

## What Color is my Shetland?

**Black-** Foals often born a smoky ash color and often have legs lighter than their bodies. The foal coats shed out to reveal a rich, black coat. Mature ponies should not have any other color hair present besides white markings if they are to be considered truly black. Lighter colored hairs around the flanks and muzzle suggest the pony is seal brown (see below).

**Blue Roan-** Also known as black roan, this is a genetically black pony with at least one copy of the roan gene. A blue roan foal will resemble a solid black foal until it begins to shed out. A mixture of white hairs will appear on the body, but the head and legs will remain black. The degree of roaning can vary between individuals and often changes shades with the seasons.

**Grullo-** This is a genetically black pony with at least one copy of the dun gene. Grullos have slate colored bodies with dark points and the primitive markings associated with all duns (dorsal stripe, leg barring, face mask, shoulder stripe, etc.) Although the dun gene *is* present in Shetlands, it is relatively rare.

**Smoky Black-** This is a genetically black pony diluted by a single cream gene. Since the cream dilution does not express itself on black pigment except in the homozygous form (2 cream genes) smoky blacks look very much like a regular black pony. Your pony may be smoky black if it has at least one dilute parent (palomino or buckskin) or has produced dilute offspring out non-dilute mares. If your pony has a double dilute parent (smoky cream, cremello, or perlino) but looks black, then it is definitely a smoky black. Again, while possible in Shetlands, this color is rare.

**Smoky Cream-** This is a genetically black pony diluted by two cream genes. Smoky creams have pink skin, blue eyes, and an orange-red cast to the entire coat. Very closely resembles a cremello, but genetic testing can be done to verify the base coat is indeed black. Possible, but exceptionally rare in Shetlands. Smoky creams, as well as Perlinos and Cremellos, are double dilutes and will therefore pass along a cream gene to 100% of their offspring.

**Silver Dapple-** This is a genetically black pony diluted by either one or two copies of the silver gene (Z gene) which only affects black pigment. Dapples are often present, but not necessarily. Silver dapple ponies can range in shade from a light bluish silver, to a deep chocolate, and generally have light colored manes and tails. Silver dapple foals are born a creamy buff color. This is a common color in Shetlands.

**Seal Brown-** This is an otherwise black pony with lighter colored hairs around its muzzle and/or flanks.

**Bay-** This color comes in a variety of shades from a light sandy bay to a deep mahogany bay, but all of them consist of a reddish pigment to the body combined with black points. Bay foals are born with lighter colored legs, but the black is evident once they shed out.

**Bay Roan-** This is a bay pony with at least one copy of the roan gene. A bay roan foal will resemble a solid bay foal until it begins to shed out. A mixture of white hairs will appear on the body, but the head and legs will remain dark. The degree of roaning can vary between individuals and often changes shades with the seasons.

**Dun-** This color is also known as “zebra dun” and is a genetically bay pony with at least one copy of the dun gene. Their body color can range from a light yellow to a dark tan, with very dark or black points. Although often confused with buckskin, a bay dun exhibits primitive markings (dorsal stripe, shoulder stripe, face mask, leg barring, etc.) whereas a buckskin does not.

**Buckskin-** This is a genetically bay pony with one copy of the cream gene. Just as there are different shades of bay, buckskins range in shade from a very light tan to a dark sooty brown. Buckskins generally have black points, but they can sometimes fade to a chocolate color.

**Perlino-** This is a genetically bay pony with two copies of the cream gene. Perlinos have blue eyes, pink skin, and reddish-orange points that are a shade darker than their cream-colored bodies. Possible, but extremely rare in Shetlands.

**Silver Bay-** This is a genetically bay pony modified by either one or two copies of the silver gene. As this gene only affects black pigment, the pony will retain its red body color but the mane, tail, and points are diluted. Silver bays often have white or very light colored manes and tails and are frequently mistaken for chestnuts with flaxen manes and tails. However, the key is to look at the lower legs, which will be a sepia or chocolate brown color. Silver bays can come in a wide range of shades, and as with silver dapples, their manes and tails can vary from dark grayish silver to almost white. This is a very common color in Shetlands.

**Chestnut (w/flaxen mane and tail)-** This is a chestnut pony with a light colored mane and tail. The body color can range in shade from a very light red, to a deep liver chestnut but lower legs are the same color as the rest of the coat. Often confused with silver bay (see above) but is genetically distinct.

**Chestnut (w/chestnut mane and tail)-** Chestnuts have a red coat with red points and can vary in shade from a very sandy red, to a deep liver.

**Chestnut Roan-** This color is also known as red roan. This is a chestnut pony (with or w/o flaxen mane and tail) with at least one copy of the roan gene. A chestnut roan foal will resemble a solid chestnut foal until it begins to shed out. A mixture of white hairs will appear on the body, but the head and legs will remain dark. The degree of roaning can vary between individuals and often changes shades with the seasons.

**Red Dun-** This is a genetically chestnut pony with at least one copy of the dun gene. A red dun's body coat will be very similar to a regular chestnut but may be a shade or two lighter and will exhibit the primitive markings (dorsal stripe, leg barring, shoulder stripe, etc.) in a darker red color. The head will also be a darker shade of red. As with the occurrence of dun on other base colors, red dun is possible although unusual in Shetlands.

**Palomino-** This is a chestnut pony with one copy of the cream gene. Palomino foals are born a very light, almost white color often with pink skin that darkens with age. Palominos can range in shade from very light cream, to a rich copper that is often mistaken for chestnut. Palominos must have at least one parent who carries the cream gene.

**Cremello-** This is a chestnut pony with two copies of the cream gene. Cremellos have pink skin, blue eyes, and very light cream-colored coats. Similar in appearance to smoky black, genetic testing can confirm the red base coat that identifies a pony as cremello. As with all other double dilute colors (smoky black & perlino) cremellos will pass along a cream gene to 100% of their offspring. Possible, but not very common in Shetlands.

**Grey-** Grey is a modifier that can occur on ponies with any base color and mask the presence of all other colors or modifiers. Grey foals can be born any color but they progressively lighten with age. Grey ponies must have at least one grey parent. If the pony has two copies of the grey gene (homozygous) then 100% of its offspring will turn grey, regardless of their base color. Adult greys are often mistakenly called "white" but the presence of dark skin classifies them as grey.

**Appaloosa-** Ponies who display appaloosa color characteristics are not eligible for registration with the SPSNA.

### **Pinto Patterns**

Can be found in combination with any of the above listed colors. There are many more classifications of pinto patterns, but for the purposes of SPSNA we have broadly grouped them into either tobiano or overo.

**Tobiano-** White spots are generally a rounded shape with clean, sharp edges. The white will usually cross the pony's topline somewhere between the ears and the tail. The head of a tobiano tends to look like that of a regular solid colored pony.

**Overo-** White areas rarely cross the topline and have a more jagged, lacey outline than those of a tobiano. Overos tend to have more white present on their heads and often have blue eyes, however blue eyes *can* be present on any color or pattern.

For more information, and for color photograph examples please visit <http://www.equinecolor.com/color.html> .