

INTRODUCTION

Catalana del Prat is a dual purpose Mediterranean poultry breed that comes from Prat of Llobregat, in the vicinity of Barcelona. It is recognized for its hardiness, adaptability, cream colored eggs, white thin meat and slate blue tarsus.

OBJECTIVES

- **Investigate the origin:** background, fixation, selection, improvement and conservation.
- **Analyze present situation:** breeders, poultry farmers, veterinarians and technicians.
- **Purpose feasible measures:** preserve, ensure and improve the future prospects of the breed.
- **Recognize peasant women:** whose knowledge and dedication enable conservation and recuperation of the breed.

DESCRIPTION

Big comb, white ears, large tail and slate blue tarsus. There are two recognized varieties (Figure 1 and 2) and two extinct varieties (Figure 3 and 4).

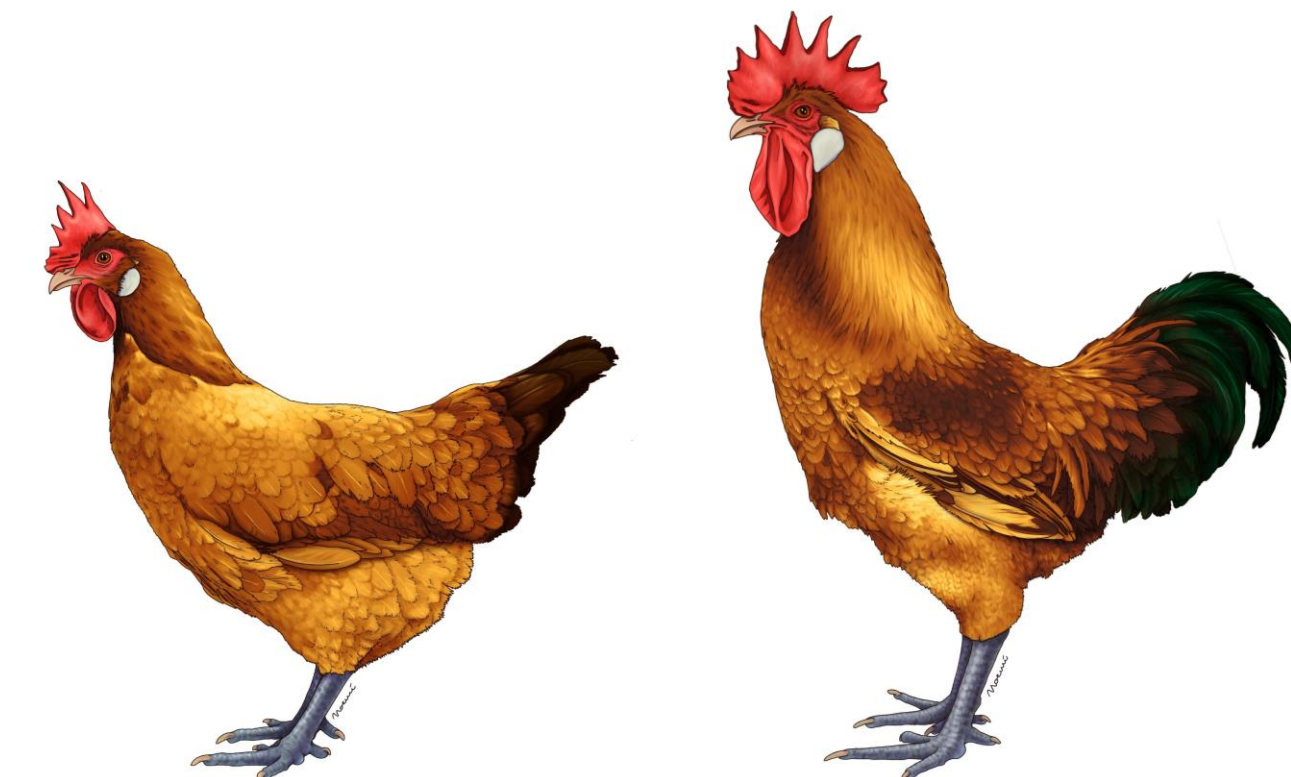


Figure 1. Buff Prat. Illustration by Noemi Vives.



Figure 2. White Prat. Illustration by Noemi Vives.

