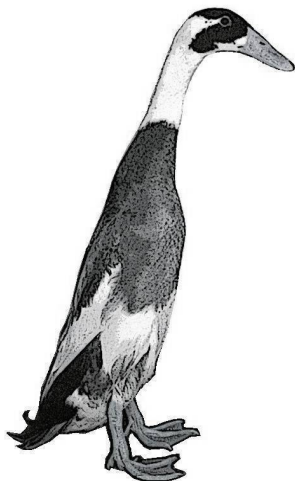




Above

Mark Rubery's Best of Colour winners at Oswestry in 2019. His White drake (on the left) was Champion Runner and Reserve Show Champion.

Left
Spot the 'Birdie' in the cage!



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Front Cover
Variations in Silver Runner
females [Chris Ashton]

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www.runnerduck.net**EDITORIAL**

In many ways it will be sad to step down from the editorship of this newsletter. Receiving and sourcing articles had kept Chris and myself on our toes. Chris in particular has had to encourage people to collect show results and give out rosettes. She is the one who has had direct contact with the membership, dealing with subscriptions, answering queries by phone and email, collating the addresses and sending out information by post. It is impossible to produce a newsletter without having a secretary who is capable of fulfilling these tasks. Additionally she has had to look after the finances.

However, we both find it harder to undergo the physical strains, of visiting the more distant shows for example. There was a time when we spent all of Saturday preparing birds. The other days of the week were taken up with our teaching jobs. Just getting back to feed the birds and lock them up was hard enough. I have watched Chris fall asleep during staff meetings. Other teachers wished they could do the same, under the beady eyes of a strict head master. Sunday started at midnight followed by a 300 mile trip, if we were to get to the far limb of England. As soon as the show ended we had a five hour trip home (another 300 miles), which often ended at midnight (if we afforded ourselves the luxury of a meal and relief break). Then up for school next morning, to look after the birds and drive to school. Now that we have retired, we have (allegedly) more time, but the physical stresses and strains of aging are making it harder. It's time to hand over to younger generations.

This edition has presented us with a surprise article from Andy Flett in Australia. It's a bit of a shock to read views so passionately expressed, even more so when they echo opinions heard within the IRDC. Like many of us in this country, who are deeply concerned with slap-dash marketing of hatching eggs, flock mating, advertising of mongrel birds under the dubious names of prestigious breeds and varieties, Andy expresses his frustrations very lucidly and forcefully. He also casts aspersions at the use of red cards, etc., in small classes of exhibits. Just because a bird gets 'first' in a class of one or two doesn't mean a great deal. His espousal of genetics is especially pleasing.

Genetics are the direct product of intelligent breeding and care-

ful observation. Bart Poulmans in Belgium has long shown skills in this area. His contribution here is a surprising development of work done on the Yellow Belly Call. Breeding a Yellow Belly Runner should more opportunity to workout a valid genotype.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Looking back at the accounts, I see that I took over the Secretary's job in 2007. I joined the IRDA (Indian Runner Duck Association as it was then) in 2000, and was involved in setting up the website, and sponsoring the Sally Harris sculptures for the awards. So, I had a great commitment to making the Indian Runner Duck Association work.

The breed club had a high of up to 180 members in the early days of neophilia but fell to as low as 28 before picking up again. It is now trundling along at the 90-100 mark on a regular basis. Exhibition is not as popular as it was; fewer people seem to keep exhibition birds, or even know what pure breeds are, but there is still a lot of interest at home and internationally on these special birds. Email, the www.runnerduck.net website and IRDC Facebook page have all been great enablers in keeping communication going between a few people in this rather esoteric hobby of pure colours of a pure breed. This is at a time where Indian Runners of various shapes and sizes still parade the Indonesian paddy-rice fields, the vineyards of South Africa, and various other Facebook pages for these hobby birds and pets.

I had indicated to the Committee last year that I intended to stand down as IRDC Secretary at the end of 2019. As things have worked out over the year, that was not to be. Other people on the committee have high commitments to their job or, in the case of Rachel and Mike Mayers, in running several shows every year. There is simply not the time in the day to handle the bits and pieces which come up.

Therefore, two people have stepped up the plate to help. I am very pleased about that. Antonia Hudson who has designed and hosted (for free) the current website will also design, print and circulate the newsletter which comes out three times a year. All the committee must help in finding items for publication. That lets Mike and me off the hook to a large extent.

