

Blue Factor in Modern Games

By: Cecil R. Thompson

A book could be written on the cause of the blue coloring, which is essentially hybrid. Even then the subject would not be exhausted, because the complex factors in the heredity of fowls have not been sufficiently studied. It appears to be proved, however, that any hybrid character means simply the presence, without the amalgamation of the two pure factors. Therefore, if the two factors are present, either one or the other, as well as the two together, are liable to reappear at any time. From time immemorial there have been blue game fowls. The writer has seen blue Jungle Fowls, as well as black in the hills of Jallapahar, and also in bazaars in Rawalpindi. Delhi, Upper Topa and Murree Hills of India: and also blue Malays on the island of Mauritius. The blue Madras, it is said, never sports any whites, the females always being dove-blue except for the hackle feathers showing a brassy hue. The origin of the Blue Modern Game Bantam found itself in the crossing of Pyle Modern Game with Brown Reds.

Now comes the secret of how to produce bright lemon top color in Brown Reds, which I hope will prove of interest to the fancier taking up this variety.

The late Mr. Fred Smith, of Barnley, Moore Lodge, Rudford, England, was unable to secure any Brown Reds to cross with his own stock to improve the top color in his males, the whole country being sought in vain. In consequence, he decided a cross with Pyles. So far as we know, this was the only cross of Pyles introduced, and it was used with marked success. It resulted in the production of those beautiful lemon hackle blues. Blue Reds they certainly were, and as good, if not better than the Brown Reds. They were similarly marked, but with a bright blue where the Brown Reds are black.

If we mate a brilliantly top colored Lemon Blue cockerel with Brown Red, Black Red Golden Duckwing and Wheaton Hens and include a Birchen hen, the mating will produce Blues, Lemon Blues Blue Reds and Blue Duckwings. From these take the best pullets of all colors and mate them back to the Lemon Blue Cockerel; then from the second mating select the best Lemon Blue pullets and mate them to a good colored Brown Red cockerel. This last mating produces Black, White, Lemon Blues and brilliant lemon top colored Brown Reds. These white pullets, mated back to the Lemon Blue cockerel, produce exceptionally clear and bright top color in the progeny. Blue Duckwing bred back to Brown Reds gives much better results than the cross with

pure Duckwings.

I should only introduce the Lemon-Blue cross when I found myself unable to continue the direct mating of Brown Red to Brown Red to produce the standard colored specimens; crossing different colors sets up wide variation and requires years of careful amalgamation afterwards.

Brown Red cock mated with self Blue hens will produce Lemon Blues and Lemon Blacks. These can be mated back either way - Lemon Blue cockerel to Brown Red hens or Brown Red Cockerel to Lemon Blue Hens. Be sure to use only those Lemon Blues that have finely etched lemon on the hackle and wing bows. On no account use a Lemon Blue male possessing dull top color; and, remember, there are only two colors — lemon and blue. Lemon-Blue mating will produce one black one white and two blues, which, of course is accordance with Mendel's laws of heredity. These blacks from the Lemon Blues will be laced with lemon in the hackle and wing-bow; these lemon blacks or Brown Reds must be refined.

Any black fowl mated to a blue will produce 50 per cent Blues; and by mating these blues back to the original black and remating the resulting blues to the same black breed in three or four seasons we will produce the black breed in a novel blue color.

Another mating is that of lemon top colored pyle cockerel with a nice even shade of color. Don't trouble about his win bay or wing ends, for the blue will wash that away. Mate this cockerel with a dark hackled Blue hen, and this mating will produce Lemon Whites and the Blues together, brother and sister, and their product back to the Blue mother, and from here on you can continue working.

To produce the Self Blue Moderns, mate a good colored Blue cockerel to your splash white blue hens (these females are sometimes called porcelain, although a true porcelain is made up of white, blue and red or buff color), and there will be produced that beautiful even shade of blue. By judicious back crossing of the selfs with the splashed-white blue the shade of blue will be fixed.

Crossing a Modern Black red cockerel with a Self Blue Modern hen will produce Blue Reds. Experienced breeders know that when blue males are mated to blue females black, white, splashed black and splashed whites will be produced in addition to blues.

We have blues most susceptible to the weather; sun, wind and rain are sure to produce a brown or bronze shade. The blues should, therefore, be shaded during moulting and exhibiting. This applies to nearly all colors if one desires to exhibit them in proper condition.

It is most important never to trust to outward appearance in procuring a bantam. He may be an outstanding specimen from a hundred poor ones; but strain and blood uncontaminated is essential. The wise Eastern proverb goes: "Take a thorny bush from the desert, nurture it, and water it daily with rosewater; it will never produces dates."

Editor's Note: Mr. Cecil R. Thompson can be counted among the world authorities on the Modern Game Bantam. He has produced and exhibited among the best to ever grace a show pen. Thanks to you Mr. Thompson and Poultry, Australia's leading poultry publication for this reprint.

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