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EC1421 Judging Six Common Varieties of Chickens

S. J. Marsden

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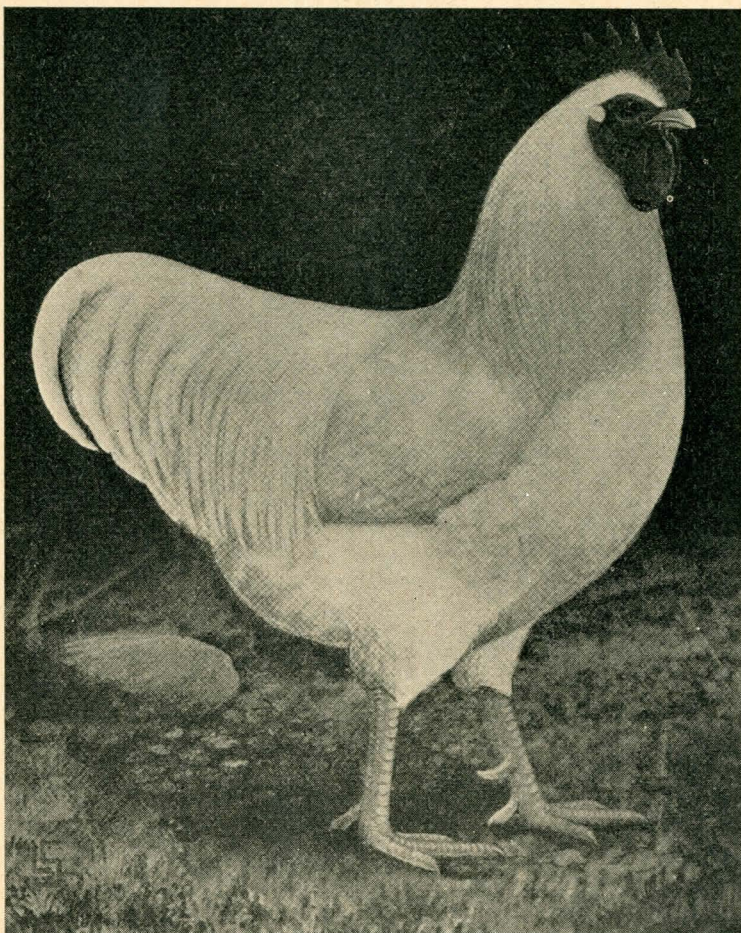
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Extension Circular 1421

January, 1929

Judging Six Common Varieties of Chickens



—Courtesy of the Poultry Tribune
Standard White Rock Male

The University of Nebraska Agricultural College Extension Service
and The United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating
W. H. Brokaw, Director, Lincoln

**Cooperation of the American Poultry Association is
acknowledged by the reproduction of their letter below:**

**AMERICAN POULTRY ASSOCIATION
(letterhead)**

Fort Wayne, Indiana.
September 7, 1928.

Mr. S. J. Marsden,
University of Nebraska,
College of Agriculture,
Lincoln, Nebraska.

Dear Mr. Marsden:

Your letter of July 14 addressed to Mr. H. A. Nourse, President of the American Poultry Association, was taken by Mr. Nourse to the convention of the American Poultry Association held at Ardmore, Oklahoma, August 14-16, and presented to the Board of Directors in session there at their first meeting. The letter was read in its entirety and discussed by all members in session.

Finally, it was moved and seconded that the use of the circular published by the University of Nebraska, as submitted, be authorized as published in the letter from the University,—this refers to your letter of July 14 — and that there should be no deviation from the text as printed in the pamphlet. This letter is No. 1063. If there is anything further please advise.

Sorry you did not attend the Ardmore convention. It was the best and largest we have ever held.

Wishing you success, we are

Very truly yours,
AMERICAN POULTRY ASSOCIATION,

(Signed) E. B. Rigg

E. B. RIGG, Secretary.

EBR:F

Judging Six Common Varieties of Chickens *

BY S. J. MARSDEN

Exhibition judging is based on the two factors of type and color, each counting about half in the placing of birds in the poultry show.

