

Pomeranian Pouters And Dutch Croppers, A Close Family

by DAN JOHNSON, Northridge, Calif.

For the last few years, here in California, our Pouter and Cropper shows have been steadily increasing in the number of entries and breeders exhibiting. This is due mainly to the interest and promotion of the Western Pouter and Cropper Club. With more varieties of Pouters and Croppers entered also come a lot of questions from new breeders and interested visitors at the show.

I don't claim to be an authority on Pouters and Croppers, not by a long shot, but the breeds that I raise I know inside and out. The question that I will try to clarify is one that I hear every year at our shows and that is, "Just what is the difference between the Pomeranian Pouter and the Dutch Cropper." For anyone who doesn't raise either of these breeds or isn't familiar with the large muffed Pouters, it is definitely hard to see the difference.

The best place to begin to answer the above question is with the history of how these breeds came to be. The Dutch Cropper was reported as being bred in Holland as far back as 1600, the Pomeranian Pouter was first reported as being bred around 1800 in Germany. The conclusion derived from the history is that the Pomeranian came about through selective breeding of the Dutch for a different type, station and leg length.

Our modern day Dutch Croppers and Pomeranian Pouters still have features that are comparable. For example the legs of the Pomeranian should be long, straight and strong. They should be set an inch and a half to two inches apart and should have heavy hock feathering and large muffs. On the Dutch, the legs should be medium to short in length and like the Pomeranian should be straight



POMERANIAN POUTER
Blue Bar Pied Pomeranian Pouter Hen, Band No. 813.—Bred and owned by Dan Johnson, Northridge, Calif.

and strong with an inch and a half to two inches of space between the same profuse and large hock and foot feathering.

The bodies of both breeds should

A Little About Pomeranian Pouters

by AMSIL ERICKSON, Bowman, N. Dakota

The Pomeranian Pouter is a very gentle and tame breed of pigeon, a very definite plus for any pigeon.

I have found that the following loft care is the best for breeding Poms. I keep feed and water in front of them at all times. Poms fly well, so I keep their nests high off the loft floor. Because they are large, they require large nests and I find that at least a 14 by 16 nest is sufficient. I find that nest bowls usually don't work, so I put a piece of sheeting under the nest that has a good fiber. I find that Poms like to dig down in the nests and with good fiber at the bottom the birds get a better grip and I don't raise any spraddlers.

I use wheat straw and shavings for

be thick and powerful, broad at the shoulders and tapering to the tail. The body should be long, however, it shouldn't appear stretched out. The body, although massive, should show keel.

As for globe, it should be as large as possible without throwing the bird out of proportion. Also on both breeds, they shouldn't have back globe, over blowing or showing is a definite fault.

Type and station are where both breeds differ immensely. The Pomeranian should stand from 60 to 80 degrees, this is why the longer legs on a Pomeranian make him carry himself taller. The Dutch, on the other hand, is a much lower standing breed, and should stand no higher than 45 degrees. The shorter legs of the Dutch help keep him down.

The colors and markings of both breeds are the same.

This has not been an in-depth look at the Pomeranian or Dutch Standards, but just a comparison of the main points of each breed. This will give the layman a better understanding of these two beautiful breeds of Pouters and Croppers. □

the nests and it works well. I also have a large bath area for the Poms. It is two feet by five feet and four inches deep. The birds fly free and can bathe any time they want. I also have a fence around the loft of steel barn sheets and I find that stray cats can't climb up it.

An odd thing that I have found is that when the young take a bath, they lay on the grass and put their feet up on their back. They stick their feet up between their body and wings and look like they are laying on their backs. I suppose they do this to dry their feet and muffs and I never saw any other breed do this. Poms are sort of rare, but a good Pom breeder is even rarer than the birds are. □



DUTCH CROPPER
Blue Bar Self Dutch Cropper Hen, Band No. 676.—Bred and owned by Dan Johnson, Northridge, Calif.



POMERANIAN POUTERS
Group of Pomeranian Pouters bred and owned by Amsil Erickson, Bowman, N. Dakota

Pomeranian Pouter Show Preparation

by KYLE SYMMES, Norco, Calif.

First of all as a brief introduction, I happen to be a Southern California breeder of 14 breeds of pigeons of which six are Pouters and Croppers. Pigeons have been my hobby since grade school when my father, Don Symmes, presented me with two pair of Kings for Christmas. Through the last 15 years, various breeds have come and gone through my lofts but Pouters and Croppers have always had a permanent place. In my opinion these tame breeds were created to be the true show birds of the pigeon world.

Hopefully my show preparation of my favorite breed of Pouter, the Pomeranian, will help give some insight to the old Pouter breeders as well as the beginner. Ideally actual show preparation could begin when the second egg of the clutch hits the nest bowl. Incubation would follow, next in order would be handfeeding and rearing of the young followed by a lengthy visit to the psychiatrist to determine whether you, the breeder, are actually a pigeon or if the young Pomeranian Pouters are taking on human characteristics.

