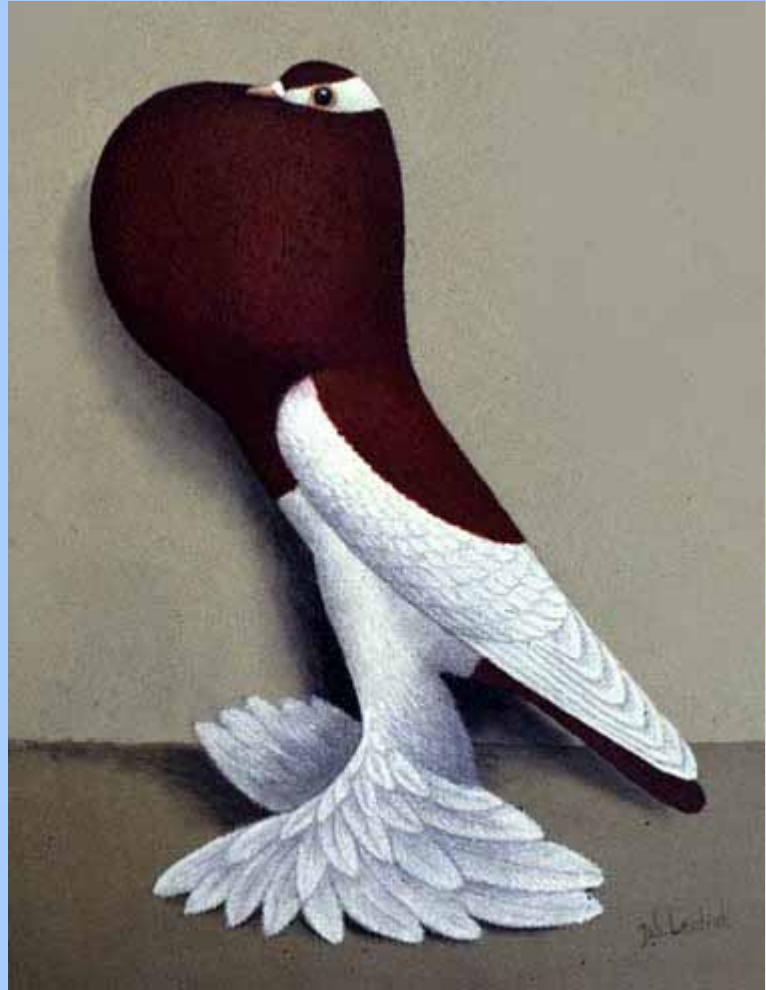


Reversewing Cropper

Vedervoetige Eksterkropper (NL)
Verkehrflügelkröpfer (D)
Reverse wing Cropper (GB)
Boulant de Sax Pie (F)



Reversewing Croppers in the colour variety blue (left) and red (above). Painted by the famous Dutch pigeon illustrator Joh. Lentink. Photos: D.J. Hamer.

(B) who specializes in breeding the Reversewing Cropper. With our thanks to the Dutch Specialty Club for all extra information.

History of the Breed

By 1880 there were already a number of variants of this Breed, in Saxon (Germany) and in Bohemia (Austria then, now part of the Czech Republic.)

In Saxon it was called the Saxon Magpie Cropper. We know that the Saxon Cropper were mostly Yellow and Isabel with White Bars, and that the Reversewing was a Magpie marked variant of that Breed. It was also known as the *Kalotten* = Helmet Cropper, while in Bohemia it was known as the Gansel Cropper, which was a reference to the markings of the Viennese Gansel Tumbler Markings as well as the Viennese Magpie Tumbler.

After 1880 the first serious references to the Breed are made in writings by the Ornithologist Baldamus, saying that the Saxon Magpie Cropper was possibly 'made' from crossing the Old German Cropper and the Dutch Cropper. In his Book *'De Kropperrassen'* (Cropper Breeds) from 1929, the Dutch author Spruijt states that not the Dutch Cropper but the Gent Cropper in Dominican Marking was used in the Cross.

