

Dark-eyed Clears - An Old Variety Revived

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(Photo - Dark Eyed Clear Yellow cock bred by Ghalib Al-Nasser 1989)

When examining the varieties covered by the Budgerigar Society's colour standards, one wonders why certain varieties are popular while others are not. In fact some are almost extinct. There are a number of reasons for this: the arrival of a new mutation; lack of interest; not making headway; insufficient stock available and most of all lack of encouragement from various official bodies. All these assist in the decline in popularity of certain varieties.

Two such varieties that enjoyed brief acknowledgement and success in the fifties and sixties and then returned to oblivion are the "Dark-Eyed Clears" and the "Continental Clearflights". Other varieties that hit rock bottom are the Violets, Mauves and their counterparts, the Olive, Fallows, Dutch Pied and the Brownwings, just to name a few. The Rare Variety and Colour Budgerigar Society must take full credit for reviving the interest in these varieties and of course, the Specialist and Rare Variety Open Show catering exclusively for such specialist colours and varieties will further assist their revival.

I became interested in the Dark-Eyed Clears (*DEC*) in 1988. The ones I had seen previously were of such poor quality that, like others, I criticised the variety and their owners, even though I am known for my appreciation of, and interest in the "lesser varieties". I acquired two white DEC cocks from my friends Geoff and Cherril Bunker who were at that time in the process of moving house to the West Country. The two cocks were brothers and of reasonable quality. One of those cocks when exhibited in the Recessive Pied class on two occasions was wrong-classed even though it was entered in the correct class. I took them on for two reasons; I needed a new challenge and perhaps wanted to do my bit in promoting a variety.

What are They?

Dark-Eyed Clears, from their name, are budgerigars of clear yellow or white, free from any markings and colour pigmentation. This purity of colour covers the entire body and wings. They resemble the Lutinos and Albinos except in the eye. They share a common ground with Recessive Pieds, insofar as they have the solid black eye without the white iris ring; hence at times they are referred to as a "Black-Eyed Clears". Like the Lutino and Albino the DEC can mask any colour. For instance, a Yellow DEC could be in fact, an Olive Green DEC or a Light Green DEC. The shade of yellow in this case will be deeper and richer in the Olive than in that of the Light Green.

The *Budgerigar Society 1994 Colour Standards* (for the Yellow variety) defines them as follows:

Mask, frontal, crown and general body colour	Pure buttercup yellow throughout and free from any odd green feathers or green suffusion. Note: The intensity of body colour varies in depth according to the number of dark factors in the make-up of each bird.
Wings	Pure buttercup yellow throughout, free from black or grizzled tickings or green suffusion.
Cheek Patches	Silvery white.
Primary wing flights	Paler yellow than rump colour.
Primary tail flights	Paler yellow than rump colour
Cere	Fleshy-pink in cocks, brown in hens.
Beak	Orange coloured
Feet and Legs	Fleshy-pink
Eyes	Dark and solid in colour without a light iris ring.

Scale of Points for Dark-Eyed Clears

Size, shape, balance and deportment	Size and shape of head, including mask and spots	Colour	Variety markings
35	25	40 N.B. Points for depth and clarity of colour.	--

Records of their origin are rather scarce. They seem to have originated in Belgium about 1948, and a couple of years later in Denmark too. A breeder found these colours appearing in his aviary. He had at the time, the dominant Continental Clearflights and Danish Recessive Pieds breeding on the colony system.

The appearance of those DEC's caused some confusion, in the genetical sense, as to why two different type of pideds, one dominant and one recessive, should produce a bird free from any colour pigmentation as are the Redeyes, Lutinos and Albinos.

Therefore, it is in order to describe them as a synthetic colour or man-made colour resulting from the mixing of two different forms of Pies.

Genetics

It took a while to understand the gene that controlled their production and by the fifties they were popular, as were the Continental Clearflights. It was found that when pairing a Clearflight with a Recessive Pied, half of the young would be Clearflights and the other half Normals, with all the young split for Recessive Pied. It was also found that by mating a Clearflight split for Recessive Pied back to a Recessive Pied, a certain percentage of the young will be DEC. These Clears are not really Pies in appearance but are the Recessive Pied form of the Continental Clearflight, or more concisely "Clearflighted Recessive Pied".

It took me a while to understand their genetical breeding behaviour as written material on them was rather scarce. Those DEC's are in fact, birds that carry in their genetical make-up, one dominant gene (gene for Clearflight) and two recessive genes (genes for the Recessive Pied). Depending on which partner they are paired with, one type of gene will predominate and various varieties will be produced.

