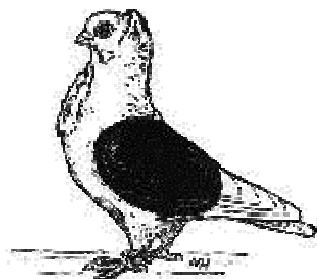
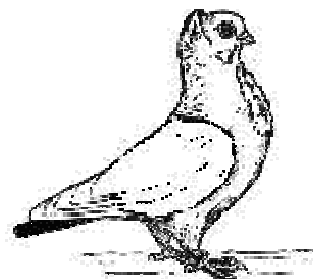


The Old German Owl, A "New" Old Breed

By: Helen Bresler September 1997



In the last few years, a newly-imported pigeon breed, the shield-marked variety of the Old German Owl, has been making its appearance at pigeon shows. It is an attractive pigeon, of medium size, with a shell crest and frill, and a beak of medium length, unlike the short African Owl or Turbit beak. Although this shield-marked variety is new to the United States, a tail-marked variety, which may have either a shell crest or a plain head, has been shown here in the States for at least 40 years.



The Old German Owl is a stocky little pigeon with a cheerful and friendly overall impression. They are fairly tame, and are easy to breed, being fully capable of feeding their own young. While the three varieties, shield-marked, tail-marked, and self-colored, have been developed to a high standard, there are still plenty of refinements for a breeder to work on, like more perfectly-shaped heads, more precise markings, better developed frills, and fully symmetrical crests ending in rosettes. In addition to their good looks and friendly disposition, Old German Owls are energetic and athletic flyers.

Medium-beaked owls similar to the Old German Owls have been known and loved in Europe and the Middle East for centuries. They are so well-loved, in fact, that nearly every country seems to have developed its own owl breed. While the shield-marked owl is a very common and ancient type, there are also owls with tail-marking only, with shield- and tail-marking in combination, and with every other pigeon color and marking. In the Netherlands, shield-marked owls were often called Farmers' Owls because they were a common pigeon kept on farms. The Old Dutch Turbit is a breed similar to the Old German Owl, but larger, peak-crested, and with a differently-shaped head. Other medium-beaked owl breeds include the Aachen Lacquer Shield Owl, the Chinese Owl, the Hamburg Sticken, the Italian Owl, the Polish Owl, the Spanish Owl, and the Syrian Owl.

The German name for the Old German Owl is M \ddot{o} vchen, or little gull, which probably refers to the resemblance of the breed's color and markings to the Silver Gull, a shield-marked seagull. The use of this name indicates that the oldest form of the breed was probably shield-marked.

Several varieties have been developed from the original shield-marked Old German Owl. These include shield-marked with plain head, peak crest, or shell crest; tail-marked with plain head, peak crest, or shell crest; and self-colored in white and red. In addition, a separate breed, the German Owl, which comes in crested and plain-headed forms, and has a short African Owl-type beak, was developed from the Old German Owl. Ironically, the German Owl has been known in the United States for many years, and its standard is listed in the National Pigeon Association's Encyclopedia of Pigeon Standards. This has led many American breeders to believe that the German Owl is the older breed and that the Old German Owl is a new breed, when, in fact, the Old German Owl really is older.

To promote the Old German Owl and to help clarify the differences between these two breeds, the Evergreen Old German Owl Club has been formed and has affiliated with the NPA. The association has written a draft standard for the breed. The proposed standard is identical to the present German standard in recognizing the shield-marked, tail-marked and self-colored varieties. Unlike the present German standard, it also recognizes the plain-headed and peak-crested forms in addition to the shell-crested one. Anyone interested in learning more about these charming pigeons, or any present breeder who would like to help develop the standard further is invited to contact the club. Contact can be made by Email to duiven@aol.com or by regular mail to Helen Bresler, 3922 14th Ct. NE., Olympia, WA 98506.