

History of Poultry Origin and Domestication

1. Chicken

Different archaeological surveys indicate that chickens were originated from the Red Jungle fowl (*Gallus gallus*) in the Indus valley about 200 B.C. and believe that it may be the chief ancestor of modern chicken. But it is also believed that another three wild species of chicken have been contributed to develop modern chicken which found in South East Asia. India and throughout mainland of Southeast Asia to the off-shore island of Indonesia are the ancestral home of the present day domestic fowl. The four species are closely related and are known to interbreed.

The species are-

01. the Red Jungle fowl (*Gallus gallus*)
02. the Grey Jungle fowl (*Gallus sonnerati*)
03. the Ceylon Jungle fowl (*Gallus lafayetti*)
04. the Black/Green/ Java Jungle fowl (*Gallus varius*).

Our ancient history bears witness to the fact that the people of India were quite familiar with chicken, duck, quail and turkey, about 3200 years B.C. Quail or cock fight provided as a source of fun.

Domesticated fowls could certainly be found in Iran by 800 B.C. and the Persians spread them throughout Western Asia and to the shores of the Mediterranean by 600 B.C. They were introduced in Italy by 400 B. C. northern Europe by 100 B.C. Chicken was imported into the America and Australia by the early European explorers and immigrants. To-day they are considered as vital source of animal protein throughout the world.

2. Duck

The wild duck was first domesticated in Asia also. The modern improved duck breeds or varieties are derived from the wild stock. The wild Mallard duck (*Anas boschas*) is the progenitor of all domestic with the exception of the Muscovy which has been derived from the South American tree duck (*Cairina moschat*).The domesticated duck belongs to the genus *Anas* and species *platyrhynchos*.

3. Goose

The scientific name of domestic goose is *Anser anser*. Due to foraging habit it is easy to rear in grass field at low cost. The African goose originated from the wild Asian Swan Goose of China. It was introduced into Europe in the late 1700s and into the USA in the mid 1800s. African geese are similar to Chinese geese. The Chinese Goose is a breed descended from the wild Swan Goose. Historic names include "Hong Kong, Knob Fronted.

4. Swan

Black Swans were first seen by Europeans in 1697, at the [Swan River](#), [Western Australia](#). The Black Swan (*Cygnus atratus*) is a large [waterbird](#), a species of [swan](#), which breeds mainly in the southeast and southwest regions of [Australia](#). The species was hunted to extinction in [New Zealand](#), but later reintroduced. The Black Swan is also very popular as an ornamental waterbird in western [Europe](#), especially [Britain](#).

The **Mute Swan** (*Cygnus olor*) is native to much of [Europe](#) and [Asia](#), and (as a rare winter visitor) the far north of [Africa](#). It is also an [introduced species](#) in [North America](#), [Australasia](#) and southern Africa. The name 'mute' derives from it being less vocal than other [swan](#) species.

5. Pigeon

Pigeon were kept and domesticated as far back as the 5th Egyptian dynasty, around 3,000 B.C. Pigeon was first domesticated in Libya or Babylon or Egypt. The rock pigeon (*Columba livia*) is the ancestor of modern domestic pigeon. Many varieties of pigeon the domestic pigeon today were decedent from the wild pigeon, Blue Barred Rock, *Columba livia*. The pigeon of today still resemble to this ancestor. Pigeons were referred to in the Bible as a symbol for the holy sprit. There is record of pigeon being raised and used for food by the Egyptian

6. Quail

Japanese quail (*Coturnix japonica*) also known as Coturnix quail, Pharaoh`s quail, Eastern quail. Coturnix is widely distributed in Europe, Africa and Asia, where they are reared as migratory species. Apparently quail were either domesticated in Japan about the 11th century or brought to Japan from China about that time. They were first raised as pet and singing birds, but by 19th century Japan had become widely used quail for meat and egg production. By virtue of high acceptability of quail meat and eggs, it has occupied a prominent position in many other countries like Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, and France etc.

7. Turkey

A turkey is a large bird in the genus *Meleagris*. One species, *Meleagris gallopavo*, commonly known as the Wild Turkey, is native to the forests of Mexico, North America. The modern domesticated turkey is descended from this species. The other living species is *Meleagris ocellata* or the *Ocellated Turkey*.

The 16th-century English navigator William Strickland is generally credited with introducing the turkey into England. Domestic turkeys were taken to Europe by

the Spanish. Many distinct breeds were developed in Europe (e.g. Spanish Black, Royal Palm). In the early 20th century, many advances were made in the breeding of turkeys, resulting in breeds such as the Beltsville Small White.

8. Guinea fowl

The abundance of guinea fowl (*Numida Meleagris*) in wild of Africa, there was no need to produce domestic flocks. Wild birds could be hunted as needed or could be captured and caged. Guineas were brought to the New World a mere 16 years after Christopher Columbus made his first landing. Birds were stocked from Spanish ships bringing African slaves to the islands of the Caribbean. The modern colorful varieties of guinea fowl are developed from African wild stock.

Guinea fowl figures were inscribed on the temples and buildings of the ancient Egyptians as far back as 2400 B.C. The Greeks were keeping domesticated varieties by 400 B.C. and both the meat and eggs were considered delicacies by the ancient Romans.

Early colonists brought guineas to North America and they were introduced to China in the late 1600's. They were eagerly accepted by the Chinese and were so successful that in India guineas are still known as Chinese Fowl.

9. Ostrich

The Ostrich was originally described by Linnaeus in his 18th-century work. Its scientific name is derived from Latin, *struthio* meaning "Ostrich" and *camelus* meaning "camel", alluding to its dry habitat.

The ostrich is a large flightless birds native to grass and arid land of Central and Southern Africa, the only living member(s) of the genus *Struthio*. Some analyses indicate that the *Somali Ostrich* may be better considered a full species apart from the Common Ostrich, but most taxonomists consider it to be a subspecies.

10. Pheasant

Pheasants originated in China and have been transplanted through out much of the world. The Common Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) is only the Ring-necked Pheasant which was introduced to USA since the 1880.

11. Peafowl

A peafowl is a bird of the Phasianidae family. It is a relative of the pheasant. The Indian Peafowl or Blue Peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*) is a large and brightly coloured bird native to *South Asia*. The Congo Peafowl (*Afropavo*) is the only member of the pheasant family that originated outside Asia.

12. Partridge

Partridges are native to [Europe](#), [Asia](#), [Africa](#), and the [Middle East](#). Partridges are ground-nesting seed-eaters. They are a [non-migratory](#) Old World group. This is a game or hunting bird. Several species are observed in the world. The Chukar partridge (*Alectoris chukar*) originated in Asia and Southern Europe. Stock currently used in USA, parts of North America and New Zealand. The French or Red legged partridge available in shooting place in UK.

The **Grey Partridge** (*Perdix perdix*) also known as the **English Partridge, Hungarian Partridge**. The species has been successfully introduced to many parts of the world for shooting, including vast areas of North America, where it is most commonly known as Hungarian partridge. This [partridge](#) breeds on farmland across most of [Europe](#) into western [Asia](#), and has been introduced widely into [North America](#). They are quite common in some areas of southern [Canada](#) and the northern [United States](#).