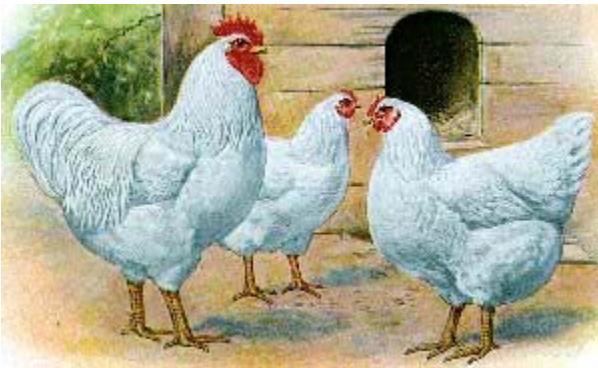


Chicken Breeds

As part of your chicken skillathon for Osceola County 4-H, you will need to know 20 breeds and varieties of chickens. The ones you need to know are the photos or illustrations with labels in **bold red text** on this page. Photos and illustrations of additional varieties for some breeds are included on this page labeled in **black bold text**. Study the photos, illustrations and descriptions on this page.

The description for Cornish chickens is from the Department of Animal Science, Oklahoma State University. All other chicken descriptions are from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

Plymouth Rock



Plymouth Rock white American Large Fowl

Image courtesy of Department of Animal Sciences, Oklahoma State University. Used with permission



Plymouth Rock Barred American Large Fowl

Image courtesy of Department of Animal Sciences, Oklahoma State University. Used with permission

The Plymouth Rock, often called simply Rocks or Barred Rocks (after their most popular color), is a chicken breed that originated in the United States. The Plymouth Rock is a dual-purpose, cold-hardy bird and therefore makes a great breed for the small farm or backyard flock owner.

Origin

The Plymouth Rock was developed in New England in the middle of the 19th century and was first exhibited as a breed in 1869. Several individuals claimed its invention, using crosses of Dominiques, Black Javas, Cochins, and perhaps Malays and Dorkings. John C. Bennett (1804-1867) has been credited with either creating or popularizing the breed. Plymouth Rocks were bred as a dual-purpose fowl, meaning that they were valued both for their meat and for the hens' egg-laying ability. The first Plymouth Rock was barred and other varieties were developed later. The breed became popular very rapidly, and in fact, until World War II, no breed was ever kept and bred as extensively in the United States as the Barred Plymouth Rock. Its popularity came from its qualities as an outstanding farm chicken: hardiness, docility, broodiness, and excellent production of both eggs and meat.

Most of the other varieties were developed from crosses containing some of the same ancestral background as the barred variety. Early in its development, the name Plymouth Rock implied a barred bird, but as more varieties were developed, it became the designation for the breed. The Barred Plymouth Rock was one of the foundation breeds for the broiler industry in the 1920s, and the White Rock continues to be used as the female side of the commercial broiler cross.

Characteristics

Plymouth Rocks are large, long-lived chickens. Some varieties are good layers while others are bred principally for meat. They possess a long, broad back; a moderately deep, full breast; and yellow skin and legs. The hens have a deep, full abdomen which is a sign of a good layer. The face of a Plymouth Rock is red with red ear lobes, a bright yellow beak, bay-colored eyes, and a single comb of moderate size. Their feathers are fairly loosely held but not so long as to easily tangle.

Generally, Plymouth Rocks are not extremely aggressive, and tame quite easily. They are docile and normally will show broodiness. The hens usually make good mothers. However, some males and females are big and active enough to be quite a problem if they become aggressive.

Breeders should be aware of the standard weights and not select small or narrow birds for the breeding pen. Common faults include a shallow breast, high tails, narrow bodies and small size.

Varieties

The varieties of Plymouth Rocks refer to differences in feather markings.

- **Barred**
- **White**
- **Buff**
- **Partridge**
- **Silver Penciled (or Silver Laced)**
- **Blue**
- **Columbian**

Eggs

Plymouth Rocks lay a large egg that varies in color from light to medium brown, sometimes with a touch of pink. The birds continue laying all through the winter with decreased production. On average, each hen will lay around 200 eggs per year.

Weight

The standard weights for Plymouth Rocks, as established by the American Poultry Association, are as follows: cock - 9-1/2 pounds; hen - 7-1/2 pounds; cockerel - 8 pounds; and pullet - 6 pounds.

Use

Plymouth Rocks were bred to be dual-purpose birds. In the poultry industry, the term "dual-purpose" implies that these chickens are both prolific layers and excellent table fowl.

In the rapidly-growing "backyard chicken" movement in the United States, Plymouth Rocks are a popular choice among families who choose to raise chickens at home as pets. The birds are well-adaptable to confinement or free range, are docile, friendly, and easily-handled.

Leghorn



Leghorn Single Comb White Mediterranean Large Fowl

Image courtesy of Department of Animal Sciences, Oklahoma State University. Used with permission

The Leghorn is a breed of chicken named after the Italian city of Livorno, which in English is also known as Leghorn. Leghorns, and leghorn crossbreeds, are one of the most popular commercial breeds of chicken worldwide, and while the majority are white, a number of varieties also exist. In America in both the APA and ABA they are recognized in:

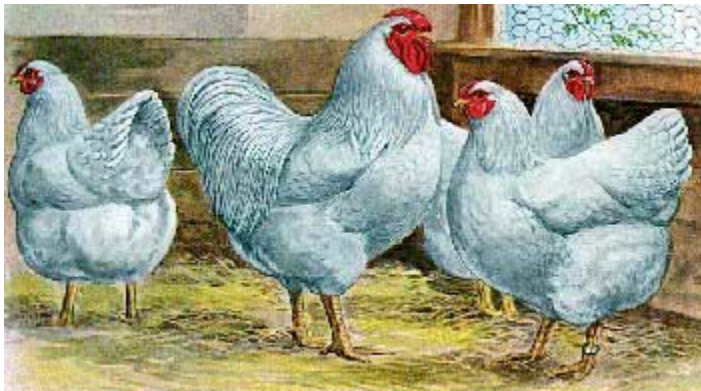
1. **white**
2. **red**
3. **black tailed red**
4. **light brown**
5. **dark brown**
6. **black**
7. **blue**
8. **buff**
9. **columbian**
10. **buff columbian**
11. **barred**
12. **exchequer**

13. **silver.**

Most have single combs but there are several color varieties that have rose combs. In bantam they are also exchequer, a pied pattern.

