

CHARACTER OF THE SHORT STORY

DUN

Why dun colour is called 'grey-blue' in some countries and a few words on the character of dun colour?

These are so-called Vogtländers, deliberately made in camo colour for the wild mountains in Germany on the border with the Czech Republic. Their colour should allow them to escape flying predators. They do best roaming free, sleeping high up in trees they don't like it to be locked up. They resemble Rheinländers, made fit for the mountains and in a special outfit.

In English-speaking countries, dun was called fawn for centuries.

The dun craze started with the White crested Polish bantams in the US, and the brown colour became a fashion in chickens. Perhaps because they are different from black and blue?

Ten years later, recessive sex-linked chocolate arrived on the scene and became more fashionable due to its solid brown (no khaki) breeding character when homo- and hemizygous. Dun colour behaves like blue as autosomal dominant - heterozygous it is dark brown and pure (homozygous) it is khaki, a cream colour. Which is comparable to blue and splash in terms of mode of inheritance.

The difference between the two dark browns (dun and choc) is the colour temperature. Dun is of a colder grey-brown (based on ER) and choc more of a warm brown (mainly based on eb and probably just darker on ER). Dun colour has a colder hue in northern countries where blue dominates daylight. This observation from northern latitudes explains why dun colour is called 'grey-blue' when not knowing it is the dun-allele of dominant white or similar to 'fawn' in some English native breeds.

The photo is from my archive and was taken in winter. In summer, the

dun colour is perceived as slightly warmer by our northern eyes (I guess).

Dun colour is chocolate or what?

There was confusion in Europe for a while about what to call dun and choc.

White crested Polish bantams from the USA were the first in dark brown, and their colour was called 'chocolate'.

When not long after, recessive sex-linked chocolate also came into vogue with the genetic name 'choc' (Carefoot), a problem arose. Meanwhile, there was already a tendency in Europe (European standard committee) to make the colour names sort of logical and to preferably give new colours a genetically correct name while respecting to the old hobby chicken colour names. All to avoid confusion, because lots take the hobby colour names for what they genetically are (not correct).

It was thought that choc should then be called 'bronze', because 'choc' is 'bronze' in muscovy ducks. This can still be found in my books.

Later it was decided to call dun colour ($I^{\Delta D}$) 'dun' and homozygous dun 'khaki' because those names already existed. Dun is also the name for the allele of dominant white in official genetics. I forgot when this was finally settled in the European standard, the year.

Since dun is also used for the allele itself and not just the specific colour of a specific chicken, I found this



'dun' for the heterozygous chicken colour confusing. That's why I called the heterozygous dun colour 'dark brown dun' in Dutch, and also in English. Clear language prevents confusion. It is not official however for as far as I know. This way the context is clear whether the word 'dark brown' is necessary, or not: when talking about the allele, the hobby chicken colour in general or a heterozygous dun coloured chicken.

As for the different shades of dark brown dun seen throughout the chicken queendom, this generally depends on the e-allele and feather quality. Furthermore, this also depends on how dun colour is expressed (the fine-tuning) in a particular breed. Dun and choc are sensitive to UV radiation from the sun, as is blue. The extent of fading is different from line to line.

More on dun colour and more photos can be found in the book Genetics of chicken colours
@ www.chickencolours.com