

WHAT HAS HAPPENED WITH THE

DUTCH FRILLBACK CROPPER?

By: Hein van Grouw (NL/UK)

In 1997 the Dutch Frillback Cropper was recognized as a new breed in its country of origin. Other countries followed, including the UK and this pigeon enjoyed a short-lived popularity. Now, 15 years later, only a handful of breeders are left in The Netherlands, while in other countries this Cropper is no longer seen at shows. What has happened with the Frillback Croppers? And are there still breeders in the UK?

History

The breed was created by the Dutch pigeon fancier Peter Stallmann. Almost whole his life Peter bred Fancy pigeons, and by the age of 14 he fell in love with the Frillbacks. He bred them very successfully and soon he became one of the top breeders in the Netherlands, especially with the red grizzles. And he still is. He also created the silver colour in the Frillback and he breeds that colour to an excellent quality. For several years the Dutch Frillback and Trumpeter Club flourished under Peter's presidency, and now he is a 'Honary President' of the club.



Though the Frillback is his favourite pigeon he always was very fond of pouters as well. Especially the affectionate, friendly and active character of the different pouter breeds attracted him. For years he dreamt about creating a gentle and active pouter with frilled wing shields, and in 1986 he actually started the first crossings to realise his dream. First Norwich croppers were used, but in the beginning it was difficult to obtain birds with enough structure.



**Left: Yellow Grizzle Dutch Frillback Cropper, hen, bred by Peter Stallmann.
Photo: Hein van Grouw.**

In those years it was battling two opposing situations; a Frillback has a long, soft plumage, whereas the Norwich cropper has a short, hard feather structure. When young were born with acceptable frill there was no balloon, and conversely, nice blowing birds had hardly any frill development. So in the early years pairings with other pouter breeds were also tried; Marcheneros, Saxons and Voorburg shield croppers.

However, the offspring of the Marcheneros was too aggressive (even still in the 4th generation). The Saxons gave nice leg length, but there was not enough balloon development and the wing shields stayed too small. Small wing shields also resulted from the Voorburg crossings as well as too many pied colours.

It turned out that the best results still came from the crossings with Norwich croppers, and in 1991 Stallmann bred his first bird to meet his expectations. This bird, an ash-red female, had both frill and a balloon and she was used for many years to improve the breed. Later on he crossed again with the Voorburg shield cropper for 'more character' and this time it was a success.

Right:
Dutch Frill back Cropper, young male, red-grizzle.
At the Ornithophilia show in Utrecht (NL), October 2005.

Excellent male, at this photo it could show some more crop.

Photo: Aviculture Europe.



After years of selection the offspring became increasingly uniform in type and in 1997 the breed was recognised by the Dutch Pigeon Fanciers' Association (NBS).

First it was a 'Provisional Recognition' for 3 years, but in 2000 the Dutch Frillback Cropper achieved full recognition status and was added at the European list of recognised breeds.

Now, more than 10 years later, the breed has improved even further. Of course, selection on curls and crop formation is still necessary, and will always be so as the main features of the breed. But uniformity in the desired type is more or less established and offspring that reverts back to the Frillback type is now very rare.

Further perfections in the stockings and colour over the last few years has established the Frillback Cropper as 'a dream came true', and the existence of an affectionate pouter breed with frilled wing shields is a fact.

Left:
Dutch Frillback Croppers in different colours, bred by Peter Stallmann.

Photo: Hein van Grouw.



Above: Painting by Jan Hatzmann, made on instruction by Peter Stallmann in 1997 short after the recognizing of the breed. This is the ideal picture that Peter had in mind.



Until 2007 the breed in the Netherlands was under the wing of the Dutch Frillback and Trumpeter Club, but its interest is now looked after by the Club for Rare Pouter Breeds.



Above and right: Dutch Frillback Croppers in different colours, bred by Peter Stallmann. Photos: Hein van Grouw.

Appearance and character

The general appearance of the Dutch Frillback Cropper is a medium sized, active pigeon with an erect posture, frilled wing shields and feather stockings on leg and toes. It has an elegant, wedge-shaped body with a round, well-balanced balloon in harmony with the body shape.