Leghorns are excellent layers of white eggs (around 300 per year), but they can be noisy, flighty, and easily excited. Leghorns mature quickly, but are generally not considered to be large birds, they average from 3 lbs to 4 lbs. Due to their prolific egg-laying, they are preferred by laboratories for embryonic and avian biological research as well as being the number one breed used for large-scale commercial egg production in the United States.

Wyandotte



Wyandotte white American Large Fowl

Image courtesy of Department of Animal Sciences, Oklahoma State University. Used with permission



Silver Laced Wyandottes are the original variety of the breed

Image from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

The Wyandotte chicken is a breed of chicken that began in America and spread all over the world.

Appearance

The Wyandotte has a medium sized breast with a rose comb and clean legs. The chicken feathers are broad and loosely fitting. The area around the vent is very fluffy. The legs are yellow, although some silver laced may have gray.

Colors

There are eight colors recognized by the APA (American Poultry Association) which are:

1. **golden laced,**
2. **silver laced,**
3. **white,**
4. **black,**
5. **buff,**
6. **Columbian,**
7. **partridge**
8. **silver penciled.**

In bantams there is also

1. **buff**
2. **Columbian**
3. **black breasted red**
4. **blue red**
5. **lemon blue**
6. **barred**
7. **brown red**
8. **birchen**

that are recognized by the American Bantam Association. However, there are more colors than that which are either

recognized by similar organizations in other countries like the PCGB (Poultry Club of Great Britain). These colors include

1. **blue laced**
2. **red**
3. **buff laced.**

Overall there are 17 colors

Characteristics

The Wyandotte is a breed that suits both free range and confinement in a run. They occasionally go broody. They tend to be quite friendly, and not flighty, and so make good pets for people. They are also very vocal, uttering soft clucks on a regular basis.

Utility aspects

The hens (females) will lay around 200 eggs a year with an exceptional hen laying around 240 eggs a year. The eggs are brown or tinted. The hens weigh around 6 pounds and the cocks weigh around 8 1/2 pounds. The hens also make great setters. It is sometimes difficult for natural insemination to occur, due to the number and thickness of feathers in the tail area for the same reason, they are prone to accumulation of feces on vent-area feathers that needs to be regularly washed off, or the vent could become clogged.

Variations



The Blue Laced Red is one of the rarest varieties

Image from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

Silver Laced: The silver laced wyandotte has white feathers with black edges to every feather, an effect called lacing. The tail is black and they should have yellow legs. The silver laced was developed in New York state in the early 1870s and was admitted to the standard in 1883. The silver laced wyandotte was the base for all other colors.

Golden Laced: The golden laced wyandotte has a golden color with black around the edge of every feather and black tail. It is the result of a cross between a Silver Laced Wyandotte females with a large "Black Red" patterned fowl of unknown origin called the Winnebago.

Blue Laced Red: The blue laced red is a buff/red color with a blue that looks just like gray around the edge of every feather.

Buff Laced: The buff laced is buff but with white around the edge of the feathers.

White: The white is white all over.

Black: The black is black all over.

Buff: The buff is a buff color all over. A buff is like a ginger orange color

Columbian: Columbian is white, but with a black tail, black wing tips and the neck is mainly black with some white.

Partridge: A red color but with three black stripes, meeting at the middle of the feather and then going outwards at an angle in the hen, and the cock looks like a typical farmyard cock.

Silver Pencilled: Like the partridge, but with a silver undercolor in the hen and the cock is a white color but with bits of black in there until the tail and the wing which are black.

Blue: The hen is blue all over but the cock is black with the tail and wing blue on some birds.

Barred: The barred, in both genders, has feathers which have black and white stripes across the width of the feather, all over the body

Mille Fleur: The mille fleur wyandotte is a dark brown color with black crescents with white spots on the tips.

Buff Columbian: Like the Columbian except buff.

Red: The red wyandotte is a dark red/brown all over.

Cornish



Cornish White English Large Fowl

Photo courtesy of [My Pet Chicken](#) . Used with permission.



Dark Cornish Cock

Image from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

Varieties:

- **Dark**
- **White**
- **White Laced Red**
- **Buff**

Standard Weights: Cock-10-1 /2 pounds; hen-8 pounds; cockerel-8-1/2 pounds; pullet-6-1/2 pounds.

Skin Color: Yellow.

Egg Shell Color: Brown.

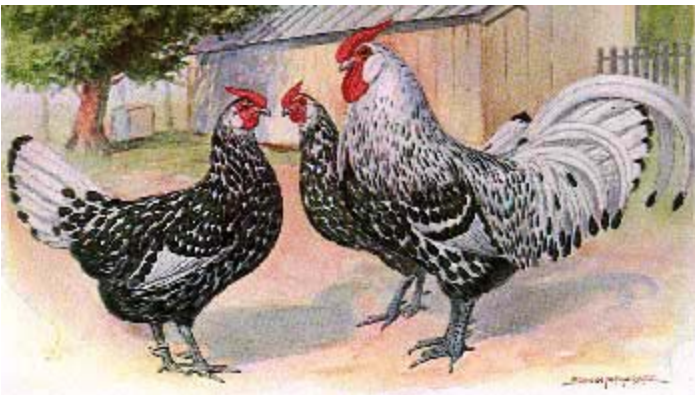
Use: Developed as the ultimate meat bird, the Cornish has contributed its genes to build the vast broiler industry of the

world, Its muscle development and arrangement give excellent carcass shape.

Origin: Cornish were developed in the shire (county) of Cornwall, England where they were known as "Indian Games". They show the obvious influence of Malay and other oriental blood. They were prized for their large proportion of white meat and its fine texture.

Characteristics: The Cornish has a broad, well muscled body. Its legs are of large diameter and widely spaced. The deep set eyes, projecting brows and strong, slightly curved beak give the Cornish a rather cruel expression. Cornish males are often pugnacious and the chicks tend to be more cannibalistic than some breeds. Good Cornish are unique and impressive birds to view. The feathers are short and held closely to the body, and may show exposed areas of skin. Cornish need adequate protection during very cold weather as their feathers offer less insulation than can be found on most other chickens. Because of their short feathers and wide compact bodies, Cornish are deceptively heavy. Due to their shape, good Cornish often experience poor fertility and artificial mating is suggested. Cornish are movers and need space to exercise and develop their muscles. The old males get stiff in their legs if they do not receive sufficient exercise. The females normally go broody but because of their very minimal feathers can cover relatively fewer eggs. They are very protective mothers but are almost too active to be good brood hens.

