

Most beautiful pigeons of Bangladesh

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Abstract: Pigeons are not aristocratic bird but its body shape, colorful feathers, ornamentation, care, mode of breeding; availability and cost seem to be aristocratic. From the very beginning of human welfare there existed a good relation between pigeon and human. At the dawn of human civilization pigeons are used as letter sending. Later on its tumbling is another great point for its peculiar life. These birds are more social, lovely and sophisticated and found most of the houses in rural and urban areas. Observed seven very nice pigeons are- western crowned pigeon, fantail, jacobin, frillback, pouter, trumpeter and swallow. Their breeding is not normal as local pigeon except fantail. Though the western crowned pigeon is wild but in captivity its breeding and maintenance is not bad. Though these pigeons are produced fewer squab but only 1-2 pair in a year is shown great economic value. Mentioned pigeons are chosen by peoples only on ornamental feathers except the enlarge crop of the pouter. Observed some pigeons are reared in aristocratic family of the famous people or for research affairs so that it can be easily considered as aristocratic ones. Jacobin pigeon was the best to queen Victoria. In America, trumpeter is one of the most popular breed to all. Moreover, emperor Akbar reared fantail and pouter pigeons with other pigeons and naturalist Charles Darwin established a pigeon farm in his yard for explain his book 'variation of plants and animals under domestication'. From the history the frillback is called Darwin pigeon. Pablo Picasso and Gypsy Rose Lee like fantail pigeon and Johnny Otis is famous for swallow pigeon collection. Out of seven breeds only crown pigeon and frillback evolved by natural selection and others from artificial selection by judicious breeding. Except fantails other six pigeons need to foster pigeons for its squab rising.

Keywords: Fancy pigeons, Beautiful pigeons, Crowned pigeons

1. Introduction

In Bangladesh perspective some fancy pigeons especially crowned pigeon, jacobin, fantail, pouter, swallow, bokhara trumpeter and frillback are reared as expensive items and it have aristocratic lifestyles. A study of Kabir in 2013 showed that the most costly breed is frillback and the grading of this pigeons was A⁺ in fantail and capuchine and pouter and frillback were A. Care of these pigeons is more sensitive than others and is accepted by everybody for nice feathers. But one great problem is that its breeding performance especially egg laying and from hatching to fledging is not good. For avoiding such situations some foster pigeons (tumblers) are used. For one pair beautiful pigeon minimum five pair fosters is needed. Though this is a problem to maintain those foster parents for rearing those fancy items but at present there is no way. Moreover, need to ensure the similar date for egg laying of foster pigeons. Otherwise, it not showed the regurgitatorial activity to the young. Above pigeons were

reared at the time of mughal dynasty. Emperor Akbar had 500 selected pigeons with fantail, jacobin and pouter but in Ain-I-Akbari which translated by Blochmann in 1873 there distinct breeds were only nine and other descriptions were not clear. That time all breeds are bred in court and its feed were grains. Its care was more sophisticated so that rearers are got more benefit from those breeds' squab. Lot of scientific and proper care is important than other breeds. In these pigeons for ornamental feathers which are the barriers for its normal breeding. So, trimming of the head-feather, leg and tail region is must in some cases. For the huge ornamentation of feathers those pigeons can't fly properly. So, it is easily maintained in a balcony or narrow space of the residence. Later on in America and England is performed huge research on fancy pigeons and produced lot of varieties with its proper identifying points. Mr. Levi in 1992 who was army personnel described in his book 'The Pigeon' deals various corners of the pigeons with aristocratic one and he divided the fancy pigeons into four major groups- fancy,

utility, racing and flying. Charles Robert Darwin in 1868 in 'The Variation of Animals and Plants under Domestication' mentioned the four major evolutionary groups of pigeons. He noted pouter in group 1; fantail, Indian frillback and jacobin in group 3 and swallow, trumpeter and English frillback in group 4.

2. Materials and Methods

Huge ornamentation of the feathers mainly in head-region some breeds can't see well. This is the main barrier for breeding performance. Secondly, the muffed is adverse for its walking and the excess tail-feather and its expansion are the cause of non-fertile eggs. So, need to trim those feathers mainly in breeding season of that beautiful pigeons.

Table 1. Following pigeons with their origin and selection

English Name	Origin	Type of selection
western crowned pigeon	Australia	Natural selection
fantail	India	Artificial selection
jacobin	India	Artificial selection
Cropper/pouter	India	Artificial selection
swallow	Germany	Artificial selection
bokhara/trumpeter	Turkey, mid Asia	Artificial selection
frillback	Asia Minor	Natural selection

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Western Crowned Pigeon

Types: Victorian, southern, western. **Characteristics:** This is large, blue-grey pigeon with blue crest and dark blue mask feathers around its eyes. This bird is very similar with Victoria and southern crowned pigeon. It is one of the largest and is considered most beautiful members of the pigeon family. Average length is 28 inches. **Breeding:** The female usually lays a single white egg (Plate 1).



