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Washing Dark and Hard Feathered Bantams (for the Beginner)

Wirtten for YEPA

By Matt Lhamon, APA/ABA POULTRY JUDGE & BREEDER

When washing a dark color or dark colored hard feathered breed of bantams, I do things a little different from washing white birds. I use about half as much shampoo and if you can find it, Hartz Mountain Black Dog shampoo is great; otherwise I use a mild baby shampoo.

In the **first tub** I use about half as much shampoo as I would with white birds, just enough to lightly suds up the water. If the birds have bugs I also use 2 oz. of Pyrethrum concentrate per 4 gallons of water to kill any external parasites. I do not use a brush but use my hands always working with the lay of the feathers until the bird comes clean. If the bird is really dirty I may soak him in the tub for 5 minutes or so always holding on and keeping his head above the water. Once the feathers are clean, I scrub the head and feet areas if needed. An old toothbrush works great here.

In the **second tub** I have plain water and immerse the bird several times and on the final time I squeegee the water from the feathers with my hands making sure all the suds are gone and the bird is clean.

The **third tub** has 1 cup of white vinegar to 4 gallons of water to cut any excess suds and repeat the process from the second tub again squeegee the water from the feathers with my hands until the bird is not dripping.

In the **final tub**, I use about 6-8oz of Glycerin to 4 gallons of water to restore oil to the feathers and squeegee the water from the feathers with my hands until the bird is not dripping. Towel dry and leave the bird to dry in the sun or under heat lamp till completely dry.

Dark colored birds dry fast in the sun or under a heat lamp so make sure they do not get too hot and overheat. I like to do this a week before the show so the bird can get their feathers back in place and never blow-dry a hard-feathered bird.

Note: If the bird is not real dirty, I use the same process but use little or no soap in the first tub. A poorly washed hard feathered bird will look like a frizzle so make sure if you use any soap, it is all rinsed out. Again, keep the show boxes dust free and full of fresh shavings so the bird does not get dusty or dirty in route to the show.

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