The posture is medium high and sloping. The head must be oblong, equally rounded and with a lightly arched forehead. The neck must be long enough to give space for a not too large sized, almost round balloon. A waist must be visible. The legs are of medium length with stockings. It's preferably that the curled feathers reach over the toes. Vulture heels are permitted, but those feathers must also be curled.

The breed has long and soft feathers with a full frill on the wing shield.

The Frillback Cropper occur in the same colours as the Frillback pigeon; white with orange eyes, black, blue grizzle, red grizzle, yellow grizzle and shield marked. However, they are also recognized in white with dark eyes. This colour is the inheritance of the crossings with the Voorburg shield croppers. At the moment the best animals are found in white (with orange or dark eyes), red grizzle and yellow grizzle. Black and shield marked birds especially still need improvement.

The character of the Dutch Frillback Cropper can be described as friendly and active.

The whites have the most affectionate temperament, thanks to the Voorburg cropper.

In the other colours, especially the red grizzle, the slightly more 'distant' temperament of the Norwich is apparent.

Right: White Dutch Frillback Cropper, old hen. Frillback Croppers incubate their eggs perfectly.

Photo: Hein van Grouw.

However all colours perform the active cooing and wing-clapping display and this is an



essential part of the breed's character.

Left: White Dutch Frillback Cropper, squab. Young Frillback Croppers grow quickly.

Photo: Hein van Grouw.

Despite its active temperament, the Frillback Cropper is a gentle pigeon in the loft. They are not aggressive and hardly fight among each other. They are good breeders and perfect parents and give no problems at all with rearing their own young.

Popularity of the breed

Interest in this new breed grew rapidly during, and especially after its creation. The first few years after its recognition the demand for stock could not be fulfilled. Strangely, the interest was mostly from abroad and not from The Netherlands.

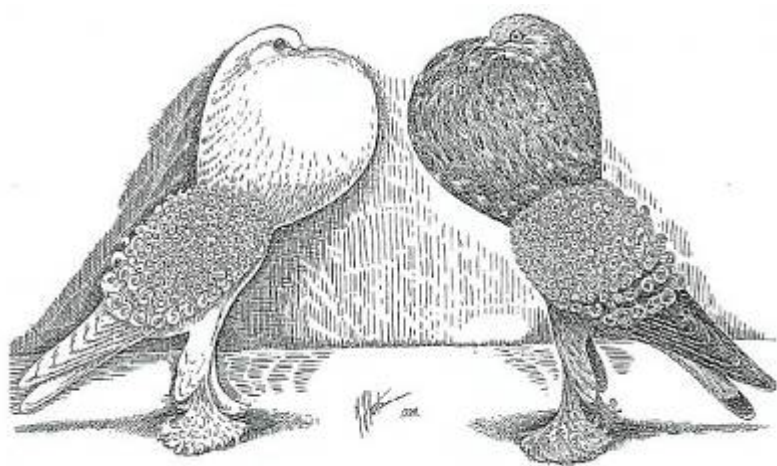


Worldwide, the Dutch Frillback Cropper found new fanciers. Within Europe its popularity seemed greatest in the UK. But although many birds were exported there the Frillback Cropper now does not seem to have any exhibition breeders anymore.

The author would like to know if there are still other breeders around, in the UK but also in other European countries than the Netherlands. Perhaps breeders can write their experiences with the breed in another article for Aviculture Europe?

You are welcome to contact the author, Hein van Grouw, via e-mail h.van-grouw@nhm.ac.uk or Aviculture Europe, e-mail redactie@aviculture-europe.nl

Right:
White Dutch Frillback Cropper,
old cock.
Photo: Hein van Grouw.



Left: Two Dutch Frillback Croppers
Artist: Jan Hatzmann.

The Dutch Frillback Cropper is in The Netherlands look after by the Club for Rare Pouter Breeds.

Specialty Club for Rare Pouter Breeds,
secr.: M. Timmerman
Oudepolderdijk 1, 4301 PA Zierikzee
The Netherlands.
tel.: 0031 (0)111 – 416538.

e-mail: m.timmerman@zeldzame-kropperrassen.nl
website <http://www.zeldzame-kropperrassen.nl/>