

Rare Budgerigar Varieties Pieds

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(Photo. Continental Clearflight Grey cock.)

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 "Continental Clearflights" and the "Dark-Eyed Clears". Other varieties that hit rock bottom are the Fallows, Dutch Pieds, Slates and the now extinct Brownwings, just to name a few.

The Rare Variety & Colour BS must take full credit for reviving the interest in some of the rarer varieties and of course the Specialist and Rare Variety Open Show catering

exclusively for such specialist colours and varieties, has further assisted in their revival.

The two varieties that I mentioned earlier have a common factor connecting them. Even though in appearance they do not resemble each other, one was responsible in producing the other and their fate seems to have run parallel paths.

For many years there have been birds bred on the Continent with varying amounts of clear areas on their plumage. To mention one mutation was the Danish Recessive Pied which appeared in 1932. But it was not until 1940 that a strain of these Clearflighted birds was established in the aviaries of Mon. M R Raemaker of Belgium. Initially these birds only had a few patches of clear areas but with selective breeding Mon. Raemaker was able to establish the Clearflights as we know them today.

Soon after the war examples of this variety found their way to the United Kingdom and breeders established that the variety is dominant in its breeding mode of inheritance. The variety when bred to the correct marking is very beautiful to look at but the arrival of the Australian Dominant Pied variety in the United Kingdom in 1958 and the beauty of the initial Australian Pieds with the band across the chest pushed the Continental Clearflight into the background.

The Clearflighted Pied characteristic is that the flights and tail should be clear and the bird should have a clear head patch, which varies in size. All other markings, such as spots, cheek patches, beak, feet and body marking and colour is as per the normal variety.

The factor that controls the production of the Clearflight is variable in its expression; hence many birds that are produced today differ from the ideal described by the Budgerigar Society Colour Standards produced in 1994. The ideal depicted by the Budgerigar Society requires seven visible clear flights and clear tail with no spillage of the mask into the body colour but exhibits produced today seldom show the correct marking.

Most, if not all, of the Clearflights show the breaking of the colour mask into the chest, which at one time was written into the previous BS Colour Standards. How this spillage from the mask into the body occurred can be debated by those who were around the period of the Second World War. Others, like myself, will have to depend on what we read in history books.

It was apparent that during that period there was another Pied variety established in Holland in the early fifties called the Dutch Pied. This was a separate mutation, dominant in its breeding pattern, and its coloration was 50% dark and 50% clear. In appearance they resembled the Danish Recessive Pied from the body colour pattern but had the white iris ring around the eye. Their cere, beak and feet were the same as other varieties while the Recessive Pied has the fleshy pink colour cere, orange coloured beak and fleshy pink colour feet and legs.

The Clearflights were crossed with Dutch Pieds as well as with the Recessive Pieds, which eventually resulted in this colour spillage into the chest.

As far as I know there are no Dutch Pies in this country and very few examples on the Continent but I saw many examples when I visited Australia in 1994.

The Clearflight gene, like the Dominant and Dutch Pies, is dominant to Normal hence the gene can be expressed in single and double factor in both sexes. The rules that govern the production of this variety can be expressed as follows:

1	Clearflighted Pied (s.f.) x Normal	50% Clearflighted Pied s.f. 50% Normal
2	Clearflighted Pied (d.f.) x Normal	100% Clearflighted Pied (s.f.)
3	Clearflighted Pied (s.f.) x Clearflighted Pied (s.f.)	25% Clearflighted Pied (d.f.) 50% Clearflighted Pied (s.f.) 25% Normal
4	Clearflighted Pied (s.f.) x Clearflighted Pied (d.f.)	50% Clearflighted Pied (s.f.) 50% Clearflighted Pied (d.f.)
5	Clearflighted Pied (d.f.) x Clearflighted Pied (d.f.)	100% Clearflighted Pied (d.f.)

It is important to realise that since the number of Pies produced per nest will differ from one pairing to another, the actual percentages may differ from theoretical expectations. Also the Clearflighted Pied can be produced in all combinations and colours.

While the Danish, Clearflight and Dutch Pies were flourishing in the period up to the late 1940's, a new variety of Budgerigar resembling in appearance the Lutino and Albino but with a black eye and no iris ring was appearing. They seem to have originated in Belgium in about 1948, and a couple of years later in Denmark too. A breeder found these black eyed Yellows and Whites appearing in his aviary. He had, at the time, the dominant Continental Clearflights and Danish Recessive Pies breeding on the colony system. This new variety was given the name of Dark-Eyed Clears (DEC) from the colour description mentioned above.

The appearance of those DEC's caused some confusion, in the genetical sense, as to why two different types of Pies, one dominant and one recessive, produced a bird free from any colour pigmentation as in the Red-eye's 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.