For example, if a DEC is paired to a Recessive Pied, then the recessive genes will act and the pairing will be as pairing two birds of recessive genes or two Recessive Pies together. This type of pairing will produce DEC's and Recessive Pies of equal numbers, theoretically.

The confusion arises when pairing a DEC with a normal (non-pied or split for Recessive Pied); we then produce the Clearflights. In this pairing we will not produce DEC's even though we started with one. In fact, the pairing will produce Clearflights and normals all split for Recessive Pied. What happens in this type of pairing is that the dominant Clearflight gene will act and the pairing is just like a Dominant Pied to a normal. Because the DEC had two recessive genes in hidden form, then these genes will continue to be present in the progeny in a hidden form as well, hence all the progeny will be split for Recessive Pied.

Yet, when pairing a DEC with a Clearflight split Recessive Pied, the dominant gene on both sides will act and the pairing is similar to Dominant Pied x Dominant Pied. This pairing will produce DEC, Clearflight and normal; both of the latter being split for Recessive Pied because of the recessive genes of the DEC, and because of the presence of the recessive gene on both sides, Recessive Pies will appear as well.

It is interesting to see how the dominant and recessive genes of the DEC act depending on the partner. Because of the presence of a dominant gene in the DEC make-up, this gene can be present in a single or double dosage, visually both alike. The Pied genes act by eliminating the pigment melanin from the Pied patches. It seems that neither the recessive nor the dominant Pied genes can on their own, eliminate all the pigment, but two recessive and one dominant are sufficient to give complete elimination.

If you are not already confused with the genetics then perhaps the table of expectations below will assist in understanding the intermingling of the three varieties with each other.

The table below shows the various types of pairings that can be used to produce the DEC.

Expectation Table

Pairing	Expectation
Clearflighted (sf) x Recessive Pied	50% Clearflighted/Recessive Pied 50% Normal/Recessive Pied
Clearflighted (sf)/Recessive Pied x Recessive Pied	25% Recessive Pied 25% Normal/Recessive Pied 25% Clearflighted (sf)/Recessive Pied 25% Dark-eyed Clears
Clearflighted(df) x Recessive pied	100% Clearflighted (sf)/Recessive Pied
Dark-eyed Clear x Recessive Pied	50% Dark-eyed Clear 50% Recessive Pied
Dark-eyed Clear (sf) x Dark-eyed Clear (sf)	50% Dark-eyed Clear (sf) 25% Recessive Pied 25% Dark-eyed Clear (df)
Dark-eyed Clear (sf) x Clearflighted (df)	50% Dark-eyed Clear (sf) 50% Dark-eyed Clear (df)
Dark-eyed Clear (sf) x dec (df) /Recessive Pied	25% Dark-eyed Clear (sf) 25% Dark-eyed Clear (df) 25% Clearflighted (sf)/Recessive Pied 25% Clearflighted (df)/Recessive Pied
Dark-eyed Clear (sf) x Clearflighted (df)/Recessive Pied	12.5% Dark-eyed Clear (df) 25% Dark-eyed Clear (sf) 12.5% Recessive Pied 12.5% Clearflighted (df)/Recessive Pied 25% Clearflighted (sf)/Recessive Pied 12.5% Normal/Recessive Pied

The single and double factor Clears from the above matings are indistinguishable from each other.

Second Revival

Will the Dark-Eyed Clears progress in their second revival? That will remain to be seen and be dependent on the level of interest shown in this variety by other fanciers. I know that I am very interested in them. To me they are a new challenge and the progress that I made in three breeding seasons was quite noticeable.

The Specialist and Rare Variety Open Show, of which I am the show organizer, provides separate classes for them rather than combining them with the Recessive Pies as in all other shows. At the 1989 show a young Yellow DEC cock of mine came third in the Recessive Pied breeder CC line-up. He won best DEC in show and repeated his success as an adult the following year. The same bird was second in the breeder CC line-up at another area championship show. This was a pleasant success for me indeed.

In 1988 I paired the best of the two DEC cocks that I had acquired, with one of my best Recessive Pied hens. That pair produced three White DEC hens and some Recessive Pies. Again, using the best of those hens back to one of my best Recessive Pied cocks the following year, produced three Yellow DEC cocks, one of which I mentioned above. Now the quality of those DEC's are such that I use them with Recessive Pies instead of splits as partners. In this way there is no production of inferior quality splits and therefore, no wastage.

There is great scope for the Recessive Pied breeder in taking up breeding DEC's, as there is no wastage with them. They are exhibited in the same class as the Recessive. Pied. With understanding and appreciation by the judges, they did win CC's allocated to them in conjunction with the Recessive Pied, in the early- and mid-90s.