

# *Deklo Whers Of Keroon BeastCraft Hall*

## *A Short History*

The main BeastCraft Hall records state that nearly 300 Turns ago a Journeyman BeastHealer assigned to the BeastCraft Hall proposed that the Hall begin a breeding program for Whers. Journeyman Deklo was originally from a small mining Hold looking to Crom, and had grown up watching the Whers that were used extensively in the mining interests of Crom, and believed that the breed could be vastly improved if they could be bred to encourage sociability. His arguments, recorded in the Hall's archives, were persuasive, and the CraftMaster of the day agreed to allow him to spend time on the project.

Deklo set out with the intention of creating a Wher that instead of being extremely territorial and solitary, was more capable of living and interacting with those of its own kind in closer quarters and possibly also with their human trainers, making them easier to train and control. Deklo convinced several aging Wher Trainers from Crom to come to Keroon to assist him and he quickly found himself relying on their superior experience with Wher flesh.

His initial breeding programs all failed to produce any visible results, though by only breeding the more tractable of the Whers available to him, he did find that their overall ~size~ tended to be reduced. Since this was not the result he was looking for, he scrapped that breeding program and started over, this time breeding both the tractable specimens with the more temperamental ones to see what happened. Unfortunately, the less sociable ones tended to breed true, while the better behaved ones didn't. Once again, he had to scrap that breeding program and start over.

Because Whers are slow breeding, tend to have fewer viable eggs, and Queen eggs tended to be few and far between, over 30 Turns was wasted on 'failed' breeding programs. Although the Hall in the end decided that perhaps it was advisable for them to continue to keep a breeding population of Whers, the sociability breeding program was ultimately scrapped and it was nearly 200 Turns before someone else took up the challenge of the 'Social Wher.'

The second attempt at breeding kinder and gentler Whers was taken up by MasterBreeder Myrs of the Experimental Breeding section of the Hall. Studying the records of Deklo's results as well as the extensive archives kept on all the breeds in the Hall's care, he surmised that Deklo ~might~ have been on the right track the first time when he was only breeding the tractable Whers and that the smaller size was a side effect of breeding for more desirable traits. Figuring that size might be bred back into the Whers later, Myrs again set about experimenting. Since this time

**the project was being administered by a MasterBreeder and was under the auspices of the Experimental Breeding section, the program continued even after Myrs's death, this time sponsored by his long time assistant Senior Journeyman Llectic.**

**Although the size of the Whers was affected and some unexpected side effects did crop up, the overall health of the animals was still sound. The Whers tended to have shorter and denser bones, heavier shoulder muscles that made them capable of hauling the same loads as their larger counterparts but made jumping a little more difficult, wings that were on the whole longer and more agile but still far too small to carry the weight of the animal, and although still vehemently adverse to light, they could tolerate the indirect sunlight of predawn and post sunset, as well as the diffused light of extremely heavy cloud cover.**

**The most surprising side effect of the breeding program was that the Deklos were born Impressible more often than the standard Whers. Standard Whers are estimated to be born Impressible 10 to every 100 births, while Deklos estimates are closer to 25 to every 100 births. Breeders are keeping as records on this side effect to see if any changes occur, but also estimate that there are probably Whers born Impressible that they don't catch so no one will probably ever have completely accurate numbers.**

**Slowly, over the course of the next 100 Turns and with careful selective breeding, the now christened Deklo Whers began to show signs of more sociability both with their own kind and humans. Still fiercely territorial they were more inclined towards tolerating invasions by lesser colors, although fights to the death would occur between competing Queens if it was allowed. Bronze territorial disputes tended to break off before death occurred when the clear loser would retreat, as did disputes between other colors. All colors tended to tolerate invasions by adolescents and both Golds and Greens tended to watch over the newly hatched while the male Blues, Browns and Bronzes tended to ignore them completely unless they gave reason for a rebuke.**

**Inside Wher pens, clear demarcations could be discerned between the territories of the different Whers, but the areas marked out tended to be smaller than with the Whers not in the breeding program. Llectic theorized that this might be because the Whers felt less pressure to hold as much area as they could now that they were well taken care of and willing to entertain the notion of another Wher inside what they considered their space. With the release of the societal pressures towards being antisocial, the Whers also began to tolerate incursions into the pen by humans as well, though there was ~always~ an area in every Wher's territory where no one, not even a most trusted trainer, adolescent or hatchling was allowed. They also tolerated being handled much better by BeastHealers and Trainers, though it was always safer if the Wher knew and trusted the human.**

**With the change in social attitudes came a better willingness to be trained, and the ability to be trained for more complex tasks. This well pleased the breeders and**

trainers alike. With some training, the Deklo Whers made much 'safer' WatchWhers that were more inclined to challenge and not attack unless provoked, and could be trained to break off an attack with a command from their trainers. Also, when the smaller Deklo Whers challenged, they tended to spread their wings and *display*, much like dragons and firelizards do; this behavior was also noted in territorial challenges between Deklo Whers, and was not noted in the Wher population not in the breeding program, even between two non-Deklo Queens, who were the only type that ever challenged before attacking.

The Deklo's ability to haul the same loads even with their smaller size was seen as a plus since it negated the need to breed size back into the population, and their willingness to tolerate light as long as it was diffused and dim, made transporting the still large beasts easier to accomplish.

