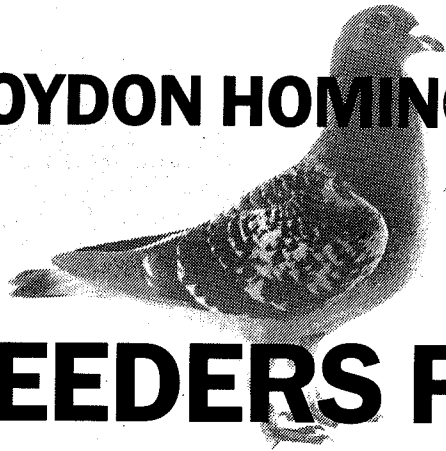


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Don't judge a pigeon by its throat

by Rudi Witt

A lot of fanciers recommend that pigeons aged between 6-8 weeks must have a good throat; if the birds haven't, they advise to dispose of them, but is this the right thing to do?

I personally, look for a good throat but other breeders without much experience, don't know the difference between a good or bad throat. Sure, a really bad throat is not very difficult to recognise; on opening the beak and looking at the breathing hole, it pops up and the opening is big and round, so that every breath the pigeon takes, the hole opens and closes, this is one of the signs of a bad throat.

When fanciers talk about good and bad throats, most actually mean the air slit. Many don't realise the colour of the throat is also relevant, it must be red but not bright red; a good throat is one where the breathing opening is deep in the neck and tongue movement is limited, the throat will also be an oval shape and the colour will be a light red. It all sounds quite simple but I know many beginners who are not very experienced with throats, it is, virtually impossible for them to open the pigeon's beak and look inside and decide whether the throat is no good.

To make judgements on pigeons throats is not too difficult for a fancier but I know of fanciers that have been racing for years and they don't even know what to look for.

Even though it is important to open the beak and have a good look inside, it must also be taken into consideration that a young bird who has been fed wrongly will show a bad throat but once feeding habits have been altered, in a few weeks the throat will return to a healthy state.

Everyone knows that a fat pigeon has a bad throat but that's not because of sickness but of short breaths due to fatness. You also have to be careful about declaring a pigeon bad, if you've chased him

around the loft, trying to catch him; it will obviously show signs of a bad throat but in reality, it will be perfectly healthy, but because you've chased it around you cannot fairly judge it.

With all of this looking in the throat and mucking around, you can never really judge a good throat from a bad one, even the experts often make mistakes. So, if you are not absolutely certain about what you are doing, keep your hands off the pigeon and let the basket sort it out for you.

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