

## **Goldfish Varieties – Veiltail**

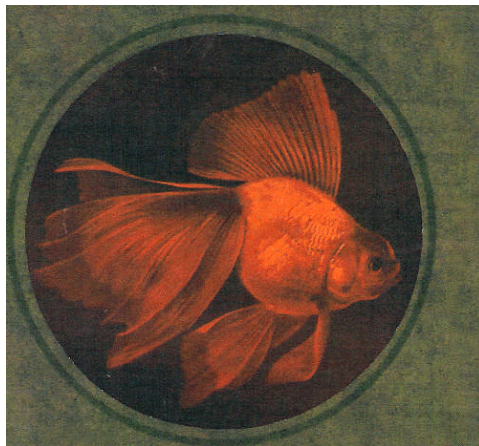
### **By Peter J. Ponzio**

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 Veiltail is one of my favorite varieties, yet it remains a fish that relatively few people have seen or raised. The fish is bred primarily by individual hobbyists, which accounts for its rarity. Due to the delicate nature of their finnage, these fish are too delicate to be raised commercially with much success.

Since the Veiltail is relatively unknown, a brief history of its development is in order. The Veiltail, along with the Comet, is one of two fish to be recognized as originating in the U.S. In the case of the Veiltail, this parentage is debated, with some people, including William T. Innes author of *Goldfish Varieties*, claiming that this fish originated in Japan. Most people would agree that the Veiltail was produced in the U.S. from stock originally imported from Japan as fantails. The dates of the first introduction of the Veiltail are also in dispute, but most people would list the time period between the turn of the last century and the first two decades of the twentieth century as being a good approximate time for its introduction.

The Veiltail originally enjoyed immense popularity, and most fish shows in the early part of the twentieth century awarded Grand Champion designations to



the fish. A fine example of a Veiltail is this fish, taken from the front-page of *Goldfish Varieties*, published in 1947 by Innes Publishing Company. This fish was known as "Sunset," and won many awards during its distinguished show career.

The Veiltail proved so popular that it was adopted as the official symbol of the Philadelphia Aquarium Society. The Philadelphia Society was responsible for developing the first comprehensive set of goldfish standards in the U.S., and was responsible for establishing a breeding program for these fish with several of its members. Sometime in the second or third decade of the twentieth century, offspring of Philadelphia fish were sent to the U.K., so that line breeding could occur there, as well. As it turns out, this was a fortuitous event, as we shall see. Due to the difficulties experienced in breeding this fish, fewer and fewer hobbyists bred Veiltails in the U.S., but the U.K. line continued unbroken.

Sometime in the 1950s or 1960s, the Philadelphia line of Veiltails died out in the U.S. Two hobbyists in particular, Al Thomma and Al Foster, were interested in reviving the line in the U.S. They contacted John Parker in the U.K., who had a line of the original fish available, and John arranged for other fish to be sent to the two Als in the U.S. Thanks to the efforts of John, Al, and Al, the Veiltail line is doing well in the U.S., although quantities of these fish are still limited, due to the intensive work needed to breed and raise them. If you ever are fortunate enough to obtain one or more of these fish, I'm sure you will enjoy them.

The Veiltail is a round bodied fish, and possesses paired anal, ventral and pectoral fins. The dorsal fin is usually  $\frac{3}{4}$  or more of the depth of the body and should be carried fully erect, and the caudal fin, which in the best specimens is completely straight, is often the length of the body to 2 times the length of the body. The distinguishing feature of this fish is the finnage, and to see one of these fish in person is truly a remarkable sight. The fins literally flow around the fish as they swim, giving the impression that the fish is gliding in the water. The body, as was mentioned is round, and should look almost like a ball, and be very compact.

Ryukins are relatively smaller fish when compared with Orandas and Ryukins. Body sizes of 5 to 6 inches are about the maximum limit for these fish, but with caudal fins as large as 2 times the size of the body, these fish can look larger than they actually are. Veiltails should **NOT** be over-wintered outdoors, and they require a calm environment – **no rapidly moving water** – since they have difficulty swimming. They seem to require heavy aeration, and it is preferable to keep them isolated from more aggressive varieties, such as Comets or Shubunkins.

