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From the Editor

The last month of summer has been relentless here in WA with not just the extreme heat but also we have had flash floods with damage to roads, bridges and farmers have lost the top soil from their land due to extreme wetness. All of these things are material items and in time will be replaced, but for the families & friends of the two lives lost, their memories and good times will remain with them forever.

Poultry over here has also taken a hit with some poultry breeders saying they have lost a few birds, but have had to be extra vigilant with providing fresh water more than once per day and either using misters or very light hose spray so that the poultry would not become distressed.

Although a little earlier than usual, chickens I bred last October/November have been through the first molt and are feathering nicely. Although I strive to have a champion one day, I always like to make improvements as each year goes by.

On the weekend of 10th & 11th March I took both soft and hard feather birds to the Wagin Woolorama., and it was lovely catching up with Mal & Jan McDougall (of Bundaberg, Queensland) who attended Woolorama, as Mal judged the poultry.

There are no Junior Classes and Champion Bird of Show & the reserve Bird of Show were benched by 2 juniors, Mal was amazed, so we were all one happy family. The 350 benched not only poultry but approx. 50 of turkey, geese, waterfowl and eggs.

All members of MGPS are more than welcome to forward items to me for publication in the magazine. Remember this magazine will only be as good as you the members make it. This brings me to another matter!!

During the past two years, Noel & I have travelled many kilometers making our way to and from MGPS National Shows. Our accommodation at one of these towns was in a delightful 1890s hotel (with all the antique furniture & trimmings) where we were told by the owners if we were heading home, and if we were passing a certain hotel, we must stop and have a meal at this ?? hotel. Well, we did stop in this delightful town for a few hours of sightseeing and stretching our legs and we did have a most beautiful meal for the unbelievable cost \$5 each. One needed to see the lunchtime rush to know what a rush is – the food was plentiful, wholesome and good size serve for \$5.

If you know the name of the town and hotel, I will donate for you, your 2017 MGPS Membership, but you must be a current financial member of MGPS. **Only postage replies will be accepted, no phone or email entries.**



To all members of the Modern Game Promotional Society Inc. I wish each of you a fabulous Easter with your family & friends



WIN YOURSELF 12 MONTHS MEMBERSHIP TO MODERN GAME PROMOTIONAL SOCIETY INC.

YOUR NAME:.....

HOTEL NAME:.....

TOWN NAME:.....

Members of the Management Committee of MGPS or their immediate family members are not permitted to enter.



Disclaimer and Acknowledgements

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual authors and may not necessarily reflect the views of The Modern Game Promotional Society. No responsibility is accepted by The Modern Game Promotional Society or the Editor for the accuracy of any statement, opinion or advice contained in any text or advertisement. Readers should rely on their own judgement in making any decisions.

The members of the Modern Game Promotional Society wish to gratefully acknowledge all modern game enthusiasts for the use of their prints and input to this publication. It is without a doubt that this material is of great assistance to us and other clubs who promote this truly wonderful breed of poultry so we believe that recognition should be given to the people who produced the original work of art

Vale to Clive Claus

The Poultry World has lost one of the Master Breeders of poultry and Clive will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

The first event that MGPS held was at the Rosewood Poultry Clubs Annual Show in July 2010 and it was here that Clive and his lovely wife Dos were elected to be our very first patrons of MGPS. A fitting venue as it was here that Clive made a huge contribution to the organisational side of poultry as Clive was The President for 35 years 1978 – 2013 and Secretary or Treasurer of the club in total of more than 50 years. Clive would often be seen in the big poultry shed at Rosewood Show or sitting on the veranda outside the Clive Claus official bar at the Rosewood Show surrounded by many poultry mates.

Poultry enthusiasts that visited his yard were shown fowl in the peak of condition and type and he would advise to always use good quality feed if you want your birds to do well. Clive used a number of different types of pens which were needed to raise the birds at different stages of the year.

Clive was a great mentor to many and showed how to handle birds and helped them to understand the Standard and type of the fowl. One tip he gave was to always breed many from a few birds and if you were starting out buy your breeding birds from a reputable breeder.

Clive was a much respected judge and judged all over Queensland and Northern NSW and at the Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide Royals.

Vale to a great man.

