

Goldfish Varieties – Fantail

By Peter J. Ponzio

In the original article for this series, we defined a number of characteristics common to all goldfish, and introduced the concept of goldfish varieties, or different types of goldfish. Each subsequent article would provide detailed guidelines to appreciate and understand the characteristics of each variety recognized by the Goldfish Society of America (GFSA). Line Art for the GFSA standards has been provided courtesy of Merlin Cunliffe.

The Fantail is a double-tail goldfish, which possesses an egg-shaped, rather deep body and paired anal, ventral and pectoral fins. The dorsal fin is large, and should be carried erect. The fantail was probably the first double-tailed fish bred successfully, and most likely developed as a natural mutation in China. The fantail is known as the "lettered-fish" in China, due to its resemblance to the Chinese character "wen."⁽¹⁾

Fantails can grow quite large, with specimens of 10 -12" being reported. Despite the large size, and presence of paired fins, fantails swim quite well, and are very hardy. Fantails do well in a pond environment, and mix well with single-tail goldfish varieties.

The fantail comes in a variety of colors, including orange, yellow, white, olive or drab green, yellow-brown, calico and black. The primary identifying characteristics of this variety of goldfish are the paired fins (especially the caudal or tail fin), the deep body, and the high erect dorsal, which is expected to be from 1/3 to 1/2 the depth of the body. Typically, the caudal fin should be from 1/4 to 1/2 the length of the body, split for at least 75% of the length of the tail, with the remaining fins being proportional to the shape and size of the fish. Unsplit, or tripod tails are to be avoided, and will sometimes result in a disqualification at a show.

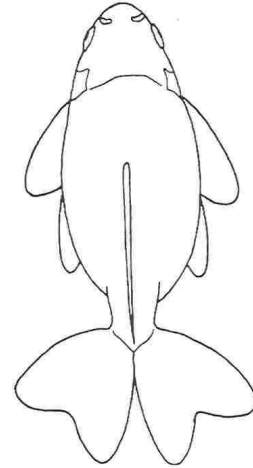
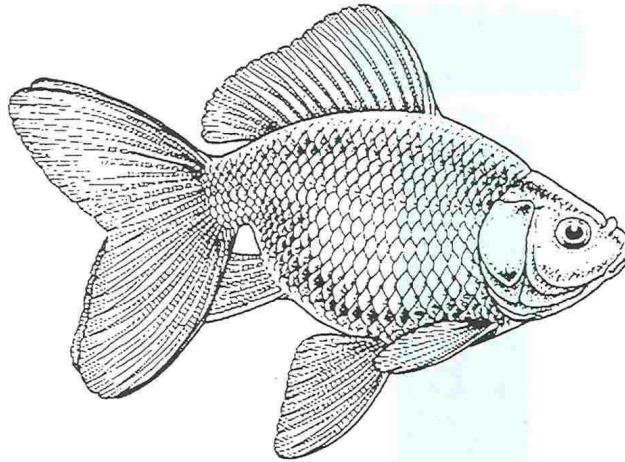
The fantail is usually the first "fancy" goldfish kept by most people. Due to their hardy natures, these fish are easy to care for, and make a pleasing contrast to the single-tail type fish. Fantails are considered a separate show category at most goldfish shows, but do not often win major awards such as Grand Champion or Reserve Grand Champion, which are usually won by Orandas, Ryukins, Ranchus, and Lionheads.

Shown below is the GFSA variety guideline, which indicates the judging criteria, and emphasizes the finnage and body shape which we discussed above.

Double Tail

Breed: Fantail

Goldfish Society of America



Description:

The Fantail possesses a long egg-shaped body with double caudal fins. The depth of the body should be approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{5}{8}$ the length of the body. The caudal fin is double, and should be 90% or more divided; the caudal fin is approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ the body length. The dorsal fin should be approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ the depth of the body. The pectoral and pelvic fins are paired, and should be short, rounded and well-matched. The paired anal fins should match the pelvic and pectoral fins in length and shape. The Fantail can occur in any of the scale types common to Goldfish: nacreous, metallic, or matt. Acceptable metallic colors are orange, red & white, and white. Nacreous coloration included bi-color, tri-color, solid red, and calico (with or without spangled scales). Matt coloration includes pink, bi-color, and tri-color.

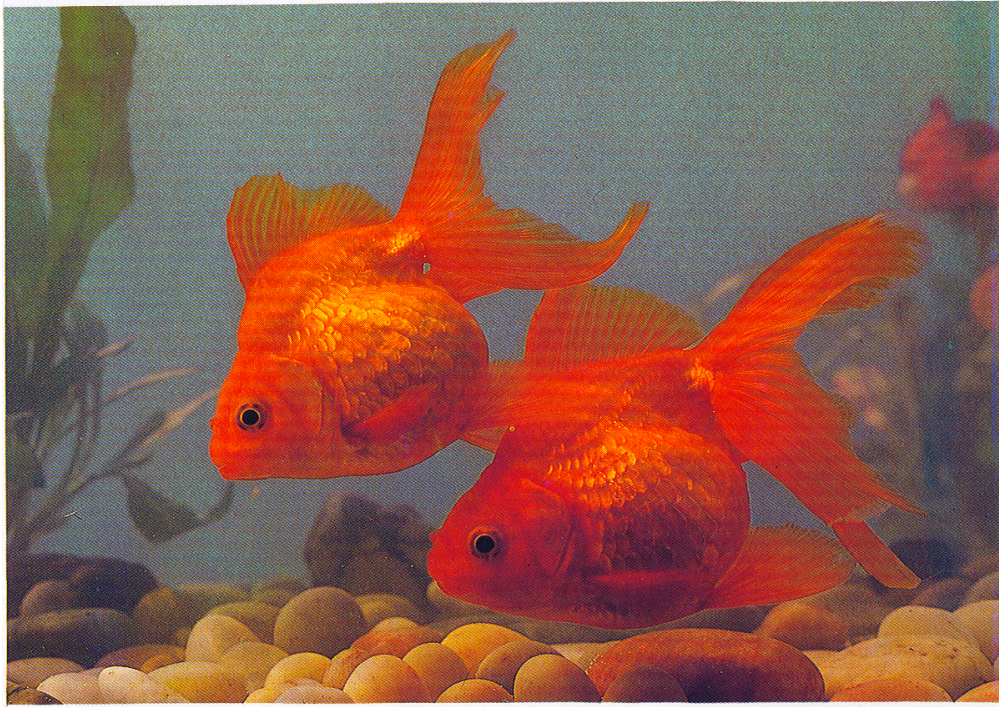
Point Schedule:

Body Style	20 points
Coloration	20 points
Finnage	20 points
Special Characteristics:	
Intensity of color;	
carriage of caudal fin	20 points
Department and Condition	20 points

Judging for these fish is somewhat different than for single-tail fish, since the tail and double fins present unique challenges (they should be matched and proportional to the size of the fish). In addition, particular attention should be paid to the body depth, and the height of the dorsal fin. As was mentioned earlier in the article, colors can span the range of those seen by most goldfish types. Large fish often show intense coloration, especially if raised in outside ponds.



Calico fantail, photo by Fred Rosenzweig



Red fantails, from *Chinese Goldfish*, Tetra Press (photo used with permission)

⁽¹⁾ *Goldfish in Hong Kong*, Hanson Han-Shek Man, 1993, Urban Council of Hong Kong.