A breed is defined as a race of fowls having certain definite characteristics of shape and size. *Shape and size define the breed.* A variety is a subdivision of a breed according to the color or type of comb. *Color and comb define the variety.*

For example, we have the *Plymouth Rock* breed which has a certain shape and size. There are now seven Standard varieties of Plymouth Rocks, each one of which has identically the same shape and size, but a different color. Examples are White Plymouth Rocks, Barred Plymouth Rocks, etc.

Then there is the *Rhode Island Red* breed divided into two varieties, the Single Comb Red and the Rose Comb Red, both the same except for shape of comb. Some breeds have only one Standard variety, for instance, Jersey Black Giant. Most breeds, however, have more than one, so the variety name, as well as the breed name, is generally used when mentioning any particular variety. For instance, Single Comb Rhode Island Red is the full name, usually abbreviated to Single Comb Red. In the case of Barred Plymouth Rocks, the term, "Barred Rock" is used.

All the information and diagrams contained in this circular that relate to type, color, defects, and disqualifications are taken directly from the American Standard of Perfection (the recognized authority for all judging rules), which is published by the American Poultry Association of Fort Wayne, Indiana. Copies can be obtained through any bookstore or poultry journal. Anyone exhibiting poultry or interested in the Standard breeding of poultry will do well to obtain the latest edition of this book. It is well illustrated and contains detailed descriptions of all the Standard breeds of chickens, turkeys, ducks, and geese.

Disqualifications and Defects

Any deviation from the Standard description in shape, size, or color of any part of a bird's body is either a *defect* or a *disqualification*. Certain of these are considered serious enough to rule a bird out of competition. These are the *disqualifications*. Others are not so serious, hence are called

* From the 1926 Standard of Perfection.

defects which are undesirable but do not keep the bird from competing.

All birds should be carefully inspected for disqualifications and defects before they are shown or used for breeding. Certain disqualifications that may be found in a number of different breeds are called *general disqualifications*. The Standard lists about 40 of these, but only the more common ones are listed here. They are as follows:

1. General inferiority — birds that are very poor representatives of their breed.
2. Faking — any attempt to deceive the judge.
3. Deformities of any kind such as crooked beaks, crooked backs, etc. (Crooked toes do *not* disqualify, however).
4. Clipped wing feathers.
5. Split wing — primary and secondary wing feathers permanently divided or held out of place.

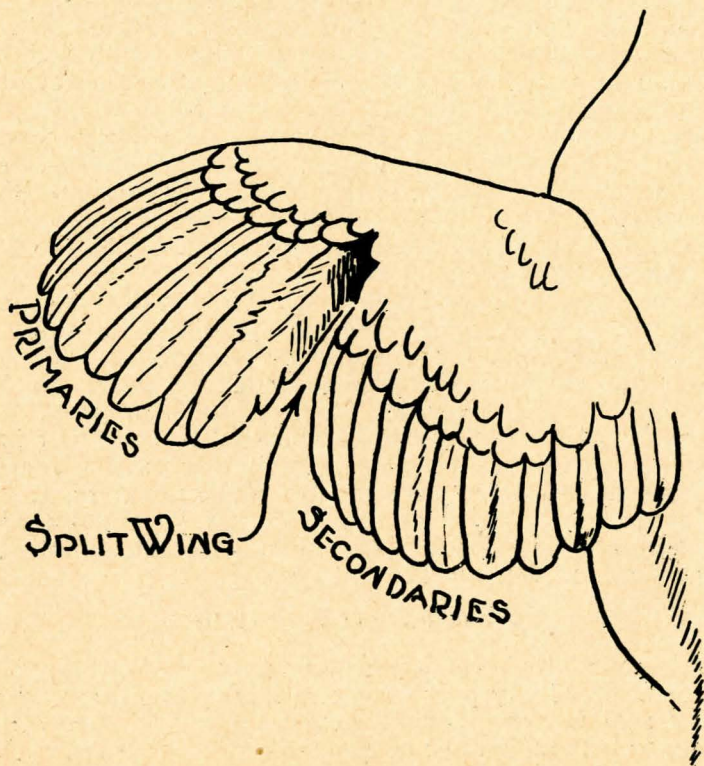


FIG. 1.—Illustration of split wing.