Right: A blue Reversewing Cropper in 1991. Excellent old cock with 97 points. Owner: Comb. Droog. Photo: D.J. Hamer.

In the early years of the 1900's the Saxon Muffed Magpie Cropper was not so upright in stance, shorter in neck and with a smaller, rounder head.

After 1925 there was a dramatic improvement in the Breed, the result of crossing with the English Cropper, which was larger and more upright in Stance. In the Netherlands after 1980, the name 'Saxon Magpie Feather Foot (Muffed) Cropper' was adopted to avoid confusion with the Saxon Clean-legged Cropper.



Left: A Yellow Reversewing Cropper at the VDT 2005. Owner: Bernard Rappold. Photo: Mick Bassett.



Right: A Black Reversewing cropper at the VDT 2005. Owner: Bernard Rappold. Photo: Mick Bassett.





There are several stories about why the German name 'Verkehrflügel Kröpfer' and the English name 'Reversewing Cropper' were given. Although the most plausible explanation is the one I read in the book *'Onze duivenrassen in woord en beeld'* of 1955, by C.A.M. Spruijt, stating that at the end of the 19th century, when the name Verkehrflügel Kröpfer found acceptance, the Breed had been crossed with a Magpie colour pigeon that was named *'Verkehrflügel Farbentaube'*.

Left: A Blue Reversewing cropper at the VDT 2005.

Owner: Bernard Rappold.

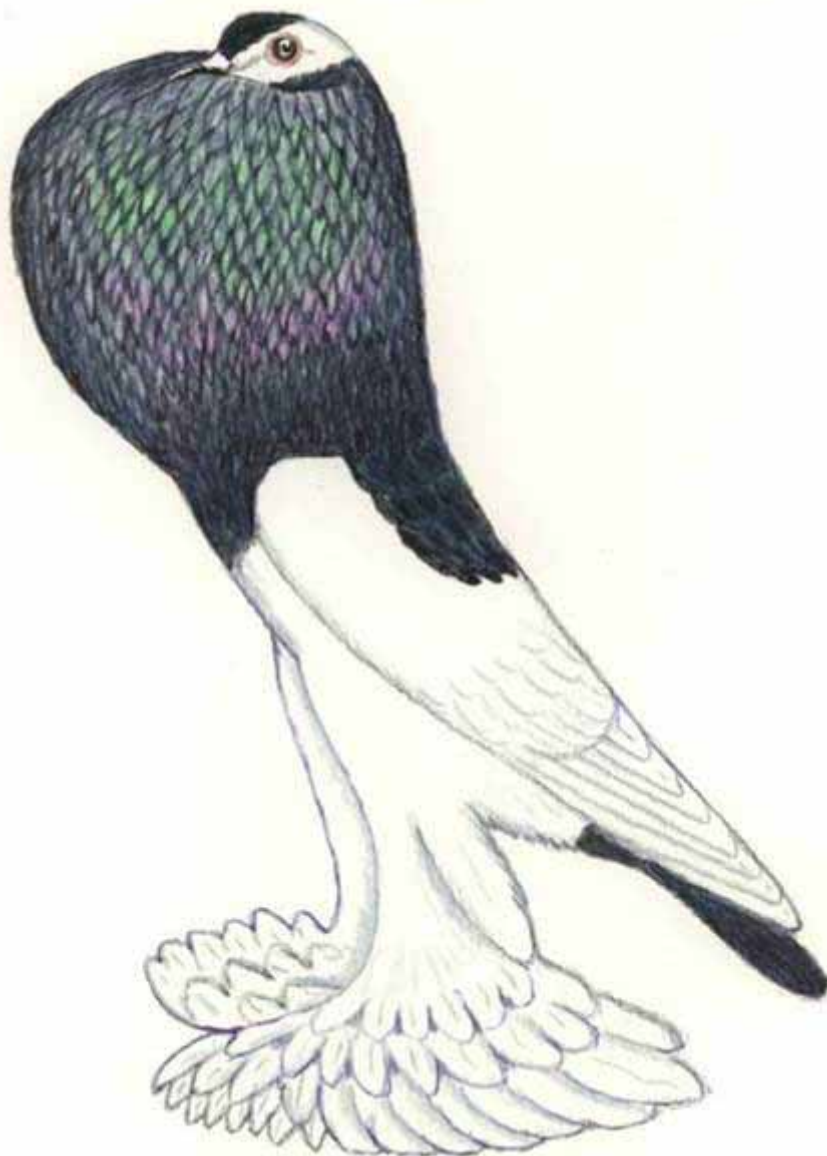
Photo: Mick Bassett.

