



Review article

LINE OF THINKING ON THE NUMERAL OF FANCY PIGEONS

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ABSTRACT

Fancy pigeons are huge in number in the world. This is very tough to come into a concrete solution on their specific numbers. From the wild rock-pigeon, all fancy pigeons have been evolved. Taxonomically, all fancy pigeons are breed but on the basis of the information of many books, pigeons could be classified into the following terms (race, strain, variety, type). The quantitative method ensured the actual number of the fancy pigeons of the world and qualitative survey showed their differentiating characteristics. Many old and new books, online supplements, articles, reports, and oral communication helped a lot for understanding the history and ensured 116 fancy pigeons in the world based on their physique, exceptional colour, voice, and behaviour. In this number of pigeons, races were 8, strain 1, breeds 57, varieties 45, and types 5 (Table 2; Figure 2). In addition, mentionable groups were consisted of eight— performing, structured, meat, coloured, feathered, trumpet, cropper, and wattled (Table 1). The highest members (44 pigeons) were in performing group (flying tumbler, show tumbler, racing, and flying) (Table 1; Figure 1). In fact, pigeon keepers did not bother about the scientific classification of their pigeons.

1. INTRODUCTION

Pigeons are enjoyable birds to everybody. Many pigeon breeders kept their pigeons for breeding purpose. Most of the time, pigeon keepers got exceptional colourful feathers of their birds and used to provide a local name for their proper identification, and in this way, they established many types of pigeons. In fact, any domestic breeds do not get the status of the scientific name according to the rules of taxonomy. In the field of selective breeding (Kabir, 2015a), breeds of fancy pigeons are increasing in the world day by day. That is why the exact number of fancy pigeons is not equal in all edited books. In addition, the same type of breeds has different names in some books. For instance, if a pigeon is mentioned as a breed, at the same time, other writer could say that is variety. The word variety is more appropriate in plant kingdom. It is defined that there will be some slight differences between or among organisms, so all fancy pigeons are a variety also.

Considering type, they will have some common characteristics in individuals, so all domestic pigeons cover this criterion. Wild rock-pigeon (*Columba livia*) is the origin of all fancy pigeons and it has 12 sub-species in the world (Gibbs et al., 2016). Fancy pigeons are species because they could be crossed with other species dove especially and produced sterile offspring. German Modena was considered as strain (locally established animal) (Muller & Schrag, 1985). From that strain then selection ensured today's many modern fancy pigeons. Huge breeds (57 breeds) are now available all over the world, then many varieties were crossed with many breeds to produce so called different types of pigeons like beauty homer, English carrier, scandaroon, white king, etc. (Table 2; Figure 2). Major groups of fancy pigeons in the world are—continental breed, American breed, and English breed. Continental breeds are the leading of all fancy pigeons. Form Mughal dynasty, emperor Akbar reared 20,000 pigeons in his court where 500 were selected. There were only nine known and huge unknown pigeons in this Mughal history (Kabir, 2014). The book 'Encyclopedia of Pigeon Breeds' mentioned near about 1900 breeds and varieties of fancy pigeons which was the

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highest collective information in the pigeon history (Levi, 1965). 229 breeds with their photographs were focused to everybody in a well-manner (Muller & Schrag, 1985). A book mentioned 55 breeds and 175 varieties of fancy pigeons (total 230) (McNeillie, 1993). High quality photographs of pigeons ensured 139 breeds in the world (Green-Armytage, 2003). A European list dealt 481 breeds in the year 2012, whereas NPA (National Pigeon Association) of USA counted total 227 types in 2016. On the internet (Wikipedia, 2023), mentionable fancy breeds were 679 without mentioning their group. Numbers of pigeons in various parts of the world depend on place, writer's observation, clubs' decision, survey, and colour. Now in Germany, geneticists are producing many breeds through the study of Molecular Biology. India, Iran, Turkey they have some leading breeds but no counting record of fancy pigeons in this field. Only NPA (NPA list, 2016) and EE (European Entente) (EE list, 2012) list have counted the probable total fancy pigeons and have published on the internet. The actual number of fancy pigeons is not fixed but after analyzing it is possible to differentiate different pigeons. The objective of this review is to mention the common categories of fancy pigeons with their breeds for easily handling them in selective breeding.

