

Pigeon and Pet Stock Department,

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Pigeon Notes.

Experienced breeders now begin to separate their breeding birds and divide them according to their sex.

Fanciers generally report a good season, lots of young ones being the usual thing.

Those having Guineapigs for sale would do well to advertise them in our columns, we have several times lately been asked for them.

Why do not our pigeon fanciers show more often? At all the shows it is the same, one sees only two or three exhibitors; much of the interest in breeding is lost when there is so little competition.

We recommend our readers to go in for some of the small foreign birds, such as Cutthroat Sparrows, Zebra Finches, Budgerigars, Bengalese, etc., etc. We hope to shortly give a series of articles on these interesting pets.

We should like to see more classes for small birds and Canaries, at the fall fairs and exhibitions; but a better place must be provided than the ordinary corner of the poultry house, if fanciers are expected to show valuable birds.

Do all our fanciers use salt-cat in their lofts? We do not hesitate to reply in the negative! Yet nothing, perhaps, is more beneficial to the health of the inmates. A good mixture is equal parts of gravel, loam, mortar, and salt.

Now is the time to sell your surplus stock of pigeons. A few pair wintered well will breed you more and healthier young birds than where they are overcrowded in their winter-quarters. This is the month for pigeon-pies, do not overlook this fact or you will regret it later on.

Ferrets.

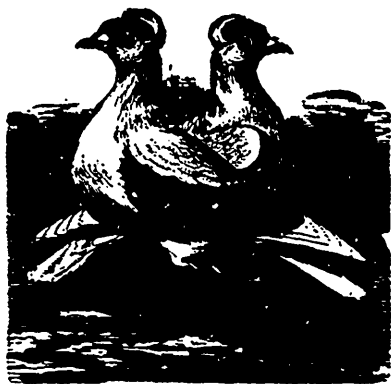
These useful little animals are daily becoming more popular on this continent. People are beginning to recognize them not as a wild beast of some unknown description to be gazed at from a safe distance, but as a legitimate method of ridding themselves of rats, and as an invaluable adjunct to the sport of rabbiting.

There are two species; the one, brown in colour, and usually known as the pole-cat ferret, and the other white, usually larger and tamer; the former is usually used for rats, the latter for rabbits.

The females or "bitches" breed twice a year, going in young for about six weeks and having from three to

eight in a litter. The young remain blind for about a month, and should be removed from their mother as soon as they can feed themselves.

Ferrets should be fed on bread and milk as a staple diet with a little meat occasionally; or a pigeon, rabbit, or other small animal, may be given now and then when convenient. Oatmeal porridge and corn mush makes a good change. They should have straw for bedding, and sawdust in their day compartment, and need to be kept very clean.



The Swallow.

This pigeon, known in Germany as the Schwalbentaube, and in France as the Hirondelle, is not as frequently kept as its beauty deserves.

The general formation and markings, as given by Robert Fulton, are as follows:—

"Beak, long; nostrils, small; forehead, high; neck, short; shoulders and back, broad; body, plump, and rather squat in shape; legs, short, and 'long muffed.' At the base of the skull rising from the neck, is a well-spread ridge of inverted feathers, which should form a nicely scalloped, clear-ridged, well-raised 'shell crown.'"

"The upper mandible is dark, the lower portion white. The line of head-markings runs in direct course with opening of beak and through the eye, all the upper part of the head being black or coloured, terminating in an accurate line at the base of skull or rise of 'crown' which is white. The neck, breast, belly, thighs, hocks, vent-covering, tail, back, and 'saddle' are also white, leaving the wing in its entirety black or coloured; the leg-feathering (from hocks) also coloured; and the eye is dark, known as black, or 'bull-eye.'"

The chief desiderata in breeding Swallows are colour and markings. There are nine recognized colours, viz.: Black, red, yellow, blue and silver barred, blue and silver barless, and blue and silver chequered. When in Paris, a short time back, we noticed some extremely handsome blue Swallows in the Pigeon Department of the Jardin d'Acclimatation, and we ourselves rather incline to that colour as being the prettiest in Swallows, though a deep glossy black is very striking.