

Rajshahi: Home of Tumbler Pigeons and Remarkable Katakhal Market

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ABSTRACT

There is no doubt Rajshahi Division and its renowned Katakhal pigeon market is the best place for collecting all sorts of high-graded tumbler pigeons. To visit at this pigeon market mentioned 43% tumblers, 14% highfliers, and 43% show tumblers with reasonable price. Most of the buyers were mid- or young-aged. Sellers and buyers were highly experienced on such tumbler group of pigeons (tumbling, flying, show). At the time of flying for amusement, pigeon keepers had experience to lost their pigeons due to high flying or by predator birds especially falcons. Sometimes, crossbred tumblers were seen at this market, and it was possible to find out such mis-marks by external features.

Keywords: Tumbler Pigeon, Roller Pigeon, Highflyer Pigeon, Conservation, Significance, Flying, Rajshahi, Katakhal Pigeon Market, Bangladesh.

INTRODUCTION

Amusement with pigeon keeping

Tumblers of the worlds are divided into three categories—highflyer, tumbler, and roller. Millions of thousands selective breeding developed the tumblers perfection in various ways. In Bangladesh, Rajshahi Division is the main place for the availability of various tumbler pigeons. Early characteristics of these pigeons were based on their small body size, few colors, and unbelievable flight endurance. In 19th century, England organized flying competition with short faced-tumbler varieties. Pigeon flying is a remarkable hobby in Rajshahi from the very beginning. Due to long time flying endurance, predator birds especially peregrine falcon, caught or injured those pigeons in the sky. After Rajshahi, Dhaka is the best place for many pigeon breeds as well as tumblers [1-3].

Quality tumblers at Rajshahi

Tumbler pigeons are unlike any ordinary pigeon. With a medium-sized body, strong wings, and a lively temperament, they are natural performers. When released, tumblers soar high and spin in mid-air, and exhibit somersaults. Those acrobatics are not just for show they demonstrate strong muscle coordination, stamina, and intelligence. Breeders in Rajshahi take pride in raising their selected pigeons in competition. At the time of selective breeding, breeders keep in mind on the agility, endurance, and tumble style of their pigeons.

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Katakhali pigeon market

This pigeon market stands only Friday in a week from 8 a. m. to 5 p. m. In Rajshahi city, there are other pigeon markets but this Katakhali is the best for many pigeons especially variety of tumblers. English short-faced tumbler, house-tumbler, Turkish tumbler, parlor tumbler, crossbred tumbler, Indian lotan, local (deshi) lotan are available at this market. With these pigeons, other fancy pigeons are common at all. The price of those pigeons is reasonable and most of the buyers or sellers are satisfied to carry these pigeons. Pigeons are sold on the basis of their characteristics especially external physique and flying endurance. From the Akbar reign, he had huge tumbler pigeons and that time pigeons flying was the great hobby [4]. Tumblers have special colors and patterns with remarkable flying endurance [5].

Scientific exploring at this market

Due to crossed with other pigeons, sometimes, pigeons do not tumble or flying properly. Depending on tumbling behavior these are categorized—rollers (huge and rapid tumble), tumblers (few tumble), and highfliers (less tumble and huge flying endurance). The eye color of the most tumbler pigeons is pearled; feet are mostly naked. Flying pigeons need rest 2-3 days in a week. Training performing from a young age is beneficial for their landing. Flying birds need less feed for its light body weight which is helpful for long-time flying in the sky. Its strong flight muscle and good feather condition helps to perform in the sky. Duration of flight depends on genetics, training, and ideal feed. In cloudy or heavy wind need not to fly pigeons. Sometimes they fall during rolling, rarely escape death, and predator hawk bird takes advantage to seize upon them [6]. In case of lotan (shaking tumbler) pigeon mostly found self-white with bull eyes.



Plate 1. Rajshahi Katakhali pigeon market.

Table 1. One-day observation of tumbler varieties at Katakhali pigeon market

Group	Name of pigeons	Sample size (%)
Tumbling	English tippler, Bangladeshi house-tumbler, Turkish tumbler, Indian lotan, Bangladeshi lotan, English short-faced tumbler (turibaj)	6 (43)
Flying	Pakistani highflyer, Budapest highflyer	2 (14)
Show	Moos-sulli (ghia sulli), brander (chila), Danish tumbler, Vienna short-faced tumbler, Felezyhazer tumbler (non-tumbler), Komorner tumbler (non-tumbler)	6 (43)