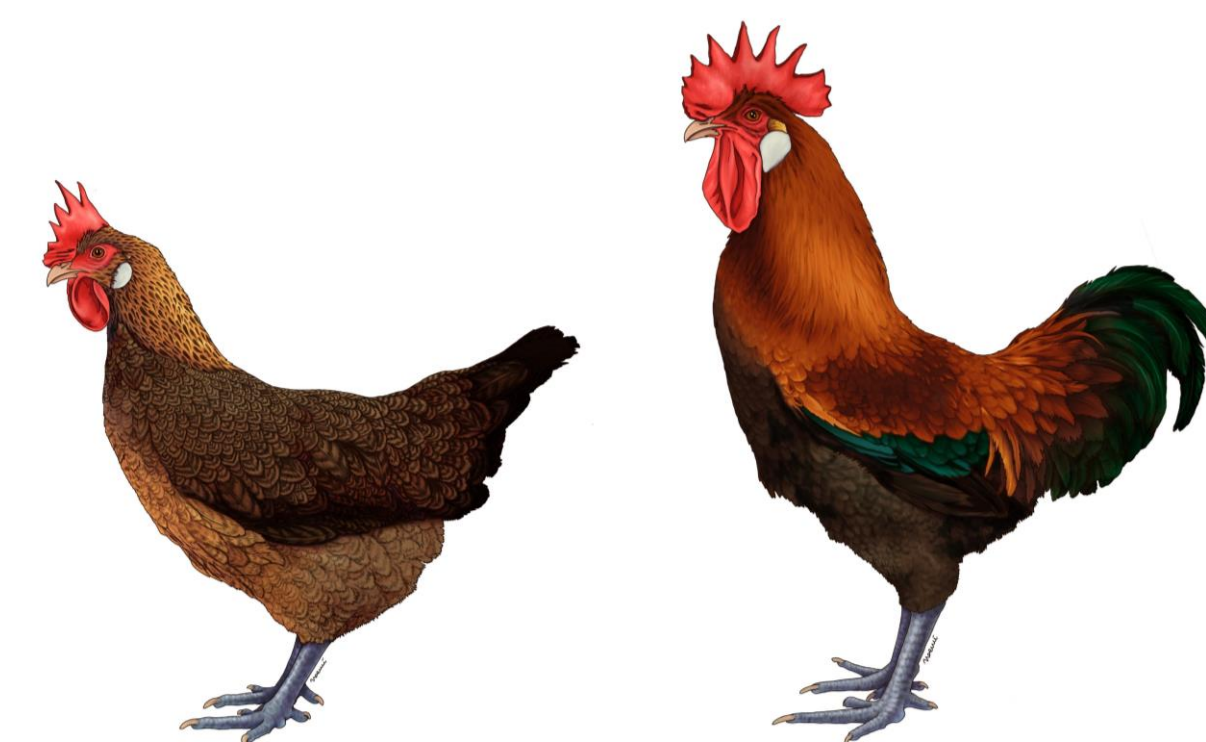


Figure 3. "Perdiuada" Prat. Illustration by Noemi Vives.

