

The Budgerigar Society Annual Judges' Meeting 2011

Reported by Janice Al-Nasser, Publicity Officer

The Budgerigar Society held their Annual Judges Meeting at their premises in Northampton on 17th April attended by 50 judges from all the 10 area societies and included new judges who have joined the Judges Training Scheme this year.

Ghalib Al-Nasser, the Society's Judges Panel Officer & Training Scheme Co-ordinator, in welcoming the judges to the meeting read out a message from the Society's President, Dave Herring, giving his apologies for not attending and asking the judges to endorse the Society's new Guidelines for the betterment of the hobby.

The first speaker of the day was Ghalib Al-Nasser who outlined the history of the Judges Training Scheme and the assessment forms that both the judges and subsidiary judges receive prior to the assessment shows. He further outlined the procedure for awarding the challenge certificates and certificates of merit and clarified the classes in which varieties of yellowfaces and goldenfaces should be exhibited. He further explained what a judge can write on a cage label, and emphasised that, when wrong classing a bird, the judge should always write the reason for wrong classing that bird.

Janice Al-Nasser followed with a presentation on the Guidelines for Judges & Exhibitors relating to the Major Faults section only. Janice gave background history from when the newly elected General Council gave the task in May 2006 to the newly elected Judges Panel & Colour Standard committee to review the 1994 Colour Standards which is in 6 parts; the variety description, Standard of Perfection, Scale of Points, Main Features of a Budgerigar, Pictorial Ideal and the Guidelines for Judges & Exhibitors which included the new section "Major Faults". The completed work of the committee after 6 meetings during 2007 and 2008 was approved by the General Council at their meeting in November 2008 and the new Colour Standards booklet was issued to all members in January 2009. A few minor adjustments have been made since the issue date and again the newly elected General Council further endorsed the Major Faults section at their November 2010 meeting.

Janice explained why the Major Faults section was introduced in an attempt to eradicate the ongoing faults seen in winning exhibits and to educate & encourage exhibitors to keep birds with faults at home, thus causing less problems for judges. Janice highlighted the fact that we have a period of four years to educate the fancy as a whole on these Guidelines and to make them work for the long term benefit of the hobby.

Janice showed a number of photos relating to the various parts of the Major Faults section, comprising flecking, opalescence, spots, primary flights, tail feathers, and deformity. She explained to the judges that the photos are still a working document to fit within the Guidelines and encouraged them to send their feedback to The Budgerigar Society office for consideration by the General Council later in the year.

George Booth, the Society's Chairman, followed with his presentation on the Guidelines for Judges & Exhibitors confined to specific varieties. Again, with the aid of photos, George went step by step

explaining the faults that need to be severely penalised found with the Opalines, Cinnamons & Greywings, Opaline Cinnamons, Lutinios & Albinos, Clearwings, Crests, Spangles, All Pied varieties, Yellowface mutations, Lacewings, Fallows, Clearbodies and Halfsiders. This section proved to be very useful when comparing birds of certain varieties without faults against birds with faults of that variety.

Gren Norris, Past President of the Budgerigar Society, followed with his presentation on the new Anthracite variety, Easley Clearbody and other rare varieties. Gren informed members that the Anthracite variety was initially bred by Hans Jürgen Lenk of Germany in 1998. The Anthracite is dominant over the grey factor and independent of it giving a charcoal effect of colour over the body colour; the cheek patches are dark anthracite in colour. It is only recognised in the double factor form which is the visual Anthracite. Because the variety is not recognised by The Budgerigar Society yet the variety has to be exhibited in the Any Other Colour class. The WBO recognised the variety in the blue series last year and has written a colour standard for it. The Rare Variety & Colour BS has taken the variety under its wing and members are breeding and exhibiting the variety as much as they can.

Gren then went on to talk about the dominant Easley Clearbody which was first bred by C.F. Easley of California, USA in 1954. The distinguishable features of the variety is that the cheek patches are “smokey grey” in colour regardless of the body colour with the wing and tail jet black in colour.

Other varieties that Gren touched on that are exhibited in the “Rare Variety” classes were the Texas Clearbody, Fallow, Rainbow, Saddleback & Slate. Slides comparing the English from the German Fallow were shown also the differences between a Saddleback from a normal or an opaline, these proved to be very helpful to the judges.

After Gren’s presentation the judges were treated to an excellent buffet laid out by Dave Whittaker, the Society’s Secretary, which exceeded all expectations.

After lunch Maurice Roberts, Vice President of the Society, took to the floor to present his talk on identifying Clearwings, Greywings and Dilutes. Maurice informed the judges that all three varieties are of different allomorphs of the same gene with both the Greywing and Clearwing being dominant to the Dilute with the main differences in the body colour, wing marking and colour of cheek patches. Maurice informed the meeting that the colour standard description for the clearwing has changed six times since they were imported from Australia in the 1930s to suit the top breeders of the day and the current clearwing does not resemble the Australian clearwing with regard to the colour of the wing and tail.

The Dilutes (Yellows & Whites) are in fact the Light Yellow, Suffused Yellow and Grey Yellow depending on what colour they mask while the Whites are the Suffused White and Grey White and the colour standard for each was shown. The Light Yellow, the original mutation that appeared in 1872, was the first to mutate from the Light Green but it is believed that Yellows were seen in the wild bushes of Australia much earlier than that and now this variety can only be seen in Australia.

At the end of his presentation Maurice produced a slide showing the main differences between those three varieties with regard to body colour, cheek patches and tail colour which the judges present found to be very useful.

<u>Variety</u>	<u>Body Colour</u>	<u>Cheek patches</u>	<u>Tail</u>
Clearwing	90% depth	Violet / Grey	Blue / Grey
Greywing	50% depth	Light Violet/Light Grey	Grey/Blue tinge
Dilute	Up to 50% depth	Pale Blue/Violet/Grey	Yellowish White to pale grey

After the completion of the five power point presentations George Booth chaired the final session of Questions & Answers and invited the judges to give their views on any of the topics that were presented earlier and asked members to write to The Budgerigar Society office with regard to the Major Faults section and what photos to use with the Major Faults. A number of positive comments were made regarding the whole aspect of the day. Before the Chairman closed the meeting he posed a question to them that a member had written regarding Judges' Panel Condition A.5 and asked both the General Council to discuss it as well as the judges present at this meeting. The Condition relates to the fact that a judge must exhibit and bench a minimum of five birds at two championship shows each year to stay on the Main Panel of Judges. The member posed the question that when you have a judges partnership of two or more then each judge must satisfy Condition A.5 and not only the partnership. When put to the vote only one judge was in favour of the member's recommendation.

At the end of the day Mick Freakley said the day had been very good with superb power point presentations by all the speakers and meeting with good friends. He added that he was pleased about this as two years ago he was given a very difficult time during his presentation but he was pleased to see that this meeting was so much more positive. There is an element that always appears to be anti whatever The Budgerigar Society does but this had been a day when judges have seen what The Budgerigar Society is suggesting and have been asked to give them suggestions and comments to make the guidelines work. Mick concluded by saying that he felt sure with what we have heard today and with your help, we can make the Guidelines work for the benefit of everyone.