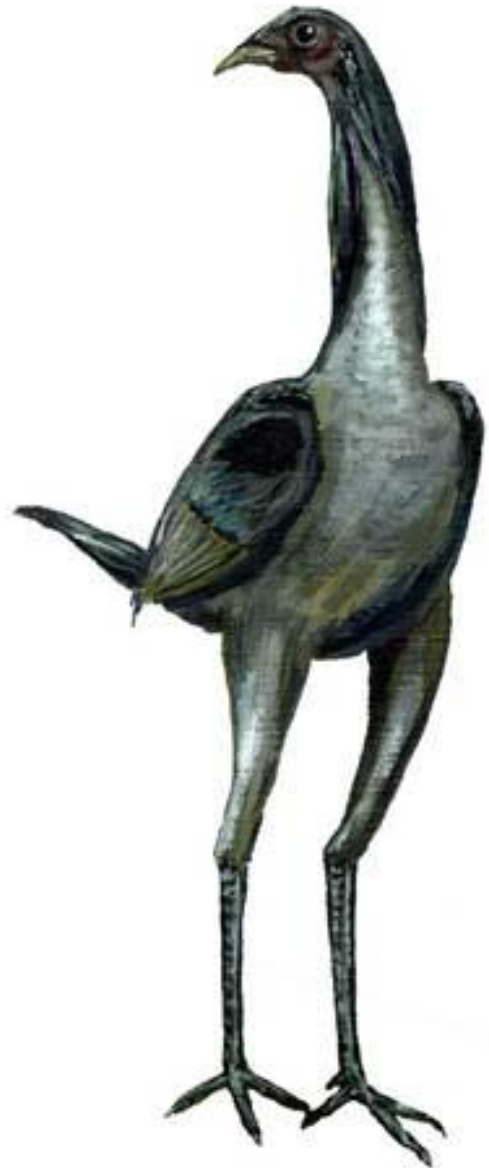


Photo of Clive with his wife Dos taken in 2010 at the first MGPS event at Rosewood Poultry Club



Secretary Report

I'm just about to go into the process of culling. The honeymoon is over where the thrill and joy of watching the chicks hatch out and watching them grow into youngsters. For me the hard part starts where you have to run that critical eye over your pullets and cockerels and decide who is going to be kept. I am very guilty of culling later rather than sooner and the old sentiment creeps in. It's also the time to be critical of the Hens and Cock birds.

Once we do cull we normally cull by colour and sex and will put the birds in the show pens to have that final look at them, looking for potential breeding birds and the birds we will take to shows.

At the back of the magazine is the Membership form for 2017 and a flyer for MGPS. Please take the flyer to shows and help promote our wonderful club. If you would like extra copies please don't hesitate to ask and I can post some out to you.

The Judges for the Modern Game Promotional Society National Show 2017

Ellis Dick and Andrew Lee



Ellis has been involved with poultry most of his life and has bred and shown most breeds of both hard feather and soft feathered fowl and bantams.

Ellis started with Black Red Modern Game Bantams 19 years ago and his first Champion Bird of Show was a black red modern game hen at the Devonport Agriculture Show in 2000, judged by the late Jack Dowsett of Victoria.

Ellis has been a member of the MGPS since its inception and for those who went to the second MGPS show in Harden 2011 you may remember meeting Ellis where he and his wife Lorna few over with some moderns to exhibit..



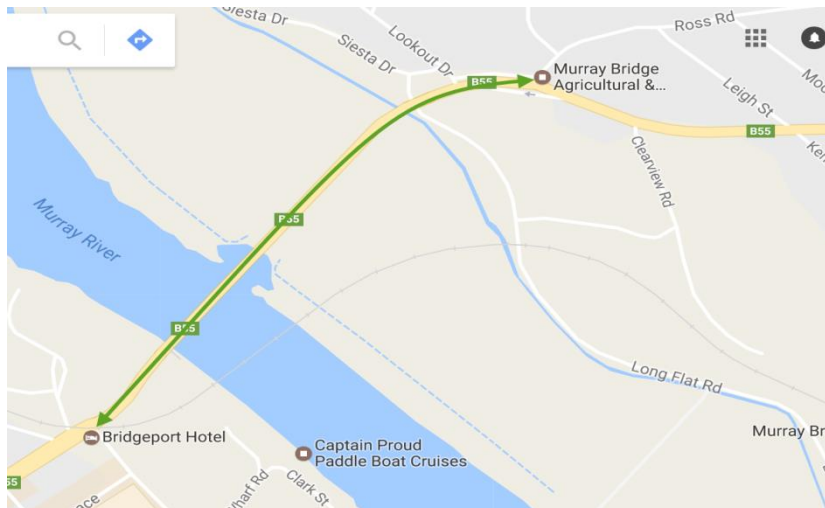
We had an extensive article on Andrew Lee Issue No. 37. Andrew Lee has judged at WA Modern Game Club, Qld Modern Game club and been a great supporter of showing his moderns.