Mike will therefore stand down as newsletter editor, and also as Vice Chair, and is replaced by James Rigby, who ably takes the AGM minutes. Keith May will take charge of the awards at the shows after the current round for 2019–Jan 2020. I'm very grateful for him taking that on. Knowing the birds, the shows and the exhibitors so well, he is ideal for the job.

Mary Reeve has retired from the committee and I really cannot thank her enough for her support in the early years, and she is replaced by Antonia Hudson.

The subscription rate for the IRDC/IRDA has remained at £7.00 per annum since we started in 2000. A series of cost-cutting measures have included the free hosting of the website by Antonia Hudson, reducing the Newsletter to 24 pages, and reducing the number of ribbons at the shows. I think we have now reached the end of the line on these savings and the committee has reluctantly decided to increase the annual rate to £9.00 for PayPal/ £8.00 for cash, etc. If you have already paid for 2010, the subscription can stand. If you pay by standing order, we would be grateful if you could amend it for 2020. More on the AGM and the shows in the next Newsletter!

QUERIES & OBSERVATIONS

If you sell ducks and give advice, it might be useful to persist with this email chain of what happened to these ducks. It's certainly made me more careful about giving advice about feeding.

22 October 2019, 22:49

Hello. I was wondering if you could help me. I own a small flock of runner ducks and have had many die unexpectedly. I got my first pair about 3 years ago and the drake died suddenly. Then I got another pair and kept two of their ducklings which then both died on the same day aged a year old. In June I bought four new year-old ducks for my flock who came here at a brilliant weight and so, so healthy. However, I've noticed this week that one of the ducks has lost a lot of weight and is weak.

I've taken bodies for post-mortem - nothing found. I've asked numerous duck breeders I know and they don't know. The ducks are

on high vit meal, get wormed and I treat them like royalty. The typical symptoms are weight loss, followed by weakness and then death. Some have even been staggering about and eyes spinning before death.

A lady I know decided to stop keeping runner ducks as they were constantly dying with no meaning. It's just soul sickening and I feel like giving in and quitting the Runner ducks even though I love keeping and breeding them. If you can offer any ideas of what you think it could be I would really appreciate it.

25 Oct 2019, 8:34 am

IRDC : Where do you live? What do you feed them on? Is there a stream or pool of standing water? Are there wild mallard there?

25 October 2019, 12:16

I live xxxxxxxx. They are fed on duck layers. However, at the minute since it's winter, I'm mixing their meal with wheat. The only water they have access to is a pool with clean water and there are no wild ducks around. The duck passed away yesterday so now I have 4 ducks left. I was going to try mixing some cider vinegar in water and see if it would help flush the rest out and garden their stool. Do you think it could be coccidiosis?

25 October 2019, 19:37:

IRDC: Sorry to hear you are having such problems because they are normally so easy to keep. Here are a few things to think about:

- 1. Meal (layers mash?) is normally fed to chickens. It tends to get stuck in the mouths of ducks. Are you feeding it as a wet mix with the wheat? I think you could try switching to layer pellets.*
- 2 What does high vit meal mean?*
- 3. Are you feeding bread?*
- 4. Do they have mixed poultry grit?*

The layers meal is not good for drakes (too much calcium) but I think the ducks are dying too. I had wondered if the birds had caught duck viral enteritis from the wild mallard - which will kill them They become very lethargic, have a dirty vent, may bleed or have greenish droppings. Does that happen?

We lost 6 ducks one year like that – and never actually saw a mallard. The suspected DVE case examined by the vet showed lesions in the oesophagus, and congestion of the lungs and liver. Birds also get a dirty vent and pass green droppings if they contract Pasteurella, but it's usually just one bird.

Another case of dead birds from elsewhere showed renal failure which also caused calcification in the lungs. So, if your birds looked normal on post mortem, I would suspect some long term problem with the food quality rather than a pathogen. There is no harm in trying the cider vinegar, but ducks are amazingly resistant to coccidiosis and it generally tends to strike in hot weather. Your vet would have found evidence, I think. The feeding tract would have deteriorated, and the coccidia can be seen under the microscope in the droppings. Ducks do die off if they are deficient in B vits. But if you are feeding whole wheat they should be ok.

I should try feeding a mix of dry layer pellets with wheat. Also offer whole wheat in a bucket of water - they like feeding under water. Maybe add some vitamin B powder (the type you buy for horses to the food) to the dry food for a while. Moisten the pellet/wheat mix (to make the powder stick) and add 1 tablespoon per kg. I do know someone who was losing ducks due to vit B deficiency - but he was feeding a lot of brewers grains. Brewers grains are used in compound feeds (both pellets and meal) but they should be adding vit. B to compensate.

