

## Crosses amongst Fancy Pigeons

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All fancy pigeons of the world have been produced through selective breeding. In Bangladesh, 31 types of fancy pigeons are available. But there is no actual selective breeding in pigeon/fancy pigeons. For excess non-selective breeding, lots of mixed breeds are produced and all are good for fostering. Small size with large size, muffed with normal, tumbler with indigenous, tumbler and lotan and rock pigeon with indigenous are very common breeding pair in Bangladesh. Broiler breed like King, Strasser, and Runt all are known to rearer as fancy item. Expensive item are not normally crossed with another breed. But crosses between King and Strasser, the result is not good. Actually, NPA (National Pigeon Association of America) approves a new breed of fancy pigeon.

After the Blue Rock Pigeon the chequered pattern is common in the world. From the wild state through domestication a lot of fancy pigeons are evolved [1]. In London, the rock pigeons have white rump whereas in Indian breeds this have ash. Gibbs, *et al.* [2] mentioned 12 subspecies of rock pigeons where most of the pigeons were originated from the feral stock. In Gibraltar cave with the fossils of Neanderthal human the rock pigeons (*Columba livia/oenas* and *C. palumbus*) were discovered. So, it is easily concluded that from the cave people the relation between rock pigeons with man is very clear [3]. From the history there were seven different species of rock pigeons are- Indian variety (*C. livia intermedia*), English variety *C. affinis*, Italian *C. turretum*, Indo-Chinese *C. l. livia*, mid-Asia *C. rupestris*, Himalayan *C. leuconota*, Abyssinian *C. schimperi* and Senegal variety *C. gymnocyclus*. By selective breeding Fantail, Jacobin, Carrier, Pouter, Barb, Tumbler, and lots of hybrid ones which is called mongrels are produced here and there. Domestication of pigeons first observed in India and Europe. That time in India fancy pigeons were reared haphazardly and ultimately produced different breeds but there is no selection idea within people [1]. From the common tumbler then short-medium-long faced tumblers are very common and easy examples for all on selective breeding. Moreover, half-breed of Mookie from Fantail and Capuchine from the Jacobin is another good example for easy understanding about breeding. In 5<sup>th</sup> Egyptian dynasty about 3000 BC Professor Lepsius first described the pigeons. In this time, Mr Birch mentioned the value of pigeons. In the Roman time Pliny mentioned the immense value of pigeons in his time [1]. Akbar Khan in India (1600 AD) reared near about 20,000 pigeons where 500 were selected [4]. These pigeons were collected from Iran. The people of Dutch and Romans they were very eager to the pigeons breeding and rearing [1]. Finally, by the modern naturalist Charles Robert Darwin described the whole of selective breeding and domestication of pigeons in large-scale spectrum in his book 'Origin of Species' (1858) [5] and 'Variation of Animals and Plants under Domestication' (1868) [6]. In ancient time there were considered four largest groups in fancy pigeons - Pouter, Fantail, Carrier, and Tumbler. Within these, the most divergent group was tumbler pigeons. Homing ability were found in Carrier and Tumbler pigeons once a time. In past, little tumbler showed huge tumbles in the sky [1]. Now, there are huge recognized fancy pigeons in the world and some geneticists are passing their valuable time on these pigeons and try to produce various nice fancy pigeons through selective breeding. Small-size and blue bodied with two black bars tumbler pigeons are very common in Bangladesh. After identification of that tumbler pigeon from the rock pigeons then selective breeding by people now House Tumbler and Roller (Lotan) has produced consequently. The roller/tumbler gene (*ro*) of tumbler pigeons is of course an abnormal and dominant mutated gene. This peculiarity of the gene though a morbid characteristic of pigeon but human selection ensures its stability and this breed now a well-spread and very favourite pigeon of the world.

Following table 1 indicates that most of the selective breeding is found in US. Table or broiler breed is exported from US to various parts of the world. In Bangladesh, broiler breed is treated as fancy item.