Hamburg



Hamburg silver spangled rose comb clean legged bantam

Image courtesy of Department of Animal Sciences, Oklahoma State University. Used with permission

The Hamburg is a type of chicken developed in Germany and Holland prior to 1700. It is comparatively rare, with less than 1000 registered in North America each year.

Appearance and behavior

It is a small breed--cocks tend to weigh only 5 pounds and hens about 4 lb (2.25 and 1.75 kg) with slender legs and a neat pea comb. The bird comes in more than ten different varieties, including: Silver-Spangled, Golden-Spangled, Golden-Penciled, Silver-Penciled, White, and Black. Penciled breeds are smallest and self-colored birds are largest. They are hardy, active birds who are capable of flight and often jumpy around humans.

Eggs

Hamburgs mature quickly and are considered good egg producers. Their eggs are white, with glossy shells, and rather small.

Brahma



Brahma Light Asiatic Large Fowl

Image courtesy of Department of Animal Sciences, Oklahoma State University. Used with permission



Dark Brahma hen

Image from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

Brahmas are an Asiatic breed of chicken, originating in the Brahmaputra region in India where they were known as "Gray Chittagongs". Their heritage is unclear, but they are believed to be closely related to the Jungle Fowl (*Gallus Gigantus*) and the Cochin (chicken)[citation needed].

The first Brahmas were brought to the U.S. from China in 1846, and were used as a utility fowl for their edibility and generous egg laying and hardiness even during the winter months, although today they are kept mainly for ornamental purposes as selection for utility has taken a back seat to selection for appearance. Some of the earliest imports to the US reached weights of nearly 14 pounds, but rarely is such massive size seen today: standard weight for a cock is 11 pounds; hens are 8.5 pounds. By the 1870s Brahmas had become so popular that they were admitted into the American

Poultry Association's Standard of Perfection.

Appearance

Brahmas are massive in appearance, in part due to profuse, loose feathering and feathered legs and toes. Approximate weights:

1. 1. Cock - 12 pounds
2. 2. Cockerel - 10 pounds
3. 3. Hen - 9 pounds
4. 4. Pullet - 8 pounds

Recognized varieties

The American Standard of Perfection recognizes three Brahma varieties: light, dark, and buff. The light Brahma has a base color of white, with black hackles edged in white and a black tail. The cocks' saddle feathers in a light Brahma are striped with black. The dark Brahma has the most notable difference between cock and hen. The hen has a dark gray and black penciled coloration with the same hackle as the light whereas the cock has black and white hackles and saddle feathers, and a black base and tail. The wings of a dark Brahma are white-shouldered and the primary feathers (remiges) are edged with white. The buff Brahma is the same in tone as the light, except with a golden buff base color instead of white.

Japanese Bantam



Japanese Black Tailed white single comb clean legged bantam

Photo by John deSaavedra courtesy of FeatherSite.com .
Used with permission.



Japanese Bantam rooster

Image from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

The Japanese Bantam ,also known in many parts of the world as Chabo, is a breed of chicken originating in Japan. They are a bantam breed, with large upright tails that often reach over the chicken's head. The wings angle down and to the back along the sides.

History

This little chicken has graced the gardens of the Japanese aristocracy for well over 350 years. Historical evidence suggests that the Japanese Bantam originated in Southeast Asia, where it is still raised today. The Dutch spice traders probably carried the Chabo as gifts to the Japanese from the Asian spice ports; likely from Java, which was part of Dutch colonial area of that time. The very word "chabo" originates in Java as chabol (Cebol) , where it means "dwarf" and applies both to humans, and to the short-legged Chabo chicken.

Characteristics

They have wonderful personalities, and will gladly ride around on your shoulder or be pet and held. Japanese Bantams are also good foragers, and will pretty much feed themselves if they have a large enough area to do so.

Variations



A young Buff Japanese Bantam cockerel, which has not yet developed the breed's characteristic large tail and comb

Image from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

There are different kinds of Japanese Bantams which include

1. Black-Tailed-White
2. White
3. Buff
4. Black-Tailed-Buff
5. Gray
6. Blue
7. Barred
8. Black Breasted Red
9. Black Japanese
10. and many more.

These are usually referred to BTW, BTB, etc. These chickens have been known to live for up to 13 years with proper care. As with most other chickens, even though the birds are very docile and friendly, do not put too many males together or they will fight.

Old English Game Fowl



Old English Game Black Breasted Red Game Bantam

Image courtesy of [Diane Jacky](#). Used with permission.



Old English Game hen

Image from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

The Old English Game Fowl is a breed of chicken. Pure English Game Fowls are prized among Poultry breeders and thus fetch a high sale price. English Game cocks are known for their aggressive nature and attractive appearance. They were originally bred for cockfighting.

Characteristics

There are a few varieties of the English Game, however many pure breeds have died out. Purebred English Game Fowl tend to have long legs, be muscular and full breasted. The male cocks are colorful and have many long tail feathers. The female hens look similar to the males except they don't have the large tail feathers and typically show less color Old English Game Fowl were bred as active birds. They need plenty of room or space. Although the females are less aggressive than the males, they are more aggressive than other counterpart breeds. The females will become Broody and

according to poultry breeders make excellent mothers. The Old English Game tends to have a long life span of 12 to 16 years, which is more than most other chicken breeds.

Bantam version

The Old English Game Bantam is the bantam version of this breed. The Old English Game Bantam is one of the most popular bantams. This is especially the case in the United Kingdom, where it has its own specialist shows. The Old English Bantam is similar to the Old English Game in that it has long legs and it is fairly muscular. However unlike the Old English Game the English Game Bantam is docile and not aggressive. The Old English Game Bantam makes a good pet for children.

Domestication

The English game fowl can be an aggressive bird. It is only recommended for experienced poultry keepers and enthusiasts. Some males do not make good pets and are not recommended around children. Novice keepers should learn how to properly handle and care for English Game Cocks. Keepers should always separate the males; roosters should never be able to have contact or even see each other. When aggressive they are considered man fighters. Mostly the breed is not suitable for integration with other flocks, both the males and females are more aggressive than their counterpart breeds and could attack. It is suitable to keep Old English game fowl separate from other breeds, with a few females for each male. Making sure that flocks can not see each other is also important as Old English game will fight with other chickens even through wire. They are an active bird and need plenty of space and should not be kept in crowded areas.

