

## Why Should I Raise Fantails? By C. H. Harper

A very good question and one I shall try to answer for the benefit of those who want to start with the pigeon fancy.

While I have had pigeons for quite a few years it was not until I decided to concentrate my time and efforts on raising and showing Fantails that I realized for me personally the ultimate returns to be had from a hobby.

It has not been as easy as it might seem, due mostly to my mistakes but not on any account of the birds. They will do their part as they are hardy, prolific, and very good parents. As one of the long time fanciers said, "Take care of their tails and they will do the rest." (Thanks John W, Bolton).

However, since they are Fantails their tails pose many problems for the beginner. My first loft was not suitable, especially the nesting arrangements, and I soon had some very ragged looking Fantails. Another problem to be considered is the clipping of the tails to insure better fertility. If that is not done properly you destroy the looks of your birds and after all, you decided to keep Fantails because of their beauty a hitch is mostly their tails. My experience has been that given proper accommodations they will take care of their part pretty well. Flying is not a strong point with Fantails and they stand confinement very well during the mating season.

Last, but not least, is the condition of the tail in the judging show pen. This appears to be a very controversial subject, but I do want to go on record and state that I believe a breeder is defeating himself in the long run by using birds that need a lot of work done

on their tails to make them fit to show. There definitely seems to be two schools of thought on this matter as I have read of one prominent fancier who states that any bird that needs more than 2 minutes work done on its tail is not a show bird. On the other hand, the Fantail through the years has been improved and the tail brought to its present state of perfection through man's efforts.

Horticulturalists do not stop after producing new varieties of flowers; they clip, trim, and tie-up plants and bushes to look better. So now you have the job of lacing and arranging the tail to make it appear at its best as a Fan. My only advice to beginners is that you must have patience and watch how old time fanciers do it. Then practice, practice, and practice some more.

As a comparative newcomer, I will not presume to offer much advice as I expect there will be articles in this Special Fantail issue from more experienced breeders.

However, I want to remind you that you cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, and you must purchase good stock to start off. I would also remind you that when you pay a little more for better birds you are also getting the benefit of the breeder's knowledge and his time spent bringing those birds up to the higher standard.

As this article was written primarily for beginners, in closing I will say if you get as much pleasure and as many thrills as I do watching youngsters grow up to become good show specimens you will find it more than repays you for your time and effort.