Accommodation at Murray Bridge

For those who wish to book in early here are the details of accommodation. The Bridgeport Hotel has 21 budget accommodation rooms ranging from Standard Single and Double rooms (share bathroom) to Ensuite double and family size rooms.

This hotel will be the venue for our Friday night get together and Saturday presentation night.

Phone **08 8532 2002** Email bridgeport@hcs.on.net Web Site www.bridgeporthotel.com.au



Other hotels available

Murray Bridge Hotel Phone 08 8532 2024: Website: www.murraybridgehotel.com.au

Balcony On Sixth Lodge Phone: (08) 85311411 Website www.balconyonsixth.com.au

Murray Bridge Motor Inn Phone:(08) 8532 1090 Website: www.murraybridgemotorinn.com.au

Golden Chain Murray Bridge Oval Motel Phone:(08) 8532 2388 Website: www.ovalmotel.net.au

REVIEW TIME by Ian Simpson

Now that our chickens are growing and our adult birds are moulting and there are no shows to attend, it is now an excellent time to review our breeding season.

LET'S START WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. Which mating's did our chickens come from?
2. Which male was fertile and which one wasn't?
3. Which hen's laid the best shaped eggs?
4. Which birds am I going to keep for breeding and showing this year?
5. Which ones aren't I going to use?
6. How did my incubator perform and could I have done anything different?
7. Now is the time to clean it check all the bearings in the motor and any other maintenance work required. Don't leave it to the last minute before next breeding season starts!



Now that your pens are full of chickens nothing can match the wonder that comes from watching a fuzzy breeding chicken under the lights of your brooder. Once hatched its needs are simple warmth, food and water. The lamp should be positioned so that the temperature underneath is 39° When the temperature is right the chickens will be distributed around the edge of the light not huddled directly underneath.

All chickens need access to clean water and the chickens must be given the water in shallow containers so they don't drown. Chickens also require access to high protein (20 to 22 %) feed in a feeder with enough access holes for all of them to eat at once to prevent bullying. Feed them a reduced protein level as they mature at about 16%. Don't be afraid to feed them a little shell grit which is required by the gizzard to grind hard grains. Also feed them after a fortnight a little bit of grass clippings or you can trim grass

with scissors.

Now sit back and watch your champions grow!

HOW DID YOUR INCUBATOR PERFORM

I personally use a smart incubator which is forced draught. After the breeding season, make sure that your incubator is clean, level and in good working order. Do not assume everything is okay and just put it away. Use a good food disinfectant and wash the incubator and water tray and place both in the sun to dry.





POINTS TO BE AWARE OF

In preparation for next year's breeding season I have summarised as follows:

1. Ensure the air vents are free from cobwebs and dust
2. After turning on your incubator run the incubator for 24 hours to confirm the temperature before putting the first lot of eggs in
3. Check the level of humidity
4. The inflow and ventilation are free

Select eggs that are clean and laid by healthy birds that have been fed a proper diet. Do not use eggs that do not have the desired shape. Dirty eggs can be cleaned by using steel wool gently. The eggs should be placed perfectly flat on the tray. Some people place the broad end higher on the tray for forced draught incubators. During incubators the eggs should be turned at least 3 times a day.

In respect to the position of the thermometer place the thermometer about 50mm above the eggs. The thermometer is placed above the eggs so that it does not get in the way when you are turning the eggs.

It is important to follow the manufacturer's instruction as a correct and even temperature is the most singular important element of successful incubation.

The amount of moisture in the incubator controls the rate of evaporation from the eggs. This moisture loss dries out the content of the eggs. The humidity level inside an incubator is measured by a wet bulb thermometer.



In my experience with incubation you should always read the manufacturer's instructions about the operation of their product. However you cannot replace your own successes and failures of operating the incubator as every location has different levels of moisture and all buildings have different maintenance of temperature. Incubation is trial and error so always take notes of your successes and reasons for failure.

Thanks for the Article Ian. Photos shown are of some of Ian's breeding for the 2017 show season.

SHOW RESULTS CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE WINNERS



Left: Karella Rennes daughter won Junior champion at Adelong Ag show today with her red black modern game that they got from Mathew Smith

Right: Bird of show at Armidale AG show. Owner Junior Sam Bible.