English Game Cocks will attack if their flock is threatened and they do not take exception to humans. The breed can be aggressive and not timid, some birds will peck and spur humans. The Old English Game are not laying birds, hens only lay ~130 eggs a year. They are a reasonable eating bird, being culled at about 5 months old. However, because of their high value (US\$:40-250) per bird, many choose not to eat them.

NOTE: Old English Game Bantam Chickens have been bred over the past 100 years to be a very small bantam chicken and come in over 43 recognized color varieties. The breeding of the Bantam variety over the last 100 years has been very different from that of the Standard size breed. The Bantams have been bred to be very tame and non-aggressive as compared to the Large Old English Game birds. These very tame Old English Game Bantams are raised specifically for showing of the fine aspects of the bird's size, build, coloring, feather quality and temperament. The Old English Game Bantam Club of America (OEGBCA) maintains the standards of show for the wonderful Old English Game Bantam chicken. The Bantam varieties are not raised for egg production or meat because the bird is so small. The bantam variety eggs and birds from some of the leading breeders with great show records can bring in hefty prices. Nice, show quality

birds can easily sell for \$200 to \$500 USD. Eggs can sell for as much as \$3 each and up to \$10 each for top quality show lines. It is known that the Old English Game Bantam chicken is very often the most popular breed of chicken raised by hobbyist breeders in the USA.

History

The English Game Fowl is one of the oldest strains of poultry breeds that have been used for fighting purposes. Through the Middle Ages the breed was developed by the English Nobility into many varying colors., traits desirable for cockfighting were chosen by breeders. Cockfighting became illegal in Britain and Australia in the 1850s and English game fowl are usually kept just by poultry enthusiasts. Many of the original strains have died out, however many varieties remain.

Current Status

Because cockfighting is illegal in many countries, the Old English game have little use and are not kept by many people. Their aggressive nature means that most backyard chicken keepers are put off.

Today the breeds are used at Poultry Exhibitions and breeders try to develop stock that will win prizes. Exhibition bred cocks can fetch amounts over US\$ 600. Breeders aim to preserve the present strains of this species, as many have already died out.

There is also an Old English Game Bantam.

more info Varieties:

Black Breasted Red Brown Red Golden Duckwing Silver Duckwing Red Pyle White Black Spangled Standard Weights: Cock-5 pounds; hen-4 pounds; cockerel 4 pounds; pullet-3-1/2 pounds.

Skin Color: White.

Egg Shell Color: White or light tint.

Use: Old English Games are strictly an ornamental fowl.

Origin: Old English Games are the modern day descendants of the ancient fighting cocks. They are associated with England but their heritage is almost worldwide and they have changed little in shape or appearance in more than 1,000

years.

Characteristics: A small, tightly feathered bird, Old English Games are very hardy, extremely active and very noisy. Old English have figured in the development of many other breeds. The mature cocks should be dubbed (have the comb and wattles removed) with a characteristic cut. This is in keeping with their heritage. Old English hens usually show broodiness but are so small and aggressive as well as defensive that they are not always the best choice as mothers. Old English are capable of considerable flight and may revert to a feral (wild) state in some areas. They are the domestic breed most like the wild jungle fowl in appearance.

Sebright



Sebright Silver Rose Comb Clean Legged Bantam

Photo by Beth Adams courtesy of FeatherSite.com.
Used with permission.



A Golden Sebright rooster

Image from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

The Sebright is a breed of chicken named after its developer, Sir John Saunders Sebright. Created in the 19th century through a selective breeding program designed to produce an ornamental breed, the Sebright is a true bantam, meaning it

is a miniature bird with no corresponding large fowl to which it is related.

The first poultry breed to have its own specialist club for enthusiasts, Sebrights were admitted to poultry exhibition standards not long after their establishment. Today, they are among the most popular of bantam breeds. Despite their popularity, Sebrights are often difficult to breed, and the inheritance of certain unique characteristics the breed carries has been studied scientifically. As a largely ornamental chicken, they lay tiny, white eggs and are not kept for meat production.

Background

Sir John Saunders Sebright (1767-1846) was the 7th Sebright Baronet, and a Member of Parliament for Hertfordshire. In addition to breeding chickens, cattle and other animals, Sir John wrote several influential pamphlets on animal keeping and breeding: *The Art of Improving the Breeds of Domestic Animals* (1809), *Observations upon Hawking* (1826), and *Observations upon the Instinct of Animals* (1836).

Development

With the breed that carries his name, John Sebright intentionally set out to create a very small bantam chicken with laced plumage similar to the laced variety of Polish chickens. Although the exact makeup of the breed is uncertain, he is thought to have crossed British, Hamburg, Nankin and Polish birds with a base of Rose combs before achieving a laced chicken that would breed true. After the breed's establishment circa 1810, Sebright founded The Sebright Bantam Club, which was the very first individual breed association for chickens. The breed has appeared in the American Poultry Association's Standard of Perfection since the first edition in 1874. Today, the breed is one of the ten most popular bantam chickens, according to the American Bantam Association.

In accordance with the intentions of their creator, the Sebright is an ornamental chicken, and is common in competitive poultry showing. As a true bantam, all Sebrights are very small in stature; males weigh an average of 22 ounces (625 grams) and females 20 oz. (570 g.). Their short backs, proportionally large breasts, and downward-pointing wings combine to create an angular, jaunty look.

All Sebrights have plumage that is laced around the edges evenly with black, on a base of either dark gold or whitish silver. Sebrights have unfeathered legs with slate-blue skin, and their beaks are ideally a dark horn color. Sebright roosters carry a rose comb covered with fine points, and a small spike that sweeps back from the head (called a leader). Combs, earlobes and wattles were originally a purplish color, but today are often bright red. Characteristically, Sebrights are only one of a few chicken breeds in which the males are hen feathered, meaning they have none of the long, sickle-shaped feathers common in most roosters that appear in the tail, neck and saddle. Some breeders consider hen feathering to have an adverse effect on the fertility of male Sebrights, and may use roosters that don't carry the trait for

breeding purposes, despite their automatic disqualification in shows.

