

PORTUGUESE TUMBLER



OVERALL APPEARANCE: Very small—the smallest being preferred—short, with a somewhat erect posture.

MEASUREMENTS:

- from the tip of the beak to the end of the tail (bird stretched)—about 11 3/4"
- from the tip of the beak to the back of the wattle— .6"
- perimeter of breast and shoulders (measured over the wings)—about 9 1/2"

WEIGHT: about 10.6 ozs

HEAD: Wide and short, flat at the top, front slightly prominent.

BEAK: medium length, fine and inserted almost at a right angle with the front (called "bico de andorinha": swallow beak or swallow-like beak).

WATTLES small and of a fine texture.

EYES: white or slightly powdered with red pigment (fish eye or pearl eye).

EYE CERES: narrow.

NECK: short and thick at its base.

BREAST: broad and prominent.

BACK: wide and oblique.

WINGS: detached, ending just short of the end of the tail and resting upon it.

LEGS: medium in length. very small toes, red and without feathering.

TAIL: short and inclined.

COLORS: all colorings.

Selection of these pigeons must be directed towards smallness, especially in length; correct shape of the head with a flat crown and a well marked angle beak/front;

FAULTS TO AVOID: beak too big and/or thick, eyes too dark, drooping wings, legs too long and toes too big and/or feathered.

POINT SYSTEM

Overall Appearance.....	30
Head and beak.....	20
Eyes and eye ceres	20
Neck, breast and back.....	10
Wings and tail	10
Toes.....	10
.....	100

OVERALL APPEARANCE: The ideal Portuguese Tumbler is very small, short, wide breasted, strongly set at the shoulders, its back a short trapeze, its posture somewhat erect and its overall appearance harmoniously fit. There are many specimens that stand horizontally, which is a serious fault. As described, weight and measurements serve only as references. The selection of these birds being directed towards a decrease in size, it obviously requires the

constant revision of their weight and measures. As said, when correctly selected, the Portuguese Tumbler must decrease in size from one generation to the next. In this particular feature, the Official Standard of the Portuguese Tumbler sets itself apart from all other known Standards. Strong emphasis though must be put on the fact that the best specimen is not always the smallest: That title belongs to that one that possess most of the qualities described in the Standard of the breed.

WEIGHT: From 10.6 oz in 1954, the average weight of these pigeons has been irregularly (!) decreasing, some individuals attaining 6.5 oz. in the 1980's. Special attention must be given to the fact that when mentioning either weight or measurements, we always refer to adult specimens fully grown and healthy. Its through serious and thoughtful selection that one must strive to reach the goals

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set by the Standard. Obviously, by the only means of selection, decreases in size will become harder to obtain for Nature has its limitations!

HEAD: When eyed from above the head must look as close to a square (with rounded angles) as possible. The face is ideally wide between the eyes, subdivided into three sensibly equal zones, the beak being its central part. Observed from the side there should be enough substance between the foremost part of the eye cere and the vertical line of the front, as well as between the upper part of the eye cere and the crown. The crown must be flat, without humps or shallows. Feeling the crown with a finger, there should be only a uniform plane with no depressions or bulges. Although straight, the top line of the head can be inclined towards the rear because of the slight prominence of bulge of the front, this not being a fault.

BEAK: Feature that best distinguishes this breed, the ideal beak of the Portuguese Tumbler is inserted, (if imaginarily extended...) just under or, better said, sticks out, in a pointy fashion, its medium line passing the eye at the right angle with the vertical line of the front. The Portuguese call it "Bico de Andorinha" which means "Swallow beak" or "Swallow-like" beak, because of its likeness to the beak of that passerine. Outside Portugal it has been erroneously thought that this denomination describes the angle of insertion when in fact it only describes the beak itself. (As a matter of fact, the shape of the Portuguese Tumbler's beak is more like that of the common tit, the chickadee or even the warbler, but in Portugal the swallow who has been linked to the worship of the Virgin Mary, and is therefore a more popular bird, is more appealing as subject for comparison.) It is, ideally, cone-shaped, thin, narrow and pointy, medium-sized, mandibles similar in thickness, perfectly adjusted, the upper only slightly longer than the lower. Any beak other than the above described (short or too long, thick, blunt or hooked, mandibles badly set...) is therefore faulty in the Portuguese Tumbler and must be eliminated by the most serious and dedicated selection.