Champion Junior ([Tallangatta Show](#)) - Modern Game Hen Lara Harris



Brown Red hen that got Reserve Modern tat the South Plains Bantam Club Spring show. (Lubbock Texas) Owner Jamie Davis

Reserve Bird of Show James and Judith Hawker at the Mount Pleasant Show with a Black Red Cockerel



James and Judith Hawker also had success with their female black red who won Champion Hard feathered female



The Modern Game Promotional Society Inc
Inc. No. A0091944G



National Annual Show

MGPS

SATURDAY JULY 8th, SATURDAY NIGHT PRESENTATION

UPCOMING Sponsored SHOWS by MGPS

This will be updated on the website as more sponsorship requests come in. When a show schedule is available we will place it on the MGPS website and face book. If you wish to have a copy contact the below names for a show schedule



Sat. 3/06/2017

NSW Modern Game Club Inc

Associated with MGPS

Annual Show

Judge: Graeme Rantall

Contact: Chris Windus Ph 0408 866 094

Sat. 17/06/2017

Modern Game Club of Qld Inc.

Associated with MGPS

Annual Show

Judge Graeme Rantall and Les Oxley

Contact Michele Dunn Ph: 0417 110 785



Sat. 29/07/2017

The Game Club of Vic Inc

Annual Show

Judge: Len Wills

Show Secretary: Brian Daniels Ph: (03) 5169 6705 after 6.00pm

or Secretary: Deb Sigmund Ph: (03) 5169 6705

THE GAME CLUB OF VICTORIA INC.

Sun. 6/08/2017

Victorian Modern Game Breeders Club

Annual Show

Judge Brian Daniels

Contact Filipa Marshall on 0408550545



Sun. 13/08/2017

South Australian Modern Game Club

Associated with MGPS

Judge

Annual Show

Secretary: Graeme Rantall Ph: 0447 165 487

PHILOSOPHY OF JUDGING 1889: by Felch, Babcock, and Lee.

Below is an excerpt from the book, interesting reading from a Historical viewpoint as written in 1889.

The philosophy of judging: a manual upon the scoring of exhibition fowls, intended to meet the wants of the general breeder and the exhibitor, as well as the professional judge / by I.K. Felch and H.S. Babcock ; illustrated by J. Henry Lee. The general breeder though he has no intention of becoming a professional poultry judge certainly needs to understand how to score his fowls. The Score does not make the fowl— the fowl makes the score— but the- score does, to a large extent, measure the pecuniary value of the fowl. The exhibitor needs to possess similar information in order to properly select his fowls for exhibition. Unless he does he may leave the highest scoring specimens at home, and though really possessing birds that would enable him to win in the exhibition, he is, through lack of the necessary information, placed in a subordinate position.

There are pages of the below in detail on points deduction but I have only added the summary.
I found the detail of colour deductions an interesting read.

<i>CUTS FOR FORM.</i>	
COMB.	
Improper dubbing	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 1
Bad shape, size, etc.	$\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$
Large and twisted	$2\frac{1}{2}$
HEAD.	
Short	$\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$
Too curved beak	$\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$
Weak beak	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 1
NECK.	
Too long hackle	$\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$
Too long or short neck	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 1
BACK.	
Roached	$\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$

Continued next page

Hollow	$\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$
Narrowness	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 1
Horizontal	1

BREAST.

Too full	1
Too narrow	1

BODY AND STERN.

Flat sides	$\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$
Bagginess	$\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$
Long stern	$\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$
Crooked keel	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 2

WINGS.

Badly folded	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 2
Carried over back	1
Fronts hidden	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 1
Twisted feathers	1 to 2

TAIL.

Carried too high	$\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$
Too large and bushy	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 3

LEGS AND FEET.

Short thigh	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 2
Bunches	$\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$
Short shanks	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 2
Knock-kneed	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 3
Absence of spurs	2
Rear toe too high	1
Forming right angle	1
Crooked toe	1
Absence of nail	$\frac{1}{2}$
Loss of first joint	1

BLACK BREASTED RED Varieties Colour Deductions

The MALE

In speaking of varieties, it is unnecessary to describe anything but colour, for our remarks upon form, already made, apply to all varieties alike. It is true that the Black Breasted Red are usually superior to the other varieties in form, having been more largely raised and more carefully bred to a high standard. But the Standard of Perfection recognizes but one form for all varieties, and the only difference possible to make in scoring the varieties for form is a more liberal interpretation of the

terms of the Standard in accordance with the development of the varieties as they actually appear. Either this must be done or the other varieties must score lower for form.