Seriously, if we all had the time to at least hand feed our youngsters, competition at the shows would be keen indeed. I usually managed to hand feed one or two youngsters a season, usually because the feeders abandon them for some unknown reason or the pair doesn't keep both squabs as full of feed as I would like to have them. The hand reared young almost always have a special place in my loft even if not show quality because of the extreme friendliness they display. Since most of us are only allowed a few hours a day to spend with our birds, some obvious reasons include job, career, family and the ability to buy pigeon feed, we must allow our birds to either raise their own young or use foster parents.

In either case, my show preparation usually begins at about three or four months of age. At this time I have usually narrowed down the young birds that will have the outward characteristics of a good show Pomeranian which include stance, leg straightness, large muffs, good color, body conformation and crescent markings on the pied birds. The shape and size of the globe of course will improve as the bird matures and it isn't as imperative to me at this time as is the next qualification I earnestly

look for.

The qualification I am talking about is tameness. You will never see "pushed out wire" in the lofts of Pouter and Cropper breeders as you some times do with many "flighty" breeds. Pouter men usually can't stay long in a loft of "flighty" breeds kiddingly referred to as "tennis ball" pigeons who have the uncanny ability to bounce off walls whenever the breeder enters the loft. We are all very proud of the tameness our various Pouter breeds display. In observing my potential show youngsters at about three to four months old, I am looking for those special hens that come jumping up to me on the loft floor or that young cock bird that slaps a wing at me from his perch near the door or immediately begins strutting back and forth in front of the loft whenever I come in sight.

Remember the judge must pick a champion among several birds that may follow the standard almost to the letter as far as markings, body conformation and color. But if they aren't showing off either to the judge or the other birds they might as well be back home in your loft. So what I am looking for is the natural "show-off" or tame bird that I can work with and hopefully improve.

How I usually go about working with the young birds is to separate the two sexes about two months prior to a potential show. Leaving the young birds together, not only causes some shyness but can apply some stress to young hens with early mating and egg laying, in my opinion. I always enter the lofts talking to the young hens and try to pick up each one gently and set her down again slowly to reassure her or place her on my arm until she feels like flying off. This small test usually separates the "front line chorus girls" from the "back stage good lookers" as far as tameness goes.

About two weeks before the show, I place one or two hens in an individual coop approximately three by three feet by two feet high. This helps protect the muffs which are now about five to seven inches long. It also allows the hens to become accustomed to a small enclosure similar to a show coop. The hen also associates my arrival as either her mate, or at least as her food and water provider, at which time I am talking to her and usually handling



KYLE SYMMES

Kyle Symmes is shown hand taming one of his Pomeranian Pouters.—Photo from Kyle Symmes, Norco, Calif.

her briefly once a day. No longer can she interact with a cock or another hen (unless cooped with another hen) all of which increases her trust in people.

I generally follow a different procedure as far as cooping young cock birds. If one cock bird is an aggressive fighter or has extremely large muffs, which may get stained or broken in the loft, he is cooped by himself as described earlier in the hen section. Otherwise, cock birds are left in a common loft with individual perches no higher than six feet (my height). I have 15 cock birds in the loft, I make sure it has at least 20 perches so none of the birds are without a perch. The perches are placed away from the wall about a foot on a 45 degree angle up to a five inch diameter circular piece of 5/8 plywood. Each perch is two feet above or below or across from the next one to decrease fighting, avoid droppings of other birds and protect large muffs from damage. This arrangement also allows each cock bird to have his own "territory" and strut and coo to his heart's content without infringing on the other bird's domain. This set-up also allows me to walk and talk very near all the cock birds at the same time. They soon learn to challenge me when I am very close with a slap of the wing or with much spinning around on the perch. I usually reply with rubbing their heads or tugging gently on their tails to reassure them that I like what I see.

A week before the show, I place the young cock birds in my own show coop (four hole) so obviously four cocks for about ten minutes a day hopefully each day until show day. I pluck the muffs of my Pomeranians eight weeks prior to the show and allow the birds to bathe four or five days before the show. If the birds are

hesitant about bathing I generally will set them in the water and hand clean their muffs and make sure some water gets on their breast to insure a glossy sheen on their globes when they blow. The feather plume really "blossoms" four or five days after a bath.

Although I have mentioned only young bird preparation in this article, most of the preparation can be used on old birds as well, taking into consideration that the mated birds must be separated and not allowed to visibly see their mates for a couple of weeks to help tame them into show

temperament again. Don't forget to talk to your birds, remember the only louder noises at a pigeon show other than the birds themselves are the pigeon breeders. We are usually talking about that special bird the dog killed or that super young cock bird you loaned to a friend in China who would have won this show hands down had he been there, etc., etc. So with all that hot wind in the air, you will want your bird to be used to it.

Good luck to all Pouter and Cropper breeders and thanks APJ for this Pouter Special. □

Pomeranians by the breeder Gustav Pruetz around 1886. You will note the very short muffs which was a trait in all muffed breeds some 100 years ago. The longer muff development did not come until later.

Pomeranians in tail marked were very famous in those days. Also the pied marked ones in all colors. Also came in solid colors and in later years, they died out and only the ones with the pied markings were popular.