2. PHENOTYPIC DIVISIONS OF FANCY PIGEONS

Pigeons can be divided by the following ways phenotypically by the breeders. Sporting group is much expanded with highfliers, tumblers, and rollers. Pigeons are important bird to mating with any other breeds of pigeons and produce individuals with different physiques, exceptional feather colours with arrangements, voice, etc.

Sporting group

Tumbler pigeons are consisted of many types in the world and most pigeon keepers have this bird (Kabir, 2015b). Now many tumbler pigeons are using in many exhibitions as a show or exhibition tumbler. Komorner tumbler, Felezyhazer, fantails (it tremules their neck and sometimes tumbles), English magpie, and naked-neck are very popular as their show purpose. Birmingham rollers have been introduced in Bangladesh recently but till now there is not flying or tumbling record. Lotans (shaking roller) are abundant here and some have English short-faced tumbler (in Bangla this is called 'turibaj'); few have oriental rollers but they do not use them in flying. Before

the covid situation, Bangladesh Racing Pigeon Owners Association (BRPOA) organized competition by using their trained racing homer pigeons. From the short-faced tumbler, other tumbler pigeons originated through selective breeding (Kabir, 2015a). Uzbekian tumbler is a race that showed huge tumbles in a short-heighted place. In addition, star-tailed tumblers were used in race from the very beginning. Ukrainian skycutter or Polish orlik is rare in Bangladesh; its butterfly-like flying endurance is an excellent look in the clear sky (Table 1; Figure 1).

Structured and Meat breeds

Hungarian giant house is a nice breed with huge size and crest feathers and muff is available in Bangladesh. Four types of colours (black, red, yellow, silver) of Lahore pigeons are very common in Bangladesh. Since, this is a meat breed; rearers keep it as a fancy item (Kabir, 2020a). Beauty homer is unique with their parrot-like beak and this is completely a show bird. From the very beginning, English carrier pigeons were used to send letter from one place to another through proper training. The white king is an excellent meat breed of the USA, and China is the only remarkable consumer of this pigeon. Only one strain (German modena) was found in the history of the fancy pigeons (Muller & Schrag, 1985).

Colourful feathers and their arrangements

Archangel is a breed of pigeons with bright plumages with many colour patterns (Bailey, 2015; Green-Armytage, 2003). In addition, oriental frill or Turkish frill has an outstanding colour combination. In the fancy pigeons, feather construction has a motivational power to snatch everybody (Kabir, 2020b; Kabir, 2022b). Cauchois is an excellent colourful pigeon in the world (Green-Armytage, 2003).

Voice or Trumpet pigeons

On the basis of voice qualities, pigeons can be categorized as trumpeters/drummers. In Bangladesh, there is a common breed named 'kokah' that could produce peculiar voice (Kabir, 2022a).

Cropper family

Old German cropper pigeon is an old bird. This cropper group is much diversified and carries various types (www.pigeontype.info, 2023; Levi, 1965; Muller & Schrag, 1985).

Wattled group

In this group, dragoon, barb, and scandaroon are common in Bangladesh.

3. CONCLUSION

If two similar types of pigeons are considered into different breeds in books, this could make puzzles to the breeders. At this point, we could mention all of them as different breeds. In a performing group, sometimes their physiques are the same within the different breed hence their flying endurance help to differentiate them. It is possible to setup authentic local names of these pigeons by observing their physical structure, plumage colour, voice, and performing capability. For preserving the purity of tumbler genes, sometimes this is mandatory to rear them separately. Since some fancy pigeons are classified into different ways but this is true that taxonomically all fancy pigeons (*Columba livia domestica*) are breeds except wild rock-pigeon (*Columba livia*).

