

BREEDING MODERN GAME BANTAMS

By Jas. H. Carre Of Guernsey, Channel Isles.

Your secretary has asked me to write a few notes on the above subject which I have much pleasure in doing. I have bred that variety of Bantam since I was ten years old, no some forty-eight years and naturally during that time, have seen many changes. Birds today are very different to what they were years ago. Of course I have before me the English Standard and type of bird required to win this side of the water. It is of course, just possible that the American requirements are not exactly similar.

In starting, we must have the tall, fine boned bird, straight on leg, short in body and feather. The leg should be placed under the body in almost a direct line with the eye when the bird is standing straight up. Whereas, in the Old English' Game, the legs should be placed as far back as possible, giving the bird a good front to be able to withstand a blow in the chest. So the first thing we must look for is type. I prefer a fairly small male bird and have no objection to largish females as long as they are of the correct type. Be sure to see that all the birds used are in good health.

Commencing with the Black Breasted Reds which are the most popular color. It is possible to breed both sexes of exhibition birds out of one pen and if this is done, I recommend a pullet breeding pen for this reason: you will get a good percentage of show pullets which several of the males can also win whereas, if you've a cock breeding pen, though the female will probably be of beautiful shape their color keeps them from winning in good company. Even in England today it is not easy to obtain genuine pullet breeders, for those who have them are not keen on selling and when they do the price is high. To describe the color of the exhibition female is far from easy, where the cock breeding hens are seemingly goodly laced round each partridge feather on the back, the "show" female must be free from that lacing and no shaft in the feather with one uniform color of light partridge, the wings being of same shade, so that it appears difficult to see where the wings are. On that light ground color must be very fine black markings, the wing ends being fine also and if possible, no lacing round the edges. Of course the male must be pullet bred, that is out of exhibition colored hens. It is not easy to select a pullet breeding male by looks. I like to see the body color to be jet black, no sign of rust also the shoulder points, no matter if weak in wing bays. Some of the males have laced sickles. In breeding the males, the best exhibition males must be chosen and the females must have bright hackles and the gold lacing on back, no matter if too pale in breast color, or if coarse marked in wings or a bit of ruddiness on sides.

Duckwings are similar to the Black Reds, of course, substituting steel gray for partridge in the females. There is the Golden Duckwing and the Silver Duckwing male. The Golden of course has a certain amount of Black Red blood in him to get the color, for if you persist in continually using

Duckwings pure, you will get no show males hence it is necessary not and then to introduce a Black Red. There are two ways of breeding show pullets and that is Silver male to show hens or a Silver male to pullet bred Black Red hens; the gray color after a time gets quite washy if only Silvers are continually used. When introducing the Black Red male for cock breeding see that he is absolutely sound in his black body color an shoulder points, that is very important.

With Red Pyles in England today the male is not the color, crimson on back, one remembers some years ago. No, he is practically similar to the Black Red, substituting of course, black for white. Always try to secure a Pyle with as pure a white as possible. One sees in England some really nice typed birds with good top color and wing ends, absolutelt creamy in color. I had the honor to judge the Moderns at the last Dairy Show in October. There was, I think, forty Pyles in two classes and only four or five of them sound in their white. Three years ago I noticed far more better colored birds. It is difficult to breed out in a strain. I have bred some good pullets in my time from a yellow legged Black Red of Pyle bred mated to hens practically white, with little or no breast color. Probably two pens, one mated to breed pullets and one for cockerels would be best in the Pyles.

Brown Reds and Birchens are very similar, of course, substituting lemon lacing on breast and lemon hackles for Brown Reds for white in Birchens. I only use one pen for Birchern breeding myself. Put two exhibition females and two females a bit laced on back, but be sure that all are nice and silvery, Birchens, right up to the comb or one is apt to get them capped, that is dark headed which quite spoils them. The Brown Reds must also be lemon up to the comb. At present in England many of the Brown Reds fail in body color, being a rusty black or nearly brown body color and much over laced on breast which spoils them.

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