

## **Breeding Modern Game Bantams; by Harry H. Brewer of Hickory, NC**

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Without a doubt many of the members of the American Bantam Association are older in the game of breeding Modern Game Bantams than myself, but there are a few who have not yet reached their goal, to whom this article might be of some help, by urging them to use more patience and greater care in making their selection and mating their birds.

If you will notice the majority of the articles that are written on Bantams, lay stress only on the good points and excellencies of the various breeds and varieties and fail to show the defects which are continually cropping out. So the beginner must learn best by watching his "Standard of Perfection," keep close to a master breeder, steadfastly study his birds and his fellow fanciers' birds and he will soon be able to recognize the desired and the undesired points of his birds.

Now the moulding of future generations begins by very careful scrutiny, you will note individual specimens possessed of very strong development in some particular feature which you desire; it may be a very excellent tail; powerful shoulders with wings carried well up; legs that are well set, very long and muscular; short and tight hackle or short body. It is possible that a single bird will have more than one of these strong points, which is so much the better as you will be a jump closer to the ideal. To mate with this bird, pick its counterpart in the opposite sex and intensify the individual and desired characteristic, unless a strain is definitely established a grave mistake will be made 'by mating birds for general results, in which case only fair birds will result and only by chance a bird might be produced that is of good quality. In Modern Game Bantams, we want the high stationed bird of proud style, slick and handsome, and hard as nails. We must have the long, lean, bony head, with large, full eyes (bear in mind that both eyes must be of same standard color); long, slightly arched neck; large, powerful wings that stand out from the body at the shoulders. A good shouldered bird has a tendency to carry a loosely folded wing. Pick the well carried up, well folded and tight winged bird in preference to the good shoulders if you have to. The back must be short, flat, wide at shoulders and narrowing to tail. The body must not be too thick. It must have the appearance that it has been pressed together, being wider than it is deep. This type makes the legs appear wider apart and longer. The legs must be long, muscular and straight and of small bone. They should appear as if they were "stuck on" the body. This will show muscular development that cannot be seen in legs that come out close together and under the body. Toes, long and straight. Bear in mind the legs and toes count 14 points—you can't give too much attention to them. Now we have a pretty nice bird but it isn't worth a snap of your finger if it does not have a good, short, whip tail, narrow, hard feathering and the ability and willingness to "stand up" and pose for you.

Avoid wild birds that you have to run down to catch—the coarse, overly large, short legged type—slate colored legs—crooked toes and duck-foot—off colored eyes—loosely folded wings or wings carried over the back—wide feathers, also loose soft feathers—spread tail—long body.

Now pick your birds free from these imperfections and you will have the

foundation for the supreme quality the Standard calls for, type (which includes station) and shape. Color should come in at this time, but that can wait for another article. Birds continually mated with the above in mind are bound to produce something if given a little time.

If your own birds do not come up to par, go out and get some that do. Buy from a breeder who has "been through the war" and don't kick on his price. You will not be over, charged. Goods birds are worth money. They will save you years worrying along with, no doubt, inferior birds.

Make your matings small, even down to pair matings if necessary. Breed from only the best—the ones that will produce quality always should come before quantity.

For systematic matings a record must be kept on every mating. The system I use, I find very satisfactory and it is simple enough. I have a record book that has in it each mating, listed separately. Recorded under Pen No. 1 is the male heading this mating, band number and a full description of him. This description includes the bad points or his weaknesses the same as the strong points, also vigor and vitality as noted. The females in this mating are likewise recorded with band number, description, etc. I also allot a certain toe punch for each mating. As eggs are gathered they are marked with an indelible pencil. When chicks are hatched they are toe punched according to the pen they come from. When my 1937 matings are made I will refer to the records. This system, to my mind, can be beaten only by individual pedigreeing in which case few of us have the correct time to spare at the right times.

*Editors note: the last two lines of this article are missing.*