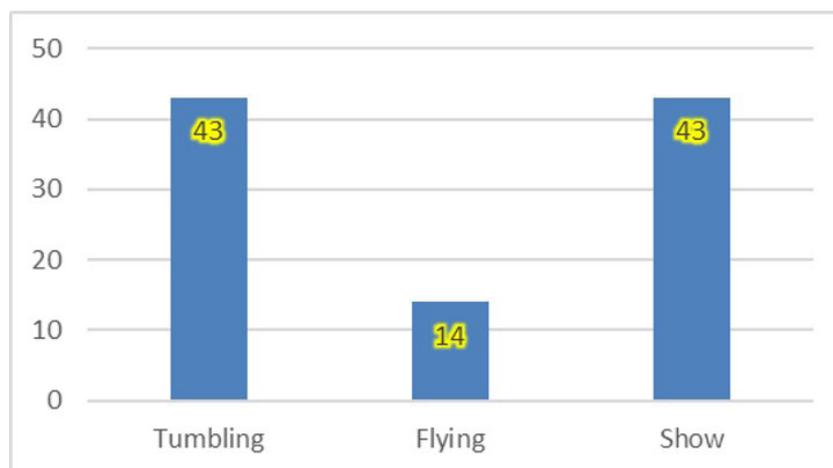


Figure 1. Percentages of observed pigeons.

Remarkable or common tumbler/roller pigeons at this market

English tippler: In Bangladesh, most pigeons are English tipplers. This is a common breed and found all over Bangladesh with a reasonable price. Most of the time, breeders cannot maintain the purity of this pigeon due to non-selective breeding. Amusement by flying, tumbler pigeons is our common tradition from the early history. Its basic color is black spotted on white plumage. **Bangladeshi house-tumbler pigeon:** There were many Pakistani highfliers and English tipplers in Bangladesh. Selection after selection between and among tumbler pigeons, pigeon breeders have got desirable type of tumbler pigeons. Rajshahi Division of Bangladesh, breeders have produced Bangladeshi house-tumblers from such selections. In a balcony of loft or short height from the loft, this pigeon performs well. Sometimes, from the common tumbler pairs, few progenies show this

type of performance. **Indian lotan:** Unlike parlor tumbler or parlor roller, so-called lotan pigeons of Bangladesh either they are local or Indian, these are interesting breeds because it shows performance on the ground by shaking. These pigeons especially Bangladeshi or local lotan pigeons are somewhat local pigeons (gola pigeons) of Bangladesh. Its unique color is white with bull eyes. Its parental care is noteworthy and can be used as foster parents. **Moos-sulli:** In Bangladesh, this pigeon is called 'ghia sulli' (due to yellow color). This is not a flying bird. Breeders keep in the cage as a show bird. In most of the pet shops, this pigeon is available and price is reasonable to everybody. Moreover, its breeding performance as well as care to the young is mentionable. Its body shape, eyes color, beak, and head size are somewhat a true tumbler (performing tumbler). Among the tumbler group, this is very common, especially in Dhaka city. This breed is plain-headed and clean-legged but crested variety also common.



Plate 2. English tippler.



Plate 3. Bangladeshi house-tumbler.



Plate 4. Indian lotan.



Plate 5. Moos-sulli.

Cultural significance of tumblers

Tumbler pigeons are woven into the cultural fabric of Rajshahi. In many festivals, competitions, and neighborhood flying events these birds are raised. Watching a flock of tumblers in flight is considered both entertaining and auspicious, with some locals believing that a well-trained pigeon brings luck and prosperity. Pigeons also play a role in community bonding. Families often compete or showcase their birds, creating friendly rivalries and shared experiences. Knowledge about breeding, feeding, and training is traditionally passed down orally, making pigeon keeping a living heritage.

Tourism and economic potential

The Katakhal market is increasingly attracting tourists, photographers, and bird enthusiasts across Bangladesh and abroad. Colorful pigeons at this market ensure the bondage among all sorts of breeders through sharing their experience. With proper pigeon dealing, the cultural tourism could provide a sustainable economic boost to this remarkable region of Bangladesh. Tumbler pigeons, flying competitions, and guided market tours could be marked as part of cultural heritage of Rajshahi, combining tradition, education, and commerce.

Challenges and conservation

Despite their popularity, tumbler pigeons and the tradition of pigeon breeding face challenges. Rapid urbanization, shrinking open spaces and lack of formal training threaten the craft. Disease outbreaks [7] and inbreeding can also affect pigeon quality. Awareness campaigns, training programs, and pigeon clubs encourage young people to participate and maintain breeding standards. Conserving pigeons of Rajshahi is not just about birds, is about protecting a unique cultural identity.

CONCLUSIONS

Rajshahi Division of Bangladesh is a city of tumbler pigeons where humans and birds have shared the skies for generations. The Katakali pigeon market stands as a vibrant hub of aviculture, bringing together tradition, skill and commerce in one lively space. By supporting local breeders, raising cultural awareness, and promoting tourism, Rajshahi can continue to soar alongside its remarkable tumbler group of pigeons, ensuring this unique feathered legacy remains alive, and thriving for generations to come. Non-selective breeding program is the major limitation in tumbler group of pigeon in Bangladesh. Only proper knowledge in pigeon breeding could enhance the quality tumbler pigeons. In this sense, Katakali pigeon market can be an ideal place to purchase pigeons to improve them in order to perform in the sky.

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None.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflict of interest.

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