The Clearbody in Australia

On a recent visit to and stay at Bruce and Marion Stafford's of Adelaide I spent a reasonable amount of time with Bruce and the birds, assessing, comparing, studying features and basically admiring a variety that I have not had a great deal to do with.

That variety is the Texas Clearbody.

There are two recognised forms of Clearbody– and possibly only the one form is in Australia as is the likely case in the United Kingdom from the research that I did – this may be challenged by others and I will accept their case assuming they confirm the Clearbody they have or refer to is Dominant as this is the case of the Easley Clearbody. The Texas Clearbody that Bruce has is sex-linked.

There is a difference with the Texas Clearbody (sex-linked) when paired to Ino – it becomes Dominant. Something that does require to be highlighted at this point is that it often said that Ino masks all other varieties – this is not the case with the Texas Clearbody. A Texas Clearbody cock can be split Ino, a normal cock produced from say a Texas Clearbody cock to a Normal hen can produce split Ino or split Texas Clearbody cocks (not both) and the 'split for' is not revealed until test mating occurs.

I questioned the name 'Clearbody' as not many were 'clear of colour' in the body area other than two Clearbody Cinnamonwing Grey hens that I sighted and an Opaline Grey Green hen – the Cinnamonwing form are not permissible on the show bench, only the 'Normal' and Opaline forms are. The questioning of the naming continued after seeking information on actual colourations around the world. I do not have an alternative nor should I endeavour to find one.

Opaline Grey Green

Cinnamonwing Grey

Cinnamonwing Grey

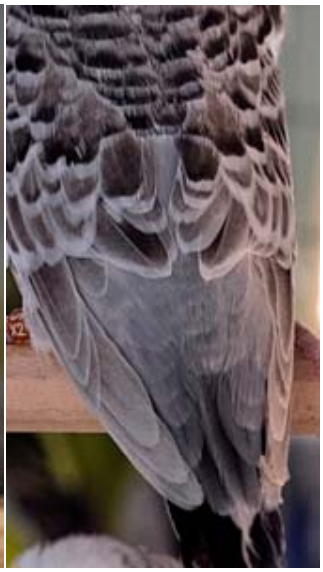
Given that I have not had a great exposure to this variety I ask “Is the Grey Green form of the Texas Clearbody the same as or similar to a Grey Yellow in its make up”? It has that appearance from my perspective.

I read varying standards and many a book on this variety and most accept body colour and varying degrees of – and more so in the rump area.

Clearbodies

Sky

Grey



Rump of the Grey

Refer the article of Ghalib Al-Nasser ‘Rare Budgerigar Varieties, The Clearbody’ which states “the body colour is suffused and may vary in intensity from minimum through to almost 50% of normal body colour depth and increase in intensity downwards and towards the rump area “and is a good read and in fact was the first article that I found on this variety on searching via ‘Google’.

The WBO Standard reads for the light green of this variety: “rump, breast, flanks and underparts yellow suffused with light green and may vary in intensity from minimum through to almost 50% of normal body colour depth, the suffusion should increase in depth of shade progressively downwards from the upper breast to the rump area where the colour is deepest”.

The Standard (Australia) desires Buttercup Yellow or White.

I read and often hear that Ino assists in the ‘clarity’ of body colour? I question this as Ino masks another variety and depending on what that variety/colour is logically should impact the body colour of the Texas Clearbody. Just because an Ino is ‘pure yellow’ or ‘pure white’

does not mean that it will produce 'pure yellow' or 'pure white' Texas Clearbodies, from my perspective, the major influence will be from the 'masked' variety/colour.

Perhaps, without going into genetic details and schematics Clive Hesford of, I believe, the United Kingdom makes a few points useful to the practical breeder:

- There is a special relationship between Texas Clearbodies and sex-linked Inos (Lutinos and Albinos) – they are 'allied' as Ken Gray would put it.
- Because of this it is not possible for an Ino to mask or hide a Clearbody as is the case with most other varieties.
- A hen must be a straightforward visual Normal, visual Clearbody, or visual Ino – no sort of combination is possible, and there can be no hidden or split factor.
- The situation is more complicated with cock birds. There can be:
    1. Pure Normals
    2. Normals split for either Clearbody or Ino - but not for both.
    3. Visual Clearbodies which can be either pure double-factor (DF) Clearbody or single-factor (SF) Clearbody split for Ino.
    4. Pure Inos - which cannot be split for, or mask, Clearbody.