This crossing caused the intense, rich colours and the 'Reversewing' Markings, which are the Reverse on the Wings to what is normally expected in a 'Magpie' marking, with the wing totally white and a coloured 'Heart' marking across the shoulders and back; the head white with a coloured 'Snip' or forehead spot.

In 1907 the two fanciers Jahnke in Leipzig grounded the first Specialist Club for this Breed, the 'Reversewing Cropper Club'. A second specialist club was grounded in 1912 and by 1933 this Breed was being bred seriously by dedicated Fanciers. In 1977 in the then DDR (East Germany) there were 50 active breeders in this Specialist Club.

The present day concentration of Reversewing Croppers is now in Bayern (Bavaria). This State has not only the most breeders with the highest number overall of quality birds, but also the highest entries at Shows.

**Right:
Standard drawing of a black
Reversewing Cropper by Jan de
Jong.**



Left: Red Reversewing cropper.
Owner: M.C. Wuyts.
Photo: D.J. Hamer.

Characteristics

With an approximate measurement of 44 cm from the beak tip to the tip of the tail, the Reversewing Cropper belongs to the group of large Cropper Breeds. It is essential now-a-days for an exhibition specimen to have the correct height and posture; for this good strong legs placed at the correct angle are essential.

A good guide is that 1/3rd of the total body length should be behind the legs and 2/3rds before the legs.

Right:
Red Reversewing cropper, old hen, in 1995.
Owner: M.C. Wuyts. Photo: D.J. Hamer.

Below: Another old red hen, in 1994.
Outstanding bird with 96 points.
Owner: M.C. Wuyts. Photo: D.J. Hamer.



To attain these perfect balance proportions, a bird must have the desired length of neck and also the correct crop shape when inflated. This must be pear shape; the widest part at the top, flowing into a slight but discernable 'waist' at the lowest point of the inflated crop. From there a few centimetres of body should be visible before the start of the strong and long thighs that should be clearly visible and appear to curve very slightly forward due to the well developed

muscle.

The correct leg length, placement and strength is essential for the bird to display a well developed and shapely crop. As with most Cropper Breeds, for them to be displayed at the best advantage a certain amount of 'Cage' training is necessary, so that often simply being spoken to will stimulate the bird to 'Show-off'. At rest, few Croppers will be seen to their best advantage. Thighs, feet and toes are fully covered by feathers.



**Right: Red Reversewing Cropper.
Owner: Frank Barrachina (USA).
Photo: D.J. Hamer.**

The long vulture (hock) feathers should flow into the lower leg feathers and muffs without any large gaps. The full vulture feathers may give the impression that the height of stance is not correct; this is something you can easily rectify. It so happens that some inexperienced breeders pull some feathers from the hocks to produce a higher Stance, but with these pigeons the upper body is then no longer correct or balanced.

The head and neck should be carried almost perpendicular, the pear shaped crop carried high and curving forward, ideally in a line a little forward of the centre toe feathers. The back should slope steeply from the shoulders in a straight line to the tip of the tail, which should not be too broad.



**Left:
Black Reversewing Cropper in 1991.
Owner: M. Michels.
Photo: D.J. Hamer.**



The shoulders should not be too broad, this can cause wing tips that cross badly (they may touch at the tips or slightly cross), or dropped (hanging) wings. A Reversewing Cropper that is somewhat smaller in shoulders still looks elegant, even when of appropriate height.

