

Chapter 3: General Characteristics

Chapter 3 of the Bettas4all Standard® describes the general characteristics that all show betta should possess regardless of their fin and/or color variety.

General remark:

Hobbyists are only allowed to register fish for the competition that are bred by the hobbyist him/herself. All fish have to be shown in clear water that is not colored by any additives such as banana and/or Indian almond leaves.

1. Anatomy

Figure 3.1 shows a general overview of the anatomical features a male and female show betta should possess according to the Bettas4all Standard®. There should be a clear distinction between male and female bettas of the various finnage varieties. The ideal size and shape of the different parts will be discussed in the different parts of the standard.

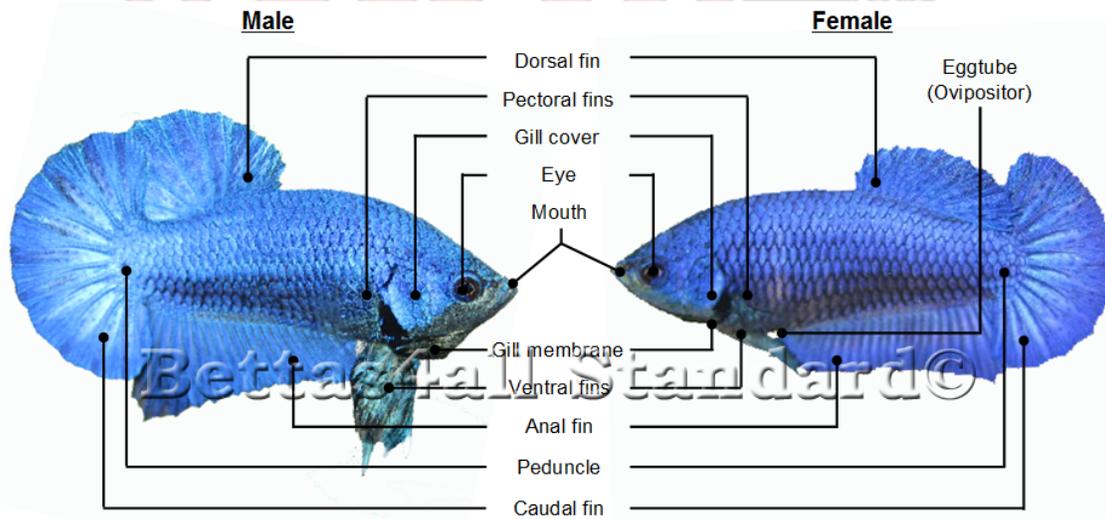


Figure 3.1 Betta anatomy.

2. Overall appearance

The general appearance of a show betta is determined by its condition, deportment and overall balance.

2.1 Condition

A show betta needs to be in good condition. Condition refers to the health and state of the body and finnage, which contribute to the overall appearance of the show betta. Ideally the fish should appear well nourished and vigorous without any damage to the body or finnage.

2.2 Deportment

Deportment refers to the behaviour of the fish. A show betta ideally presents itself by actively swimming throughout the whole tank (up and down, forward and backward). The fish flares actively to its own mirror image or, when uncarded, to neighbouring fish within the same show class. During flaring the gill membrane and gill cover on each side of the head are opened, the three unpaired fins (anal, dorsal and caudal fin) are fully spread and the ventral fins are directed forward. Females usually are slightly less aggressive than their male counterparts.

An important note with respect to judging deportment is the fact that this can vary from time to time. All entrants have to keep in mind that the judging is done at a specific time point of the show and that the show betta must be judged according to its performance at this timepoint. Each show betta has to be given the chance to show itself to another fish from the same class and/or its mirror-image. Each fish must respond within 3 minutes (timed with stopwatch).

2.3 Overall balance

Independent of the finnage variety, the general appearance of a show betta must be balanced. In general this means that the finnage has to be in proportion with the body in such a way that it does not interfere with the swimming abilities of the fish. The ideal proportion between body and finnage differs between the different fin varieties and therefore is described in more detail in the different standards (see **Chapter 3A–3H**).

3. Body

The body of a show betta is determined by its form, dimension and scalation.

