ROSIE - ARTICLE 5

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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **SNOW BENGALS**  **A guide to Registration based on eye-colour**  by Rosie Alger-Street | | | |  | | | | As the first people to introduce Any Other Colour-Eyed (AOC-Eyed) Snow Bengals into the UK, we have been approached many times over the last few years by people asking us to explain the difference between the two categories of Snows within the Bengal breed in the UK. One thing that does seem to be universal is the agreement that they are truly beautiful cats, whatever they are!  We won’t go into complicated technical details – these are not needed when registering kittens. This article is written purely to help people recognise their kittens and register them correctly. |  | First litter of Snow Spotted born in the UK   |  | | --- | | [Click on Bengal Kittens to Enlarge](javascript:CaricaFoto('assets/bengal_g_snowleop_1_l.jpg')) | | |  | | | | To start from the basics, there are two genes involved; the Blue-Eyed gene from the Siamese and the AOC-Eye-colour gene from the Burmese.  When we visited America in 1993 for the First Bengal Congress, we found the Snow Bengal situation very confusing and so did the American breeders! They had divided their Snows into three categories; Blue-Eyed Lynx-Point (one Siamese gene from each parent), Mink (Tonkinese – one Siamese and one Burmese gene) and Sepia (one Burmese gene from each parent).  This had apparently seemed quite straightforward for the first couple of generations but then the confusion started when they mated them together. The Blue-Eyed Snow kittens were still quite easy to identify because, having two Siamese genes, they were born white with no spots or marbling. They usually started to show some pattern at about 7 -10 days so, as long as you were able to remember which ones were born White, you could be confident that their eyes would remain Blue and not change as they grew up.  However, they found it increasingly difficult to decide into which categories to put the Sepia Snows and Mink Snows. The Burmese gene had a very strong influence on the strength of the coat pattern and the Mink Snows were getting a better defined pattern than the earlier generation of Snows thereby causing a lot of confusion.  When it came to writing our Bengal Standard of Points, we hopefully had learned from their experience. We used just two categories, Blue-Eyed Snows and AOC-Eyed Snows. This was to simplify matters as usually they were either born without markings or with markings.  We have discovered that some people have been confused because their AOC-Eyed Snows have sometimes had an opalescent eye colour. In an ideal world, the AOC-Eyed Snows would have deep Green or even Gold eyes. However, although some do start off with a strong eye-colour, we understand that, even in America, this rarely lasts and we personally have not heard of an AOC-Eyed Snow maintaining its strong eye colour over two and a half years of age. The usual final overall effect is a very pale wishy-washy opalescent blue that confuses some people into thinking the cat has been wrongly registered. This you will now realise is not the case. They are only wrongly registered if they were born with markings and registered as Blue-Eyed. This eye colour, although not ideal, is not incorrect and is definitely not that attributed to a Blue-Eyed Snow.  Therefore, the main and general rule of thumb when registering Snows with the GCCF is to remember which ones were born “naked” and which ones “had their clothes on” and register them accordingly. Something else to bear in mind is that Brown Spotted and Brown Marbled Bengals can only carry one snow gene, i.e. either the Siamese gene or the Burmese gene. Also, a Snow Bengal is only the colour he or she is by virtue of the genes that he or she has.  An additional factor has been introduced by breeders selecting for a stronger pattern on Blue-Eyed Snows which has led to some Blue-Eyed Snow kittens being born with ghost markings or even a visible pattern. In some cases, this has been due to the repeated mixing of Snow genes through the generations. The unexpected results of your mating may have been caused by an ancestor being incorrectly registered. GCCF registered breeding cats have a genetic profile, so if in doubt, they might well be able to help you with what is genetically possible or impossible from the parents. | | | |  | | | |