After putting this article together, I thought it prudent to run it by Ken Yorke from New South Wales. His response in part is as follows and I thank him for this feedback:

"The following is grossly over simplified as the genetics and biochemical processes for the manufacture and distribution of these pigments and structural changes in the feathers are very complex."

- *In over simplistic terms Ino masks most other varieties, It does not mask Texas Clearbody (although as I mentioned earlier, the term "masking" is not accurate to use in this context as they are multiple alleles. It's a bit like saying a greywing masks dilute when in actual fact greywing is dominant over dilute). It also does not mask Cinnamon markings, which is why we have lacewings.*
- *The Texas Clearbody and the Easley Clearbody are genetically different and visually different. The Texas has grizzled flights, the Easley does not. The variation in the intensity of black in Texas flight feathers is just natural variation. I don't breed Texas clearbodies but I would bet that in general the Texas which have darker markings will also be more suffused in body as the amount of black pigment throughout the entire bird is usually (but not always) proportionate. The Easley(sf) tend to be very heavily suffused, (I am led to believe even worse than the Texas). The Easley(df) have the cleaner body colour. Not sure if the Easley is in England, but it is definitely in*

continental Europe (and possibly South Africa) and of course in USA where it came from. There have been several other clearbody mutations which are now extinct.

- *In general, Texas(df) cocks are more suffused than Texas(sf) cocks as all the single factors are split for Ino. For a genetic purist you could argue that the "split" bird is not a true split as quite often you can visually spot the split bird because it has better colour. The simplistic reason for this is that the Texas gene tries to restrict the level of black pigment to about 50% of normal value that a green bird has. The Ino gene tries to restrict the level of black pigment to about 2% of the normal value that a green bird has. In a Texas (df) you have two genes both wanting 50% so you get 50%. In a Texas (sf) you have one gene wanting 50% and one gene wanting 2%, so you get a percentage in between (pick a number, say 20%). Hence Texas(sf) have less black than Texas(df) and thus less suffusion and thus appear clearer. It's not always a perfect rule as there are other natural variation factors involved, but taken on average across the whole population, this trend is what you find. In theory, a Texas hen can never be as clean as Texas(sf) cock because the hen can't carry the Ino gene. Opaline and cinnamon help to a degree in reducing suffusion, so the very best Texas clearbodies on the show bench will in general always be Opaline Texas(sf) cocks.*
- *Your comparison of colouration of grey yellow and grey green Texas is partially correct even though the underlying genetic and physical reasons are completely different, the outcome that your eye sees is similar because it boils down to how your eye perceives the colour palette. From a colour palette point of view (think mixing paints) what parrot breeders call the colour grey green is actually a mixture of yellow and black colours. True green (like light green) is actually a mix of blue and yellow colours. What bird people call grey green is actually not a true green colour because it contains no blue colour in the mixture. If you start with a can of yellow paint and keep adding black paint to it you get a grey yellow colour, keep adding more black you eventually get a khaki colour (which bird breeders call grey green). In our birds, a pure yellow (0% black) is a dark eyed clear, a grey lutino (about 2% black), a suffused grey lutino (about 3% black), a grey yellow (about 5% black), a heavily suffused grey yellow(about 15% black), a greygreen texas clearbody (about 10- 50% black), a greywing grey green (about 40-80% black), a normal grey green (100% black). The percentages mentioned are just ballpark estimates and reflect the percentage compared to the amount of black that a normal grey green has.*

After viewing close up and seeing the beauty of this variety, I sense I will now accept the challenge to breed some more – I did play with them many a year ago to get a sense of their make up for judging purposes.

Nigel Tonkin

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