Husbandry

Sebrights are neither prolific egg layers, nor outstanding meat birds. They can be difficult to raise, especially for the beginner. Hens rarely go broody and chicks usually have high mortality rates. Adults are generally hardy birds, but are especially susceptible to Marek's disease. In temperament, Sebrights are friendly, but very active birds. Males are not known to be aggressive, but Sebrights in general are, like most small chickens, somewhat skittish birds. Due to their small size and relatively large wings, they are one of a minority of chicken breeds that retains a strong flying ability. Thus, most keepers keep Sebrights in confinement rather than allowing them to free range.

The Silkie



Silkie bearded white feather legged - bantam

Photo by Parker courtesy of FeatherSite.com . Used with permission.



White Silkie hen, non-bearded

Image from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.



Bearded Partridge Silkie hen

Image from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.



Black Silkie hen and a chick

Image from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

The Silkie (sometimes spelled Silky) is a breed of chicken named for its unique plumage, which is said to feel like silk. The breed has several other unusual qualities, such as black flesh and bones, blue earlobes, and five toes on each foot (most chickens only have four). They are often exhibited in poultry shows, and come in several colors. In addition to their distinctive physical characteristics, Silkies are well known for their calm, friendly temperament. Among the most docile of poultry, Silkies are considered an ideal pet. Hens are also exceptionally broody, and make good mothers. Though they are poor layers themselves, they are commonly used to hatch eggs from other breeds and bird species. Silkies most likely originate in China, but other Southeast Asian countries are also sometimes proposed. The first written account of the breed comes from Marco Polo, who mentioned chickens with fur-like plumage in his Asian travelogues in the 13th century. The Renaissance author Ulisse Aldrovandi also spoke of chickens akin to Silkies. Today, the breed is recognized for exhibition, and is fairly common in the poultry world.

Silkies most likely made their way to the West via the Silk Route and maritime trade. The breed was recognized officially in North America via acceptance in to the Standard of Perfection in 1874 (the first year of publication). Once Silkies became more common in the West, many myths were perpetuated about them. Early Dutch breeders told buyers they were the offspring of chickens and rabbits, while sideshows promoted them as having actual mammalian fur. In the 21st century, Silkies are one of the most popular and ubiquitous ornamental breeds of chicken. They are often kept as ornamental or pet chickens by backyard keepers and in zoos, and are also often used to incubate and raise the offspring of other poultry (including waterfowl like ducks and geese) and game birds such as quail and pheasants.

Silkies are often considered a bantam breed, but this varies according to region, and many breed standards class them officially as large fowl. Almost all North American strains of the breed are bantam sized, but in Europe the large is the original version. However, even "large" Silkies are relatively small chickens, with standard size males weighing only four pounds (1.8 kilos), and females weigh three pounds (1.36 kilos).

Silkie plumage is unique among chicken breeds, It has been compared to silk, and to fur. Their feathers lack functioning barbicels, and are thus similar to down on other birds. The overall result is a soft, fluffy appearance. Due to a lack of hard outer feathers, Silkies do poorly in extremes of temperature or inclement weather of any kind. Silkies appear in two distinct varieties: Bearded and Non-bearded. Bearded Silkies have an extra muff of feathers under the beak area that covers the earlobes. They also are separated according to color.

Colors of Silkie recognized for competitive showing include

1. **Black**
2. **Blue**
3. **Buff**
4. **Gray**
5. **Partridge**
6. **Splash**
7. **White.**

Alternative hues, such as Cuckoo and Red, also exist. All Silkies have a small Walnut-type comb, dark wattles, and turquoise blue earlobes. In addition to these defining characteristics, Silkies have five toes on each foot. Other breeds which exhibit this rare trait include the Dorking, Faverolles, and Sultan. All Silkies have black skin, bones and grayish-black meat. Melanosis which extends in to an animal's connective tissue beyond the skin is a rare trait, and the Silkie is one of only a handful of chickens to exhibit it. The breed does not generally produce as much meat as the more common meat breeds of chicken. Silkies lay a fair number of cream-colored eggs, but production is often interrupted due to their extreme tendency to go broody; a hen will produce 100 eggs in an ideal year. Their capacity for incubation, which has been selectively bred out of most egg-laying fowl, is often exploited by poultry keepers by allowing Silkies to raise the offspring of other birds. In addition to being good mothers, Silkies are universally renowned for their calm, friendly temperament. They do well in confinement, and interact very well with children. This docility can cause Silkies to be bullied by more active or aggressive birds when kept in mixed flocks.

The black meat of a Silkie is generally considered an unusual or unpalatable attribute in European and American cuisines. In contrast, several Asian cuisines consider Silkie meat a



gourmet food. Chinese cuisine especially values the breed, but is also a common ingredient in some Japanese, Cambodian and Korean dishes. Areas where Chinese cuisine has been a strong influence, such as Malaysia, may also cook Silkie. As early as the 7th century, traditional Chinese medicine has held that chicken soup made with Silkie meat is a curative food. The usual methods of cooking include using Silkie to make broth, braising, and in curries. Traditional Chinese soup made with Silkie also uses ingredients such as wolfberries, white yam, orange peel, and fresh ginger. A few fusion restaurants in metropolitan areas of the West have also cooked it as a part of traditional American or French cuisine, such as in confit.

Image from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

Rhode Island Red



Rhode Island Red Single comb American Large Fowl

Image courtesy of Department of Animal Sciences, Oklahoma State University. Used with permission



Rhode Island Red hen

Image from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

The Rhode Island Red is a utility bird, raised for meat and eggs, and also as show birds.

Appearance

Their feathers are rust-colored, but darker shades are known, including maroon bordering on black. Their eyes are red-orange and they have yellow feet, with reddish-brown beaks. Chicks are a light red to tan color with two dark brown bars running down their backs. They are generally good pets to keep and safe around children, though they have been known to attack toddlers when provoked. They will happily be kept in a run.

History

Developed in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, early flocks often had both single and rose combed individuals because of the influence of Malay blood. It was from the Malay that the Rhode Island Red got its deep color, strong constitution and relatively hard feathers. The Rhode Island Red was originally bred in Adamsville, a village which is part of Little Compton, Rhode Island. One of the foundation sires of the breed was a black-breasted red Malay cock which was imported from England. This infusion gave the breed its size, disease resistance, overall docile nature and superior meat qualities. This cock is on display at the Smithsonian Institution as the father of the Rhode Island Red breed. Rhode Island Reds and Sussex are also used for many modern hybrid breeds.

