

## Indigenous Breeds of Poultry

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6417464>

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Domestic chicken is one of the most important animal species worldwide which developed from its main wild ancestor, the red jungle fowl (*Gallus gallus*), after its domestication in Southeast Asia in 3,200 BC. Over the years, chicken evolved from their wild form to the several contemporary layers, broilers, bantams, game and fancy breeds, as well as the indigenous village chicken available today. Since early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the industrialization and globalization of chicken production adversely affected the distribution of chicken genetic resources worldwide, thereby limiting the breed composition to commercial broilers and laying hens.

The Indian birds are mostly non-descriptors, having comparatively little value as layers and vary in appearance according to the locality in which they have been bred. The importance of native breeds of poultry birds for rural economy specially in developing and underdeveloped countries is very high as they play a major role for the rural poor and marginalized section of the people as a source of subsidiary income as well as nutritious egg and meat for their own consumption. Hardiness of native chicken is one of the most important positive characters, which is ability to tolerate the harsh environmental condition and poor husbandry practices without much loss in production. There are total 19 indigenous breeds of chicken in India which are discussed as following:

**Ankleshwar:** It is distributed around Bharuch and Narmada district of Gujarat. This breed of chicken is quite hardy and is associated with tribals maintaining them. It is named after the name of area i.e. Ankleshwar in Bharuch district of Gujarat. Locally, it is known by 'desi/ gowrani/

*gamthi*'. It is reared for both meat and egg purpose. The average age at first egg is roughly 179 days. Annual egg production varies between 78-84 eggs with mean egg weight around 35 gms. The dressing percentage is 62.44%. The adult weights of cock and hen averages around 1.75 and 1.48 kg respectively.



**Aseel:** 'Aseel' is an arabic word meaning 'pure or thoroughbred'. It is maintained by tribals of North Bastar and South Bastar district of Chattisgarh and Khammam district of Andhra Pradesh. The bird is known for its fighting tendency i.e. pugnacious. It has delicious meat along with excellent heat tolerance and disease resistance. The bird is utilized for game, meat and egg purpose. The average age at first egg is 27-29 weeks and annual egg production varies between 30-36 eggs. The dressing percentage is around 75%.



**Busra:** This bird is maintained by tribals of Maharashtra and Gujarat. The name 'busra' is derived from 'busrawal' - a tree. Frizzle character is quite common among this breed. The bird is reared for meat as well as egg purpose. The average age at first egg is 5-7 months and annual egg production varies between 40-55 eggs with mean egg weight of 28-38 gm. The dressing percentage is around 65-70%. The adult weight of cock and hen averages between 0.85-1.25 and 0.8-1.2 kg respectively.



**Danki:** Locally known as 'Dinki'. These birds are reared in Vizianagram, Srikakulam, Vishakapatnam districts of Andhra Pradesh and utilized for game and meat purpose. Its fight is called 'Danki fight' and are conducted on day of Makar Sankranti. The bird can fight continuously for 1-1.5 hrs. The average age at first egg is 6-8 months and annual egg production varies between 25-35



eggs with mean egg weight of 37-54 gm. The adult weights of cock and hen averages 3.1 and 2.2 kg respectively.

**Daothigir:** This breed is reared by Bodo community in Bodoland region of Assam and along Northern banks of Brahmaputra river. The name is derived from 'Thigir' plant found in this region as its plumage is somewhat similar to flowers of this tree. Utility of this breed is for both egg and meat. The average age at first egg is 6 months and annual egg production varies between 60-70 eggs with mean egg weight of 42-48 gm. The adult weights of cock and hen averages 1.79 and 1.63 kg respectively.



**Ghagus:** This breed is locally known as 'desi or ghegu' and its name is derived from a peculiar sound. It is reared in Kolar and Bangalore districts of Karnataka as well as Chittoor and Anantapur districts of Andhra Pradesh, utilized both for egg and meat. The average age at first egg is 5-8 months and annual egg production varies between 45-60 eggs with mean egg weight of 38-42 gm. The adult weights of cock and hen averages 2.16 and 1.43 kg respectively.



**Kalasthi:** The birds are found in Chittoor, Nellore and Cuddapah districts of Andhra Pradesh and is named after Sri Kalahastri area of Chittoor district where these birds are found. It is mostly utilized for meat purpose but sometimes also as game bird. The average age at first egg is 5-9 months and annual egg production varies between 32-36 eggs with mean egg weight of 40-44 gm. The adult weights of cock and hen averages 2.48 and 1.25 kg respectively.



**kashmir favrolla:** This breed is known for its hardiness as it can survive and produce in subzero temperatures. Locally known as 'Kashir Kukkar' and is distributed in Anantnag, Baramula, Budgam, Kupwara, Srinagar and Pulawana districts of Jammu and Kashmir. It is reared for





both egg and meat purpose. The average age at first egg is 6-8 months and annual egg production varies between 60-85 eggs with mean egg weight of 43-74 gm. The adult weights of cock and hen averages 1.8 and 1.4 kg respectively.

