every few minutes. Kit was very easy to spot all the time.

At around 11:00 am Mandeep Dhaliwal came to see birds flying, Ujjal had to leave 11:30 and my 2<sup>nd</sup> timer (Amangeet Gill) was little late. So I asked Mandeep if he can time me for a little while and Mandeep released Ujjal at 11:30 am. Amangeet showed up around 12:00 noon. Mandeep stayed for a while and one of co-worker friend also came to see the birds and then they both left and promised to come back later. The kit came low at around 2:30 pm and had to work hard to fly without the wind but in a few minutes they went up high and flying beautiful. Harpreet was also flying his kit but DQ by



hawk attack so Harpreet and his timer Nandu also came to see the birds flying. Then we had 2 more visitors Ghuman brothers. Then Mandeep and his friend came back and brought coffees for me and Amangeet. My brother also came to see us so there were five of us chatting and we had some good laughs. The birds kept flying with no problem.

In the evening at around 8:00 pm Oskar came, saw the birds flying nicely and said "oh they can break the record easily". I believe Oskar and Amangeet saw either a falcon or marlin around 9:30 pm while I was inside the house making tea for us. But I guess that was my lucky day. No attack. Rajesh Sharma called me to see if the birds are still flying because he had never seen the night flying and wanted to see it.

Well it had passed 10 pm and it was dark, birds were flying well. They split a few times but got together within a minute or two. Now we were 6 of us, myself, Oskar, Amangeet, Harpreet, Rajesh Sharma and Mandeep. Every one of us was so excited to break the NA record. I was a little nervous and stressed at the

same time. My target was 18:10. The night had settled and cleared from the clouds and we were able to see the birds very clearly. Time had slowed down, minutes felt very long that time, but slowly we passed the 18 hours and then 18:05. Birds were still strong. Another friend of mine Sukhdev called me and asked me if I have done the job already. I said I have but I still have to drop them and trap them. So I decided to throw for them at 18:18. Time was 10:56 pm now I was about to switch on the lights and Oskar asked me to hold of few seconds I waited few seconds and turned on the lights, my timer called the time at 10:57 pm.

I was very nervous at that moment, I released the droppers (5 pure white Turkish tumblers) but the droppers were very slow in the beginning. Oskar was worried because birds were not responding to the droppers. Harpreet was praying for me not to go through what Oskar has been through. I was very confident at that kit of birds that they will never let me down. Everyone was very quite and standing in the dark in the driveway watching the bird and telling me to move the droppers when they come above the loft. Finally I got the first bird (12-2304) down at 11:19 (18 hrs 41 mins) after few minutes I went up on the ladder and easily grabbed him from the loft roof. Then the 2<sup>nd</sup> one (12-2319) came down at 11:32 pm (18hrs 54 mins) and finally the 3<sup>rd</sup> one (12-2305) landed at 11:38 pm (19 hours). Again I went up and grabbed them one by one from the loft roof. The last bird was handed to Amangeet at 11:41 pm. Everyone shook hands with me and congratulated me. All of us were very excited for the achievement of the new NA record of 18:19....



I would like to thank to Oskar, Harpreet, Amangeet Gill, Mandeep Dhaliwal and Rajesh Sharma for being there till the end. And very special thanks to Ujjal Grewal to be there on time in the morning.

*Yours in the sport,*

**Sikandar Bal**

