

## **Goldfish Varieties – Odds & Ends**

### **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 prior articles of this series covered all the varieties recognized by the GFSA, and now the American Goldfish Association (AGA). Goldfish are quite variable, however, and new combinations of fish are being introduced constantly. Some of these combinations will not catch-on to become established varieties, while others languish because they are not regularly seen in this country. In terms of classification at goldfish shows, most of these fish are placed in the “Other” category, and do well in that grouping. In order for these fish to win major awards, they must be quite exceptional in order to place before the traditional varieties of goldfish.

We'll divide this article up into varieties that are established, but not frequently seen in the U.S., and varieties which are truly new combinations of features, some of which might catch-on and others which might be viewed as one-off attempts at a new variety.

Most new types of goldfish originate in China, and more recently, in Thailand. The Chinese seem to enjoy combining various goldfish characteristics in new patterns, mixing dorsal fins on fish that we consider dorsal-less, or adding head-growth and eye characteristics on one fish. Lately, the Thai breeders have been mixing and matching goldfish characteristics into new strain of fish, the most notable example being the introduction of the Lionchu, which combines aspects of the Ranchu and Lionhead in the same fish.

#### **Established, but rarely seen varieties of fish**

1. Wakin. The Wakin is considered the “common” form of goldfish in Japan, and was, until recently, not seen in the U.S.. In the past ten years or so, the Wakin has been imported in larger quantities, so it is no longer such an unusual sight. Wakins have an elongated body shape which is intermediate between that of the single-tail fish and the fantail. Similarly, the Wakin has a double tail that is not as developed as a fantail, but more developed than in the single-tail varieties. As mentioned, the body tends to be long, and the fish reach sizes in excess of twelve inches. The

coloration is usually quite intense, and in the red and white varieties, as pictured, is quite striking. When these fish first became available, they won many awards in the "Other" category, but now that they are more plentiful, they are not automatically guaranteed a placement in shows. Wakins are believed to be one of the first goldfish mutations to have occurred; this fact seems to be borne-out by the intermediate body and fin shape, as well as the intense colors associated with this variety.



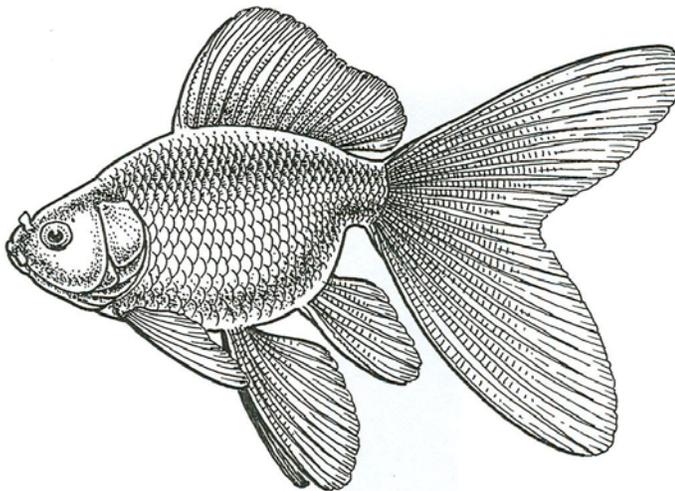
### **Red & White Wakin**

2. Phoenix. The Phoenix is another old variety of goldfish, and is believed to be the common ancestor of many of the dorsal-less varieties of goldfish. The Phoenix is not often seen in the U.S., but several hobbyist breeders raise these fish. Russ Thomas, who is a member of the GFSA, and who raises Phoenix, reports that they are not difficult to breed, and are quite hardy. The Phoenix has a long body shape, no dorsal fin, and long pectoral, anal and tail fins. The combination of a lack of dorsal fins and long tail fin would seem to indicate that the fish would have difficulty swimming, but this is not the case. Phoenix look delicate, but are actually quite hardy, and grow quickly. In theory, Phoenix come in all goldfish color categories, but usually have metallic scalation and are seen in blue, brown, and orange colors.
3. Nymph. The Nymph is often viewed as a cull of the Veiltail or Ryukin. It is a single tail fish that has the body-shape of either the Veiltail or Ryukin, but is identical in all other respects to these fish. In the early part of the twentieth century, Nymphs were sought out and won many awards at top

goldfish shows throughout the country. Today, they are rarely seen, and as mentioned earlier are viewed as culls of the more desirable double-tail fish. The original Philadelphia standards listed the Nymph as a separate variety of goldfish, and had point standards for this fish. Today, these fish are rarely seen, and a good specimen would probably do well in competition.



**Orange Phoenix with narial bouquet**



**Merlin's rendition of a Nymph**

## New Combinations

Since most of these fish don't have established names in the U.S., we'll just describe them by the combinations of the features that they exhibit. I'm being somewhat arbitrary in choosing the fish to display, since the Chinese seem capable of mixing and matching any combination of goldfish characteristics into a new type of goldfish. All of the pictures in this section are from Hanson Man's *Goldfish in Hong Kong* in the Chinese version of the book.

The first picture shown is a fairly conventional telescope-eyed fish with Pom-Poms added. The fish appears fairly conventional, but the addition of the pom-poms makes it look slightly different



**Telescope-eyed fish with pom-poms, from *Goldfish in Hong Kong***

The second fish is somewhat more radical – a Lionhead with a dorsal fin. The placement of the dorsal fin looks incorrect, as if someone added it later; yet every picture I've seen of these fish has the slightly odd placement of the dorsal fin. As you can see, the dorsal is placed farther back on the fish than what we're used to, and the hump of the back looks concave, giving the fish an unusual appearance.



**Lionhead with dorsal fin, from *Goldfish in Hong Kong***



**Lionhead with a dorsal, from *Goldfish in Hong Kong***

The next grouping of pictures shows eye-fish that are normally dorsal-less, i.e. the Bubble-eye and Celestial, with a dorsal fin. Once again, these fish look slightly odd since we are used to seeing them without a dorsal. As in the Lionhead with a dorsal, the placement of the dorsal fin on these fish seems to start farther back than we would expect.



**Bubble eye with dorsal fin, from *Goldfish in Hong Kong***



**Celestial with a dorsal, from *Goldfish in Hong Kong***

As you can see in these photographs, it is difficult to tell if any of these fish will catch-on to become established varieties. The pictures demonstrate the ability the Chinese breeders have in developing fish that have different characteristics and combining them into one type of fish.

This article concludes our series on goldfish varieties. Hopefully, the series provided insight into variety characteristics and judging. See you at a fish show soon.