Plate 1. Western Crowned Pigeon

3.2. Fantail

Types: Indian, English, American, Silky. **Characteristics:** *Indian Fantail:* It varies in size and tremulous of the neck. Mostly white and overall tail feather or rectrices are thirty plus. Muffed are medium in length or none. Generally Indian fantails are long and mostly crested. Some are black, tigered, spotted, patches and tip of the tail back with white bodied. Occasionally it appears small in size and wild type head. Tail

feathers are overlapping and not well arranged. Non-tremulous varieties are common. *English Fantail:* This is small in size and non-muffed. Its head is wild type and always attach to the tail with huge tremulous. Tail feathers are few but well arranged. It always stands on feet and in Bangladesh this breed is not available. White bodied with coloured tail is common in this breed. Beak is medium and head is small. In Scotland the fantails are considered only on carriage but in English this is expanded-tailed breed (McNeillie, 1993). *American Fantail:* American fantail resembles Indian fantail. Head touch with the tail and tail feathers are 40 or above. Not muffed and crested. Tail feathers are semicircular and well arranged. In Bangladesh some Indian Fantails or its crossed variety is sold as American Fantail. Normally this is large in size and legs are short; body not elongated and stands on tiptoe. *Silky fantail:* Probably the first picture and description of a silky Fantail was by John Moore in his Columbarium (1735). Linnaeus also described and named the silky pigeon in the 10th edition of his Systema Naturea (1758). He called it *Columba hispidus* (from the Latin word hispidus=rough, hairy). Charles Darwin (1868) was familiar with silky plumage in pigeons as well, and he knew it was a variety. The barbules of the feather do not lack hooks and elasticity is very poor. Silky pigeons can not fly because of their feather condition. **Breeding:** Sometimes this breed is called garden dove or peacock pigeon. In Bangladesh the production of fantail is not bad. Most of the cases rearer provides some vitamins for its proper breeding. Its squab producing is same as common pigeon. Its white colour and fan-like tail is attractive to the breeder so it gets more benefits for its caring. Maximum tail feathers are thirty plus and minimum were 28 and tail feathers are less expanded so that mating is as usual. Caudal and neck muscle shows contraction and expansion so that tremule of the neck and up-down of tail is happened. More expanded tailed birds need to cut 3-4 feathers from male and female. If male is large and tail feathers are not well arranged its mating is okay and eggs are being fertilized without cutting the tail feathers (Plate 2).



Plate 2. Fantail

3.3. Jacobin

Types: clean-legged, muffed. **Characteristics:** This is also called wig pigeon (McNeillie, 1993). Clean leg; slender and sleek; horizontal and 'L' shape between neck and tail; head is white until half to three-quarters of an inch; hood present;

elongated wing and tail. *Breeding*: Jacobins will be mated up around the end of July. Breeders will cut the hood and surrounding vent feathers to allow more efficient mating. The hood is so large that it can interfere with mating. Jacobin has too short beak have trouble to feed its young. Foster parents such as homers are usually used to hatch and raise jacobin chicks. Head is covered with long manes so predator animals get a chance to attack easily (Plate 3).



Plate 3. Jacobin

3.4. Cropper/Pouter

Types: brunner, English, pygmy, ghent, Norwich, old German, dewlap. *Characteristics*: When it flies a clapping sound happens by shifting the tail and wing and its upper oesophagus is large (McNeillie, 1993). Balloon and enlarge crop is elongated; staying in two legs like a man; much elongated body, wings and legs. *Breeding*: Foster parents are required for its proper output. While feeding special attention must be taken and include enough grits in their diet for proper digestion (Plate 4).



Plate 4. Cropper/Pouter

3.5. Swallow

Types: Nuremburg, Saxon, fairy, spotted, tiger. Swallows are of two types- fairy swallow and swallow proper. Fairy swallow is performs fly (McNeillie, 1993). *Characteristics*: These are mainly muffed and crested- known as 'color pigeons'; always similar to the white pigeon with colored wings; low standing pigeon; marking to the tern bird; edge of the mouth is red; leg is short; body shape is resemble wild rock pigeon. *Breeding*: In USA and Britain the muffed and crested varieties have gained the greatest popularity while in Germany clean-legged are more popular (Plate 5).



Plate 5. Swallow

3.6. Bokhara Rose/Russian Trumpeter

Types: English, Bokhara (Turkey), double crested, bernburg, Dresden, German, altenburg. *Characteristics*: Long and large-sized pigeon; nice rose-crest and muffs are fan-like measures 4-5 inches (McNeillie, 1993); coo voice; legs are vulture-hocked. *Breeding*: For proper breeding need to trim crest and leg feather (Plate 6).



Plate 6. Bokhara/Trumpeter

3.7. Frillback

Types: Indian and English (Darwin 1868). *Characteristics*: curled feather all over the flights and tail; the flights and tail are only slightly altered; eye gravelly-red; feather form conical hollow; light flight. *Breeding*: Its curly feathers are caused for autosomal dominant mutation. All the chicks from a cross of a double dominant frillback to another breed would produce slightly frilled offspring; recessive shell crest and feathered legs. A cross of a double dominant frillback to another breed would produce slightly frilled offspring (Plate 7).



Plate 7. Frillback

4. Conclusion

In Bangladesh among seven types of the most beautiful pigeons the fantails are the class one which is common in every rearers. Attractive body shape and feathers are easily snatched by people. Secondly the pouter is common. The demand on fantail pigeon is showed year-round and its breeding is as usual. All breeds have lower parental bondage so need to rear foster parents. If only 1-2 pair squab rises in a year that's enough for the benefit. Need to trimming some feathers from tail, head, neck and leg regions for proper vision as well as breeding. Only adult pair is reared separately and the squab with aged 5-6 months for selling need not trimming. All beautiful pigeons have elongated body, large size, expanded tail, great mane, frilled feathers, swollen crop, muffs and double rose-crested. These breeds are more or less pure because they have no similar breeds in Bangladesh. For huge profit and commercial view these ornamental pigeons are really different than others. Fanciers reared these pigeons in totally intensive system. Only crowned pigeon is reared in aviary. In future we should maintain extra care and more scientific study on these beautiful pigeons.

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(frillback). During the time of this study huge pet shops in Dhaka, Kataban were helpful for observing the characteristics of these pigeons with daily-routine in those shops and the rearers' residences. Plate 1 photograph is collected from google.com and 5, 6 and 7 from www.bikroy.com.

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