Rare Budgerigar Varieties, The Clearbody

by Ghalib Al-Nasser

(Photo. left Texas Clearbody Grey Green, right Easley Clearbody Grey.)

Since my early days in the Budgerigar fancy (early seventies), I had heard of the American mutation, the Clearbody. The late Cein Roberts of Lancing, Sussex had seen the variety and was in the process of importing some to the U.K. but that process never materialised. His nearest description to the variety was a futuristic artist's impression by R A Vowles, which appeared in Dr M D S. Armour's book Exhibition Budgerigars. Dr Armour predicted the appearance of a variety with a clear body, normal wing markings and black tail and referred to it as a Laced Yellow.

The Clearbody originated in America in the early 1950's. Initially there were three separate types of Clearbodies but one (Terraneo Clearbody) seems to have disappeared. The other two are the Texas Clearbody, because it originated in the State of Texas, and the Easley Clearbody, named after C F Easley from the State of California who established the variety. The two varieties differ in both appearance and breeding pattern.

While I was in Australia in 1994, on my lecturing and judging tour with the late Mick Wheeler, I came across the Australian version of the Clearbody in Sydney, which they say has been in existence since the early fifties. Here is an example of how a mutation has the ability to appear in different parts of the World at about the same time. The Australian version was referred to as a Greywing Dilute. I found this definition difficult to accept as the Greywing variety is dominant to the Dilute (Yellows and Whites) even though both varieties are recessive and therefore a Greywing can not be masking a Dilute but can be split for it.

The Texas Clearbody is more common and was first imported to the UK in 1989 by Jeff Attwood and then to Europe. The Budgerigar Society provided a provisional colour standard for this variety in 1997. The general appearance of this variety in green and blue is similar to normal and but with the following differences. The flight feathers are pale grey instead of black, the body colour is suffused and may vary in intensity from

minimum through to almost 50% of normal body colour depth and increase in intensity downwards and towards the rump area.

The Texas Clearbody is sex-linked recessive in its breeding inheritance but has an unusual relationship when paired to Ino (Lutino and Albino) as it was found to act as dominant. Because of this relationship an Ino cannot be masking a Clearbody as it can with other varieties and a normal cannot be split for both Clearbody and Ino, yet a Clearbody can be split for Ino.

Because of this relationship there are a number of matings that can produce a Clearbody depending on the partner used. The table below outlines this permutation. The term "Clearbody" used in this table refers to the Texas sex-linked variety for simplicity:

No.	Pairing	Expectation
1	Ino cock × Clearbody hen	50% Clearbody/Ino cocks 50% Ino hens
2	Clearbody cock × Ino hen	50% Clearbody/Ino cocks 50% Clearbody hens
3	Clearbody/Ino cock × Ino hen	25% Clearbody/Ino cocks 25% Ino cocks 25% Clearbody hens 25% Ino hens
4	Clearbody/Ino cock × Clearbody hen	25% Clearbody cocks 25% Clearbody/Ino cocks 25% Clearbody hens 25% Ino hens
5	Normal/Clearbody cock × Ino hen	25% Normal/Clearbody cocks 25% Normal/Ino cocks 25% Clearbody hens 25% Normal hens
6	Clearbody cock × Normal hen	50% Normal/Clearbody cocks 50% Clearbody hens
7	Clearbody/Ino cock × Normal hen	25% Normal/Clearbody cocks 25% Normal/Ino cocks 25% Clearbody hens 25% Ino hens
8	Normal/Clearbody cock × Clearbody hen	25% Normal/Clearbody cocks 25% Clearbody cocks 25% Clearbody hens

		25% Normal hens
9	Normal/Clearbody cock × Normal hen	25% Normal/Clearbody cocks 25% Normal cocks 25% Clearbody hens 25% Normal hens
10	Normal cock × Clearbody hen	50% Normal/Clearbody cocks 50% Normal hens
11	Clearbody cock × Clearbody hen	50% Clearbody cocks 50% Clearbody hens

It is worth knowing that all the Normals and split cocks for either Clearbody or Ino are indistinguishable and only by test mating can their identity be revealed. The use of the Ino in the above matings lightens the body colour, while the Normals add extra size and head features desirable for a show specimen.

I was delighted to have met with Tom Easley at the 1998 All American Show in San Diego and had quite a long chat with him about the variety, which was established by his father over forty years ago. Mr Easley did inform me that the present Easley Clearbody did not resemble the mutation his father established. The present Easley Clearbody (referred to sometimes as Laced Clearbody) generally has jet black wing markings, flight feathers, tail feathers and mask spots because of the excess black melanin. Their cheek patches are a shade of grey/silver regardless of their body colour. The body colour also tends to have less suffusion as found with the Texas mutation. However, Tom Easley did say that the cheek patches of the original stock were pale violet.

Ken Gray published an article about the Easley Clearbody in a recent publication of the Rare Variety & Colour BS magazine. The article being based on a letter sent by the late C F Easley to the late Cyril Rogers, which gave full details of this variety. Mr Easley described the first so-called Easley Clearbody, which appeared in his aviary in January 1954 as an Opaline Greywing Dark Green hen with a yellow body colour. The parents of that bird were an Opaline Dark Green cock and a Cobalt hen. When this hen was paired the following year to a normal Dark Green cock two more of this new mutation appeared, both cocks, a normal and an opaline. Both fitted the above description of the Easley Clearbody but with pale violet cheek patches.

Mr Easley also established that the variety is dominant in its breeding pattern and can be produced in both sexes from any mating of which one partner must be visual. Because of the dominant gene, the variety can be established in both a single and double factor. The double factor version tends to have a much diluted body colour. Although I have seen examples of this variety in both America and Europe, to date the variety has not been imported to the UK.