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The Blue Aby— Looking for Acceptance

Sometimes it is more difficult to obtain official recognition for a new color than for a new breed.

by Dorothy Holby

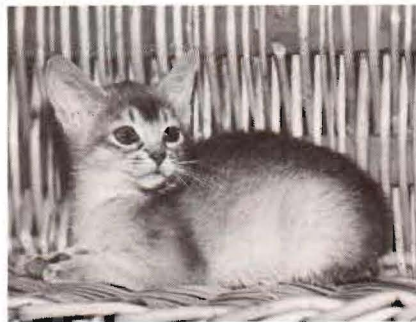
IT HAS BEEN said that the only constant is change; yet it is human nature to resist change of any kind. This is certainly the case when it comes to the cat fancy accepting a new breed—or even a new color for an established breed.

The Abyssinian is one of the oldest breeds of cats, and one of the most popular. Breeders report that waiting lists are common. People looking for an affectionate, beautiful, intelligent, personable cat, with a great sense of humor and a quiet voice, may have to wait a long time to own one of these huggable pets.

At present, the Cat Fanciers' Association (CFA) recognizes only red and ruddy Abyssinians for championship status, but enthusiasts for the "new" blue Aby are predicting that cats with blue coats will soon be competing for championship points. Blue Abys are certainly gaining in popularity, not only in the U.S. but in Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Europe and Canada, as well. Wherever the blue coats appear, the enthusiasm among cat lovers is overwhelming. It is this popularity that makes so many blue Aby breeders confident that they will be able to successfully present a petition to CFA for championship status in the fall of 1983.

It should be noted that Abys with blue coats have been around for a long time. "New" as used in this article, refers only to their recognized status in the CFA. According to CFA rules governing the acceptance and advancement of new breeds and colors: "A new breed or color first must be recognized for registration before it can become a provisional breed and finally enter championship show competition." Before a new

color can be submitted to the CFA Executive Board for consideration, all applications for new colors within existing breeds must have a 60 percent favorable endorsement from that breed's council membership. Request for recognition as a provisional breed may be made to the CFA Executive Board after not less than 100 individual specimens of the new breed or color have been registered with CFA over a period of not less than five years. The current breeder list must include 25 active breeders. CFA is willing to register any litter that fulfills its requirements for registration.



Jaanus Bleu Genesis of Abazuh, bred by Arthur Nelson and Joan Arnoldi, is now owned by Linda and Jerry Romig.

Breeders of a new color must also be prepared to present acceptable evidence that the new color appeared spontaneously and is not the result of crossbreeding. To quote George Kennedy, author of *Blue and Lilac Abyssinians* (G.P.O. Box 2323, Sydney, N.S.W. 2001, Australia): "The blue gene has been in the breed for at least 57 years, and possibly longer." The line of blue Abys extending from Raby Ashanto (bred in England in 1942), the father of all modern blue Abys, appears to be pure.

Strange as it may seem, obtaining

acceptance of a new color is often far more difficult than introducing a new breed of cat! Not all established Aby breeders are in favor of accepting the new coat color. Many believe that the "miniature cougar" (a label often given to this breed of cat because of his "wild" look, not his temperament) is appropriately shown in only red or ruddy.

Arthur Nelson, secretary of the Blue Abyssinian Club International, estimates that there are approximately 35 active breeders of the blue Aby in the U.S., and George Kennedy, in his aforementioned book, states that there are about 24 breeders of blue and lilac Abyssinians in each the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. Kennedy also informs us that blue Abys are provisionally recognized in Great Britain and in Australia, and are eligible for championship status in New Zealand and parts of Australia.

The battle for recognition is also being waged in other U.S. cat registries—with some success. The International Cat Association announced just recently that the blue Aby has been officially accepted for championship status and the American Cat Fanciers' Association has published a statement that voting on recognition of the new color will take place during the spring of 1983. Recognition of the blue Aby is also in the beginning stages in both CCF and CFF.

Blue Aby breeders will maintain the same standard for their cats as is now held for red and ruddy Abys, except as it relates to color. The color standard for the blue Aby calls for a coat that gives the effect of a "warm, soft blue-gray, distinctly ticked a deeper steel blue, with a bluish-ivory undercoat." The undersides and forelegs (inside) are to be pale cream or oatmeal color that will harmonize with the main color. The ears and tail are tipped with steel blue; the nose leather is a dark pink; the paw pads are mauve with steel blue between the pads and extending slightly beyond the pads. The eyes should be a rich gold or green.