Let me know if anything springs to mind after this. And is there any possibility of poisoning?

25 October 2019, 20:03

We always just used the chicken crumb we had but when I got the Runners due to the fact they were known for laying eggs a guy we knew recommended we get the duck layer meal as is supposedly high vit and would produce eggs...although I rarely get an egg which is another annoying thing.

25 October 2019, 20:12

So if they are not laying well there may be something wrong with the diet? What did the previous owners of the ducks feed? And how much food do they get each day (by weight)?

25 October 2019, 21:00:

I tend to put around 1.5kg mix of wheat and layer pellets in their container and then after that's done (usually 2 days) I top it up again. They only have access to food when I put them in their house again at night as we used to have a problem with rats going into their house and eating meal and stealing eggs. So I keep the door shut during the day.

On Sat, 26 Oct 2019, 8:26 am

That sounds as if they get as much as they want which is fine. One person who found her ducks were dying was feeding them less than 80g per day! The poor things were starving and becoming ill as a consequence.

When you feed them at night - they do have access to water?

Is the food fed dry? They really don't manage dry food well at all.

It also sounds a bit like when one guy fed his free range ducks mainly on bread - they all gradually died in poor condition, possibly from lack of vitamin B.

On Saturday, 26 October 2019, 16:13:

They don't have access to water until I let them out in the morning. I would put water in with them but then they would wet their house and since it's a wooded floor I don't want it to rot over winter. They're fed dry meal so would wetting their meal help at all?

Sat, 26 Oct 2019 at 16:21

This is why they are dying. *They cannot possibly eat and digest their food dry. Mash/crumble/pellets is the worst thing you can give them dry. The food is only 13% moisture. They will simply be dehydrating and also not be able to eat enough food. That is why they are losing weight.*

I agree the water messes up the house - so feed them by the house before bed-time and in the morning when you let them out. As I said earlier, provide wheat under water in a bucket during the day.

Tonight, feed them before they go to bed. And offer some wheat in a bowl of water as well. Make sure they have plenty of time to drink before they are shut in for the night.

THE DILEMMA IN THE DUCK POND

ANDREW FLETT [AUSTRALIA]

'Apathy and ignorance will bring with it nothing that advances a breed or colour, and if we adopt the "ostrich approach of putting our heads in the sand" we may well see Wyandottes reduced to a nameless, shameful grouping of birds that neither meet the standard requirements nor promote the breed to the awards that indicate excellence.'

This bold and confronting statement from an article titled "Is it time we grappled with what is happening to our Wyandottes?" may well be applied to many of our waterfowl breeds here in Australia, and I am certain, to a few other fowl species too.

The above article in the Wyandotte Club's recent newsletter highlighted more than a few pertinent points which are worth careful consideration by anyone who has purebred waterfowl breeds in their care. These breeds, their attributes and unique characteristics, and to a large degree, their popularity and longevity are in our hands, and the significance of this should not be overlooked. Some breeds that were found here 20-25 years ago are no longer – anyone remember the Baldwin Duck? (no longer found in the UK, either) and others are classified as rare, endangered and are seldom seen today – the Water-vale comes to mind here. Are we to stand by and watch as other purebred breeds become obscure and fade into oblivion?

Several other articles I read recently have got my brain ticking over. I figured that as the next generation of show hopefuls are just being produced, now is perhaps the ideal time to gather my thoughts, reflections and ponder where our waterfowl breeds in Australia are headed. Is there indeed a dilemma in the duck pond? It's been joked that while a duck looks calm and serene on the pond, the legs are working furiously under the surface to keep it there. Are many of our breeds at risk of their legs running out altogether and disappearing from Australian soils? In years to come, will we have a number of birds which, we will say, 'sort of looks like the type of duck that our grandparent's parents once bred'?

This article is not written with criticism of others in mind but comes out of a genuine interest and concern for the future of purebred

ducks in years to come. It would be my hope that in reading this, you too may thoughtfully consider the birds in your show and breeding pens, and the points I am about to mention. You may wonder who I am to write such an article: my association with ducks goes back 23yrs, and having returned to poultry after some time away, perhaps the changes that have occurred are not so subtle. In any case, I'd be interested to hear what people's thoughts are, and more importantly, how we can work together to secure a future for our valuable pure-bred duck breeds.

Where are we headed?

