

## **Black Faced Birchens ?**

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After reading Mr. Ziehl's letter to Mr. Wunderlich printed in the January 1982 *Bulletin* and requests from Wunderlich and Lee for articles for the *Bulletin*, my opinion of the Birchen Modern is a two bird with one stone attempt.

Mr. Ziehl states that back in the 1940's Birchens were required to have black faces and requested a set of Standards from the Modern Game Bantam Club. Nothing's changed in the requirement of the Birchen variety since the 40's except maybe the opinion of some judges. They still should have black faces, although the correct term is Mulberry as stated in the ABA & APA Standards.

About the face color of the male and female Birchen: there are varying opinions of just what and to what degree the Mulberry, Gypsy or Dark Red facial color should be in the male and female.

The Standard also states the male and female must have white heads and there is a connection between white- versus black-capped heads and mulberry versus red facial color. White-headed birds have a tendency to be more heavily laced than dark-headed birds and more often than not real white-headed male birds have red faces.

In breeding for the Birchen feather color, zoning, pattern and facial color you must attempt to offset too much or too little by proper selection of breeder birds that have more or less of one thing than its mate in order to produce a good percentage of properly marked and colored exhibition birds. For instance, it's been my experience that if you breed two properly laced exhibition birchens together a high percentage of their offspring (especially males) will be over-laced. Also, if you breed two dark mulberry faced birds you will get a high percentage of black-headed offsprings, in later generations if not the first.

It's my opinion and preference that the male Birchen have a purplish red face with a ring of darker mulberry coloring around the eyes. In the female the darker the facial color the better for breeders and exhibition birds. Any and all ashen-faced females should be culled out.

In breast lacing I prefer exhibition birds be laced one-third of the upper breast area, especially cockerels and pullets. For breeders to go with a mate with the proper amount of breast lacing, I prefer it to have lacing only in the bib or throat areas.

In selecting breeders, looks are often deceiving when it comes to expecting a good -looking bird with some strong point to produce its like. With all this in mind you then must determine by trial or error which of your breeder birds will produce the best birds in type as well as the best Birchen color and zoning, for as the saying goes, "One must build a house before painting it."

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*This article appeared in the 1983 Modern Game Club of America's Year Book.*