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Table 1. Fancy pigeons with their major groups and numbers

Group (Sub-group) (Number)	Name of breeds
Performing (flying tumbler) (12)	chuva chandan, old German magpie tumbler/elster tumbler, cumulet, Australian saddleback tumbler, blagodar tumbler, Berlin long-faced tumbler, backa longbeak tumbler, Vienna tumbler, Uzbekian tumbler, Danzig highflyer, Vilnius nightflyer, Tung Koon Paak Chinese pigeon
Performing (show tumbler) (20)	English nun, German nun, English magpie, Komorner tumbler, Felezyhazer tumbler, domestic show flight, Rzhev star-tailed tumbler/rzhev ribbon-tailed tumbler, Warsaw butterfly pigeon/Polish butterfly pigeon, English long-faced tumbler, Taganrog tumbler, Vienna short-faced tumbler, Budapest white-storked tumbler, Pomeranian eye-crested tumbler/Pomeranian show crest highflyer, Indian fantail/broad-tailed shaker/peacock pigeon, Syrian fantail/Karakand fantail, English fantail/garden fantail, American fantail, mooke/narrow-tailed shaker, stargard shaker/zitterhal, Romanian naked-neck
Performing (roller) (9)	Birmingham roller, oriental roller, central Asiatic roller, pernic roller, American baldhead roller, Aitos roller, Galatz roller, English short-faced tumbler (in Bangla turibaj), lotan (shaking roller)
Performing (racing) (2)	racing homer, Syrian dewlap
Performing (flying) (1)	Ukrainian skycutter/Polish orlik/Lublin orlik
Structured (15)	Romain runt pigeon, American giant rumbler, Hungarian giant house, French mondain/Romagnol, strasser, Coburg lark, Lahore/martin/sherajee, mittlehauser, Texan pioneer, Syrian curled dewlap, Basra dewlap, Meverdi dewlap, beauty homer, Egyptian swift, exhibition homer
Meat (7)	white king, giant American crest, Polish lynx, maltese, florentine, Hungarian, German modena
Coloured (15)	cauchois, archangel, ice pigeon, Danish suabian, monk starling, marbled starling, Silesian moorhead/Silesian colourhead, south German charcoal lark, saxon breast pigeon/bodice pigeon, south German snip, Franconian velvet shield, Thuringian white bib, crescent/half-moon pigeon, old German moorhead, oriental frill/Turkish frill
Feathered (13)	bombai, barpan/darpan/Australian red/parvin, pappatasi Spanish primitive jacobin, jacobin, beak-crested jacobin/Bihor pigeon, old Dutch capuchine, frillback, ptarmigan pigeon, American fantasy, saint pigeon, Chinese owl/whiskered owl, Chorrera pigeon, barbarisi owl pigeon/Syrian turbiteen
Trumpet (6)	Bokhara trumpeter/drummer, German double-crested trumpeter, German fork-tailed trumpeter, Thailand laugher, Arabian trumpeter, kokah
Cropper (9)	old German cropper, old Holland cropper, Dutch curled cropper, Bohemian ice cropper/Czech ice cropper, reversewing cropper, norwich cropper, Marchenero cropper, pygmy cropper, Amsterdam balloon cropper/holle cropper
Wattled (7)	Cstrava Bagdad, Spanish strawberry eye, English carrier/English Bagdad, dragoon, barb/barbary pigeon, scandaroon/Nuremberg Bagdad, Spanish flamenca runt

Source: EE list, 2012, Wikipedia, 2023, Pigeontype.info, 2023, Levi, 1965, McNeillie, 1993, Muller & Schrag, 1985, NPA list, 2016

