

Bengal Breed Standard: ACFA

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GENERAL: The goal of the Bengal breeding program is to create a domestic cat which has physical features distinctive to the small forest-dwelling wild cats, but with the loving, dependable, temperament of the domestic cat. Keeping this goal in mind, judges shall give special merit to those characteristics in the appearance of the Bengal which are distinct from those found in other domestic cat breeds.

HEAD		(30 Points)
Shape	7	Shape: Broad modified wedge with rounded contours. Longer than it is wide. Allowance to be made for jowls in adult males. Size: Slightly small in proportion to body, but not to be taken to extreme. Profile: Gently curving forehead to bridge. Bridge of nose extends above the eyes. The line is a very slight, to nearly straight concave curve. Special Merit: Overall look gives a distinct head from the domestic cat.
Chin, Muzzle,		Chin: Strong chin aligns with tip of nose in profile. Muzzle: Full and broad, with large, prominent whisker pads and high, pronounced cheekbones.
Nose	8	Nose: has a very slight concave curve. Nose Leather: Large and wide; slightly puffed
Ears	6	Size: Overall size medium. Height: Medium to medium-short, allowance to be made for larger appearing ears on kittens up to 12 months. Base: Wide in proportion to height. Tips: Rounded desirable. Placement: Set as much on side as top of head, following the contour of the face in the frontal view, and tipping forward in the profile view. Furnishings: Light horizontal furnishings acceptable; but lynx tipping undesirable.
Eyes	5	Shape: Oval, almost round. Size: Large, but not bugged. Placement: Set wide apart, back into face, and on slight bias toward base of ear. Color: Eye color independent of coat color except in the lynx points. Special Merit: Richness and depth of color.
Neck	4	Size: Thick and muscular, large in proportion to head. Length: Long, and in proportion to body.
BODY		(30 Points)
Torso	5	Long and substantial, but not oriental or foreign.
Tail	5	Shape: Thick, with rounded tip highly desired. Size: Medium large. Length: Medium.
Boning	5	Robust, never delicate.
Musculature	6	Very muscular, especially in the males, one of the most distinguishing features. Allowance to be made for the generally slighter musculature of the females.
Legs/Feet	8	Length: Medium, slightly longer in the back than in the front. Boning: Large and substantial. Never delicate. Musculature: Very muscular, like the body. Feet Size: Large. Shape: Round. Knuckles: prominent. Boning: Robust, Never delicate.

COAT		(5 Points)
Texture	5	Length: Short to medium. Allowance for slightly longer coat in kittens. Texture: Thick, luxurious, and unusually soft to the touch. Close lying. Glitter: Comes from a domestic outcross into the first Bengal cats. It is a simple recessive giving a metallic look to the hair and a softer texture. While unique to the Bengal cat it is not required and should not be a considering factor.

COLOR		(10 Points)
		Spotted or Marbled Patterns
Brown Tabby	Seal Lynx Point Tabby	Seal Sepia
Tabby	Seal Mink Tabby	

Brown Tabby: All variations are allowed; however, a high degree of rufinism, yielding a yellow, buff, tan, golden, or orange ground color is preferred. Markings may be virtually black, brown, tan, or various shades of brown. Light spectacles encircling the eyes and a virtual white ground color on the whisker pads, chin, chest, belly and inner legs [in contrast to the ground color of the flank and back] is desirable. *Rims of eyes, lips, and nose should be outlined with black, and center of nose should be brick red. Paw pads and tail tip must be black. Eye color: Gold to Green.

***DO NOT PENALIZE:** Cats with a T shirt white, patterned with markings underside (showing it is not the white spotting factor) if the center of the nose is not brick red and if the paw pads are other than black.

Seal Lynx Point Tabby: Ground color should be ivory to cream with pattern clearly visible. Pattern can vary in color from dark seal brown, light brown, tan, or buff, with the light spectacles, whisker pads, and chin. There should be little difference between color of body markings and point color. Paw pads and tail tip must be dark seal brown. Eye color: Blue with richness in color. Allowance should be made for incomplete markings in kittens.