3.1 Form & Dimension

The ideal body size for a regular-sized, mature show betta is at least 4.00 cm (1.57 inch) for a male and 3.50 cm (1.38 inch) for female. The minimum size for a show betta accepted at shows is 3.50 cm (1.38 inch) for a male and 3.00 cm (1.18 inch) for female. Here, larger fish are preferred above smaller fish if no other faults apply. The form of the body is that of a modified ellipsoid. The “mouth-to-dorsal” and “dorsal-to-peduncle” toplines should be smoothly curved without dips and bumps (see **Figure 3.3**).

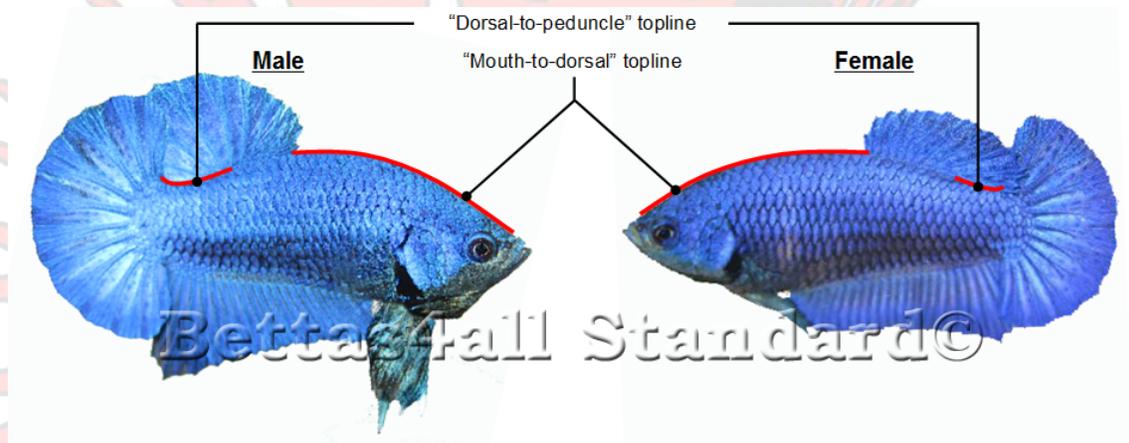


Figure 3.2 Toplines of a showbetta.

The thickest part of the body (α) is located at the place where the vertical midline (B) intercepts the horizontal midline (X) and thereby crosses the point of the body where the front of the anal fin starts (see **Figure 3.3**). The vertical midline (B) divides the total body length (A-D) into two parts with a 40/60 percent distribution. The front part (A-B), comprises approximately 40 percent of the total body length and contains most of the internal organs. In females, the belly area is slightly more rounded than in males with the ovipositor situated at the part just before the front of the anal fin starts (B). The mouth and the eyes are located slightly below the horizontal midline (X). The pupil and iris of the eyes should be clearly visible. The back part (B-D) comprises the remaining 60 percent of the total surface area of the body and contains the spine and swim bladder. The back part of the body gradually tapers from α to the peduncle and is nearly symmetrical on both sides of the horizontal midline (X). The height of the body at the peduncle (β) is equal to ~ 0.6 -times α in males and ~ 0.5 -times α in females. (see **Chapter 3A–3K**). Here it is important to note that the female body is not as thick as the male body at α .