**Right: Red Reversewing Cropper,
outstanding bird with 96 points.
Owner: M.C. Wuyts.
Photo: D.J. Hamer.**



Colours

The Reversewing Cropper is bred in only the 4 main colours, Black, Red, Yellow and Blue. For some years Breeders have bred Mealies (Rotfahl) and Lavenders but without official Standard recognition in Germany. Also Blue Black Chequer, but the Specialised Clubs have advised against further colours being bred, because of the admixture of other Breeds, which would be detrimental to the quality of the present day birds. Also maintaining the existing four colours at today's excellence is problem enough without polluting the existing Gene pool with 'crossed' birds, which could easily cause a rapid deterioration in Breed Type, Markings and Colour.

All colours must be rich, deep and with intense sheen; especially with Blacks a pure green sheen is required all over the black colouring. Unfortunately in Holland more often Blacks are seen with less intense colour (Charcoal black) and Greyish Backs, which is a fault. Blues should be a Pale Blue, especially the coloured heart and lower back, however when this colour is too pale then the sharp defined line between the colour and white markings may become indistinct.

Left: Aviary with yellow and black Reversewing Croppers.
Below: Another aviary with red Reversewing Croppers ones.
Owner: H. Vleeming.
Photo: D.J. Hamer



Left: Black Reversewing Cropper at the 1997 Avicultura Show in The Hague. Owner: J. Kramer.
Photo: D.J. Hamer.

It can even reach a point where the colour on the lower back is replaced by white, which is incorrect. When the heart colour is correct it may be that the back colour is then too dark; in particular the hen birds have a tendency to show this. However this is perfectly normal and hen birds should not be penalised for this darker factor as it is sex linked and using hens that are too pale will only increase the white lower back in males!



The colour in the tails rarely gives any problems, with Blues the two outer tail feathers will show some white on the edges, this again is normal for Blues. Flecking in the tail or flight feathers is rarely a problem but a minor fault if present.

With Reds an intense, deep and even Red colour is wanted and that is all over! No bluish sheen should be present; this is a fault. Such birds should also be excluded from the breeding programme or if used, used with care. If the Red is too pale, then flecking in the tail feathers may occur. If the Red is too dark, then it is possible that the feathers have poor structure and become hair like; often then the colour of the upper beak is incorrect (too dark).



Left:
The Snip of this Reversewing Cropper is too large.
Very good upper beak.
Photo: D.J. Hamer.

Below: A correct Snip, although the underline could be more defined.
Many breeders are specialist in trimming of the Markings.
Owner: Joep Sanders.
Photo: D.J. Hamer.

As opposed to pigeons that are too dark in colour, there are those that are too pale in colour: a pale Brick Red.

The colour of the tail compared to the heart and back will often be slightly paler. If there are no other faults, then this can be tolerated, but such birds could not achieve the highest grades.



The same colour variations and rules applies to the Yellow Colour variety. When the yellow colour is bred too intensive, the heart feathers may become a bit loose. In the worst case the feathers will split and become hairy. Same as with the problems mentioned above with the Reds, these birds can still be valuated with 93 points.



Left: Head marking of a Reversewing Cropper with some remarks. The Forehead Spot (Snip) should be free from the eye and is rather large and irregular. The black feathers between the eye and the beak (moustache) are and the under beak is rather dark. Photo: D.J. Hamer.

Markings

With the Magpie marking the neck, shoulders, heart, back, breast and tail are coloured. The white parts of the belly – from the breast to short before the thighs, ending in a hooked line at the lower tail feathers – must be clearly defined. The heart marking should not be too small, making the shoulder look narrow.

The head marking is rather special, being a coloured forehead spot (Snip), divided from the coloured neck by a 2 cm. wide white band. In the past this snip was as large as to touch half the eye, but today we wish a smaller snip, only reaching the upper eye cere. At the Yellows and Reds, some Top birds show a small white demarcation line above the eye and if this is at both sides of the head, this sure can be called 'ideal'.