Name of breed	Origin	Selective breeding
Texan Pioneer	USA	King x Mondain
Strasser	Austria	Florentine x Lark
King	USA	Duchess, Homer, Maltese, Runt
Runt	USA	Dovecote x Carrier x Dragoon
Lark	Germany	Archangel x Bagdad
Montauban	France	Runt x Mondain
Hungarian	Hungary	Florentine x Swallow
Lebanon	UK	Lace x Blondinette; from Dewlap
Dewlap	Syria, China	From Racing Homer
Slenker	Netherlands	Cropper x Tumbler
Damascene	Turkey	Powdered Blue Owl x Silver Owl
Magpie	Germany	From Tumbler cross
Scandaroon/Bagdad	Iran	Some Germany stock
Homer	USA	Carrier x Owl x Turbit; Cumulet x Owl x Turbit
Antwerp	USA	Owl x Blue Rock
Dragoon	UK	Carrier x Pouter; Tumbler x Carrier
Owl	UK	From Spanish Chorrera
Oriental Frill	Turkey	From Owl family
Mookee	India	Half-breed of Fantail
Lotan	India	After two or three generations these may come

**Table 1:** Selective breeding in fancy pigeons.

History of pigeons show that first species was Blue Rock Pigeon and Tumbler. Crosses between them and from inbreeding different fancy pigeons have come. Suddenly, produced some ornamental frills in some pigeons were named owl. Then such type of characteristics point out another specific location like on head this is crest and when in legs this is muff. Later on, simple crest showed a drastic type then it was considered as hood, rose, double crest, peak crest and toed feather as grouse, and slipper type. In case of Jacobin, its crop is located just behind of throat and the tail feather of Fantail increased gradually. The Fantail was found in India first. Then the US research on it and produced American fantail. In broad senses the fantails are tremulous, long necked, short backed, and mutated silky/lace/powdered. Tumbler family shows its small beak and arched breast. From this, the Slenker variety may come. Colours of the pigeons were come by domestication and proper care of the breeders. If we consider the ancestor of fancy pigeon is Cumulet, this was more flying breed. Within this the inbreeding possess the Homer and this is another strong flier pigeon breed. At the time of flying and millions of thousands inbreeding the genetic abnormality it showed rolling or tumbling which first recognized by Charles Darwin. If flying is a stimulus and the sake of Almighty sudden some breeds losses fly due to heavy tumbling and for artificial shaking breeds showed rolling on ground, this is Lotan. In tumbler pigeon they show tremule of the neck and from the erect tailed tumbler (Taganroga Tumbler) Fantail breeds are come. The half-bred of Fantail is produced as Mookee.

In nature, wild pigeons and doves are more similar with extant fancy pigeons [7]. In Akbar court there were 20000 pigeons with 500 selected and the pigeon keepers kept them for selective breeding due to different variety. They were known well known with those varieties [4]. Wild pigeons and doves in the world including extinct species were written by Gibbs, *et al* [2]. In Bangladesh, most rearers keep different varieties of pigeons in the same loft and sometimes good breeds are genetically mixed with others. Ultimately, they lost the purity of that pigeons. For the pairing of a single pigeon occasionally they get pair with different or non-viable pigeon. Most of the time, those new varieties do not get good markings [8]. Mr Levi [9] mentioned lots of selective breeding of fancy pigeons in his book 'The Pigeon'. Lyell [10] mentioned the breeding pattern of fancy pigeons elaborately in his renowned book 'Fancy Pigeons'. In Utah America, there DNA analyses on fancy pigeons have shown various gene structures. The evolutionary sequences said that the origin of doves and pigeons are orthogenetic [11].

It is no doubt that through selective breeding all fancy pigeons have evolved. In Bangladesh, for non-selective breeding in fancy pigeons some semi-pure or pure pigeons are losing their purity [8]. If we want to produce recognize breed of course need to study 'Genetics'. Moreover, we need to remember not only the colour, size, and acceptance but also after producing new varieties need to ensure their parental care, longevity, and immunity power.

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