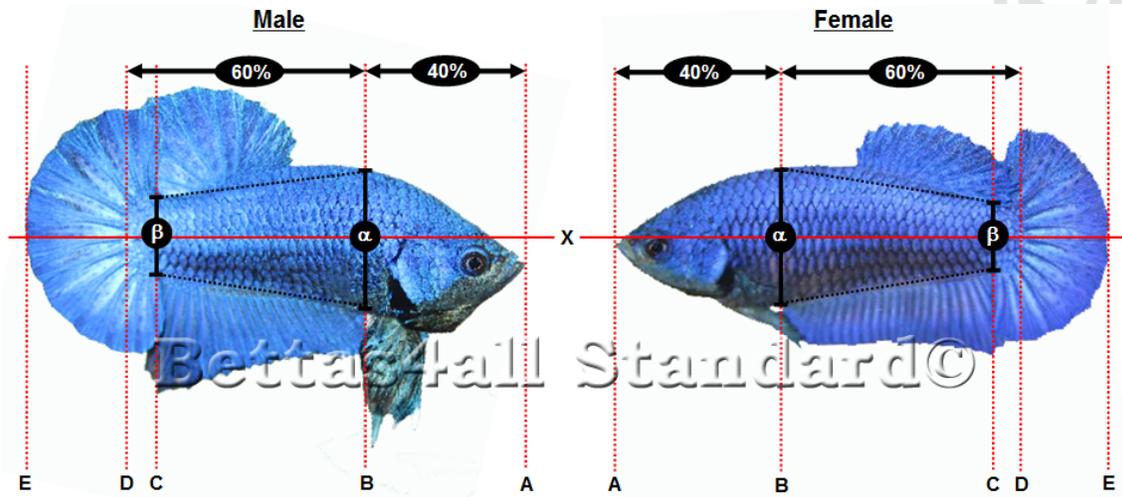


Figure 3.3 Ideal body form & dimension of a show betta.

When judged from above, the spine should be straight without any distinct curvatures, dips and/or bumps. During flaring the gill membrane and gill cover on each side of the head are opened and displayed (see **Figure 3.4**). This happens in both male and female bettas but in males the gill membrane is larger.

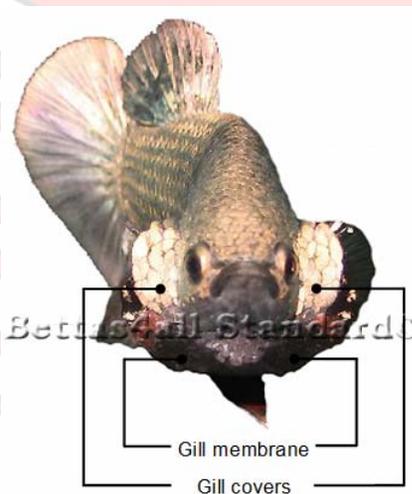


Figure 3.4 Example of a betta male opening his gill membrane and covers during flaring.

3.2 Scalation

In general, the scalation on the entire body should be nicely aligned in a symmetrical way leading to a solid appearance. On the back part of the body, each individual scale should be approximately of the same form and size. On the head, the scales are a bit smaller.

4. Finnacle

The finnage of a show betta is determined by the form & dimension of the unpaired (the caudal fin, dorsal fin and anal fin) and the paired (ventral fins and pectoral fins) fins. Please note that the width of the anal fin (B-C) is used as an important marker to indicate the desired proportions & dimensions of the finnage in the Bettas4all Standard® (see **Figure 3.5**).

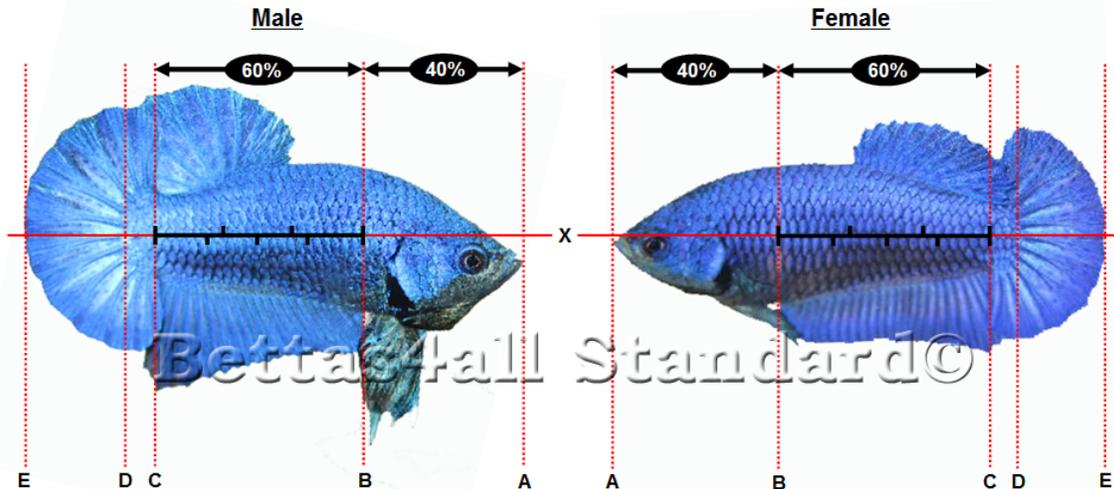


Figure 3.5: The breadth of the anal fin is used as a reference point to describe the ideal dimensions of the finnage.