In the back yard

Khaki Campbell with eye stripes and coloured speculums; Saxony with throat colour splashing onto the breast; Silver Appleyard with discernible hoods and varying degrees of colour on the duck's breast; solid-coloured covert feathers or the appearance of white primaries in breeds which shouldn't have, and white 'sports' being thrown from coloured parents; Pekin ducks that more closely resemble a white Campbell, and confusion regarding colour variations within a breed – 'Applegate' ducks for sale?

All indicate that a lack of knowledge and understanding on breeds, colour faults and/or impure genetics come into play and are being replicated in successive generations. While the aforementioned issues may not all manifest in birds on show, these birds certainly are found online, at auctions and markets and as such have a wider exposure to the public than a poultry club show.

Realistically, many of the ducks we sell don't end up on the show bench, with new owners not necessarily interested in showing, or the accuracy of the duck's colouration. While it's sensible that we don't sell our very top-quality birds, it's also imperative that these people don't get birds that are full of faults which will be cemented in genetically and worsen over time. Why? They're just backyarders right? Well - no. These are the people who may breed a few down the track (to be expected when it's almost impossible to obtain an exclusively female group with many breeds) and then sell these at the local market, online or in the local classifieds. Naive to the breed requirements and faults within their flock, the next unaware generation

comes along and purchases stock with faults such as those listed above.

Issues in the show pen

What you see isn't always the real deal! So many of the breeds we have listed in the APS2 [Australian Poultry Standards] are absent from our show benches; the VWA spectacular and the RASV shows, as well as those conducted by individual clubs. How many of us can say we've seen many standard Saxony, Aylesbury, Rouen Clair, Abacot Ranger, Dark Campbell, Watervale and Blue Swedish in recent years and, when/if these birds appear, how well do they stack up with their standard? Are they absent in part due to lack of knowledge on the judge's (sometimes not even a waterfowl breeder) behalf – the judge could then choose the easier option of a white bird, and thereby has an influence on which breeds exhibitors or new devotees choose to go with.

Will the popularity of certain breeds – the 'classic old' breeds which consistently appear and seem assured of ongoing success in both the backyard and show breeding pens, and the increasingly popular breeds of recent years – mean that those breeds that are harder to produce a quality specimen due to marking intricacies, or are not beautifully coloured simply disappear altogether in the future? Certain breeds such as Blue Swedish and Elizabeth have quite complex colour requirements. Others such as the Khaki Campbell have lost popularity, for reasons noted in a recent Australasian Poultry article. 20 years from now, what will the duck line up at the majority of shows consist of? White Runners, White Muscovy, Pekin and white Mallard*? – simply because they're easier to get right colour wise, and besides ... everyone knows that "the white versions are generally better"? That said, plenty of [white] mallards and runners get about (and get carded) with yellow colouring that would make many a Pekin envious! Quality can and does vary considerably even with the well-established breeds.

Are we willing as breeders, exhibitors and judges to adopt the mindset that what 'looks like or is close to' is as acceptable as the genuine article? As discussed in Ashtons' 'Colour breeding in Domestic Ducks', colouration and markings associated with various breeds are

related to the bird's genetics. Take the Silver Appleyard (large and miniature). The standard calls for characteristics specifically related to the light phase, restricted mallard (M^R) genes. Birds that present with a discernible hood, anything other than a creamy white breast, or with solid coloured wing coverts are displaying genetics other than M^R i.e. the bird has had other genes introduced somewhere down the line. This has been an issue well documented in the UK, and has most likely occurred due to confusion in the past between Appleyard and Abacot Ranger genetics.

Should a judge cop flack if they were to (heaven forbid I say it) disqualify a bird for not being an accurate representative (obvious colour faults/mismarking or overall type)? Is the judge less or more respected by standing resolute in their conviction or is it easier to keep the exhibitors happy and hence avoid any fallout? Better in the long term for competitor or bird? Do we figure that it's better to award every class a first prize card; considering the card has already been filled out? Best of Breed—if the specimen isn't up to standard, are we doing anyone a favour by awarding the sash? Is there a genuine lack of knowledge/unawareness on the judge's side? If so, then how can the judge be better educated in the requirements of breeds? Some reading this may be aghast at suggesting the above, but I wonder who ultimately suffers when judging decisions allow for mistakes and errors to be tolerated? If the birds winning are substandard, then those breeding poor specimens are encouraged and rewarded, and further newcomers to the world of waterfowl (or that breed) start out with an impoverished picture in mind. The breed loses out and at worst, characteristics which make that bird what it is are lost. Mike Ashton's recent article in *Australasian Poultry* magazine is healthy food for thought—perhaps it's worth trialling a Continental system of judging?