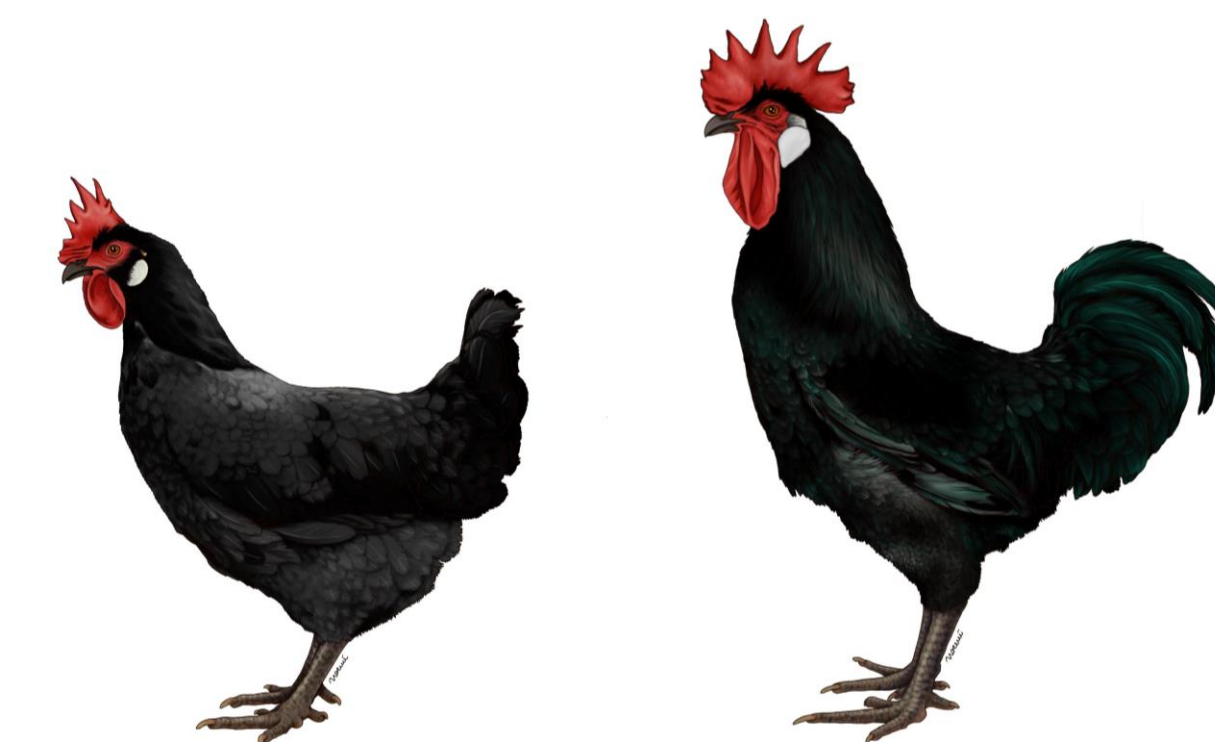


Figure 4. Black Prat. Illustration by Noemi Vives.

TRADITIONAL BREEDING

- **Poultry care:** women peasants (Figure 5) and her knowledge passed down through generations.
- **Housing of hens:** reed fence, poultry house and threshing floor (Figure 6). Laying place was a pannier full of straw.
- **Feed:** grain and vegetables. Broody hens were fed with crumb soaked in wine for improving maternal behavior.
- **Sources:** meat, eggs, curative preparations and manure.



Figure 5. Peasant with hens in Can Camins. Source: Família Sigalés i Ribas.



Figure 6. Hens and rooster in the threshing floor of Can Camins. Photograph by the author.

HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS

1373. First reference of buff hens in Plain of Llobregat (1).

"Item, unum par guallinarum rosses"

1656. Recognition of Prat capons by Mostassaf of Barcelona (2).

"Lo parell dels capons del prat – 1ll 6fs "

1789. Abundance of poultry in Prat of Llobregat (3)

HISTORICAL EVENTS

1885. Crossing between native fowls and Cochin breed (4).

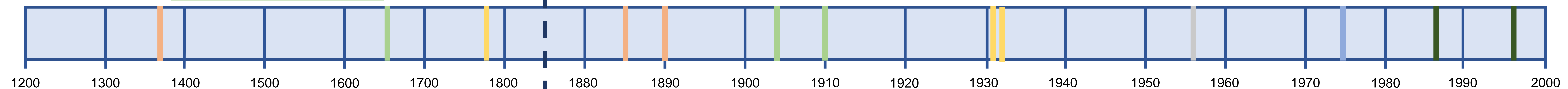
- Red ears → white ears.
- Brown eggs → cream eggs.
- Tawny plumage: conserved.
- Feathers in tarsus: disappeared.

1904. Discovery and development of White Prat by Pons and Castelló (6) .

1910. Dissemination of breed throughout Spain, Argentina and Uruguay (7).

1956. Arrival of hybrid lineages and almost disappearance of the breed (10).

1987, 1996, 2008. Approbation of quality denomination (11), geographical distinction (12) and inauguration of herd book (13)



Columbia gene: introduction in native fowls before 15th Century.