The Beak, head and eye

For any colour other than light or dark horn in the beak, cut $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 point, the latter if it be flesh colour or yellow. The eye, if it be other than bay or red in colour, cut $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 point, the former if the colour be a faded bay, the latter if it be not bay or red or some of their shadings. The plumage is light red, but darker in shade than the hackle, and usually requires no cut.

The Comb, Wattles and Ear-lobe

All should be perfectly red, but white in the ear-lobe is a common defect, and should be cut $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 point in both sexes.

The Neck

Light red or orange, free from black stripes, is the demand of the Standard, and any variation from this demand must be considered defective. A striping of the hackle with black, brown or bronze should be cut $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 points. A deep red shade of the whole hackle cut 1 point. The front of the red is black and white in under colour any red or bronze in the surface, should be cut $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 point. It is a mistake to judge front of the neck with breast, as is indicated by the description of colour in the Standard

The Back

The colour of back and the "rose" of the wings should match in shade and they both should be crimson red. The Standard description "red" is too indefinite, as there are many shades of red. The saddle should shade out into the brighter colour of the hackle. Any black, brown or bronze in the surface should be cut $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2.1/2 points, and white in the under-colour should be cut $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 1/2 points, but so pure in colour is this variety that one point in the past has seldom been exceeded in the cuts for back, but now that the points for colour have been greatly increased we may find specimens that will be cut from 1 to 2 points in isolated cases.

The Breast

Any colour other than black is to be severely punished; a mottled breast in a Black Red ought to have been a disqualification as much as in a Partridge Cochin.

This defect should be cut 1 to 3 points, and white in the under colour $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 1/2 points.

Body and Stern

Are both black, or should be, but the defect most commonly found is that the red of the back creeps down the sides, mottling the surface beneath the wings and powdering the stern with red or salmon. This should be cut 1/2 to 1 point, and does not deserve a very severe cut, for a nice saddle is apt to be accompanied by this defect.

The Wings

The wing rose or shoulder coverts, so called to distinguish them from the wing-coverts forming the bar, should be crimson red, and when foreign colour of any kind is found in the red, or when the red is found in the bar, which should be blue black, or when the outer edge of the primaries have no maroon

or bay edging, the wing is defective, and when all of these defects exist should be cut from 1 to 2 points, in proportion to the defect. White in the primaries or secondaries should be cut $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 points. The wing fronts are seldom faulty, being almost always of the required black. For want of bay edging to primaries, cut $\frac{1}{2}$ point; for red, bronze or grey in the wing bar, $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 point; for black in the rose of the wing, $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 point.

The Tail

The tail, including main feathers, sickles, lesser sickles and coverts, should be black. For red shafts and tips to coverts and coverlets, cut 1 point; white in any part of the tail, 1 to 2 points; white in sickles, being the most objectionable defect in tail, $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ points.

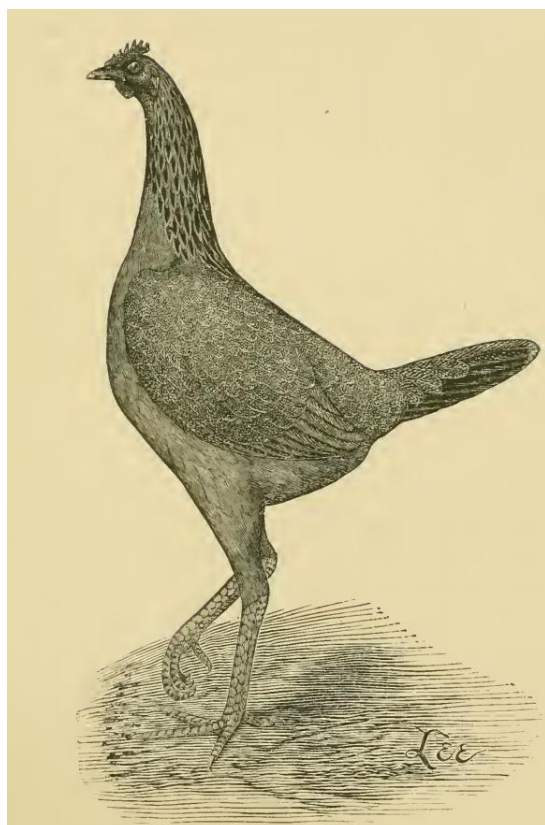
Legs and Toes

If the black of the thigh be streaked or mottled with red or grey, cut $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 point. Any shade of willow in shanks should go uncut, but any other colour, as flesh, blue or yellow, should be cut $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ points. Flesh colour is the most objectionable, and should be cut 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ points.