6. Twisted feather in wing or tail.
7. Wry tail (tail held permanently to one side).
8. Weight — in all breeds (except turkeys, Leghorns, Anconas and Bantams) any bird more than two pounds below Standard Weight. Young stock, however, are not disqualified for weight until after December 1 of each year.
9. Badly lopped comb in any specimen for which the Standard prescribes an upright one.
10. Side sprig (a pointed outgrowth) anywhere on the side of a single comb.
11. Positive white in face of Mediterranean (light breeds such as Leghorn) cockerels and pullets.
12. Any positive white in earlobe of any common heavy breed bird.
13. Feather or stub of a feather on shank or foot of any clean-legged breed. (This includes nearly all the common breeds).
14. Legs and toes of a color foreign to the breed.
15. Brown or buff in the quills of primaries or secondaries of all white varieties.

Method of Judging

The Standard contains score cards for all classes of poultry, which give the values placed on all sections of the bird's body. This score card, while it is not often used for each bird judged, is still followed in a general way by all good judges. From the sample score card shown, (which applies to American breeds such as Reds, Rocks, and Wyandottes, and is essentially the same for all common breeds of chickens), an idea can be gained of the relative value of the different parts. If all the shape points are added, and all the color points added, it will be seen that about 50 per cent of the exhibition quality of a bird rests on its shape and size, and the other 50 per cent on the various color features. The comparison system of judging is generally used, in which the competing birds are compared with each other as to shape and color of all their different sections, and as to general symmetry and resemblance to the Standard for the variety.

In the actual judging, the bird is carefully handled in order to examine for condition, (health and cleanliness), disqualifications, color, and other details of the bird's make-up. Then its symmetry and type are determined by careful observance of the way the bird stands naturally and by posing it to see it at its best. Then the different points are balanced against each other and final judgment rendered.

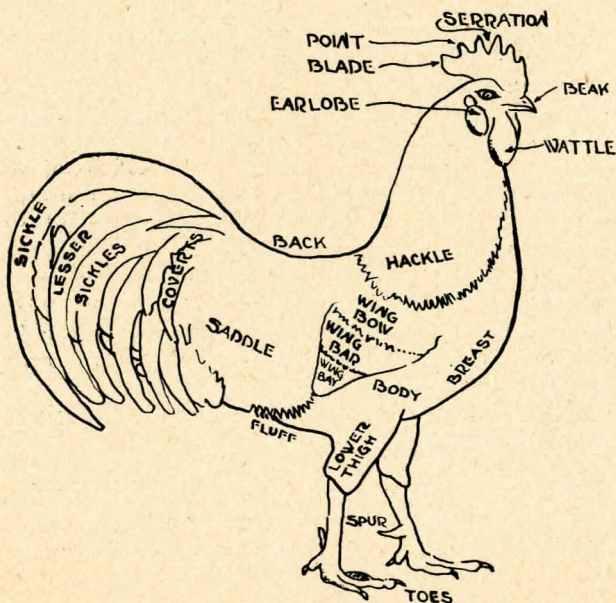
Score Card for American Breeds

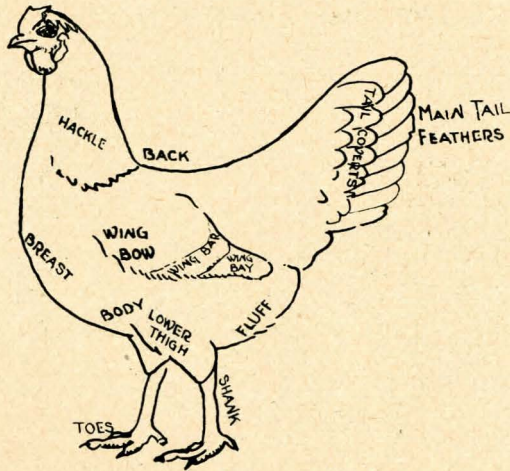
Weight	4
Symmetry	4
Condition	4
Comb	6
Beak — Shape 2, Color 2.....	4
Head — Shape 2, Color 2.....	4
Eyes — Shape 2, Color 2.....	4
Wattles — Shape 2	2
Earlobes — Shape 2, Color 2.....	4
Neck — Shape 4, Color 6.....	10
Wings — Shape 4, Color 6.....	10
Back — Shape 5, Color 5.....	10
Tail — Shape 5, Color 5.....	10
Body and fluff — Shape 5, Color 3.....	8
Breast — Shape 5, Color 5.....	10
Legs and toes — Shape 3, Color 3.....	6

Total=100

The different sections of the bird are indicated on the Leghorn diagram which follows:

The Leghorn





The Leghorn

Standard Weights: Cock $5\frac{1}{2}$, Cockerel $4\frac{1}{2}$, Hen 4, Pullet $3\frac{1}{2}$ pounds

Special Disqualifications * for S. C. White Leghorns:

Males more than 1 pound underweight.

