
What are Green Mating Flights Like?

by Lynne Brigant; November 2002 update

There are almost twice as many green dragons in the Weyr as all the other colors combined, that is, probably at least 300 adult greens, and green dragons are very amorous. They rise to mate approximately four times a Turn, so as you can imagine, green mating flights are very common, happening virtually every day, and almost always several times a day. However, a green dragon will not feel the inclination to rise to mate when she is due to fly Thread as that instinct overrides the mating heat. Greens are not nearly as possessive as golds, and if two greens rise at the same time, it is not likely to be a problem. The rider can usually dissuade her dragon from any feelings of antagonism towards the other green, instead persuading her to concentrate on her own suitors.

Since green flights are so common, if your dragon is not a participant, the flight is no big deal, and your character will completely ignore it and continue with whatever she or he is doing. This goes especially for weyrlings who will not be permitted by the Weyrlingmaster to gawk at overhead mating flights when they are supposed to be attending to their lessons.

Male dragons generally know several hours or even a day or two in advance when a green is going to come into heat - often before the green or her rider are aware of it themselves. The green's rider may or may not experience symptoms of the imminent mating, including irritability, inability to concentrate, excessive feelings of hunger, thirst or lust (this is true of golds and their riders as well). The green's color will noticeably change shortly before she flies as well, although this may occur as much as a day in advance, or only an hour or so before she flies.

When the rider becomes aware that her beast is about to fly, she tries to make the dragon blood her kills only, but this is not as vitally important as is the case with a gold dragon. For golds, the longer the mating process lasts, the better and bigger the clutch; obviously that is not an issue for a sterile green. However, dragons mate on the wing, and they are essentially falling while they do it, so clearly it is imperative that enough height be gained in the first place so that they can be finished before they would hit the ground. A green will only blood one animal, and the carcass will be retrieved by the herder staff once the green and her suitors leave the ground, to be fed to dragonets who are not yet capable of hunting their own food.

A very key difference between green mating flights and gold is that while greens are extremely agile and fast, they have by far the least stamina of any other color of dragon. They are completely incapable of outflying their suitors, and

are not going to be taunting them with challenges of unworthiness as a queen does. Greens enjoy flirting and will drag out the flight to a certain extent, but they very much enjoy the mating game, and are not at all averse to being caught. Some writers have written their green as desperately straining to get away from their pursuers: this is not accurate at all. Green dragons neither want to get away, nor have the ability to do so. A green mating flight would likely not last much longer than half an hour or so, although the riders may very likely be involved for substantially longer than that.

Mating dragons broadcast their emotions on a very wide band, and unless one is accustomed to mating flights, one is inevitably affected by the emotions generated (whether male or female). It is for this reason that one of the strictest rules in the Weyr is that a green who is near rising is not to be taken outside the Weyr. The political repercussions should a mating flight affect non-Weyrfolk would be disastrous for the Weyr in light of the fact that it is already not too popular in some quarters. Experienced greenriders have no excuse for failing to recognize the signs, and are expected to manage their dragons accordingly. (If, for example, a green were to go into heat during a Hatching while there are numerous holders and crafters present, her rider should immediately take her to another Weyr for the flight.) However, it should be stressed that the effects of a green flight on unsuspecting and unprepared people only go so far. An ordinary man will not turn into a rapist under the influence of a mating flight, though he will likely lose most of his inhibitions if there happens to be a more-or-less available woman around, especially if she is not resisting the effects of the flight. People of strong will and/or morals will not be coerced into behavior they think is wrong, though they will certainly feel the temptation.

The riders actually involved in the flight, on the other hand, are totally absorbed in the emotions of their dragons, and the rider of the winning male will have sex with the rider of the green no matter who it is, even if they hate each other in normal life. Any consideration of sexual orientation is completely irrelevant. A rider who cannot stand the thought of making love to another man needs to keep his dragon out of a flight if the green's rider is male. It is usually not too difficult to persuade a male dragon to pass up a green flight, since there is always going to be another one soon; particularly, riders in the midst of drills or riding sweep are expected to control their dragons so as not to have to cut their duties short. A rider who wishes to fly a specific green must trade favor points with his wingmates to get out of as much duty as he can when that green is due to rise. Conversely, though, no rider is expected to restrain his dragon's urges for too many flights in a row once the dragon starts feeling the urge.

Riders who lose a flight will obviously have some sexual tension to release, though not nearly as much as in the case of a gold flight where the tension has much longer to build up. Most unsuccessful riders will feel a bit dazed and frustrated, but are expected to put off doing anything about it if they have other duties to attend to. It is even

easier for the dragons; they live very much for the now and the disappointed male suitors do not have a very difficult time getting over their disappointment. A green mating flight is not too exhausting for the unsuccessful suitors, particularly browns and bronzes, and it is entirely possible he would be able to chase another green later the same day if he was so inclined, although his chances of success might be impaired. A male dragon would be unlikely to be able to chase a green immediately after drills, which are intensive and exhausting, and it would be absolutely impossible after fighting Thread. They would not even feel inclined to try.

A bronze dragon would know in advance if a gold were about to go into heat, and he would not chase a green if a gold flight was imminent. Bronze dragons NEVER sit out a gold mating flight by choice; if their rider does not want them to participate, he would have to take his dragon out of the Weyr when he became aware that the queen was about to rise, and even then he might have a bit of a struggle on his hands.

A green dragon rises to mate for her virgin flight at the age of approximately 18 months, or shortly before the end of weyrling training. The greenriders will have had a special lecture by an older greenrider on what they should and should not do and what to expect. Weyrlings are encouraged NOT to be virgins for their first mating flight as the experience could be very painful for the inexperienced female rider. Weyrlings are permitted sexual activity as soon as their dragons are old enough not to be disturbed by the emotions generated, which is approximately six months of age, although the rule is that they are to experiment only with their classmates and not become involved with senior riders until after graduation. It is at this point that weyrlings are assigned private weyrs.