



# United Budgerigar Society Inc.

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The following article is based on and extracted from presentations that John Carter has made, on behalf of the Pied Budgerigar Society of Australasia (PBS), to Branches of the Budgerigar Society of New South Wales in 2011. John is a long-time supporter of the pied varieties in general. He is a member of both the BSNSW's St. George Branch, is the Secretary of the PBS and a BS NSW judge.



## Mainly Dark Eyed Clears but also Recessive Pied.

**Dark Eyed Clears (DECs) are on the comeback in Australia** - mainly due to the ANBC recognizing them in the Budgerigar Standard. This has meant that there is now a standard for these beautiful birds, and we are seeing many more on the bench. It is rewarding to note that the number of fanciers that are breeding these beautiful birds is growing.

They were placed on show at the 2016 Australian National Budgerigar Championships in Tasmania in their AOSV as an exhibition class.

Although on the comeback, it must be said that the DEC is still one of the rarer varieties. As we all know, the budgerigar fraternity in Australia is a fickle lot; it is often difficult to foresee what varieties will be successful, and what varieties will fade away into oblivion. For the DEC to be successful we need more people to breed and show the DEC.

## Breeding rarer varieties

It is often difficult to know what encourages breeders to breed a particular variety, and why, as so often happens, why certain varieties fall out of favour. Reasons for varieties not maintaining their popularity include, amongst others, such things as the emergence of new varieties, frustration because the quality of the variety does not improve at a rate which is satisfactory to the breeders, and that the initial breeding stock is hard to obtain and/or prohibitively expensive.

The DEC is often confused with the Inos and the Double Factor Spangles (DFS), as they do look similar.

The other two factors, as mentioned above, should not be restrictive to breeding the DEC, as good stock is readily available at very reasonable prices. They can be quickly improved by using quality Recessive Pied, amongst other mating's.

## What is a DEC?

I would encourage readers to look at DECs in the Standard. Available on our website at <https://unitedbudgies.org.au/beginner-information/about-showing/>

Basically, DECs are pure yellow or white birds, and this ground colour (that is the yellow or white) should be free from any markings. They resemble Inos and double factor spangles except for the eye – Inos have a red eye with a white iris; Double Factor Spangles have a black eye with a white iris, whilst DECs have a dark eye, but without an iris. In the adult DEC it is really a dark plum eye, similar to the eye of a Recessive Pied.

The DEC is a composite variety, as it is made up from two distinct types of piers. Contrast this to the Double Factor Spangle and the Inos. The former has two factors for Spangle, which eliminates virtually all of the markings through suppression of the melanin. The Inos, which can come in all varieties (including DEC), are the result of the suppression of virtually all markings through albinism.

## Breeding Dark Eyed Clears

The easiest way to breed Dark Eyed Clears is to start with a DEC and mate it to a Recessive Pied – theoretically you will get DECs and Recessive Piers in a 50/50 ratio.

However, the genetic background of the DEC is quite involved and indeed it was poorly understood for many years. It is therefore really worthwhile discussing the history and background of the DECs, going back to when they were first identified in Europe in the 1950s. In those days it was found that by breeding a Continental Clearflight with a Recessive Pied, the theoretical results were 50% Continental Clearflights/Recessive Pied and 50% Normals/Recessive Pied.

There is nothing particularly unusual about the above mating or the expectations. However, the early breeders found that when mating a Clearflight/Recessive Pied to a Recessive Pied, a certain percentage would be DEC. However, this is not a mating that we would generally use in Australia as theoretically only one in four of the progenies would be DECs.

Theoretical expectations for a Clearflight (single factor)/Recessive Pied x Recessive Pied mating is 25% Recessive Pied, 25% Normal/Recessive Pied, 25% Clearflighted(sf)/Recessive Pied and 25% Dark-eyed Clears.

The DECs are not Recessive Pied in appearance, but are considered to be the Recessive Pied expression of the Continental Clearflight.

The easiest ways to breed DEC. Firstly DEC x DEC - if they are single factor Dark Eyed Clears, then one out of four would theoretically be a Recessive Pied, and the other three out of four birds would be DEC. Secondly, Recessive Pied x DEC where you would obtain 50% DECs. Remember here that a DEC requires a dominant gene for Clearflight (or Dutch Dominant) and two recessive pied genes in order to express the Dark Eyed Clear variety.

## **Reverse engineering**

We are all familiar with this term – that is taking a finished article and breaking it up into its component parts to see how the article was actually made.

If we did this with the DEC then you would expect to be able to identify what went into the DEC to make it what it is, and, if the genetical make up is, as we have been told (and discussed above), then you would expect to be able to ‘reverse engineer’ a DEC, and isolate birds which are Continental Clearflights, by simply mating a DEC to a normal.

Although I have not done it often, on the few occasions that I have mated a DEC to a normal, I have never produced a Continental Clearflight. However, I have produced Dutch Dominant Pies and Normals (naturally all are split for Recessive Pied).

Does this mean that the gene for Dutch Dominant Pied and Dominant Clearflighted Pied are different genes, but are acting in the same manner when combined with some Recessive Pied genes to produce the DEC?

There are many breeders that are much more knowledgeable than me, as far as budgerigar genetics are concerned. They consider that the Dutch Dominant Pies and the Continental Clearflights are different expressions of the same genetical make-up – that is two different phenotypes but the same genotype – once described to me as the same gene but wearing two different overcoats!

As you would have gathered, I do not subscribe to this theory. I believe that while the genes are close, they are unique. Further, I have now reached the point that I do not believe that I have seen a genuine Continental Clearflight on the show bench in Australia – although I have seen many purporting to be such! Yet again this is a contentious issue!

Further, I subscribe to the theory that we have a Clearflight, which is different to the Continental clearflight, because it normally has a dark tail and not a tail with ground colour. (Note that the Standard calls for the Dominant Clearflight’s tail colour to be either yellow or white.) I recommend that birds exhibited in a Dominant Clearflight class that do not have at least one primary feather that is ground colour should be automatically ‘wrong classed’> However, if they are wrong classed, then where would they be shown?

## **An Australian Clearflight**

For the sake of another name, I will call this clearflight with a normal coloured tail, an Australian Clearflight.

This so called Australian Clearflight (if it really does exist) has all but been lost, mainly due to indiscriminate mating with the old Winged Pied and other birds that fall into the category of the ‘Variegated Pied.

## **Confusion could be eliminated**

Many exhibitors are confused with the overall lack of direction with respect to the pied varieties in general. However, I do consider that the ANBC Standard is clear, concise and correct in its representations of the Pied varieties.