

# **Chinese Owl History**

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The origin of the Chinese Owl is uncertain. Some believe it all started in China and the breed was produced from imported African Owls. Others believe Chinese Owls came to Germany from Africa along with shipments of African Owls.

According to my sources the Chinese Owl was introduced into Germany about 1850. Just where it came from remains a mystery. From Germany the breed was imported to France sometime in the 1880's. It is believed that it came to England about the same time.

## **Chinese Owl in America**

Just when the Chinese Owl arrived in this country is uncertain. Some fanciers have found evidence that Chinese Owls were shown in the U.S. as early as 1870. In the early days of the Chinese Owl some called them "Whiskered Owls." In fact, in the first standard for Chinese Owls (1879) the name was whiskered owl.

The year 1893 brought about the first Owl club in America, the American Owl Club. The Chinese, as well as English and African Owls were promoted by this club. In 1906 the Western Owl and Turbit Club was formed.

The Chinese Owl was exhibited at the fourth National Pigeon Show in Mount Clemens, Michigan. They were, of course, exhibited at earlier shows but this was their first exhibition at a National. Many of these early Chinese Owls were nothing more than poor African Owls. The "true" Chinese Owls arrived in the early 1900's from Europe.

By 1947 the United Owl Club had been formed with a standard drawing which recognized the true Chinese Owl. From here things really took off. Imports began arriving from Denmark, Germany, and Spain. Two of these early importers were Ralph Buch Brage and William Hawkinson Sr.

A group of fanciers in California formed the California Chinese Owl Club in 1951. In 1958 the Mid-West Chinese Owl Club was formed in Des Moines Iowa. The first annual meet was held with the Iowa State Pigeon Association in Knoxville, Iowa with 52 birds entered. Due to the increasing interest in the Chinese Owl the name was later changed to the National Chinese Owl Club. By 1961 two more clubs had been formed to promote the Chinese Owl, The Eastern Chinese Owl Club and the Western Chinese Owl Club.

## **Standard**

The present standard has not changed much since the Mid-West Chinese Owl Club was formed. Over the years updates to the standard have been made. (Latest in 1989) but the basic drawing continues nearly the same.

## Colors

The Chinese Owl offers many colors and or patterns. At present classes are offered for the following: bars and checks in blue, silver, brown, khaki, ash yellow (cream), ash red (mealy); self's in white, black, dun, brown, khaki, indigo in bar and check and andalusian; spread ash red; pied or splash; body mark; saddle, baldhead, recessive red, recessive yellow, almond, qualmond, tortoiseshell, grizzle checks, are shown in one class. All grizzle bars are shown together with a class provided for any other grizzles. The A.O.C. class at present contains colors and or patterns not provided for in the official color standard. Some examples of the A.O.C. class would be laced, reduced, opal, toy stencil, bronze, barless, magpie, tailmark, any indigo except blue heterozygous, etc.

The Chinese Owl offers a unique challenge to breeders. They are a small breed, yet still show power. Being very prolific they raise many youngsters in a season. Some believe that the Chinese Owl being a shorter beaked bird might need foster parents. This is false, they are quite able to feed their young and do so very well. I have been breeding Chinese Owls for a few years and this is the first year I have ever used foster parents. This is being done to "pump" more young out of special pairs.

Being relative newcomers to the breed we have received a lot of help from the members with advice, suggestions, as well as a good start with quality birds. Each year we look forward to showing our birds and seeing our many friends in the club. They are all like an extended part of our family. The competition at the shows can be pretty tough with entries in excess of 400 Chinese Owls. So if you are looking for a breed with a challenge as well as fun and interesting people, why not give the Chinese Owl a try. I'm sure you'll enjoy the Chinese Owl as much as we have.