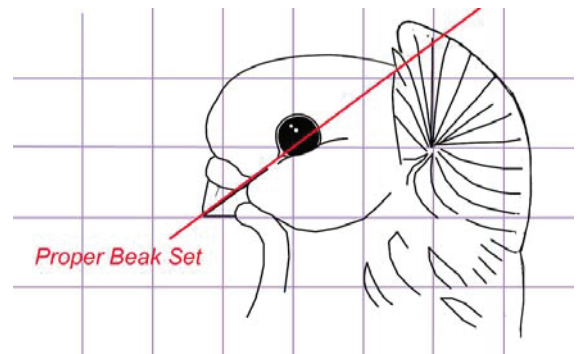


Proper Head Shape

A common question many people have who are new to Old German Owls is; "What does a Good Head look like?" Well, as the saying goes a picture is worth a thousand words, so I've put together a collection of pictures showing birds with good heads from a variety of angles. I choose birds that were different ages and sexes, as there are subtle differences between the sexes and birds change as they mature.



The bird on the left is a young cock. He has the well vaulted forehead as described in the standard. His pleasant expression is the result of a proper beak set. The standard calls for the beak to be set at an obtuse angle. An obtuse angle is slightly more than 90 degrees but less than 180 degrees. An easy way to determine if a bird has the proper beak setting is to draw a line following the line of the beak closure if you extend this line through the bird's eye it should pass just below the center of the eye.



On the right is a young hen with a beautifully shaped head. This picture clearly shows her small but distinct dewlap. A common mistake many people make is to assume that a large flashy crest makes for a good head. The breed standard calls for a "small" full shell crest. It is more important for the crest to be tightly feathered and symmetrical as opposed to being tall. It is also equally important that there not be any gaps in the feathering of the neck. The feathers of the crest should blend smoothly into the neck feathering; there should not be a gap where they meet.

A good crest will sit high on the head without crowding the eye. The crest should sit at a 90 degree angle it should not tip back or forward, it should point straight up as seen in the pictures.



The old cock bird on the right belongs to Don Hall and is a National Champion. This bird not only won best OGO, he also took best Owl Type at the Salt Lake Nationals.

While the standard calls for a small fine eye ceres and undeveloped wattles, some is thickening is common in older birds, particularly in cock birds and is perfectly acceptable.

The pictures to the right and below show this bird's nearly round head. It is important to clarify that the head should not be perfectly round like an African Owl. An Old German Owl should have a head that is just slightly oval without being too long.



The head shot to the left shows that the beak is relatively broad in relation to its short length.

The bird below is an old hen; you can see that like the old cock above and to the right; she also has a broad rounded head with a well arched forehead.

The birds in the pictures all belong to Don Hall with the exception of the young hen on the first page, she one of mine.

I hope everyone has a Great Show Season!

Christine Nyland