When I was involved in the Arabian horse world, I once witnessed a competitor leave the ring with a top 5 ribbon, when they were the only competitor. Such was their chagrin (they had frequently been awarded Champion—as an only entry) and encouraged by others, they confronted the judge. The response? 'Your horse is not championship material. In a strongly contested class, you'd be lucky to have been awarded a top 5, and that's as good as your horse could

be'. It takes a strong judge not to be swayed by circumstance, and to stand resolute.

Educational Opportunities and Dilemmas

Sometimes the only exposure the general public has to our waterfowl breeds are those that are in the show pen. At shows, I've been asked by both fellow competitors and the public what a certain breed is. They've then gone on to say "oh, we had them at home, but they didn't look like that". !! It's been identified over a number of years by articles in *Australasian Poultry* and by waterfowl authors worldwide that confusion has existed for decades about Abacot Ranger, Appleyard and Welsh Harlequin ducks and what they should 'look like'. At one stage the BWA standards gave incorrect descriptions and photos, further adding to the confusion. In our own backyard, there are several discrepancies in the APS2 in both description and photographs. Unfortunately a recently published Australian duck book was brim full of errors in both breed descriptions and photographic material, among other things. It should be of concern that this book was endorsed by both CSIRO and a state waterfowl body. The problem being that both judges and future waterfowl devotees may inadvertently award or breed for characteristics incongruent with correct type. We as breeders, the VWA and various States' waterfowl associations have a duty to promote and educate the greater public on the breeds available throughout Australia. Perhaps education could be as simple as having printed breed sheets at exhibitions, with photos of true-to-type specimens, and a list of common faults to avoid, and particular breeding tips. With informed minds, potential show and breeding stock can be selected for correct traits, and those with obvious faults culled from future programs. This would require a conscious effort on our behalf, to put cull birds in the freezer, rather than sell on at auction or online. If this results in more true-to-type birds being selected and bred from, then surely that's a worthwhile sacrifice to make.

While the modern era and technology has brought with it many advances and information within a few keystrokes, and internet and websites enable people to promote, showcase and market their birds to a wider audience, the tragedy is the confusion that then reigns over

what a breed should look like. One only has to do a google search for any breed of domesticated duck to find that worldwide, the quality, accuracy and variation is remarkable. The UK's Fancy Fowl magazine was renowned for producing quality and educational breed profiles. In years past I spent hours poring over these not just learning the breed's history and development but gaining a good visual of how they should appear thanks to the accompanying photos. Typically this was a profile of both sexes, then a number of pictures of the finer points of the breeds. That may have been the markings on the flank of the Rouen drake, a close-up of the female Saxony's head, and wings of both sexes of the Welsh Harlequin outstretched and highlighting the colouration/markings of flights, speculum and the lesser covert feathers.

Another dilemma—when breeds are rare, and quality (and fertility) is declining, breeders tend to jump ship, moving to a breed which is popular or somewhat easier to produce quality specimens. In the end, the breed suffers, and dies out. Will the Rouen Clair, Aylesbury, large Saxony and Welsh Harlequin, among others, go the way of the Baldwin, and disappear altogether? These breeds need dedicated people to persist with what's available, or recreate these breeds if required. To do so, a firm understanding of the breed's genetics and how to remove undesired genes/traits is required. Yes, they may be the 'project breed' and may not garner a huge heap of success in the show pen, but at the end of the day, shouldn't it be about preserving the heritage, type and presence of these wonderful breeds?

So, what CAN we do?

To sum up: source and breed the best we can. If birds have to be sourced interstate to widen the gene pool or improve type/size/colouring, so be it. There's a multitude of affordable avenues to transport birds these days outside of our local environment: courier, air, road trip. As breeders and exhibitors, it's wonderful to have our ducks in the ribbons and the prestige that comes with; perhaps the challenge is to enable others with lesser quality birds improve their flock. Who knows, by allowing others to utilise your bloodlines, the quality of competition may just improve over time. An added benefit

is the relationship could be one of mutuality should your birds run into problems at a later date. Sharing knowledge will not just improve quality of birds in more people's flocks but assist newcomers to persevere and accept the challenge of breeding rarer breeds.

Keep accurate breeding records to note any faults, cull diligently, and wisely. Become familiar with how your ducklings should look on hatch. Don't be afraid to test-mate birds to see if there are hidden genes present; pair-mating can identify and eliminate colour issues far quicker than in a flock mating scenario. Persevere with learning genetics; a knowledge helps understand what you should see and why, and pinpoint what is happening when you don't. Self education and at least a basic understanding of genetics will enable us to select and breed towards a truer type. Equip yourself with the Ashtons' books (The Domestic Duck & Colour Breeding in Domestic Ducks)—valuable references that will quickly become your 'duck bible'. Don't be afraid to put the duck in the freezer instead of selling it on if it really isn't going to do the breed a favour in the long term.