Seal Mink Tabby: Ground color should be ivory, cream, or light tan with pattern clearly visible. Pattern may be various shades of seal mink to a dark seal mink. Ivory cream spectacles encircling the eyes, and ivory cream whisker pads and chin are desirable. There should be very little or no difference between the color of body markings and point color. Paw pads must be dark brown with rosy undertones allowed. Tail tip must be dark seal brown. Eye color: Aqua [blue-green] to Green, the more richness and depth of color the better.

Seal Sepia Tabby: Ground color should be ivory, cream, or light tan with pattern clearly visible. Seal Sepia Tabby Pattern may be various shades of seal sepia to dark seal sepia. Ivory cream spectacles encircling the eyes, and ivory cream whisker pads and chin are desirable. There should be very little or no difference between the color of body markings and point color. Paw pads must be dark brown with rosy undertones allowed. Tail tip must be dark seal brown. Eye color: Gold to Green, the more richness and depth of color the better.

PATTERN**(15 Points)**

Spotted Pattern: Random, horizontal or diagonal. As little as possible like the mackerel or broken classic. **Rosettes:** Showing two distinct colors or shades are preferable to single spotting, but not required. **Shape:** Paw print, arrowhead, doughnut, semi circular, clustered, or odd shapes showing pattern distinct from domestic cats. Contrast with ground color should be extreme, giving distinct pattern and sharp edges. Strong, bold chin strap and mascara markings desirable. Necklaces can be broken or unbroken. Blotchy horizontal shoulder streaks desirable. Belly must be spotted. Virtually white underside and belly highly desired. **Special Merit** given to unique patterning that strikes the eye as being non-domestic.

Marbled Pattern: Markings, while derived from the classic tabby gene, and the horizontal pull of the non-domestic giving a uniquely different pattern with as little "bulls-eye" similarity as possible. **Pattern** shall, instead, be random giving the impression of marble or the impression of chaining with a horizontal flow when the cat is stretched. Vertical striped mackerel influence is also undesirable. There should be little verticality to the pattern. **Preference** should be given to cats with three or more shades; i.e., ground color, markings, and dark outlining of those markings. **Contrast** must be extreme, with distinct shapes and sharp edges. Strong, bold chin strap and mascara markings desirable. Necklaces can be broken or unbroken. Belly must be patterned. Virtually white underside and belly highly desired. **Special Merit** given to unique patterning that strikes the eye as being non-domestic.

Special Note: As the interplay of genes, domestic with non-domestic and the interplay of pattern flow coming from the mackerel, classic and non-domestic unique patterns are being created that will not easily be defined as marble or spotted. As the breeders select for these unique characteristics, it is recognized that further clarification will be necessitated in the standard. Until that time, select for uniqueness and non-domestic attributes.

CONTRAST**(10 Points)**

Contrast with ground color must be extreme, giving distinct pattern and sharp edges. The ground color has agouti banding, the uniformity of this banding gives clarity to the ground coloring. Pattern that lies deep on the hair shaft gives more contrast.

Temperament:

Temperament must be unchallenging. Any sign of definite challenge shall disqualify. Cat may exhibit fear, seek to flee, or generally complain aloud, but may not threaten to harm. Bengals should be confident, alert, curious, and friendly cats.

PENALIZE:

Spots on body running together vertically, forming a mackerel tabby pattern, circular bulls-eye pattern on marbles, substantially darker point color [as compared to color of body markings] on Lynx Points, Seal Sepia or Seal Mink. Any distinct locket on the neck, chest, abdomen or any other area not provided for in the standard. Do not penalize for mousey undercoat.

THHOLD:

Belly not patterned. Paw pads not consistent with their color group description, or paw pads not all of the same color (Exception: Cats with a T shirt white, patterned with markings underside (showing it is not the white spotting factor) if the center of the nose is not brick red and if the paw pads are other than black.)