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 Pies in so far as they have the solid black eye without the white iris ring; hence at times they are referred to as "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 the yellow in this case will be deeper and richer in the Olive than in that of the Light Green.

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 Rec. Pied, half of the young would be Clearflights and the other half normals, with all the young split for Rec. Pied. It was also found that by mating one of those Clearflights that are split for Rec. Pied back to a Rec. Pied, a certain percentage of the young will be DEC. These Clears are not really Pieds in appearance but are the Recessive Pied form of the Continental Clearflight, or more precisely "Clearflighted Recessive Pied".

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 & 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 at that time and perhaps wanted to do my bit in promoting a variety.

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

For example, if a DEC is paired with a Rec. Pied, then the recessive genes will act and the pairing will be as pairing two birds of recessive genes or two Rec. Pieds together. This type of pairing will produce DEC's and Rec. Pieds of equal numbers, theoretically. The confusion arises when pairing a DEC with a normal 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 Rec. Pied.

What happens in this type of pairing is that the dominant Clearflight gene will act and the pairing is just like a Clearflight Pied to a normal. And because the DEC has 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 Rec. Pied. Yet, when pairing a DEC with a Clearflight split Rec. Pied, the dominant gene on both sides will act and the pairing is similar to Clearflight Pied x Clearflight Pied. This pairing will produce DEC, Clearflight and normal; both of the latter being split for Rec. Pied because of the recessive genes of the DEC. And because of the presence of the recessive gene on both sides, Rec. Pieds 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 breeding 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.

1	Clearflighted (s.f.) x Recessive Pied	50% Clearflighted/Rec. Pied 50% Normal/Rec. Pied
2	Clearflighted (s.f.)/Recessive Pied x Recessive Pied	25% Recessive Pied 25% Normal/Rec. Pied 25% Clearflighted (s.f.)/Rec. Pied 25% Dark-Eyed Clears
3	Clearflighted (d.f.) x Recessive Pied	100% Clearflighted (s.f.)/Rec. Pied
4	Dark-Eyed Clear x Recessive Pied	50% Dark-Eyed Clear 50% Recessive Pied
5	Dark-Eyed Clear (s.f.) x Dark-Eyed Clear (s.f.)	50% Dark-Eyed Clear (s.f.) 25% Recessive Pied 25% Dark-Eyed Clear (d.f.)
6	Dark-Eyed Clear (s.f.) x Dark-Eyed Clear (d.f.)	50% Dark-Eyed Clear (s.f.) 50% Dark-Eyed Clear (d.f.)
7	Dark-Eyed Clear (s.f.) x Clearflighted (d.f.)/Recessive Pied	25% Dark-Eyed Clear (s.f.) 25% Dark-Eyed Clear (d.f.) 25% Clearflight (s.f.)/Rec. Pied 25% Clearflight (d.f.)/Rec. Pied
8	Dark-Eyed Clear (s.f.) x Clearflight (s.f.)/Recessive Pied	12 1/2% Dark-Eyed Clear (d.f.) 25% Dark-Eyed Clear (s.f.) 12 1/2% Recessive Pied 12 1/2% Clearflight(df)/Rec Pied 25% Clearflight (s.f.)/Rec Pied 12 1/2% Normal/Rec. Pied

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

Here you can see the close relationship between these two varieties; the Clearflighted Pied and the Dark-Eyed Clear. Although I bred both varieties in the late eighties and early nineties I did find them difficult to breed to perfection. As I said earlier most of the Clearflights have that clear spillage into the chest which is now not desirable in the BS Colour Standards. This spillage came from the usage of both the Dutch and Recessive Pies. One way to eliminate this spillage is by selective breeding and a lot of patience. Most Clearflights of today are bred from the Dark-Eyed Clears and hence carrying the Recessive Pied gene. I think that we need to eliminate this Recessive Pied gene from the Clearflights by constantly pairing the Clearflights to pure Normals. Eventually we can produce Clearflights that are pure and not split for Recessive Pies. It is possible that we can then produce Clearflights without the spillage of colour into the chest. I, for one, will be very much interested to hear from breeders who have or who are attempting to carry out this type of pairing.

The confusion arises at times when fanciers put certain exhibits on the show bench in specialist shows where separate classes for Clearflights are provided. These exhibits will most probably fit the exact description of the Clearflights (seven clear flights, clear tail, head patch and most of all no colour spillage) but in fact when quizzed they will confess that the bird came from a Dominant Pied pairing. There is no relationship between these two Pied varieties except that they are both dominant in their genetical breeding behaviour, but those exhibits to my mind are badly marked Dominant Pies with no body variegation. The poor judge has no way of penalising them or wrong classing them as they fit the description of the Clearflight.