Be aware that even backyard breeders may sell their birds on as being a representative of that breed. Your name may inadvertently be linked to these birds down the track.

Actively promote the breeds to the wider public. Whether that means putting in a few 'project' birds in a show in order to preserve a presence and create ongoing interest, or promotion through a website.

APS3? Perhaps standards could be illustrated in a similar manner to Fancy Fowl from years gone by, making it easier for judges and breeders alike to align the written with the visual.

Let's not see these beautiful breeds of ours become distant memories of days gone by. Don't you agree they're so much more valuable than that?

Andrew Flett

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* Important Note—Australian shows have entries for Mallards in many colour varieties.

INDIAN RUNNER RESULTS: Domestic Waterfowl Shows 2019
BOB – Best of Breed (Best Runner), BOS – Best Opposite Sex,
Best of Colour – BOC

Builth Wells: 25th Welsh Federation Championship Show, October 19, 2019

Judge: Anthony Stanway - Entry: 29 Runners

Best Indian Runner: C&M Ashton – White Male.

Also Best Waterfowl.

Best Opposite Sex: CTJ Bennett - Apricot Trout Duck

White Male: 1, 2, 3 C&M Ashton (BOC)(BOB) (4)

White Female: 1 C&M Ashton, 2 Penrhiwgarn (2)

Fawn Male: 1 C&M Ashton, 2 Penrhiwgarn (2)

Fawn Female: 1 Penrhiwgarn, (BOC) 2 C&M Ashton (2)

Fawn&White Male: 1 Penrhiwgarn (BOC) (1)

Fawn&white Female: 1 Penrhiwgarn (1)

American Fawn&White M/F: 1 Penrhiwgarn (BOC)(1)

Trout Male: 1 Penrhiwgarn (1)

Trout Female: 1 Penrhiwgarn (BOC) (1)

Apricot Trout Male/Female: 1 CTJ Bennett (BOC), 2 C&M Ashton, 3CTJ Bennett (4)

Black Male: 1 Penrhiwgarn (1)

Black Female: 1 Penrhiwgarn (BOC) (1)

Chocolate Male: 1 MD, RM, WM Mayers (1) (BOC)

Chocolate Male: 1 MD, RM, WM Mayers (1)

Silver Male/female 1,2 C&M Ashton (BOC) (2)

Non-Standard Male: Appleyard/Magpie/Khaki: 1 Penrhiwgarn (BOC), 2,3 M& S Gale

Non-standard F: Appleyard/Magpie/Khaki: 1 Penrhiwgarn (1)

Shropshire and Mid Wales Waterfowl Exhibition, October 20, 2019 at Oswestry

Judge: Anthony Stanway – entry 39 Runners, all penned.

Best Indian Runner: White Duck - Mark Rubery. Also Reserve

Best Waterfowl.

Best Opposite Sex: Fawn Drake - Mark Rubery

White Male: 1 ,2 Holly Harding-Smith, 3 R & C Pryce (8)

White Female: 1 Mark Rubery (BOC), 2,3 Holly Harding-Smith (6)

Fawn Male: 1 2,M Rubery (BOC), 3 Alex Logan (5)

Fawn Female: 1, 2 M Rubery, 3 Alex Logan (4)

Black Male: 1,2 Joseph Thomas (2)

Black Female; 1 Joseph Thomas (BOC) (1)

Mallard Female: 1 Thomas Kay (BOC) (1)

Blue Male: 1 Mayers Family (BOC) (1)

Blue female: 1 Mayers Family (1)

Chocolate Male: 1 Mayers Family (1)

Chocolate Female: 1 Holly Harding-Smith (BOC), 2 Mayers (2)

Silver Male/Female 1,2 Alex Logan (BOC) (2)

Pair of Runners: 1 Holly Harding-Smith (1)

British Waterfowl Association National Waterfowl Exhibition, Stroud, 2019

Runner Judge: Roy Pryce. Entry 89 Runners

Best Indian Runner: White 2019 female: Tom Davis

Best Coloured Runner: Fawn male: John Richards

Best Op Sex Runner: Fawn male: John Richards

IRDC Points Trophy: Julian Burrell

White 2019 M: 1 T Moody, 2 T Davis, 3 Penrhiwgarn (7)