Table 2. Classified status of fancy pigeons after reviewing

Status	Examples	Number
Race	Spanish strawberry eye, Spanish flamenca runt, Rzhev star-tailed tumbler, Vienna short-faced tumbler, Uzbekian tumbler, cauchois, German fork-tailed trumpeter, Basra dewlap	8
Strain	German modena	1
Breed	Romain runt pigeon, American giant rumbler, Hungarian giant house, French mondain/Romagnol, strasser, Coburg lark, Lahore/martin pigeon/sherajee, mittlehauser, Texan pioneer, Egyptian swift, dragoon, barb/barbary pigeon, giant American crest, Polish lynx, maltese, florentine, Hungarian, old German cropper, old Holland cropper, Norwich cropper, Marchenero cropper, pygmy cropper, Amsterdam balloon cropper/holle cropper, archangel, ice pigeon, Danish suabian, saxon breast pigeon/bodice pigeon, south German snip, Franconian velvet shield, Thuringian white bib, crescent/half-moon pigeon, old German moorhead, oriental frill/Turkish frill, Bokhara trumpeter/drummer, pappatasi Spanish primitive jacobin, jacobin, old Dutch capuchine, frillback, American fantasy, Chinese Owl/whiskered owl, Vilnius nightflyer, Tung Koon Paak Chinese pigeon, Felezyhazer tumbler, Budapest white-storked tumbler, Indian fantail/broad-tailed shaker/peacock pigeon, English fantail/garden fantail, American fantail, mookee/narrow-tailed shaker, stargard shaker/zitterhal, Birmingham roller, oriental roller, central Asiatic roller, Galatz roller, English short-faced parlour roller (in Bangla turibaj), lotan (shaking roller), racing homer, Ukrainian skycutter/Polish orlik/Lublin orlik	57
Variety	Syrian curled dewlap, Meverdi dewlap, exhibition homer, Ostrava Bagdad, Dutch curled cropper, Bohemian ice cropper/Czech ice cropper, reversewing cropper, monk starling, marbled starling, Silesian moorhead/Silesian colourhead, south German charcoal lark, German double-crested trumpeter, Thailand laughner, Arabian trumpeter, kokah, bombai, barpan/darpan/Australian red/parvin, beak-crested jacobin/Bihor pigeon, saint pigeon, Chorrera pigeon, barbarisi owl pigeon/Syrian turbiteen, chuva chandan, old German magpie tumbler/elster tumbler, cumulet, Australian saddleback tumbler, Blagodar tumbler, Berlin long-faced tumbler, Backa longbeak tumbler, Vienna tumbler, Danzig highflyer, English nun, German nun, English magpie, Komorner tumbler, domestic show flight, Warsaw butterfly pigeon/Polish butterfly pigeon, English long-faced tumbler, Taganrog tumbler, Pomeranian eye-crested tumbler/Pomeranian show crest highflyer, Syrian fantail/Karakand fantail, Romanian naked-neck, pernic roller, American baldhead roller, Aitos roller, Syrian dewlap	45
Type	beauty homer, English carrier/English Bagdad, scandaroon/Nuremberg Bagdad, white king, ptarmigan pigeon	5

Source: EE list, 2012, Wikipedia, 2023, Pigeontype.info, 2023, Levi, 1965, McNeillie, 1993, Muller & Schrag, 1985, NPA list, 2016

Table 3. Featured domestic pigeons in different ways

Features	Examples	References
Rock-pigeon	There are 12 subspecies of rock-pigeons in the world	Gibbs et al., 2016
Mughal pigeons	Emperor Akbar collected huge pigeons	Kabir, 2014
Selective breeding	Selective breeding ensured today's lot of domestic pigeons	Kabir, 2015a
Types of modern pigeons	There are many fancy pigeons in the world	EE list, 2012; Green-Armytage, 2003; Wikipedia, 2023; www.pigeontype.info , 2023; Levi, 1965; McNeillie, 1993; Muller & Schrag, 1985; NPA list, 2016
Sporting family	This is the largest group of fancy pigeons	Kabir, 2015b
Colourful pigeons	Pigeons have exceptional plumage colours	Bailey, 2015; Green-Armytage, 2003; www.pigeontype.info , 2023; Kabir, 2020b; Kabir, 2022b; Levi, 1965, McNeillie, 1993, Muller & Schrag, 1985
Meat breeds	King pigeon can be an alternative of broiler chicken	Kabir, 2020a
Voice pigeons	In Bangladesh, kokah pigeons are available with their peculiar voice	Kabir, 2022a
Cropper family	This family exhibits many varieties	www.pigeontype.info , 2023; Levi, 1965; Muller & Schrag, 1985