WATTLES: As small as possible, fine delicate and white. On a very good specimen the wattles will appear as having been sparkled with a very fine white powder. These birds' wattles are very little affected by age, conserving their original shape well through the years.

EYES: The best or ideal eye is perfectly white (fisheye). That is the color of a white pearl of very good grade. This being extremely difficult to obtain, the less prized pearl eye is accepted as an alternative as long as it doesn't show too much of red or yellow sparkling along the outer rim of the iris. Dark colored eyes (bull eyes) being faulty, white birds must have the same white eye as all other varieties.

EYE CERES: Narrow, single-lined, of a fine texture, fitting the color of the specimen. Eye ceres too wide or double-lined are faults. Also a fault is the complete lack of eye cere.

NECK: Of narrow and harmonious curves the neck is broad, thickly set at its base, short, lean under the lower mandible. Its curved lines are uninterrupted from the head down to the breast and back. In some specimens the lower feathers of the neck slightly overlap the shoulders. That's a fault that must be avoided.

BREAST: Wide, broad, prominent, continuing the harmonious curves of the front line.

BACK: At an open angle with the base of the neck from where it slopes down in a straight line, uninterrupted and inclined in

relation to the horizontal plain of the floor. Trapezoidal, wide at the shoulders, short, and narrow at the base of the tail. When eyed from the side the rump must be perfectly integrated in the straight line, being a prominent rump one of the most unaesthetic faults in the Portuguese Tumbler.

WINGS: The wings must be detached, especially from the breast, standing out at the shoulders almost as if the bird was about to fly. They are relatively short, so much so that they seem broader at the shield, with very tight covering. Sails are a fault, wing feathers should roll over back and rump. The primaries rest on the tail without crossing, ending just short of the end of the tail. Loose covering is a serious fault as are dropping wings which are aesthetically unacceptable.

LEGS: The so-called thigh should be of medium length, better slightly longer than too short. This is mandatory because since the stance of the pigeons is oblique and the fact that their tail, although in straight line with the back, should not touch the ground, that detail of the thigh is essential so those two qualities can co-exist. The toes must be naked and red in color. They must be very small, thin and delicate, their smallness being one of the main characteristics of this breed. The best specimens feature "ballerina feet", standing and walking tip-toed when excited. The legs should be set moderately apart so as not to be too close to each other. Legs too long or so short that the pigeon must stand horizontally, toes too big, thick or feathered, all are serious faults.

TAIL: Made up of twelve main feathers set as to form a narrow and ideally short rectangle, about one and one half tail feathers wide. The incline of the tail is basically the continuity of the straight sloping line of the back. When the bird stands in its ideal oblique position of stance, the tail should only slightly, if at all, touch the ground so as not to give the impression that the bird actually rests on it. Faults: too much length, too much width, number of main tail feathers superior or inferior of twelve.

COLORS: Being traditionally a flying breed, until as recently as the 1980's everything was acceptable in the color range. In the modern scope of Pigeon Shows though, all colors and patterns are acceptable, these must conform to the specific requirements commonly practiced today.

APPENDIX

Obviously the characteristics described above refer solely to the morphologic qualities of the Portuguese Tumbler. There are of course other interesting qualities in this beautiful breed, among which an absolutely outstanding gentleness. They truly are very sociable birds—very agreeable, tame, calm and gentle. They are way above average breeders, excellent providers of their own offspring. Having originated in a country known for its warm climate, they are often inclined to start a new brood while their other young are only a few days old. In colder weather this behavior can have disappointing consequences. In flight they have a very characteristic roundness about their outline, being short and compact. If tumbling occurs, it is always executed very fast and the performers catch up rapidly with the rest of the flock.

*Submitted by the Portuguese Tumbler Club of America
Drawing by Louis Frindel*