White 2019 F: 1 T Davis BOB, BOC, 2, M Rubery, 3 M Rubery (10)

White Adult M: 1 M Rubery, 2 Penrhiwgarn, 3 R&O James (7)

White Adult F: 1 J Richards, 2 T Moody, 3 R&O James (3)

Fawn M: 1 J Richards BOS, BCR, BOC, 2 T&S Axon, 3 M Rubery (4)

Fawn F: 1 M Rubery, 2 S James, 3 M Rubery (3)

Fawn & White M: 1 Penrhiwgarn BOC, 2 Penrhiwgarn, 3 T Moody (4)

Fawn & White F: 1 Penrhiwgarn, 2 S James, 3 T Moody (3)

American Fawn & White M & F: 1 Penrhiwgarn BOC, 2 Penrhiwgarn (2)

Trout M: 1 T Moody BOC, 2 T Moody, 3 J Burrell (7)

Trout F: 1 S James, 2 T Moody, 3 T Moody (5)

Blue Trout M: 1 J Burrell BOC, 2 P Hayford (2)

Blue Trout F: 1 P Hayford (1)

Apricot Trout M: 1 J Burrell BOC, 2 J Burrell (2)

Apricot Trout F: 1 J Burrell, 2 J Burrell (2)

Black M: 1 J Burrell BOC, 2 J Burrell, 3 R&O James (5)

Black F: 1 Karl Scanlon, 2 R&O James, 3 R&O James (5)

Blue M: 1 J Burrell BOC, 2 R&O James (2)

Blue F: 1 R&O James (2)

Mallard M: 1 J Burrell BOC, 2 J Burrell (2)
 Mallard F: 1 T Kay, 2 J Burrell (2)
 Chocolate M: 1 Mayers Family (1)
 Chocolate F: 1 J Burrell BOC, 2 J Burrell, 3 Mayers Family (3)
 Silver M: No Entries
 Silver F: 1 R&O James BOC, 2 J Burrell, 3 R&O James (3)
 Apricot/Blue Dusky M: 1 R&O James (1)
 Apricot/Blue Dusky F: 1 R&O James BOC (1)
 Pair Runners: 1 T Moody (Trout) (1)
 Best Bali: Penrhiwgarn (3)

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INDIAN RUNNER WORKSHOP Poultry Club National, 1 December 2019

Just a brief comment as we go to press—yesterday’s workshop (1/12/19) was very well attended. Thanks to Chris and Julian for leading the discussions, and a well-informed input from experienced participants, in a detailed examination of colour problems with Silver and also Trout Runners. There were large numbers of Trouts but few Silvers. It seems that exhibitors are getting wary of birds with mixed genetic flaws. The cover of this edition gives some idea of the colour variations in female Silver Runners: getting the proper dark hood without very dark scapular and rump plumage is most challenging. The Silver females should look like the best Abacot Rangers, with dark bill and legs and a rich fawn head [see the Standards].

The Poultry Club Secretary was kind enough to congratulate the IRDC for the unprecedented number of applicants and the huge number of entries in the Runner section (174, apparently). It was a busy day for Judge and Steward! The Runner AGM agreed to another workshop next year (Fawn Runners and Blacks); Philippe Wilson agreed to submit the application for the 2020 show. More information to follow.

This edition contains results from only the first three championship shows of the season. More results and information will be in the Spring edition.

THE YELLOW BELLY COLOUR MUTATION

by Poulmans, Ashton & Ashton

The Yellow Belly colour mutation ‘arrived’ on the Canals of Holland. It was commented that it ‘appeared amongst the decoys, especially around the small fisherman's place Katwijk. Until now I haven't been able to determine the genetic background of this variety. The pattern of the drake looks very much like the Mallard. The colour of the lower breast and the belly tell whether a drake is a mallard or a yellow-belly. This variety is still quite recent and has meanwhile spread to the UK and the US.’ [Wim Biallosterski on the Yellow Belly Call duck colour at Avivaria, Hasselt, Belgium 2002]

It is clear that the Yellow Belly Call has strong affinities with the Wild Colour (Grey) Mallard Call. The males are sometimes difficult to distinguish, apart from a yellowish buff tinge to the lower chest and belly. Heterozygote males are virtually indistinguishable in plumage from pure mallard.

It is the females where the ‘yellow belly’ is most vividly demonstrated. Yet, even in the ducks, the remainder of the plumage shows key features of the wild colour:

- • Mallard eye stripes,
- • Orange bill, with elements of saddle and bean,
- • Chevron-like pencilling on scapular and upper body feathers,
- • White surfaces to the under wing.