Today the quality of the Pomeranian is much superior than those of a 100 years ago. Breeders that are strongly supporting the Pomeranians here in the USA are such like Martin Bayer, Lothar and Barbara Beer, Dan Johnson, etc., just to mention a few. People like these can be seen exhib-

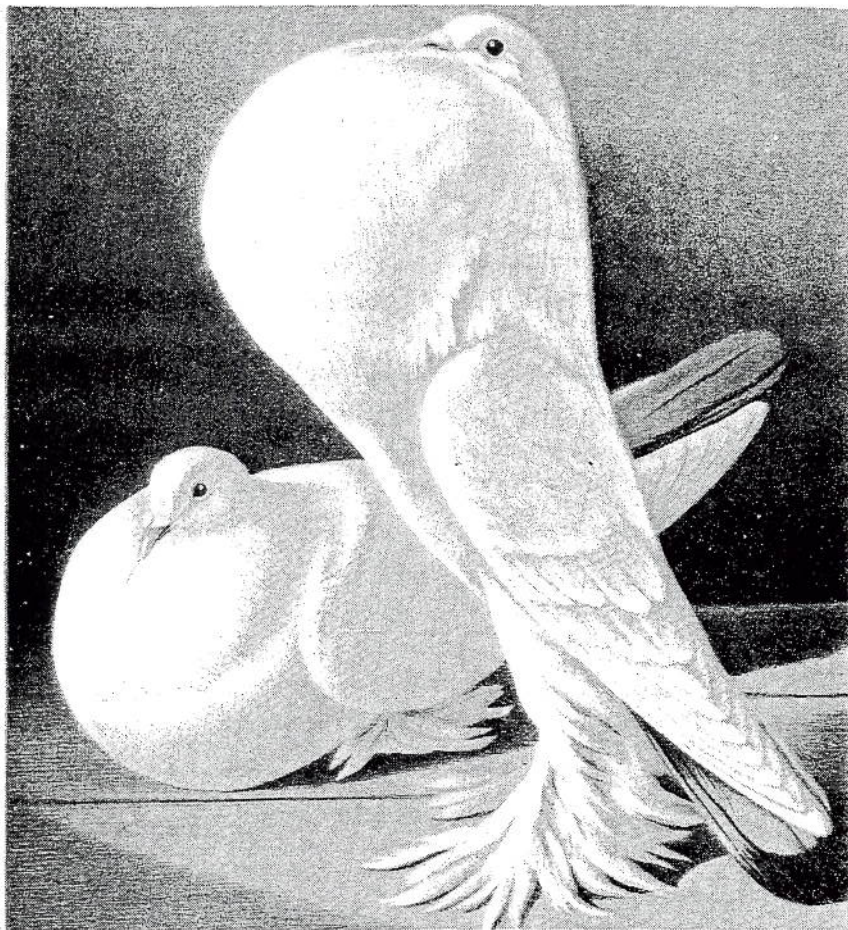
iting their Pomeranians at most major shows. The improvements they make as to color, markings and good Pomeranian type can easily be noted with every passing show and year after year, the Pomeranian increases not very fast but at a steady pace. I would like to mention that Dan Johnson from California had sent me some pictures of some solid colored Pomeranians which he recreated. They are beautiful looking birds and hopefully he has sent some pictures to the APJ to appear in this special.

As I have already stated the Pomeranian comes in all colors with the pied markings and now also in the solid colors without the pied markings. Furthermore in Tail Marked, which is an all white bird with a colored tail, the all white Pomeranian is also very popular. Adding to all of these colors are the tigers, which are evenly splashed, but must have solid colored primary flights, tail and solid colored muffs. Dark and light splashes are also a new addition to the exhibition of Pomeranians. The dark splashes must have a colored base plumage and all feathering alternate in colored and white feathering, but not so exact as in the tiger swallow! The light splashes should have a white base plumage and here too the color and white should alternate with the exception of the primaries, tail and muffs which is wanted all white.

The eye color in all Pomeranians is to be yellow to orange, this includes the tigers and dark splashes.

Whites, Tail Marks and Light Splashes should have dark eyes (bull eye).

Like all large Pouters, the Pomeranian is very tame and gentle and just another outstanding beauty of the Pouter-Cropper family. □



POMERANIANS OF YESTERDAY, GUSTAV PRUETZ 1886
Photo from Guenter Wenzel, Grant Park, Ill.

Pomeranians Of Yesterday

by GUENTER WENZEL, Grant Park, Ill.

The Pomeranian Pouter dates back to about the year 1800 at which time the old Dutch Cropper was being introduced into Germany from Holland. These huge Croppers with their large inflated crops were then bred toward a type which was later called Pomeranian. The old master, Wilhelm Havernick, had given more of his complete devotion toward the perfection of the Pomeranian Pouter than

any man in pigeon history. After his death in 1880, just 100 years ago, his son carried on the breeding and perfecting of the Pomeranian in the Stralsund area. It was in 1910 when the specialty club was formed for Pomeranians and with that, the breed was bred more uniform throughout Germany.

Please note: the Gustav Pruetz portrait of a pair of tail marked