Characteristics

Rhode Island Reds are tough birds, resistant to illness, good at foraging and free ranging, and are typically docile, quiet and friendly. Although they are widely known as good layers through cold periods, if the coop temperature drops below freezing their output drops considerably and the tips of their combs become very susceptible to frostbite. Although usually friendly, Rhode Island Red roosters, and sometimes hens, can be quite aggressive towards young children and adults. Most roosters will also attack strangers (humans or animals) if they feel nervous or have never seen the intruder. They are usually friendlier with familiar people, such as those responsible for feeding. Both hens and roosters are known to be aggressive with other chickens, especially in confinement.

Eggs

Rhode Island Reds are excellent egg layers. Although they can sometimes be stubborn, they can end up producing up to 250 to 300 large, light brown eggs per year. When free ranged, their first year eggs can be too large to fit comfortably in a standard or medium egg carton. 9 hens with 1 to 2 roosters can lay up to 6-7 eggs per day depending on their conditions of care and treatment.

Meat

Rhode Island Reds are also bred for meat, with Roosters weighing in at 8 1/2 pounds, the Hens slightly less at 6 1/2 pounds; cockerel at 7 1/2 pounds; pullets at 5 1/2 pounds.

Sicilian Buttercup



Sicilian Buttercup Mediterraneana - Large fowl

Photo by Nick Nick ([The Chicken Mother!](#)) courtesy of [FeatherSite.com](#) . Used with permission.



Sicilian Buttercup hen

Image from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

The Sicilian Buttercup is a breed of domestic chicken from the island of Sicily. The breed was imported from the island of Sicily over 100 years ago and is another member of the Mediterranean class. It has attracted wide-spread interest over the country because of its unique beauty. The golden color and cup-shaped comb are the basis for the very descriptive name. The comb is a cup-shaped crown with a complete circle of medium sized regular points. The male and female do

not look alike in coloring. The males are a rich, brilliant orange red with some black spangles in the feather of the body fluff and cape feathers at the base of the hackle; with lustrous, greenish black tail. The base color of the female is buff with all feathers on the body marked by parallel rows of black elongated spangles, giving the hen an appearance of being beautifully spotted and suggesting a ringneck pheasant hen. Skin color is yellow and shanks and toes are a willow green. Eggs are small and can be colored anywhere from white to heavily tinted. The chickens are very flighty, and are the only breed able to boast of the lovely, dainty, cup-shaped comb.

Booted Bantam



Booted Bearded Millei Fleur Feather Legged Bantam

Photo by Rupert Stephenson courtesy of FeatherSite.com . Used with permission.



Lemon Porcelain rooster

Image from Wikipedia, the free

encyclopedia.

The Booted Bantam, also called the Dutch Booted Bantam, is a bantam breed of chicken. Its name is derived from the bird's extravagant feathering on the feet and hock joints, which are called vulture hocks. With no large fowl counterpart from which it was miniaturized, the Booted is one of the true bantams. Males usually weigh in at around 850 grams (30 ounces) and females 750 grams (27 ounces). American standards dictate a smaller ideal size of 740 grams (26 ounces) for males, and 625 (22 ounces) for females.

Characteristics

Booted Bantams are angular birds with profuse plumage. They have broad backs, breasts carried well forward, and relatively large, downward-pointing wings. Booted Bantams have a single upright comb with five points, horn-colored beaks, red wattles, and red earlobes. Almost exclusively an exhibition chicken raised by poultry fanciers, they appear in more than a dozen color varieties. Hues accepted in competition include:

- Barred
- Black
- Blue
- Buff
- Columbian
- Gray
- Golden Neck
- Mille Fleur (the most common)
- Mottled
- Partridge
- Pearl Gray
- Porcelain
- Self Blue
- White.

Long kept as pets in addition to being shown, Booted Bantams are usually friendly and calm. They are good foragers, and are said to do less damage to garden plants because of their heavily feathered feet. However, most breeders keep their Booted Bantams confined and on soft bedding in order to maintain these feathers. Hens readily go broody, and lay very

small eggs that are white or tinted in color. Their egg production is respectable for bantams, especially in summer.

History

The Booted Bantam is closely related to the Belgian Bearded d'Uccle. The most significant differences in conformation between the two are the d'Uccle's feather beard and the greater height of the Booted. Some sources assert the two breeds share a singular point of origin, with a Belgian breeder around the beginning of the 20th century. Other sources point to a clearly documented presence in the Netherlands since the 16th century, and note that the Booted Bantam is known to this day in the Netherlands, as the Nederlandse Sabelpootkriel (Dutch, Dutch saber-legged bantam). Whatever their exact relation, Booted Bantams and Bearded d'Uccles are the only two breeds of chicken to possess vulture hocks. Popular across Europe for hundreds of years, the Booted Bantam was imported to North America from Germany in the early 20th century. It was officially recognized by the American Poultry Association in 1914. It is also recognized by the American Bantam Association, and is classed in the Feather Legged group

New Hampshire



New Hampshire single comb clean legged bantam

Image courtesy of Department of Animal Sciences, Oklahoma State University. Used with permission

The New Hampshire breed of chicken originated in the state of New Hampshire in the United States. Poultry farmers, starting with Rhode Island Reds and performing generation after generation of selective breeding, intensified the characteristics of early maturity, rapid full feathering, and production of large brown eggs. One New Hampshire breeder described his birds as being especially endowed with "spizzerinktum"; they were unusually handsome and vigorous.

The mature birds are a rich chestnut red, of a somewhat lighter and more even shade than the Rhode Island Reds. The baby chicks are also a lighter red.

Standard weights Cock: 8-1/2 pounds; hen: 6-1/2 pounds; cockerel: 7-1/2 pounds; pullet: 5-1/2 pounds.

Skin Color Yellow

Egg Shell Color Brown

Use

A dual purpose chicken, selected more for meat production than egg production. Medium heavy in weight, it dresses a nice, plump carcass as either a broiler or a roaster.

Origin

New Hampshires are a relatively new breed, having been admitted to the Standard in 1935. They represent a specialized selection out of the Rhode Island Red breed. By intensive selection for rapid growth, fast feathering, early maturity and vigor, a different breed gradually emerged. This took place in the New England states, chiefly in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, from which it takes its name.

Characteristics

They possess a deep, broad body, grow feathers very rapidly, are prone to go broody and make good mothers. Most pin feathers are a reddish buff in color and, therefore, do not detract from the carcass appearance very much. The color is a medium to light red and often fades in the sunshine. The comb is single and medium to large in size; in the females it often lops over a bit. These good, medium-sized meat chickens have fair egg-laying ability. Some strains lay eggs of a dark brown shell color. New Hampshires are competitive and aggressive. They were initially used in the Chicken of Tomorrow contests, which led the way for the modern broiler industry.