Always a beautiful cat, the Abyssinian is certainly just as appealing in his new coat of blue, and the future of the blue Aby does indeed look bright. It may take a few years, but blue Aby breeders are certain that this new color will eventually be accepted for championship status in all the major registries. As far as they are concerned, this change will simply mean more of a good thing. →

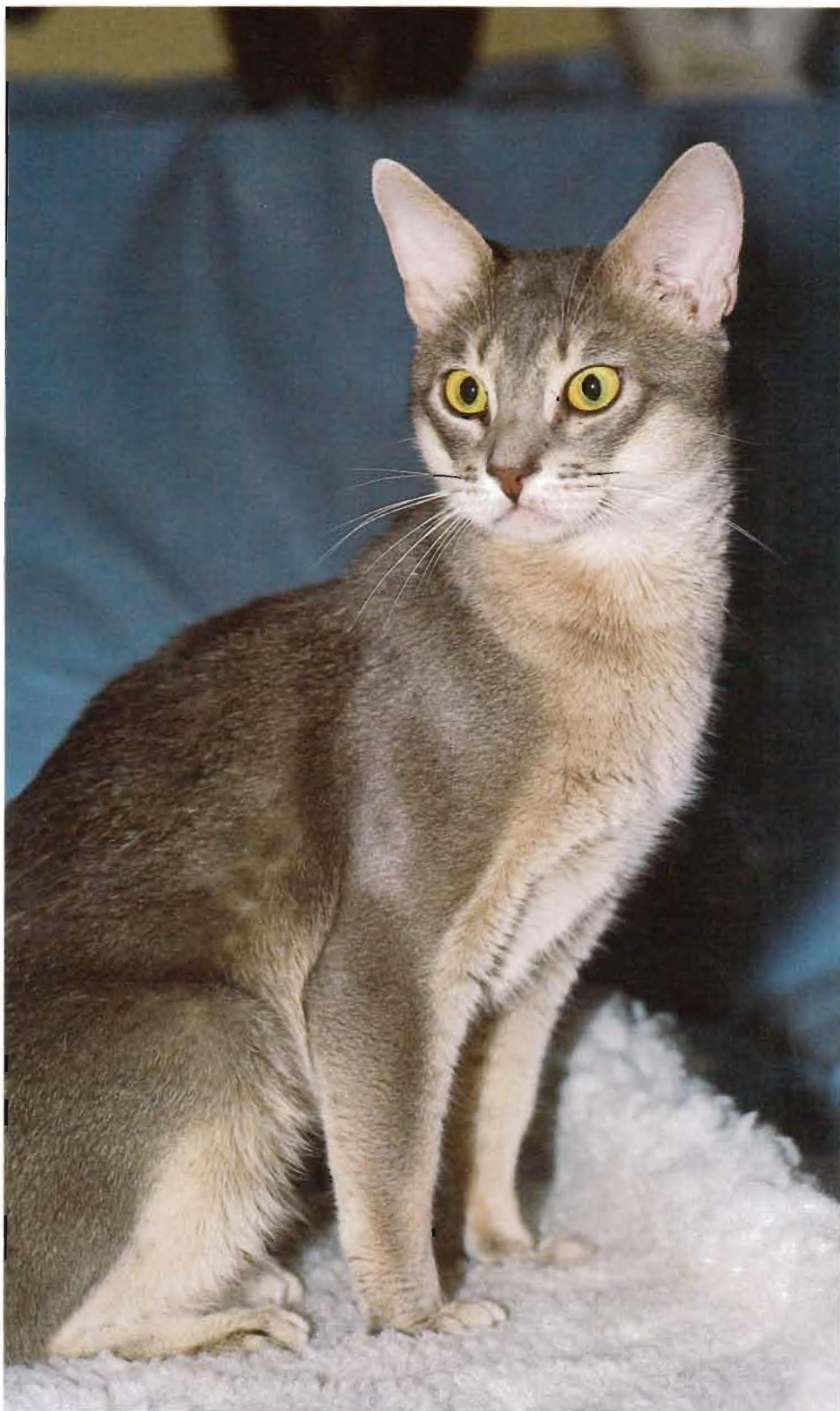


In the past, blue Aby litters have been small with a preponderance of males, but recently Nite Wind's Abigail of Nephroni, a ruddy Aby with the recessive blue gene, produced a litter of five female kittens!



At 9 weeks, Jaanus Cassiopea shows the typical Aby expression—large, flared ears and almond-shaped eyes, accented by dark lid skins encircled by a light colored area.

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Jaanus Starbuck, owned and bred by Arthur Nelson and Joan Arnoldi, is an excellent example of the proposed standard for the blue Abyssinian.

ON OVERLEAF: *These ruddy kittens from San-Toi Cattery, owned by Connie Roberts and Dee Johnson of Roseville, California, with their alert "wild" look, show clearly why the Abyssinian is sometimes called the "miniature cougar."*

Printed in black and white, these two kittens (a ruddy on the left and a blue on the right) are identical, demonstrating that the standards are the same except for color.

Abigail's litter, four blues and one ruddy, all have homes: the kitten on the far left went to Canada, the second to California, the third to Pennsylvania and the fourth to Florida. Not pictured, Jaanus Cassiopea, will remain with Art and Carol Nelson in the Illinois cattery where she was born. 🐾