However, if breeders tried to breed for this in the Blacks and Blues they would end up with pale upper beaks. Thus we are satisfied with the front of the forehead spot just touching the eyes. There are Blacks and Blues with a white line above the eyes, but these are really exceptions.

The Specialist Clubs request that tolerance is exhibited when assessing the snip marking. The markings on this breed are difficult enough; more important is the overall balance of the bird.

With Blacks and Blues, a too small snip can result in incorrect pigmentation of the upper beak, (too little pigment) whereas a bird with a large snip will inevitably have a correct coloured beak. With Reds and Yellows the beak should be pale or flesh coloured; with Blacks and Blues the upper beak dark in colour, the lower beak pale. The beak cere is White. Slight anomalies with beak colour in the Blacks and Blues should not prohibit Birds reaching a high grade. The Reds and Yellows should have the correct beak colour.



Right: Black Reversewing Cropper hen, entered at the 1991 Ornithophilia Show by W. Michels. Photo: D.J. Hamer.

The Eye and Eye Cere

When the snip is too large, the eye can be partially covered; this may result in a broken coloured (two colour) eye. While this may not be exhibited it may, with care, be useful in breeding when bred to the correct partner (one with too small a snip). With such mating good breeding records must be kept.

The eye cere should be fine and pale in colour. Some breeders say the cere colour can be influenced by feeding, or withholding certain grains (Feeds containing carotene or natural colour i.e. maize).

With Blacks and Blues a large snip may also affect the cere colour adversely.

The Breed today

The numbers of the Breed and the quality of each colour varies somewhat from year to year, depending on the number of breeders keeping each colour. On the 40th anniversary of the German Club the Yellow was the most perfected colour, thus this colour was chosen as 'standard ideal' for type, stance, footings, blowing, colour and marking. All exhibited birds are compared to this 'ideal' breed example. This enables the various Colours to be correctly assessed according to their particular needs.

In Yellow one finds usually the most high grade birds, but also in the Blacks 'ideal' birds are regularly seen throughout the years, despite the fact of the particular problems as described before with this colour to get it exactly right. In the Blacks, the front or breast could often be more stretched.

The Blues are almost on a level with the Black, again despite difficulties particular to this colour, as they cannot be effectively 'crossed' with the other colours (except possibly a Black) so are more isolated in their breeding. They tend to be somewhat heavier built than the other colours so Blues tend not always to look so elegant as the other 3 colours. For these reasons not so many Blues are to be seen on the exhibition bench.

Today the Reds are also on a level with the other colours.

It is possible to see the eye/head markings at 10 to 14 days old but selection at this time is not practical as the final markings may not be evident before 2-3 years old!



**Left: A young Reversewing Cropper at Staf Mertens'.
Photo: Aviculture Europe.**

Breeding

For breeding it is best too cut the muffs short. A nest bowl is not suitable; a box is better, size 8 cm. high x 25 x 25 cm. This can be filled with nest material (or shavings), with sacking or other natural material loosely fixed to the upper side of the frame, then make a hollow in it.

As the muffs have been trimmed the birds will be able to move about the nest with no problems; it should be rare that eggs or young are tipped out of the nest.

Only healthy birds should be used for breeding; advisably a dropping sample may be sent for analysis before pairing. Once the second egg is laid no unnecessary disturbance, although the Reversewing is a very good brooder and parent. Once the young have been rung then is the time to start handling so they become used to the breeder, and when the birds have been separated from the parents then cage training ready for exhibition is advised. Care must also be given at this time that the crop develops correctly.

Many factors go into breeding a good Reversewing Cropper and many novice breeders simply do not have the patience and give-up after a year or two when the desired results are not obtained. However when you have bred just one bird that fulfils the Standard Ideal, then the satisfaction is all the greater!