Modern Game



Modern Game brown red game - bantam

Image from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

The Modern Game is a breed of a chicken originating in England in the latter half of the 19th century. Purely an exhibition bird, Modern Game were developed to epitomize the visual appeal of the gamecock. After the outlawing of cockfights in the U.K. in the mid 19th century, many cockfighting enthusiasts turned to breeding for shows as an alternative poultry hobby, and the Modern Game was developed from crosses of Old English Games and Malays. Despite being classified as game chickens (i.e. of cockfighting derivation) in breed standards, Modern Game were not bred to fight. Today, the ideal show bird should have a body shaped like a flat iron when seen from above, a relatively short back, fine tail, hard feathering, and a very upright carriage. The breed appears in more than a dozen color variations. The most common being

1. **black red**
2. **birchen**
3. **brown red**
4. **duckwing**
5. **pyle.**

The colors can be broadly divided into two groups; those with willow-colored legs and red eyes, versus those with black legs and dark eyes.

Like many breeds, Modern Game comes in both a standard large size and a bantam version; large fowl weight 4.5-6 pounds (2-2.75 kilos) and bantams 20-22 ounces (570-625 grams). Today, the bantam version is the most popular among poultry fanciers. The color of their skin, comb, and wattles varies from red to mulberry depending on variety, but all have a small single comb. Combs and wattles are required to be dubbed to compete in showing in some countries, which reflects their descent from fighting birds. Modern Game are neither good egg layers nor are they valued for meat production. In temperament, they are friendly and curious towards people, and are easily tamed.

Sussex



Sussex speckled English Large Fowl

Image courtesy of Department of Animal Sciences, Oklahoma State University. Used with permission



Light Sussex hen

Image from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

The Sussex chicken is a dual purpose breed that is a popular backyard chicken in many countries. They come in eight colors (with a couple more being developed) and have a bantam version at 1/4 size; the bantams may be any of the seven colors.

Appearance



Buff Sussex hen

Image from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

The colors found in Sussex chickens are:

1. **Brown**
2. **Buff**
3. **Light**
4. **Red**
5. **Speckled**
6. **Silver**
7. **White**
8. **Coronation**

The Sussex chicken, whatever color, should be graceful with a long, broad, flat back and a rectangular build, the tail should be at a 45 degree angle from the body. The eyes should be red in the darker varieties but orange in the lighter one and they sport a medium sized, single, erect comb. The earlobes are red and the legs and skin white in every variety. Cocks should weigh approx 9 lbs, and the hens (females) 7 lbs The Brown and red varieties are rare but the others are more common.

Brown and Red

In the brown variety, the cocks are dark brown with black points and the hens have a slightly paler shade of brown. The Red Sussex is the same only it has a richer, more vibrant color

Light, Buff and Silver

The light Sussex has a white body with a black tail and black wing tips, its neck is white striped with black and has a very striking appearance. The buff is ginger where the light is white, if showing the bird, a person must be careful to keep it out of strong sunlight, as the color will fade. The Silver Sussex has a similar neck to the previous two variants, excepting that the body is black and the majority of the feathers on the body have silver lacing

White

The White is pure white throughout

Speckled



Speckled Sussex hen

Image from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

The feathers of the Speckled variety all have a mix of mahogany and black with white tips. Sometimes the amount of

white increases as the bird moults each year. This is the most common variety in the US. However, the Light is far more common in the UK.

Coronation

This color is essentially the same as the light, but the black markings are replaced by pigeon gray/blue. There is a buff coronation, but it is quite rare and not recognized.

It should be mentioned that pure sussex will sometimes throw offspring, with white colombian patterns replacing the black.

Characteristics

The Sussex chicken is an alert, docile breed that can adapt to any surrounding, they are comfortable in both free range or confined spaces. The breed sometimes (but not very often) goes broody, the speckled version is most likely to do so. They are good foragers.

Eggs

The Sussex was bred to be a dual purpose bird and is one of the most productive breeds of poultry. They lay large eggs that are cream to light brown in color. A person owning a member of this breed should expect approximately 240 to 260 eggs a year, although the light and white varieties are the best choice for layers. Recently there has been an olive green colored egg introduced to some Light Sussex breeds, although these green egg layers are very rare.

Meat

It is a good producer of meat and all of the varieties are a good choice to have for this purpose. The chicks mature quickly for heavy breed but the speckled is slowest to mature.

History

The Sussex chicken was created over a century ago in the county of Sussex, England. The original colors were the Brown, Red and Speckled, and the Silver is the latest variety. The breed was prized as table fowl more than one-hundred years ago and, more recently, the Light Sussex was very popular for the laying trials of the 30's. Today they are a popular breed for exhibitions as well as a backyard breed. The breed has made a huge contribution to the poultry industry and is even an ancestor to the modern broiler. Sussex is one of the oldest breeds of chicken that still exists today

Orpington



Orpington buff English Large Fowl

Image courtesy of Department of Animal Sciences, Oklahoma State University. Used with permission



**Jubilee Orpingtons,
12 weeks, pullet and
cockerel**

Image from Wikipedia,
the free encyclopedia.



Black Orpington hen

Image from Wikipedia, the free
encyclopedia.



Orpington hens, Splash, Blue, Buff

Image from Wikipedia, the free
encyclopedia.

The Orpington is a large bird from the English class of chickens. It is a bold, upright breed with a wide chest, broad back, and small head and tail. The Orpington was bred as a dual-purpose breed (meat production and eggs), but its popularity grew as a show bird rather than a utility breed. Their large size and soft appearance together with their rich color and gentle contours make them very attractive.

History

The original Orpington (the Black) was developed in 1886 by William Cook. He crossed Minorcas, Langshans and Plymouth Rocks to create the new hybrid bird. Cook named the breed after his home town in Kent. The first Orpingtons looked very much like the Langshan and were black. Between 1889 and 1905, Cook also created white, buff and blue colored Orpingtons. The breed was famous for its great egg-capacity.

Appearance

Some characteristics of an Orpington are:

Heavy (7 to 10 pounds),
Soft, profuse feathering, which almost hides the legs of the bird,
Curvy shape with a short back and U-shaped underline,
A small head with a small comb.
Large and usually tame
Its fluffy feathers that makes it look distinctively large.