Yellow and blue, being the colours that more closely approximate to willow, should be cut 1 point. If the bottom of the feet are yellow or flesh colour, cut 1 point; if the toes be shaded deeply with yellow, 1 point; if wholly yellow or blue, 1 point.

We have been speaking only of the male, but comb, wattles, ear-lobes, shanks and toes of both sexes should be alike, and further reference to them is unnecessary.

THE FEMALE



The Head

The plumage is of a golden brown and is almost never faulty to a punishable degree. The eye is subject to the same cuts as in the male.

The Neck

If the black stripe is pencilled with any foreign colour, or if the lemon coloured lacing of the feather be smutted and rendered darker than it ought to be by any other colour, or if the outer edge or the point be darkened by a foreign colour cut $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 point.

The Back

In prime specimens the back is of a brownish colour pencilled with a darker brown or black. The shaft of the feather we like to see of the lighter shade of these colours. The ground colour becomes defective by running into a dark or molasses brown, which gives a very objectionable reddish shading to the back and destroys the light shafting of the plumage. This defect is cut $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 points and in specimens not up to exhibition quality may deserve even a more severe cut.

The Breast

A medium shade of salmon colour at the throat, shading into an ashy brown beneath, is a perfect colour for this section. Any brown pencilling in this is cut $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 point, and a faded-out hue—called wheaten in Game parlance—is also cut $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 point.

The Body

The body colour is seldom defective, being an ashy brown, but when darker must be cut $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 point, in proportion to the amount of streakiness with dirt colour or black.

The Wings

The wings, excepting the primaries, are of brown pencilled with a darker brown or nearly black, with the shafts of the lighter colour. The primaries and upper web of the secondaries are a brownish slate, shading to nearly black; the best specimens we think are nearer a blue-black slate than black.

Colours foreign to this must be cut $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 point, as in degree.

The Tail

The tail proper is of a slaty brown, nearly black, the two top feathers being powdered with brown, and the coverlets are of an ashy brown pencilled with a darker brown.

When the pencilling's are so dark or so prominent as to destroy the ashen shade in the "deck" feathers and the coverlets, cut $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 point, in proportion to the degree of the defect.

I found the above to be a very interesting reading and if members are interested can include more.



Mice and Rats

Most of us would have experienced the unwanted visitors to our poultry enclosures of Rats or Mice. Some may have their cages inside concrete sheds that are fully closed to prevent the unwanted pests getting in. I know of a Modern Game owner who had her birds in a concrete shed that was kept shut at night with the cages above ground who diligently feed the moderns removed any feed not consumed only to go into the shed one morning to find one of her moderns that a rat had attempted to pull through the wire and she had to put the bird out of its misery.

Some owners have their moderns in large cement enclosures outside and this does help to prevent access from the burrowing in but it also gives a lovely roof for the Rats/Mice to set up nests. Mice can flatten themselves and squeeze through mesh no wider than your little finger, and I've seen rats squeeze through wire that I wouldn't think possible. We have an assortment of cages of all different sizes and 80% of them are on dirt floor, and ours also have access through the roofs, and mesh.

Normally fortnightly I go out to my chock pens at night to check on rodent activity. This is the best way to monitor and see how much activity is around. Living in an area surrounded by swamp in the front and paddocks back and sides we will always have the rodents visiting us and having chooks, parrots and alpaca's there will always be that sweet smell of food to attract them. If I see some I will check each night to further monitor.

When we first started having poultry we had many breeds and our daughter's each had about 5 breeds and before we knew it we had over 700 chooks and about 100 cages. All these new cages provided the ideal breeding haven for rats. I remember we went to move some cages and rats came out of the woodwork and it was quite a shock as we hadn't realised we had a rat problem. That night we went out with our torches and could not believe the rat population. Needless to say we had to put quick rat eradication into place. Every night we would go out and shoot the rats and we would place netting over holes and flood them to kill the rats. A few weeks later we had the rat population under control which is why we continually monitor the cages at night.

I have a management plan in place to help control the numbers. I keep all my feed in wheelie bins and 44 gallon drums that are kept closed at all times. All lids checked for any signs of vermin. Did you know a Rat can poop up to 40 times and a mouse up to 80 days in a day. The worst is that as they poo they urinate so imagine all the surfaces you are touching that could have their urine on. I might

see ½ dozen poops on a lid which tells me that a mouse /rat has visited the shed and pooped on route. I will place bait in the shed and it could sit there for weeks without being touched. After feeding the shed is swept out and when bins are empty I also pull the bins out to check activity behind the bin.

