

## **BROWN RED COCHINS (includes BIRCHEN COCHINS)**

by H. Craig Carroll, with Epilog by Matt McCammon  
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In this article I will attempt to give some pointers on the proper way to breed Brown Red Cochins. The following information can be applied to the Birchen Cochin since it is the same pattern, just a different color. First, one must breed for correct type, with correct color always in mind, If you don't have true Cochin type, it does not matter how good your color pattern is.

The males' head, hackle, and saddle is a lustrous deep orange. The lower hackle and saddle is marked with a narrow black stripe through the middle of each feather stopping short of the end. The breast is black with a narrow lacing of deep orange. The wing bows are lustrous deep orange. The rest of the body is black. The female is mainly black, except for the head, hackle, and breast which is marked the same as the male.

For breeding you will need a male that is as close to perfect in type and color that you can find. A bird with fine lacing limited to the upper breast. The lacing is a key point for controlling the color in the offspring. It is better to use a male that shows no lacing than to use a male with an abundance of lacing. Mate this male to a female that is finely laced on the breast and has the same deep orange color as the male. Her color should be very deep orange, looking almost like a deep red tone. This will help insure that you will get the highest percentage of correctly colored offspring as possible. You will always get some birds too light, some too dark and some that are just right in color. Balance your matings and stay away from birds that are too light or over-laced.

This color pattern occasionally produces self blacks, which are valuable in correcting birds showing too much color. Self blacks will help deepen color, reduce shafting, and improve undercolor. Brown red Cochins should have yellow shanks, feet, and toes especially in the male. The females' shanks and feet can be a dusky yellow, but the bottoms of the feet have to show yellow. It seems natural for Brown Reds to be dark in the shanks and feet, which is the opposite of what we are looking for. I have found that the color is always better in these birds that are dark in the foot. These birds should not be used for breeding. Once you lose the yellow trait it is very hard to regain it.

Keep the type a high priority, the color lustrous deep orange, and the lacing limited to the upper breast. Keep the shanks and feet yellow and you will produce the beautiful Brown red Cochins, one of the most striking and beautiful color patterns.

~H. Craig Carroll

I had the good fortune of getting a couple of brown red males from Craig Carroll. I had worked with brown reds up to this point without a decent male to show for my efforts. The next breeding season (2009), I hatched over 250 brown red Cochins. I kept 12. That is what happens when you work with a complicated color pattern like the brown red and birchen. It is also the result of crossing two lines of unrelated birds. Color and type, especially color, was all over the board. I found that the lighter youngsters remained that way, and the darker youngsters stayed dark too. So you can cull for some color issues at about 3 months of age. Combs were a huge issue for me since I was plagued by side sprigs. So I culled males and

females at about 3 months of age for correct combs. You can see how I ended up with a dozen keepers. The birds I have now are the best I have ever had, but I still have gotten quite a range of chicks in the 2010 hatch. Still fighting comb issues and color is fickle. Craig has commented that he deals with the same issues. It will take a long time to get more uniformity in the variety. Craig mentioned in the article that the brown reds and birchens are complimentary colors. If one takes a typey brown red male and crosses it on a birchen female, the resulting chicks are sex linked. The females are the brown red like their father. It is hard to find birchens that are as typey as the brown reds, so I don't think this cross would go far to make type improvements in the brown red variety. The male offspring will be birchen, but they will be creamy or brassy, lacking true birchen silver. In a pinch, and only to improve type on the birchens, one could take the male offspring back onto a birchen female. I think this might improve and add some type to the birchen, but you would have to keep working with color due to the brassiness that is added. If you cross the opposite way, with a birchen male on a brown red female, the resulting chicks are all birchen. The males will again be birchen and the color issues will remain. The females will be birchen now, and some of them may be nice and silvery and have improved type from the addition of the brown red.

~Matt McCammon