It wasn't long before word spread and Deklos came in demand. The now elderly Llectic made a flat decree, backed by the Hall, that no Deklos were to be sold and that the breeding of these animals was to remain within the BeastCraft Hall. It was worried that now that Holders could see what could be accomplished with a persistent breeding program, there would be problems. Very strict rules were set in place concerning the breeding of all Whers, Deklos in particular. Even after his death Llectic's help in conserving and protecting the new breed has helped to keep Deklo Whers genetically sound and viable. Anyone wishing the use of a Deklo Wher not only pays for the animal's time, but also the Trainer to go with it; no one not BeastCraft Hold trained is allowed to care for or be responsible for Deklos.

## *Deklo Whers of Southern BeastCraft Hall*

When Southern was opened for colonization by a limited number of Holders and for exploitation and exploration by the Halls, small breeding populations of all the main BeastCraft Hall's hot weather tolerant stocks were sent to Southern to establish a Hall to help support the Southern herding interests and to explore the established native animal life. Deklo Whers were a natural selection to send. Not only were they a now well established breed, they were tolerant of nearly all climates, and could be extremely useful to the new settlers as they built and maintained their holdings. Since even Deklos showed distinct preferences for who they would and wouldn't tolerate and the individuals usually most easily tolerated were within a familial group, two such groups – a total of 30 Whers – were sent to Glasena Hold, the first Hold to be completed. Along with the new Southern HealerHall, the Southern HarperHall and the Southern BeastCraft Hall are the oldest Halls on Southern.

The Deklos of Southern BeastCraft Hall are all as fiercely protected by their Southern Trainers as those in Keroon's BeastCraft Hall, and none of them are allowed outside the Hall's care, though some that have been trained as WatchWhers

are housed at Glasena Hold where their Trainers keep strict care of them. Anyone wishing the use of one or more of the Whers must petition the resident Hall Master, and if he feels they have good reason for the request, he will then send Trainers and Whers. The responsibility for their upkeep has fallen to Master Wher Trainer Toen and MasterBreeder Nirtin, who oversees their training and breeding respectively, and their ultimate well being and disposition, is the responsibility of MasterHerder/Hall Master Rember. The Deklos seem to thrive in the Southern environment, and maintaining the two social groups over the last 14 years they have been present at the new Hall has been relatively easy. With the attentions of the Southern BeastCraft Hall the two original social groups (one numbering 19, the other numbering 11) have now grown from the original 30 animals to 44 (23 in one, 16 in the other, and the 5 housed at Glasena Hold as WatchWhers).

## *Summary*

The 'Social Wher' experiment started so long ago by Journeyman Deklo has to be considered a success story. Though some of the breed's improvements can possibly be attributed to better care and feeding, the experimentation of several generations of BeastCraftsmen have turned a very dangerous and often unpredictable animal into one that can be considered a partner in whatever endeavor the Wher Trainer takes on, as well as creating Whers that live in collective groups and take less space to house. Though these animals can still be treacherous, especially when they are suddenly confronted with something or someone previously unknown to them, with careful training they can be taught to accept a lot of situations previously not even considered possible. Though few even in the BeastCraft Halls consider these remarkable animals as 'friends,' they are amazing tools that with proper care and attention can be as useful as any animal now in use on Pern.

## *Quick Wher Facts*

### **Common Wher**

- \*From 14 to 18 *hands*, or 4ft 8in to 6 ft at the *withers*.
- \*From 143 to 215 *stone*, or 2,002 to 3,010 lbs.
- \*Wings are stunted and stumpy
- \*Strictly nocturnal
- \*Solitary
- \*Estimated to be born Impressible 10 out of every 100 births.
- \*Can pull up to twice its weight or 286 to 430 *stone* (4,004 to 6,020 lbs).
- \*Can carry up to half its weight or approximately 71 to 107 *stone* (994 to 1,498 lbs).
- \*Lives up to 80 Turns
- \*Trainable for simple tasks
- \*Tend to attack without warning
- \*Require individual pens and usually require chains

## Deklo Wher

- \*From 10 to 14 *hands*, or 3 ft 4 in to 4 ft 4 in at the *withers*.
- \*From 108 to 179 *stone*, or 1,512 to 2,506 lbs.
- \*Wings are small but defined and agile.
- \*Accepts some low level light.
- \*Stratified social groups.
- \*Estimated to be born Impressive 25 out of every 100 births.
- \*Can pull up to two and a half times its weight or approximately 270 to 447 *stone* (3,780 to 6,258 lbs).
- \*Can carry up to half its weight or approximately 54 to 89 *stone* (756 to 1,246 lbs).
- \*Lives up to 100 Turns .
- \*Trainable for more complex tasks.
- \*Tend to challenge and *display* before attacking.
- \*Require less room to house and can be penned in social groups without restraints.

[[NOTE]] *Robin is math retarded and rather than deal with decimals, I rounded some of the weight figures down to the nearest whole number and noted these figures were an approximation. If you want more specific numbers, you can do the math.*

## *Glossary of Terms*

One Hand = 4 Inches

1 Stone = 14 lbs

Withers - The ridge between the shoulder bones of a Runnerbeast or a part corresponding to the withers in other quadrupeds.

Display – A pattern of behavior exhibited involving ostentatious shows to impress females or intimidate rivals. In the case of Dragons, Firelizards, and Whers, it involves holding the wings out to make themselves appear bigger and more threatening.