It's now relatively easy to keep the rats and mice at bay. We have dogs that will come in the Modern yards with me and sniff out any new mouse / rat holes. I always lift up the feed containers and there may be 1 or 2 mice under the odd feeder which the dogs quickly kill.

We also have a great eco system of dung beetles in our cages and I sometimes see dug up areas in the cages and put the hose down the holes to find a mass of dung beetles coming up. We also rotary hoe the cages which help by turning up the soil disturbing their burrows.



We use bait stations inside the Modern's cages and this is very successful. We haven't had any problems with Moderns getting to the bait and as the baits are wired in the rats can't drag the bait out. Mice will just nibble the bait.

The bait we have found to be most effective is Tom Cat and we alternate with the blue or red square baits. Cages that are empty I put bait in open containers but break the squares down and place on top of a handful of the poultry mix. The rodents

eat the bait first and after the bait will eat the poultry feed. It normally takes up to a week for the rodents to die. Now I replenish the bait traps about 2 monthly or as required and most now don't need replenishing which I can confirm with my weekly checks at night on all the areas, so leave them empty till I sight some activity in that area.



In Murray Bridge there has been a lot of homes in the town that are reporting that mice / rats are getting into their homes because of the wet spring so I am quite happy that my management of the rodents is under control. On my checks sometimes I might see up to 20 mice and a couple of rats so just replenish baits in that area and we haven't for years had any major number of rodents. Considering the amount of cages we have and about 5 sheds that hold tools, equipment, show cage shed, poultry feed shed and alpaca feed, hay and storage shed that's a very pleasing amount.

Below is an interesting article on the possibility of a mouse plague.

Mouse plague possible for SA and Victoria after wet spring, CSIRO warns

By Tom Fedorowytch

Last year's wet spring may have created the ideal conditions for a mouse plague in South Australia and Victoria, the CSIRO has warned.

It said there was a high likelihood of a mouse outbreak in north-west Victoria, while the pests had also started breeding early in the Mallee and the Adelaide Plains — although the population was yet to take off there.

Why so many? There are a few reasons why certain years are better than others for the humble mouse. Ecologist Steve Henry explained how three key factors can contribute to a plague: climate, food and breeding.

"Their breeding season usually starts in late August or September, but this year we found it started in early August. This is most likely because we've had one of the wettest springs on record which led to a terrific harvest, meaning more food for mice," Mr Henry said.



Because mice aren't spending all their time hunting for food, they have time to get down to business and procreate. Two or three weeks early doesn't sound like a big deal, but those extra weeks can have a massive impact.

To put that in perspective, a single breeding pair of mice can produce up to 500 offspring in a breeding season (spring to summer). It takes mice only six weeks to reach maturity and their gestation period is about 19 to 21 days.

"They even get pregnant as soon as they've given birth, so they're gestating a new litter while weaning their current one.

"Exponential is the word that springs to mind," Mr Henry said.

And unless summer brings lots of very hot, dry weather (we're looking at you, Melbourne), they'll continue breeding right through. So in autumn, when farmers begin sowing their next crop and the weather is again favourable for breeding, there'll be a greater 'base' population of mice ready to procreate. Two mice become *500 mice pretty quickly in the right conditions*

*Have a look at your chook cages at night and see if you sight any. If you want to share any ideas on how you manage rodents please send in an article and we can do a follow up next magazine. Cheers
Amanda*



Rotavirus pigeon disease

February 2017

According to NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI), genetic testing has confirmed that the rotavirus that caused the outbreak in Victoria in December 2016 is the same virus that caused the outbreak in Western Australia in May 2016.

Outbreaks in Victoria and South Australia appear linked to a sale that occurred 6 months after the initial outbreak in WA. This means that apparently healthy birds from affected lofts are capable of shedding the virus and transmitting infections for at least six months (carriers).

Clinical signs in affected birds include depression, vomiting, diarrhoea, regurgitation and hunched postures. According to relevant state, territory, and Commonwealth government agencies and Wildlife Health Australia, mortality rates of up to 30% have been reported in affected lofts.



There's no evidence to suggest a link between pigeon paramyxovirus type 1 (PPMV1) vaccines and the rotavirus pigeon disease. DPI recommends the continued use of PPMV1 vaccines. An Australian-produced vaccine may be available by the end of 2017 or early 2018.