Most Veiltails come in metallic coloration with red, orange and blue-silver colors being the most common. John Parker of the U.K. has developed a line of intense, vermillion-red fish that is spectacular, and they must literally be seen to be believed. Al Foster has developed a line of calico Veiltails that is also stunning, and most of these fish seem to be primarily matte, and not spangled.



Photo courtesy of Fred Rosenzweig



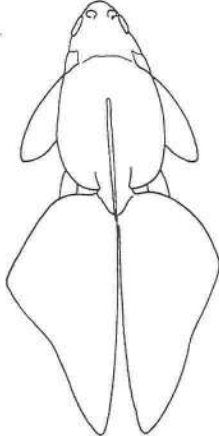
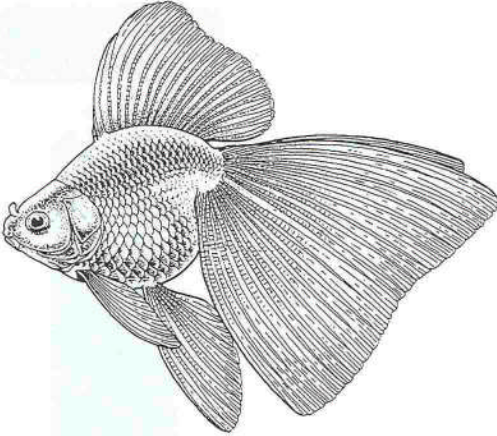
Photo courtesy of E.R. Metcalf



Photo courtesy of the *Goldfish Guide*

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: Veiltail	Goldfish Society of America												
													
<p><b>Description:</b>            The Veiltail is an egg-shaped fish which possesses very long finnage. The depth of the body should be greater than 2/3 the length of the body. The caudal fin is long, double, and should be 90% or more divided; the caudal fin is 3/4 to 2 times as long as the length of the body, with square lobes showing no apparent forking. The dorsal fin should be very high and approximately 3/4 or more of the depth of the body. The pectoral and pelvic fins are paired, should be long, and well-matched. The paired anal fins should match the pelvic and pectoral fins in length and shape. The Veiltail can occur in any of the scale types common to Goldfish: nacreous, metallic, or matt. Acceptable metallic colors are orange, red &amp; white, bluescale, ancient bronze, and white. Nacreous coloration includes bi-color, tri-color, solid red, and calico (with or without spangled scales). Matt coloration includes pink, bi-color, and tri-color. The finnage of the Veiltail can be crossed into any double caudal-finned</p>	<p>goldfish breed. These cross-breeds are commonly called Broadtails to differentiate them from pure Veiltails. Some examples of Broadtails are: Broadtail Moors, Broadtail Oranda, Broadtail Pearlscale, and Broadtail Ryukin.</p> <p><b>Point Schedule:</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Body Style</td> <td>20 points</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Coloration</td> <td>20 points</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Finnage</td> <td>20 points</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Special Characteristics:</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>    Development of finnage, especially caudal &amp; dorsal fins</td> <td>20 points</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Department and Condition</td> <td>20 points</td> </tr> </table>	Body Style	20 points	Coloration	20 points	Finnage	20 points	Special Characteristics:		Development of finnage, especially caudal & dorsal fins	20 points	Department and Condition	20 points
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Veiltail line art courtesy of Merlin Cunliffe.

Since these fish are rarely seen at goldfish shows, judging can be somewhat difficult, and they are unfairly placed lower in the standing, since they compete against Ranchus, Orandas, and Ryukins for the major awards. It is also common for Veiltails entered in shows to not be fully mature, so that the tail and dorsal fins are not fully developed. The primary feature of these fish is their finnage, and judging should reflect proper fin development and carriage at rest and in motion. The body shape should be round, and elongated body shapes are not viewed favorably during judging. As was mentioned earlier in the article, colors are usually limited to orange, red, blue-grey and matte calico.

In closing, I'd like to acknowledge the debt of gratitude we owe to the British goldfish keepers, and Mr. John Parker, for keeping this line alive. In the U.S., we owe a debt of gratitude to Al Thomma and Al Foster for reviving the line, and improving upon it.

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