4.1 Caudal fin

The caudal fin, or tail fin, extends from the end of the caudal peduncle. The caudal fin is used for propulsion. The ideal dimensions of the caudal fin differ among the different fin varieties and therefore are described in more detail in the different standards (see **Chapter 3A–3K**).

4.2 Dorsal fin

The dorsal fin is located on the posterior dorsal surface of the fish. The dorsal fin serves to protect the fish against rolling and assists in sudden turns. The ideal dimensions of the dorsal fin differ among the different fin varieties and therefore are described in more detail in the standards, which define these varieties (see **Chapter 3A–3K**).

4.3 Anal fin

The anal fin is located on the ventral surface behind the anus. The anal fin is used to stabilize the fish while swimming. The ideal dimensions of the anal fin differ among the different fin varieties and therefore are described in more detail in the standards which define these varieties (see **Chapter 3A–3K**).

4.4 Ventral fins

The ventral fins are important in swimming and maintaining balance in the water. The shape of the ventral fins mimic the blade of a knife with the cutting edge directed backwards. The ventrals are equal in length and size and run down into a single tip. During flaring the ventral fins are directed forward and ideally should not cross each other. The ideal dimensions of the ventral fins differ among the different fin varieties and therefore are described in more detail in the standards which define these varieties (see **Chapter 3A–3K**).

4.5 Pectoral fins

The pectoral fins control the up-and-down motion as well as the side-to-side motion and rolling of the body. The pectoral fins can be held close to the body to increase speed by reducing drag, or they can be extended to increase drag and serve as a brake. The pectoral fins are equal in length and size. The ideal dimensions of the pectoral fins differ among the different fin varieties and therefore are described in more detail in the standards which define these varieties (see **Chapter 3A–3K**).

5. Disqualifying faults

1. The fish entered in the show are not bred by the hobbyist who declares to have bred them by registering the fish for the Bettas4all show **(Disqualification)**.
2. Undersized fish:
 - Males with a body size under 3.50 cm / 1.38 inch **(Disqualification)**.
 - Females with a body size under 3.00 cm / 1.18 inch **(Disqualification)**.
3. Any sign of disease: Protruding scales, clamped/sticky fins, finrot, popeye, egg-bound females, etc. **(Disqualification)**.
4. Absence of an anatomical part of the fish (eye, gill membrane, gill cover, fins etc.) **(Disqualification)**.
5. Malformations of the body:
 - Crooked spine **(Disqualification)**.
 - Extreme spoonhead **(Disqualification)**.
 - Disfigurement of the lips **(Disqualification)**.
 - Extremely deformed scalation (> 3 misaligned scales) **(Disqualification)**.
 - Blindness or so-called “alien-eyes” (dense layer of colour over the eye obscuring the iris, often associated with metallic/opaque) **(Disqualification)**.
6. Finnacle/balance:
 - Extreme fin damage: Missing part of a fin, more than one split/tear in any of the fins, >4 pinholes in the finnage **(Disqualification)**.
 - Extreme ray branching **(Disqualification)**.
 - Extreme balloon webbing **(Disqualification)**.
 - Fused fins **(Disqualification)**.
 - Multiple ventral tips: > 4 tips in at least one ventral fin **(Disqualification)**.
 - Extreme fin-curling **(Disqualification)**.
 - Extreme imbalance due to disproportionate length of the (un)paired fins **(Disqualification)**.
 - Extreme masculine finnage on a female **(Disqualification)**.
7. Inability to swim properly **(Disqualification)**.
8. Inactivity/fearful behaviour, the fish does not rise from the tank bottom or does not flare (within 3 minutes) **(Disqualification)**.
9. Males with a (false) “egg-spot” and females without an “egg-spot” **(Disqualification)**.
10. Cut finnage **(Disqualification)**.