

THE STYLE OF BIRD WE SHOULD BE BREEDING

A lecture by Henry George at Pine Rivers in 2005

The standard of bird required to win the Nationals should be the same bird to win shows here. However one area of difference is flecking. Henry said himself and a few others mark flecking harder than interstate judges. Birds with longer and wider feathers are usually the ones with flecking. Everyone should have a copy of the Standard.

Head and neck area

Some people are still promoting the keyhole effect birds. These are the birds of yesteryear. Birds today have no neck.

Size

Size has increased in the latest Standard.

Components of size are:

- Width at shoulder
- Length of bird (total length from top of head to tip of tail)
- Length from perch upwards (proportions)

Birds with very long tails are out of proportion and are marked down accordingly.

Lots of birds around have head and shoulder but are short. Need short wide birds with shoulder and longer birds which are often narrower. Put these two different types of birds together to breed.

The length from the beak to the top of the head should equal the length from the beak to the bottom of the mask. The natural tendency is for the mask to creep up.

Breed off birds that have good masks even if they lack other features.

Look at the size of spot. When dressing birds, start taking spots out from the top. Leave the bigger spots at the top of the mask.

Need both depth and width of mask, directional feather, height and width of head.

Pairing up

Pairing is not all visual. Go first of all for related birds. Good matings are grandfather with granddaughter, uncle to niece, aunty to nephew and cousins. Choose a hen first. Look for 5 or 6 cock with a relationship and then choose one visually.

Don't pair two birds with the same fault.

Look at the wings on the back of the bird. They should form the shape of a shield. Mate birds without the shield to birds with the shield. Birds with buff feathers have no shield, more yellow feathered birds have the shield. Don't put 2 big buffy birds together – they often don't breed. If you do get progeny, they often have problems. Go for big buffy cocks with finer hens. Big buffy hens can be problems. Find a big buffy hen and buy her sisters.

Cinnamons

Some people don't put cinnamon to cinnamon. Henry pairs cinnamons together but doesn't use washed out cinnamons. If they have good markings and depth of colour, use them.

If you have a good cinnamon but it is washed out, put it to a normal or even a normal/cinnamon if it comes from a family of well marked cinnamons.

Clearwings

The hardest variety to breed is the clearwing. The bigger birds have wing markings. Henry had some success using dilutes. The downside is that they are all split dilute.

Q – What faults won't you use in the breeding room?

Not many. A lot of people throw out birds with big wings. Use them to increase the size of your birds.

When pairing up birds, stand back to look at them to get an overall impression.

Henry doesn't like to use narrow headed birds.

Hinged tail – will use if the rest of the bird is exceptional, but be careful to mate it with a bird that doesn't have that problem and has a good backline.

Q – What can you do about colour in the wings?

A lot of cobalt/mauve/violet are getting colour in the wings. Pair them with birds with pure black and white wings in any colour. Alternatively, use these birds to breed opalines because opalines have colour in the wings.