

## DID YOU KNOW?



● We're on sale in many **WH Smith** and **Easons** stores, selected **Morrisons** and **Tesco**, and lots of independent retailers.



● To place a regular order, simply take this copy along to your **newsagent**.



● Or you can get us **delivered** first-class. See our fantastic subscription offer, **page 21!**

● Please direct all postal items to: **Rob Innes, Cage & Aviary Birds, Kelsey Publishing, Yalding Hill, Maidstone ME18 6AL** ● Please **DON'T** send post to Peterborough ● To contact the team, phone **01959 543 544. Thank you!**

# Gloster Fancy Canary Council UK statement: new colour variants

## NEWS FEATURE

**FOLLOWING A RECENT** meeting, the Gloster Fancy Canary Council UK has released a statement about the impact of new colour variants on the pure-bred Gloster canary. Statement provided by GFFC international secretary **MARIO ZAHRA**: ■ On May 1 2022 during a Gloster Fancy Canary Council UK (GFFC) meeting, the GFFC chairman Nick Barrett introduced two invitees: International Gloster Breeders Association (IGBA) members Steve Chennells and Alan Hayward (who was also appointed as a GFFC member on the same day). Both of whom expressed concerns about the new colour variants that are appearing on the show bench.

This topic on the agenda was triggered after Steve initially wrote to the IGBA secretary expressing his concerns. Steve's letter and the matter in general was discussed during the IGBA AGM, but the IGBA chairman Keith Baker suggested that this was not within the jurisdiction of the IGBA and should be forwarded to the GFFC.

Mario Zahra, GFFC international secretary, wrote in his administrative report that he also witnessed at first hand such coloured exhibits on the show bench when he was judging and he added that they looked nothing like Gloster canaries.

Mario also warned the GFFC that this situation can get out of hand if no action is taken. To substantiate on the matter, he referred to a technical conversation that he had with Sergio Ebejer, COM judge and expert in coloured canaries, about the dangers and threats that one can anticipate if the Gloster clubs don't take this matter seriously.

Sergio specifically stressed that establishing a balance between coloured and type canaries, without altering the gene pool is impossible. He also confirmed that focusing on type while genetically crossing a fine short feather (colour) beats the whole objective of

keeping either type or coloured canaries.

During the meeting, the GFFC reminded everyone present that the official colours that exist in the current 50 classes have been established for almost 100 years and that along the years many have tried to experiment with new colour variants, but failed.

John Herring, who is also a GFFC member, said that he was one of the involved parties that supplied coronas to interested breeders for experimenting with red factors back in the 1980s, with the result that these birds had to be called something else – in fact today they are called Stafford canaries. John humbly admitted that he is not very proud of what emerged in those days, because the more they bred them, the more inclined

towards the common canary they went – both in size and feather. John states that this was a result of the domination of the gene pool that the red factor carried for many years.

John highlighted that the exhibitors of these new variants, mainly agates and satinettes, do not have the experience or the understanding of the implications that are about to hit the Gloster gene pool. He also said that they should be stopped instantly from being allowed to exhibit these birds alongside the Gloster canary before it is too late.

As it stands today, the Gloster fancy has the self-green, three parts dark (buff), variegated buff, yellow (intensive), cinnamon, yellow cinnamons (rare), blue, white, fawn and grizzle. The experienced fancier will tell you that he/she

either never bred a good grizzle or that they never bred any at all.

The reason is simple, because the more a breeder pairs up his/her Glosters clear to clear – which is how a grizzle colour can be obtained – the further away the canary will go from the Standard of Excellence.

This doesn't happen because the breeder doesn't have the right pair to put together, but rather because the clear-feathered birds lose the shape quickly and tend to incline more to the common canary while suffering on type.

Another observation that these breeders who are experimenting dangerously with new colours on Glosters should take note of, is the low number of exhibits in the white and allied to white categories. Again, the main reason for this is simple. It is always suggested that when pairing up whites and allied to whites, that they are paired with

a three parts dark or a very good variegated buff. The experienced breeder will also state that pairing white to white is not viable for the same reason mentioned earlier about the grizzle. In a nutshell, whites are kept and bred at a deficit because of the same feather issues already mentioned.

The GFFC is advising all Gloster specialist shows worldwide to stop allowing exhibitors benching these colour variants under the name of

Glosters before it is too late. The GFFC wishes to remind every Gloster club that with the existing official colours, it is already challenging enough to keep a balance between type and feather quality.

In conclusion to this matter during the GFFC meeting, it was evident that these new colours that are emerging on the show bench in some all Gloster shows were classified as a threat to the gene pool of the pure-bred Gloster canary. The GFFC is also advising any fancier who wants to take on the Gloster canary seriously, to stay away from these colour variants and from the gene pool that is kept and bred in their relative bird rooms.

As Steve Chennells, stated: "We are only custodians of the Gloster fancy and we have no right to tamper with it or put it in danger."

– Mario Zahra, June 2022.

1925 2022



Above: most exhibition Gloster canaries, like these birds bred by Nick Barrett, adhere to the official colour standards. Circled: the GFFC wishes to preserve the Gloster canary (corona pictured) and has concerns about new colour variants appearing at shows



Evolution in the Gloster (from left): an illustration from 1939; this unflighted buff corona hen (Wallace & Storey) won best Gloster at the National Exhibition in 1988; cinnamon corona (Middlemiss & Thompson), third best Gloster at the National Exhibition in 1998; and blue consort (Dot Harris), best champion Gloster at the London Interclub in 2002

To comment  
on the GFFC statement,  
email: [birds.ed@kelsey.co.uk](mailto:birds.ed@kelsey.co.uk)