Females more than $\frac{1}{2}$ pound underweight.

Feather or feathers other than white.

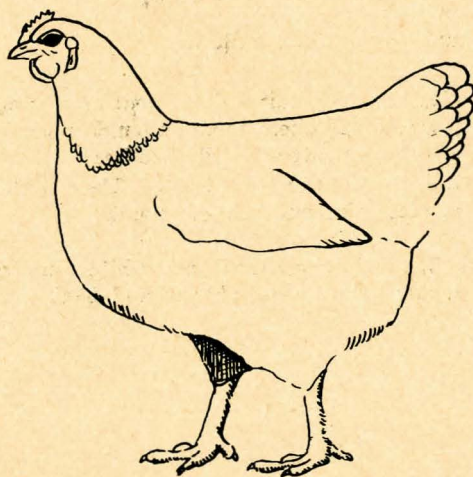
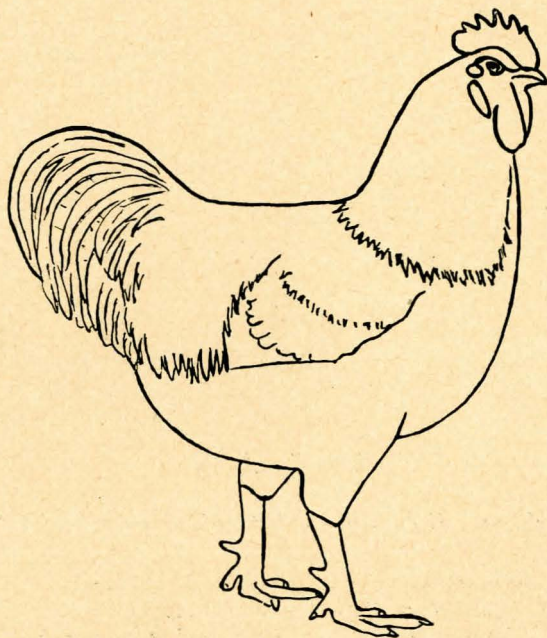
More than one-third of earlobe red, in cockerels and pullets.

Shanks other than yellow.

General Shape: Rather long, fairly deep, neat appearing body; rather low tail, full chest, medium length legs, and a beautiful sweep of profuse saddle feathers that unite back and tail in a graceful curve. The single comb is of medium size and has five points.

Color: The S. C. White Leghorn has pure white plumage; white earlobes; yellow skin, shanks and beak; and red eyes.

* The special disqualifications for all breeds must be considered in addition to the general disqualifications.

The Rhode Island Red

The Rhode Island Red

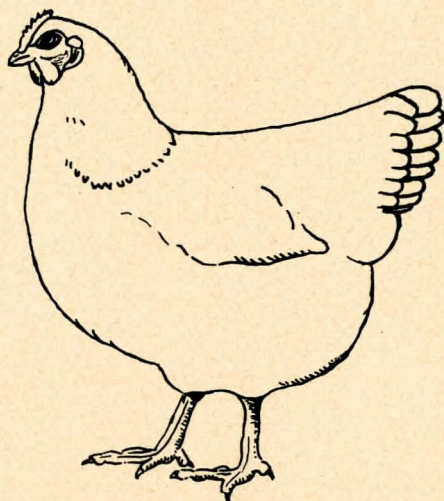
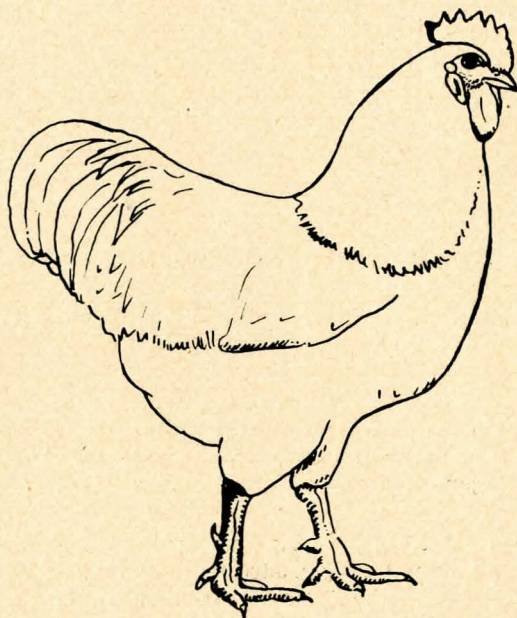
Standard Weights: Cock $8\frac{1}{2}$, Cockerel $7\frac{1}{2}$, Hen $6\frac{1}{2}$, Pullet $5\frac{1}{2}$ pounds.