Biosecurity recommendations for the pigeon industry include:

- avoid mixing pigeons (for example, racing, shows, sales) from unaffected and affected lofts until there is a suitable rotavirus vaccine available in Australia
- any pigeon fancier whose loft has been affected by rotavirus infection should maintain strict biosecurity measures, including not selling pigeons to unaffected lofts, loft hygiene and visitor restrictions to prevent the spread of the rotavirus
- pigeon fanciers in unaffected areas should maintain strict biosecurity measures, including no pigeon introductions from affected lofts, cleaning and disinfection of second hand equipment, visitor

restrictions and cleaning clothing/boots after contact with other pigeons to prevent entry and spread of the rotavirus.

Veterinarians who treat pigeons should assess risks and take steps to prevent the spread of rotavirus especially if they admit sick or dead pigeons.

The degree of impact the rotavirus may have on other bird populations is not currently known. Feral pigeons are likely to be more susceptible to the rotavirus.

Please contact Department of Primary Industries in your state or territory to notify of any wild (feral or native) pigeon mortalities.

These photographs show the condition of the droppings while the virus is going through the loft. If your birds have droppings like this, get them checked and tested by a vet immediately, you may have this virus in your loft.



VICTORIAN PIGEON VIRUS

Current disease outbreak in Victoria.

Update 7th March 2017

Rota Information night at the VHA headquarters.

Last night the VHA hosted a Rota virus information night that was open to all fanciers. The night was well attended with 150 to 200 fanciers attending. A broad range of Rota related topics were discussed including the diagnosis of the disease, the pattern of disease, how the virus is spread including wild bird transmission, how long the virus survives in the environment, where did the virus come from, the carrier state, persistence of immunity, the vaccine manufacture and the upcoming epidemiology survey. There was a question and answer time that ran for over one hour where everyone was given the opportunity to have their questions answered and their concerns addressed.

From my point of view, I was surprised that some fanciers seemed frustrated by the lack of definitive information in some areas but failed to realise that getting this information is essentially in their hands. Many fanciers did not seem to realise that much of the information they were after was dependent on them submitting samples for testing. For example a number of fanciers wanted information on the influence that wild birds have on transmitting the virus. Frustratingly since Dr Mark Hawes asked fanciers to send in any sick or dead wild birds in the vicinity of confirmed infected pigeon lofts for testing only one bird, a feral pigeon, has been sent in. If fanciers don't send in birds, AgriBio can't test them. Similarly many fanciers are assuming a diagnosis based loosely on the symptoms displayed by unwell birds. It is not possible to draw conclusions about the incidence of the disease and how it is spreading, the effectiveness of treatments, anticipated mortality rates, effect of concurrent infections such as Circo virus etc etc if the disease has not been correctly diagnosed in the first place. Fanciers, I feel, need to take advantage of the interest and funding made available by the CVOU and AgriBio. Generally a good night was had by all and the atmosphere was upbeat and positive. I think most fanciers left with a better understanding of the disease while federation officials had more information on which to base decisions about this year's racing.

Droppings and Rota virus diagnosis.

It is worth noting that some fanciers think that Rota virus can be diagnosed quickly and easily by examining the droppings. This is not the case. However when AgriBio completes its validation of the Rota PCR test (shortly) this will be able to be done but it will only be AgriBio which will be able to do this complex test on behalf of fanciers and vets. It is most definitely not possible to diagnose Rota virus by simply looking at droppings under a microscope.

Streptopelia Doves

Streptopelia doves are the brown doves with white spots around their neck that are found in virtually every suburban back yard. They were introduced into Australia from SE Asia about 120 years ago. These are the top contender for carriers of the virus. It would be good if fanciers who think that their lofts might have had Rota virus , whether it has been confirmed or not , could capture any sluggish, unwell doves in their loft vicinity and present these to the Melbourne Bird Vet Clinic or their local vet for testing. If the vet is unfamiliar with Rota simply get him to call the Melbourne Bird Vet Clinic (03 9764 9000) so that testing can be organised.

Queensland Outbreak

I spoke yesterday to the owner of the second loft confirmed with Rota virus in Queensland. The loft is located at Gympie and is a commercial operation producing squabs for human consumption. As of yesterday 10 % of the birds had died. Abattoirs are not accepting birds for processing for 6 months

Epidemiology survey

In a meeting at AgriBio tomorrow the Rota epidemiology questionnaire form will be finalised. Fanciers can expect to receive their form in the coming weeks. In my opinion federations which don't support this initiative and fanciers who don't complete the form when they receive it are simply letting the pigeon community down. The information gained will help us all. Your co –operation and participation is much appreciated.

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