Hypothesis: Atlantic fowls? (Figure 7)

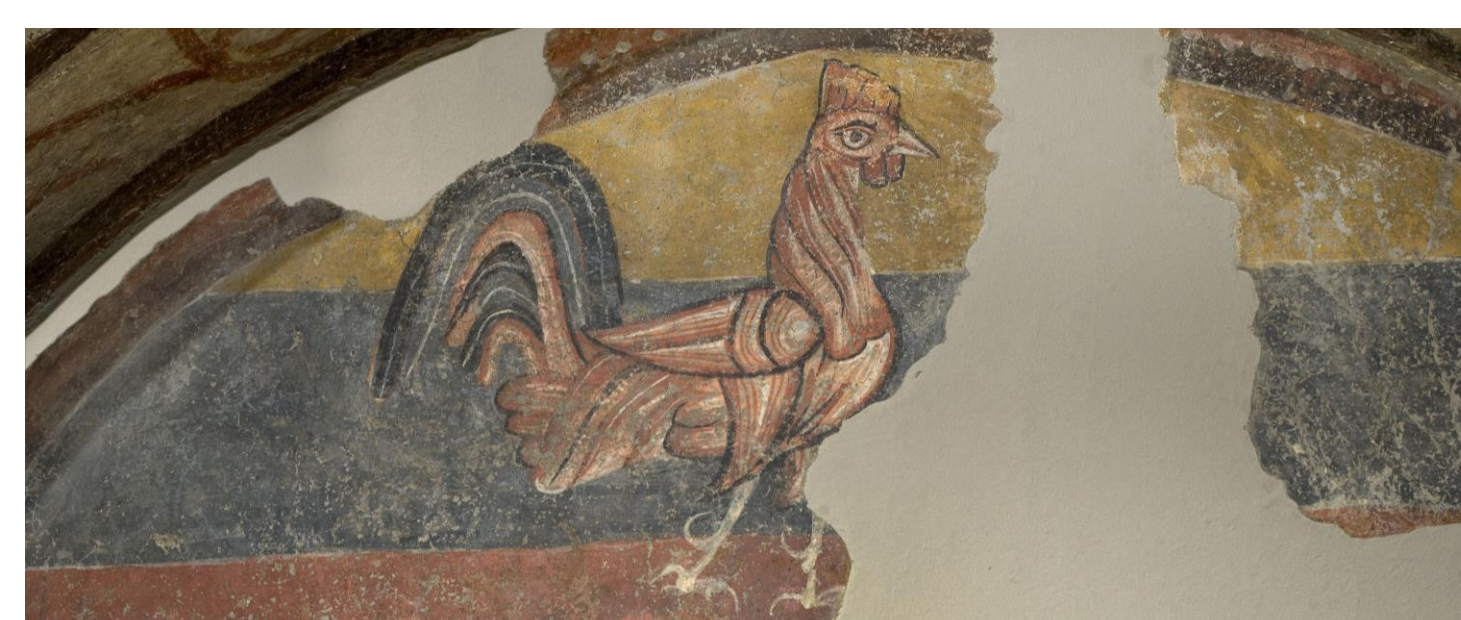


Figure 7. Rooster of Sant Joan de Boi (detail). © Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona, 2023

1890. Acquisition of fowls by poultry farmers (Castelló, Pons, Darder, Martí-Codolar and Claparols), fixation and selection (5)

1931. Constitution of "Prat Club de Perfecció" and implementation of the "Racial Pattern" (8).

1932. Foundation of the new "Granja Avícola Prat" by Josep Colominas Vergés and Rosa Álvarez Brosa (9)

1975. Recuperation of the breed with the help of peasants, poultry farmers, veterinarians, biologists and administration (5)

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

- **Promote young breeders:** guarantee generational renewal.
- **Preserve "masies" and farms:** conserve traditional breeding
- **Exhibit in "Zoo de Barcelona":** make poultry breed known.
- **Celebrate "Fira Avícola":** diffusion and recognition of the breeders.
- **More territories in IGP:** Hospitalet of Llobregat and Sants-Montjuïc.

CONCLUSIONS

- **Appreciation:** of poultry from Plain of Llobregat since county era.
- **Preservation:** collaboration between peasants, especially women, farmers, poultry professionals, veterinarians, biologists, technicians and administration.
- **Conservation:** requires respecting "masies", holding broiler and breeder poultry farms, supporting traditional breeders and encouraging young people.

REFERENCES