Special Disqualifications for Rhode Island Reds:

Shanks or feet other than yellow or reddish horn color.
One or more entirely white feathers showing in outer plumage.

General Shape: Decidedly rectangular, with a long flat back, low tail and long moderately deep body, with a square chest. The legs are of medium length. S. C. Reds and R. C. Reds are the same except for the comb. The single comb is of medium size and has five points.

Color: Plumage, rich, dark red in all sections except the main tail feathers which are black and the wings which contain some black, none of which shows when they are folded. Undercolor is the same dark red in all sections. Earlobes red. Eyes red. Shanks and feet yellow or reddish horn color.

The Plymouth Rock

The Plymouth Rock

Standard Weights:—Cock 9½, Cockerel 8, Hen 7½, Pullet 6 pounds.

Special Disqualifications for Barred Rocks:

Red anywhere in plumage.

Two or more solid black feathers in primaries, two or more in secondaries, or two or more in main tail feathers.

Shanks other than yellow, (dark spots not to disqualify, however.)

Special Disqualifications for White Rocks:

Red, buff, or positive black anywhere in the plumage.

Shanks other than yellow.

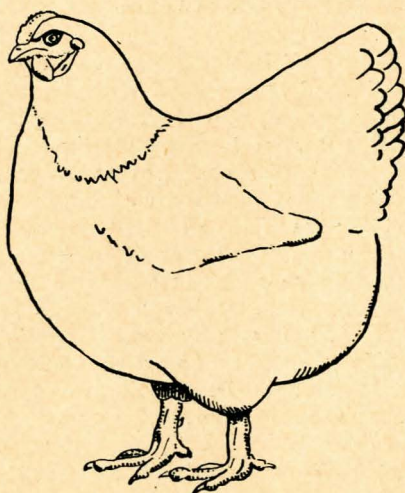
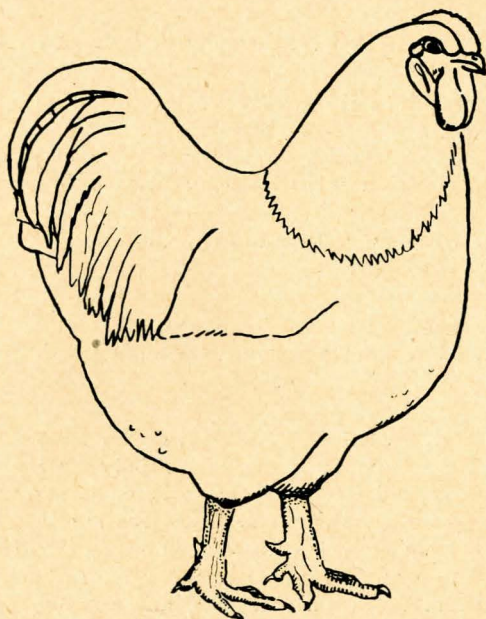
General Shape (all varieties of Rocks have the same shape and size):

The shape is intermediate between the Red and the Wyandotte. The body is moderately long, but not as long as the Red. The back is broad, quite long and should blend with the tail which is carried low. Legs are fairly long and strong appearing. The comb is single, of medium size, and has five points.

Color of Rocks: All Rocks have yellow legs, yellow skin, yellow beak, red earlobes, and red eyes.