**Miri:** It is distributed around Dhimaji, Sibsagar, Dibrugarh and adjoining districts of Assam where it is utilized for both egg and meat purpose. The name 'Miri' is derived after tribe i.e. Miri/ Mising rearing them. Locally it is known as 'Porog'. The average age at first egg is 6-8 months and annual egg production is roughly 32 eggs with mean egg weight of 41-43 gm. The adult weights of cock and hen averages 1.525 and 1.320 kg respectively with dressing percentage between 65-74%.



**Nicobari:** This breed is locally called 'Takniet hyum' and is reared by Nicobari tribe of Andaman and Nicobar Island. It is a hardy breed reared mainly for egg purpose. The average age at first egg is 5-9 months and annual egg production is roughly 112-237 eggs with mean egg weight of 43-45 gm. The adult weights of cock and hen averages 1.2 and 0.9-1 kg respectively.



**Punjab Brown:** This breed is distributed throughout Punjab and Haryana, utilized mainly for meat and egg. Males have black stripes/spots on neck, wings and tail. The average age at first egg is 5-6 months and annual egg production is 60-80 eggs with mean egg weight of 45-47 gm. The adult weights of cock and hen averages 2-2.2 and 1.4-1.6 kg respectively.



**Tellichery:** The name of this breed is derived from a place called 'Tellichery' in Kannur district of Kerala. These birds are fast movers, so they are not an easy prey. These are also thought to have some medicinal value as its soup is beneficial for anemia and worm infestations. Normally these birds are reared for meat only. The average age at first egg is 5-8



months and annual egg production is 60-80 eggs with mean egg weight of 34-45 gm. The adult weights of cock and hen averages 1.62 and 1.24 kg respectively.

**Kaunayen:** Locally known as ‘Kwakman/Koman’ and distributed in Manipur. These birds are highly alert, energetic and prized for its ‘martial qualities’. These are mostly utilized as game bird. The average age at first egg is 5-7 months and annual egg production is roughly 35 eggs with mean egg weight of 41-43 gm. The adult weights of cock and hen averages 2.4-3.8 and 1-2.9 kg respectively.



**Uttara:** Uttara is native chicken of Uttarkhand which evolved through natural selection and is well adapted to its local environment with appreciable degree of resistance to diseases compared with other exotic breeds of chicken. They have socio-economic importance as they are black in color and have crest/crown type structure on the head. These birds have feathered shank which are not seen in any indigenous chicken breed. They are reared for egg as well as meat purpose. The annual egg production is roughly 125-160 eggs with mean egg weight of 49-52 gm. The adult weights of cock and hen averages 1.3 and 1.1 kg respectively. Dressing percentage is 70-72 %.



**Hansli:** Birds are tall and slim, and have majestic look. This breed is found in Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar districts of Odisha. The males of the breed are very aggressive with high stamina and dogged fighting qualities and are used for cock fighting which is a popular sport in the region. The average age at first egg is 6 months. The annual egg production is roughly 50-67 eggs with mean egg weight of 40-46 gm. The adult weights of cock and hen averages 3.8 and 2.5 kg respectively.



**Kadaknath:** Distributed around Dhar and Jhabua districts of Madhya Pradesh. Locally this breed is called Kalamasi i.e. Black flesh due to black colour of its flesh (fibromelanosis) which is considered not only a delicacy but also of medicinal value. The tribals use the blood of Kadaknath in the treatment of chronic diseases in human beings. Its meat also has aphrodisiac properties. It is reared for meat and eggs that are reckoned to be a rich source of protein and iron. The average age at first egg is 6 months and annual egg production is 85-90 eggs with mean egg weight of 40 gm. The adult weights of cock and hen averages 1.6 and 1.125 kg respectively.



**Harringhata Black:** this breed is found in West Bengal and reared for both egg and meat purpose. As it has great mothering ability, so it can be used as foster mother. The average age at first egg is 4 months and annual egg production is 100-120 eggs with mean egg weight of 42-44 gm. The adult weights of cock and hen averages 1.5 and 1.2 kg respectively.



**Mewari:** Found in Central and Southern part of Rajasthan. This breed is not an easy prey when attacked by dogs and cats. It is reared for both eggs and meat and their meat & eggs fetch five times more compared to other chicken breeds. The annual egg production is 37-52 eggs with mean egg weight of 53 gm. The adult weights of cock and hen averages 1.9 and 1.2 kg respectively.



**Chittagong:** This breed is very strong and hardy with a quarrelsome temperament. Hence, possesses all the characteristics of a good game bird. It is found in North Eastern states of India



bordering Bangladesh reared for both meat and eggs. The adult weights of cock and hen averages 3.5-4.5 and 3-4 kg respectively.

## Conclusion:

The native breeds of poultry birds are part of balanced farming system playing vital roles not only as high-quality animal protein source but also as emergency cash income. They also play a significant role in the socio-cultural life of the rural community and woman empowerment. The low performance of native breeds of chickens in terms of productivity can be improved via improved husbandry practices, better selection along with better healthcare and feed supplements. Thus, we should encourage the rearing of indigenous breeds of poultry.

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### Cite as

Amandeep, & Narender Kumar. (2022). Indigenous Breeds of Poultry. The Science World a Monthly E Magazine, 2(4), 348–354. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6417464>