Line of thinking on the numeral of fancy pigeons

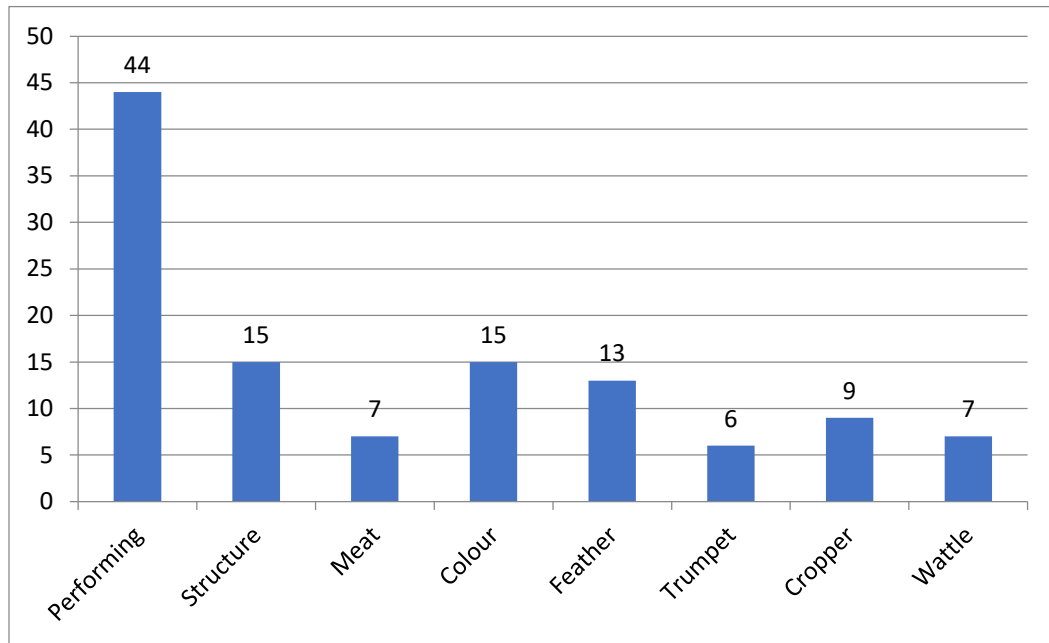


Figure 1. Number of pigeons in their respective groups

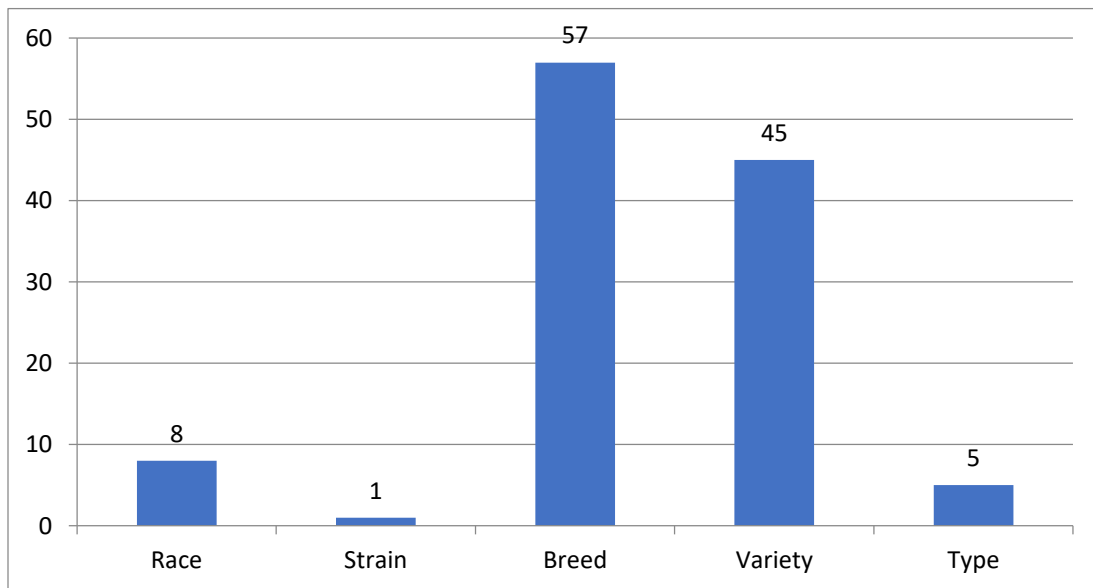


Figure 2. Status of pigeons with their numbers