Color of Barred Rocks: All Barred Rocks have clean-cut barring and are barred to the skin. Male barring is usually narrower than female barring. Light (or pullet-bred) Barred Rock males are quite light in the general shade of barring, which means that the light bars tend to be a little wider than the dark ones. Light Barred Rock females have light and dark bars of equal width. Dark (or cockerel-bred) Barred Rock males also have light and dark bars of equal width but they are narrower than the females' bars. Dark Barred Rock females have dark bars wider than the light ones giving a decidedly darker general shade of color. The Light female and the Dark male are expected to be of the same shade of color.

Color of White Rocks:—Pure white in all parts of the plumage.

The Wyandotte

The Wyandotte

Standard Weights: Cock 8½, Cockerel 7½, Hen 6½, Pullet 5½ pounds.

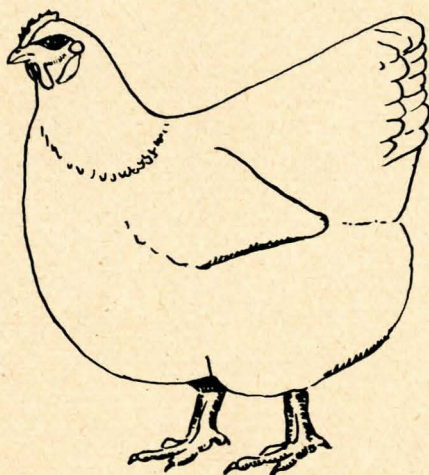
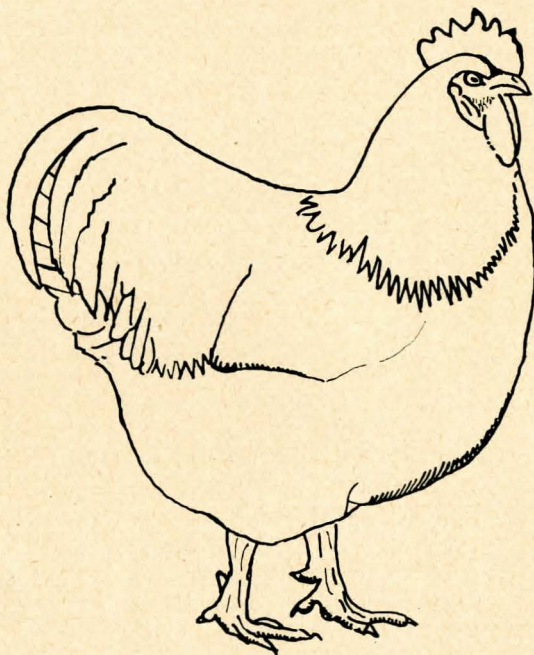
Special Disqualifications for White Wyandottes:

Shanks other than yellow.

Red, buff, or positive black in any part of the plumage.

General Shape: The Wyandotte is quite short-backed, very deep-bodied, with rather long fluffy feathering, and short legs. The Wyandotte has been described as a bird of curves, which, if bred true to type, is one of the most beautiful of our common breeds. The most important points about Wyandotte type are: almost but not quite square body shape, quite short legs, very broad back, full chest, well spread tail, symmetrical head and full feathering. The comb is rose, the top of it covered with small points and curved so as to blend with the shape of the head.

Color: White Wyandottes have pure white plumage in all sections. All Wyandottes have yellow skin, beak and shanks, red earlobes and red eyes.

The Orpington

The Orpington

Standard Weights: Cock 10, Cockerel 8½, Hen 8, Pullet 7 pounds.

Special Disqualifications for Buff Orpingtons:

Yellow beak, shanks or skin.

Shanks other than white or pinkish white.

General Shape: Large size is a very important characteristic. In type they resemble Wyandottes but are larger, slightly longer-bodied and lower-tailed. Body is very deep but at the same time slightly long appearing, legs rather short, chest full and square, back very broad. The Orpington should appear large and massive with stout legs. Comb is single, of medium size, and has five points.

Body is very deep but at the same time slightly long appearing, legs rather short, chest full and square, back very broad. The Orpington should appear large and massive with stout legs.

Color: The Buff Orpington is an even shade of rich buff in all sections. Undercolor is a lighter shade of buff than the surface. Buff birds should have no color other than buff in any part of the plumage, but foreign color does not disqualify; it is a serious defect. Skin, beak and shanks are white; eyes and earlobes are red.