General Care

A clean pigeon loft is obvious. Breeds with foot feathers (muffs) do need some adaptation for proper care within the loft and flight. Do not crowd and use the correct perches in the loft. Damaged foot or vulture feathers need to be removed 7-8 weeks prior to an exhibition, to show a full muff again. 3-4 days before an exhibition, if needed the muffs may be washed, the birds penned afterwards in show pens with shavings or sawdust on the floor. With presentation and correct trimming of the markings a steady hand is required (and ideally should be learned from an experienced exhibitor). The quality of care and the training will be clearly demonstrated in the exhibition pen, and reflected in the grading of the bird, allowing the bird to be shown to its best advantage: Stance, Crop, Performance, Footwork, Markings and Colour.

Sources:

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- 'Alles über Rassetauben' 2001, by Erich Müller.

For more information please contact the Breeders' Clubs:

Vereniging van Eksterkropperfokkers
M.C. Wuyts Heesterdijk 8
5711 PW Someren - Nederland
Tel.: 0492-332015

Sonderverein Verkehrtflügelkröpfer (gegr. 1907)
Ludwig Staimer
Arnulfstr. 273/IV
80639 München - Duitsland
Tel.: 0049 (0) 89 / 1 78 49 27



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STANDARD: REVERSE WING CROPPER (VERKEHRTFLÜGEL KRÖPFER)

Origin: Thuringan and the Saxon Regions.

Overall impression: A large, upright and very imposing Cropper, with full strong muffs.

Head: Plain headed, narrow, medium length, with a somewhat high forehead, the back of skull well rounded.

Eye: Dark with a pale eye-cere.

Beak: Medium length, strong at the base, pale colour;
For Blacks and Blues, pale under-beak and black/dark upper-beak.
The beak cere well developed but not large or course.

Neck: Long, the longer the better, if in proportion overall.
The Crop appears broadly set, widest across the upper part.

Breast: Not carried forward or curved, with a slight but definite 'Waist' to the Crop below the level of the wing butts.

Back: Not too broad across the shoulders, the back narrowing and sharply sloping to the tail tip.

Wings: Not too broad, but long, covering the Back well, the primary tips touching or slightly crossing.

Tail: Not too broad, ideally in a sloping, even line with the Back.

Legs: Long but in proportion overall, not broad standing, Thighs with a light forward curve, Vulture (Thigh) feathers full, muffs long, thick and curving to the sides.

Colours: Black, Blue, Red and Yellow. The Gloss colours rich, intensive and with intense sheen; blues with an even colour and 'normal' blue tone. The Marking is clean and distinct.

Colours and Markings: The rear of the head, neck, breast as far as 2 cm above the thighs, shoulders (Back/Shoulder 'Heart'). Back, Tail with Upper and Lower Tail Coverts.
Above the Beak-Cere a Broad 'Snip', ideally around all the base of the beak-cere, without running into the eye-cere, evenly shaped and ending within 2 cm of the coloured rear of the head.
(Some lee-way is given to the breadth of the Snip as with the 'Ideal'; the colour also tends to run below the eye and onto the lower beak!)

The Colour to the upper neck/under the throat comes to within 1cm of the under beak and eye in a curving line to the back of the head.

From above and behind the Shoulder the colour forms a closed curved 'Heart' shape, with the Coloured feather flowing over onto the white of the wings, making the white to the top part of the wings appear fairly narrow.

All the rest of the Pigeon is white: the White head marking, white wing shield (partially covered by the coloured shoulder 'Heart'), primaries, thighs, legs and muffs.

Faults: A plump or small Bird; horizontal posture; too deep (Legs); weak or narrow Crop.
Thick, reddish or uneven coloured (from the feather colour) eye-ceres.
Tail not held in a straight line, (upper tail coverts too full).
Weak, thin thigh and muff feathers; a white 'Bib' (or colour running onto the lower beak, 'Coloured Bib'); flecks or white feathers in the colour or coloured in the white.
Matt or poor and uneven colour.

Order of importance:

Breed Type and Overall Balance - Figure/Form - Posture - Crop - Muffs and Thigh Feathers - Markings - Colour.

Ring Size: 11 mm