

# **BIRMAN BREED ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

## **A BREEDING POLICY FOR BIRMAN CATS - BREED NUMBER 13c**

### ***INTRODUCTION:***

Birmans are long and massive cats with thick sets legs of medium length and short, strong paws. They have a strong broad and rounded head with medium sized ears that are spaced well apart. Their nose is medium in length with no "stop" but with a slight dip to the profile. The cheeks are full and round with a full, well developed chin that is slightly tapered but not receding. Their eyes are almost round but not bold, blue in colour, the deeper the blue the better.

Birmans have long silky fur with a full ruff around the neck and a medium length busy tail. The distinguishing appearance of the Birman cat arises from the Himalayan coat pattern and the characteristic white feet, The front paws have pure white symmetrical gloves and the back paws (socks) have pure white gauntlets which taper up the back of the leg and finish just below the point of the hock.

*As of the 1<sup>st</sup> June 1992 all Birman colours were granted Championship status in the following groups :-*

<b>Breed No</b>	<b>Colour Description</b>	<b>Colour Group</b>
13c1 13c2	Seal Point Blue Point	Seal and Blue
13c3 13c4	Chocolate Point Lilac Point	Chocolates and Lilacs
13c5 13c6 13c7 13c8 13c9 13c10	Red Point Seal Tortie Point Cream Point Blue Cream Point Chocolate Tortie Point Lilac Cream Point	Red Series
13c11 13c12 13c13 13c14 13c15 13c16 13c17 13c18 13c19 13c20	Seal Tabby Point Blue Tabby Point Chocolate Tabby Point Lilac Tabby Point Red Tabby Point Seal Tortie Tabby Point Cream Tabby Point Blue Tortie Tabby Point Chocolate Tortie Tabby Point Lilac Tortie Tabby Point	Tabbies and Tortie-Tabbies

**AIMS:****The aims of the Breeding Policy are as follows:**

- a) To encourage the breeding of Birmans which conform as closely as possible to the GCCF Standard of Points.
- b) To promote the breeding of Birmans with sound conformation, good temperament, good health and free from deleterious alleles or defects known to be heritable traits.
- c) To accomplish the development of Birmans over the full range of colours from 13c1 to 13c20 without causing either the deterioration of, or effecting the introduction of undesirable alleles or defects into the breeding stock of, other varieties of pedigreed cat (e.g. the white gloving gene).
- d) To further the health, welfare and care of Birman Cats at all times, in keeping with their role as domesticated companion cats.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The selection of Birman cats to be used for breeding purposes should be very strict, particularly so in the case of stud cats. Preference should be given to those individuals which conform most nearly to the GCCF Standard of Points with particular emphasis on overall balance and quality, type, characteristic coat pattern and white gloves and gauntlets. Excessively dark coats or general lack of contrast is undesirable.

In kittens of all colours, the points (face, ears, tail and legs) are typically less extensive than in adults, particularly so in those of the Chocolate Series and Red Series. On reaching maturity, as adult cats, the points are dense in colour and clearly defined with a full mask which covers the entire face including the whisker pads, and which is connected to the ears by tracing. In Tabby Pointed Birmans, the markings should be well defined on a pale ground.

All cats used for breeding should exhibit sound conformation, vigorous reproductive ability, good temperament and be free from deleterious or harmful alleles or defects known to be heritable traits such as :

- ❖ Polydactyly
- ❖ Squints
- ❖ Epibulbar dermoids (dermoid cysts)
- ❖ Hairlessness
- ❖ Protruding sternum (xiphisternum)
- ❖ Hernias
- ❖ Cerebellar ataxia (wobbly kittens)
- ❖ Ataxia (head tilts)
- ❖ Portal-systemic shunts (liver shunt)
- ❖ Epilepsy
- ❖ Heart defects

It is recommended that cats with a Persian or Siamese type head or with any evidence of spotting (white areas on the body, other than the gloves and gauntlets) should not be bred from. In addition, it is recommended that cats that exhibit behavioural or skeletal abnormalities (spinal deformations or any abnormality of the bone structure of the tail) should not be bred from.

It is envisaged that the majority of matings will be between Birmans (13c1 to 13c20).

It is acknowledged that outcrossing to other specific varieties of long haired cat has been necessary in order to introduce the various colours, although the incidence of such matings should decrease in time.

The use of cats from lines that exhibit extreme Persian type should be avoided: all Persian cats selected for outcross purposes should hold a FAB clearance certificate (issued after the cat is 10 months old, and scanned by an approved individual stating that the cat is free from PKD) (Polycystic Kidney Decease) Initial outcrosses are permitted for the purpose of a single colour introduction ideally between Seal and Blue Point Birmans and the following varieties within the long haired (Persian Type) breed section.

Chocolate	13b3	Chocolate Self	50b
Lilac	13b4	Lilac Self	50c
Red	13b5	Red Self	4
Tortie	<b>13b6</b>	Cream Self	5
Cream	13b7	Tortoiseshell	<b>11</b>
Blue-Cream	<b>13b8</b>	Blue-Cream	<b>13</b>
Seal Tabby	13b11	Brown Tabby	8
Blue Tabby	13c12	Red Tabby	9

Colourpoints are preferred for outcrossing due to their being 'pointed' cats as opposed to 'self' cats or 'all over patterned' cats such as the Tabbies.

*The Birman Registration Policy only allows the registration of Birman Variants from outcrosses to cats of the above breed numbers*

It is recommended that the progeny from such matings that are not required for Birman breeding, should be placed on the Non-Active Register and neutered or spayed to avoid the introduction of the gloving gene into other varieties of pedigreed cat. This also applies to kittens other than those of Birman type and/or pattern, arising from matings within the breeding programmes.

**Note:** *In order to ensure, as far as possible, that the presence of any white spotting gene is eliminated at the first cross stage (F1), it is strongly recommended that cats for breeding purposes should be selected at this stage only without any white on the feet at all. If the second cross (F2) is a mating to a Birman, gloves and gauntlets of some shape or form, should be obtained on the progeny.*

Tortie Pointed and Tortie-Tabby Pointed Birmans are usually produced by suitable Birman matings from within the Chocolate Series, the Red Series and the Tabby Series breeding programmes.

It is acknowledged that some of the early introductions of the colours were achieved by the use of Siamese and non-pedigreed outcrosses. However, outcrosses are not now permitted between Birmans 13c1 to 13c20 and any variety or short haired cat or their variants, or non pedigreed cats, or most of the breeds within the long haired (Persian type) breed section. Turkish Van cats are also excluded by this Breeding Policy. Outcrossing to any Preliminary or Provisional status breeds is not allowed. In addition, the Maine Coon, Norwegian Forest Cat and Ragdolls are also specifically excluded as they are known to carry the white spotting gene.

***It is emphasised that the introduction of the inhibitor (silver) gene is deemed as wholly undesirable.***

Associated with these guidelines is the parallel requirement that the health and well-being of these cats, including the careful placement of kittens in suitable permanent homes, is to be of paramount importance at all times. The placing of kittens/cats in homes on 'breeding terms' is to be discouraged.

Breeders are urged to observe the recommendations of the GCCF, and the advice of their own veterinary surgeons regarding cat welfare, the importance of neutering, health, inoculations and FELV and FIV testing.