Colors

Besides the original colors (black, white, buff, blue), lots of other varieties exist today, e.g. porcelain (= Jubilee, speckled), red, mottled and birchen. The original colors are still the most widely bred varieties. Many colors are still being thought of and bred today.

Personality

The Orpington chicken is thought of as a highly docile bird and is suitable for families with small children. They are very popular and their popularity is increasing. They also tend to be smarter than other breeds, some people tend to claim their Orpington has performed tricks and they usually come when their name is called.

Eggs

Orpingtons lay between 110 and 160 eggs a year. They do not stop laying in the winter. The eggs are a light brown to tinted white and range from small to large depending on the heredity of the breed. Hens tend to go broody more than other heavy egg breeds, which is to say occasionally.

Cochin



Cochin Buff Asiatic Large Fowl

Image courtesy of Department of Animal Sciences, Oklahoma State University. Used with permission



Blue Cochin Bantam Rooster

Image from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

The Cochin or Cochin China, originally known as the Chinese Shanghai, is a breed of chicken. The name Cochin came from its original Chinese name, meaning nine jin yellow, where jin is a traditional Chinese measurement of weight. This chicken was originally bred in China and later exported to Britain and America in the mid 19th century. As a very distinctive breed of chicken, it apparently created a bit of a craze among poultry lovers in the English-speaking world. Not only was this breed one of the largest seen, with cocks weighing up to 11 pounds (5 kg), but also the soft and plentiful plumage makes the bird quite conspicuous by exaggerating its already large size. Once in the United States, the breed underwent considerable development into its current state. There is also a bantam version, which is often called the "Pekin bantam", but should not be confused with the separate true Pekin bantam.

Characteristics

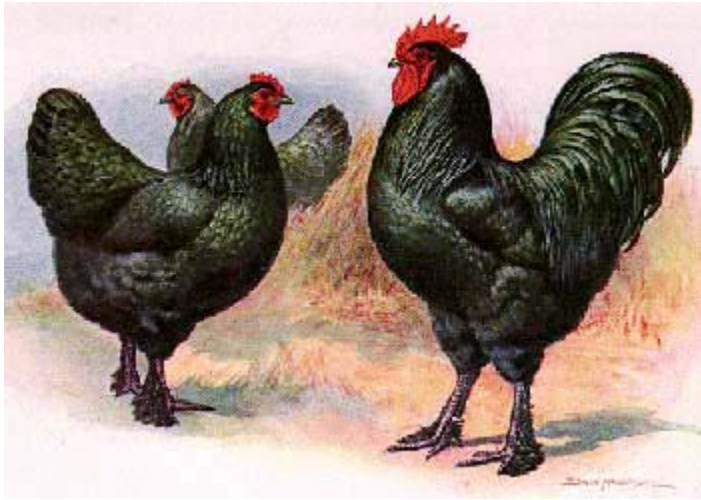
As above, the most distinctive feature of the Cochin is the excessive plumage that covers leg and foot. The birds are therefore often kept penned on days of poor weather to avoid ruining their lower feathers (assuming they are kept for ornamental purposes, which is almost always the case). Apparently their thick feathering can even lead to problems with fertility due to sexual organs being literally buried in plumage (though this can be remedied by clipping back the feathers).

The skin beneath the feathers is yellow and the egg color is brown. Eggs are also medium in size. Standard weight is 11 pounds (5 kg) for a cock, 9 pounds (4 kg) for a cockerel, 8.5 pounds (3.9 kg) for a hen, and 7 pounds (3.2 kg) for a pullet. Color varieties include

1. **buff**
2. **black**
3. **partridge**
4. **blue**
5. **silver laced**
6. **splash**
7. **golden laced**
8. **white**

Cochins also come in a variety called frizzled, in which the feathers are turned outward. Cochins are well known as good mothers, even as foster mothers for other breeds, and they can lay many eggs, but usually not for extended periods of time.

Langshan



Langshan Black Asiatic Large Fowl

Image courtesy of Department of Animal Sciences, Oklahoma State University. Used with permission



Croad Langshan

Image from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The Croad Langshan is an old, heavy, soft-feathered chicken breed which probably originated in China. The first recorded imports came from the Langshan District (north of the Yangtse-Kiang River in China) in 1872 and were undertaken by Major F.T. Croad who imported the breed into Britain. Major Croad's niece, Miss A. C. Croad, has been credited with establishing the breed in Britain. The name 'Croad' distinguishes the original type of Langshan, imported by Major Croad, which were a utility fowl of great merit, from the tall Modern Langshans which have been developed for the show pen. As with many other breeds, numbers declined after the Second World War and eventually the breed was left without a breed club in the UK. It was rescued by the Rare Poultry Society until in 1979 the club was reformed.

Langshans were also imported to North America in 1878 and admitted to the standard in 1883. White Langshans were admitted to the standard ten years later in 1893. There are three varieties of Langshans that have been accepted to the US standard:

1. **Black**
2. **White**
3. **Blue.**

The latter was not accepted to the standard until 1987.

In 1879 the breed was brought to Germany. The German Langshans were derived from these and soon replaced them. After the Second World War Croad Langshans were reintroduced to Germany from the USA.

The original Croad Langshans were black with a brilliant green sheen and that is still the main color kept today.

The Croad Langshan is large in body, has a deep and long breast which is carried well forward; the back is rather long and sloping with the tail rising sharply from the back, giving the characteristic 'U' shape. The head is small compared to the body size, the beak is light to dark horn in color; the comb is medium-sized, single and carried upright in both sexes. The shanks and outer toes are slightly feathered. In the original birds the males topped 10 lb/4.5 kg; today cocks weigh c. 3.75-4.25 kg and hens c. 3-3.5 kg. Hatching eggs should weigh at least 58g.

In the early 20th century Croad Langshans became a popular utility breed, doing well in laying trials. The hens lay 140-150 eggs a year and are good winter layers; the eggs are brown with a plum-colored bloom. The hens are excellent sitters and mothers. Croad Langshans are easily tamed and adapt well to both confinement and free range. They do well in sheltered conditions and dry soils but are not well suited to very exposed conditions. Under suitable conditions they thrive well and are very productive. Their flesh is fine in texture and of excellent quality.

Many other breeds were created using Langshan blood in the foundation matings. These include, for example, Barnevelders, Black Orpingtons, and Marans. Langshans still exist in China today.