

The Pigeon Genetics Newsletter, News, Views & Comments.

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(Founded by Dr. Willard .F. Hollander)

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This Month we take flight with the grizzles of Bangladesh!

All text and photos provided by Shoibal Sabbir.

The Highflier / Tippler/ and Tumbler breeds generally and with few exceptions are "Print Grizzles" . There has been considerable disagreement over the years but with very little BREEDING experience to back up the opinions as to whether Print Grizzle is actually a separate allele from 'Classical Grizzle' . The four main alleles being 'Tiger grizzle (G^T)' ., 'Classic or classical Grizzle (G)' ., Print Grizzle (no symbol assigned yet)., and White grizzle (G^W).

Bob Rodgers has written numerous "grizzle" articles over the past ten years stating that in his experience Print Grizzle is indeed a separate allele at the grizzle locus and he has demonstrated the range of differences between the Classical Grizzle and Print Grizzle mutants.

The Highfliers of Bangladesh come in both a flying Breed and a Show Breed. We are confident that they are all Print Grizzle. Bob has also pointed out that Print Grizzle is the only grizzle trait that can be selectively bred to cause various "Designs" both with and without a Pied factor gene.

My experience with breeding these birds in Bangladesh supports Bob's findings that he tested years ago with the North American Print Grizzle Tipplers and the Classical Grizzle Racing Homers and other Breeds.

I offer you the following photos of some of the Highfliers in my Country, and the information that I have discovered in breeding from these birds. The Flying Breed (Sport Type) stays aloft for 12 to 13 hours. The show Breed also is a performer that stays usually about 5 hours at a time in the air.

One thing that you will notice is that in the vast majority of lofts where their birds are competing in endurance flying, the birds will all be homozygous for the grizzle trait. The following photos demonstrate that. Most of the top flyers are indeed homozygous grizzle so Kits and flocks are built on such breeding stock. The variation in the amount of colour versus white depends upon the base wing pattern and the darkening modifiers that resist the grizzling effects. Some strains have a bronze, usually Brander, and it is seen in the nestlings but moults away with the first moult. The base blue/Black tends to increase with age.

If you have never seen these birds perform, I can tell you it is magnificent to see how they stand out against the blue sky even at unimaginable heights to the point where they virtually can disappear.



We mentioned earlier that the birds are all homozygous for the grizzle gene and that the variation depends on the pattern and modifiers, but due to the fact that they have been bred also for their flying ability and not colour alone, some strains have been developed with their own unique mixture of colour tone. This has been taken to greater length in the "Show Type" birds, but can also be evident in the flying strains.

Note that these flyers look much more like the typical "Light Print" as seen in Tiplers in Other Countries. It is also somewhat similar to the "Stork" or "Storked" phenotype of the homozygous Classical Grizzles. The difference however, is seen in the greater amount of colour in the flights, and that here the heads have a more distinctly pepper head which a 'Stork' marked bird does not have.



As with all youngsters, the feathers are softer, and the effects of any whitening/ de-pigmenting gene has a greater effect on the base pigment as seen here in the large amount of white versus colour.



Having said that, near pure white adult specimens have been produced over the many years of selective breeding among these homozygous grizzle birds.



Bronzing of the head and flights seems to be Brander Bronze but was reported as being from the below

Pair = Ash male het for blue/Black, X ash Print hen.



Iridescence of the neck feathers is seen in two expressions . (1) is a deep purple , while (2) the other is a rich green. Both sheens are particularly vibrant in sunlight especially on the darker birds of course..





Dirty factor (V) is prevalent in the Breed and as with all birds with this modifier , the tarsus and toes are darkened in the juvenile and turn pinkish or reddish with the first moult. Parents shown here as well.



Sooty factor is also seen in some birds and considering that Brander is also, this should not be a surprise as Sooty is very commonly found in Brander Bronze.



For those who do not readily recognize Sooty (So) , the center or mid-rib of each shield feather is usually darkened with the lighter outer edges. Sooty can be seen best on a Bar pattern bird. It is however believed to be part of the saturated T-Pattern series. This has yet to be proven as some have tried to extract it from T-Pattern and found nothing. Some believe that there is also a recessive sooty (o), but that also has yet to be documented in any sort of published paper.



Hungarian Breeders "Sport Fly" with the above Type and these are always flown in a Kit from a very early age. I (Shoibal) have been breeding this type for approximately three months and have noticed some of the points addressed in this information.





These Hungarian birds are believed to be Homozygous 'Classical Grizzle (G), and this can be seen in the lack of any colouration at the throat area. That colouring is a hallmark of the Print Grizzle specimens and in the Tippler Breed has been called a "Chuck" marking and is a standard classification. The dark head and neck colourations which you will see later in the Show Type birds have almost certainly been developed through selection from the dominant presence of the chuck marking .

An attractive Show Type that features only the coloured flights which are still grizzle basally as you can see in these two photos.



This Show Type features a combination of the fully coloured head , and neck as well as the coloured flights. You can still see the Print Grizzle trait is present in the cheeks and the flights basally. They are a very attractive example also of how selection for "Design" is possible with the Print Grizzle gene.

There are other combinations and some are combined with Pied factors which we may spend time on in a future Issue.

Milky factor, symbol (my) has also been introduced although rarely seen. Here you can see its general effect on youngsters . These appear to have a dominant white flight pied gene also (Pi//Wf) The capital letters in the symbol indicate that this white flight has been found to be dominant over wild type and is indicated by the outer first primary flights being white. Recessive white flights start back in the secondary flights.



The tendency to darken with age is somewhat similar to the effect of the (Stipple gene (St, that causes white Break in Sprinkles and Almonds . As the birds age the base pigment regains its original state and this is made more likely if the birds have a darker shield pattern such as checker or T-Pattern. They will not revert to the base pigment completely so that the Print Grizzle phenotype is always readily seen.



In addition to the blue series /Black pigmented specimens we also have the Show Type Highfliers in recessive red and yellow white sides. Here are some examples of these beautiful birds.



The crested variety is also seen in whiteside as well as the Blue series as seen below .



That is it for May , thanks to Shoibal for this presentation og Highfliers in Bangladesh !