It would appear that, whatever mutation is involved, it could be at a single locus and furthermore allelic to the wild form. So far no one seems to have much idea where the mutation came from. There are speculations that it could have emerged from a cross between a Grey Call and a Chiloe widgeon. Otherwise there is little real evidence. The genotype is based on guess-work from a number of sources:

1. Graham & Sandra Barnard used a male Yellow Belly with a Mallard female to produce exclusively *female* Yellow Belly and *male* Mallard offspring. This would suggest that the mutation is recessive and sex-linked. A reciprocal cross would be needed

(with large numbers of experimental birds to fully explore this hypothesis).

2. Bart Poulmans from Belgium (several years ago) also did do a reciprocal cross (male Mallard with Yellow Belly female) to produce offspring that were equally distributed males and females 50% Yellow Belly and 50% Mallard. This would at first sight shatter the above hypothesis but, as Bart himself said, at that time, he could not be certain whether or not the parent male was pure Mallard. Indeed, a heterozygous male ought to generate exactly the above offspring.

So, as Bart himself says, there needs to be more testing in order to come back with hard evidence. The selection of pure stock in the first place is crucial to this kind of testing. So often people, who say that the science of colour genetics does not work, simply do not know the genetic makeup of the breeder birds they are using in the first instance. It is breeders who have kept stock pure for many generations who can supply reliable genetic material. In this case – Bart's Mallard Runners and his Yellow Belly Call.

Further information on the colour

The colour of both sexes of the Yellow Belly is illustrated on the National Call Breeders poster at http://www.callducks.org/store/p35/Variety_Poster-_Harlequin_.html [please note that the Yellow belly has nothing to do with harlequin phase]

The Yellow Belly Calls which were bred by Graham and Sandra Barnard are also illustrated in the BWA Waterfowl standards, 2008, page 159.

The difference in the Call males between the BWA and NCB is interesting. The NCB male is much brighter on the chest and lacks the usual claret bib. This suggests that he may be mallard dusky (md) rather than mallard (M). In normal (not yb) Calls, the dusky Call male does not have a claret bib; the normal mallard male does. Thus in the dusky yellow belly male, the yb mutation would shine through more brightly.

Yellow Belly Runners

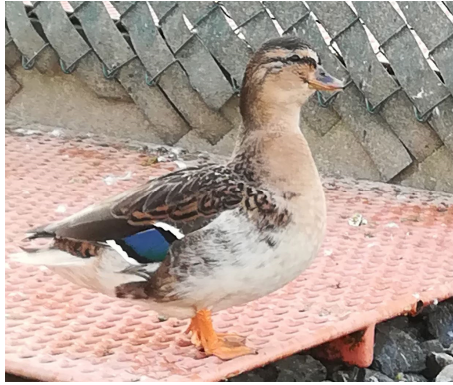
In Belgium, Bart Poulmans has kept Yellow Belly Calls since the 1990s. In recent years, he has also created, from crossing his Yellow Belly Calls and Mallard Runners, the first Yellow Belly Runner. This experiment, which has now run for several years, does demonstrate that the colour mutations of the mallard really do span all the breeds of the domesticated duck.

I also find it quite remarkable that the colour of this Call can be transferred to the Indian Runner in around four generations though doubtless Bart chose the worst 'type' of Yellow Belly Call duck he had.

This year, however, a Runner bred from a pure mallard female Runner and a Yellow Belly Runner drake did reveal a new development. One Yellow Belly female no longer has the iridescent blue on the speculum; instead the colour was grey or 'obscured'. In contrast, the bird's mallard sisters didn't have the problem.

Normally, birds which are dusky lose the iridescence of the speculum. Initially, we wondered if the female were dusky. Dusky dark phase mallard, for example, is coloured under the wing, and the speculum is obscured. In normal mallard, the under-wing is creamy white.

On checking the bird's wing again, the abnormal female turned out to be creamy white i.e. the normal mallard colour. So this lack of iridescence the speculum is still unexplained – and it will be interesting to see what happens in subsequent years. Maybe this particular female could be heterozygous for dusky?



Yellow Belly ducks: Call (left): Indian Runner (right)

Photos by Bart Poulmans



Runner drakes: two Yellow Bellies with a Mallard in the middle



Yellow Belly Runner ducks



Yellow Belly Anomalies

*The underwing coverts are clear of pigmentation (i.e. white) – the normal colour of wild mallard (M+) – whereas dark-phase duskies (md) are pigmented. The speculum on **one** specimen (right) lacked the blue iridescence.*