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Gloster canaries are a big hit in Tunisia

By Georgina Probert

SHOWS

THE TUNISIE GLOSTER Fancy Club (Tunisie GFC) in Tunisia held a successful All-Gloster show in December 2023, with more than 400 birds entered.

The club was established in 2020 by a passionate group of Gloster canary enthusiasts led by Yassine Dridi who is the club president. Tunisie GFC organised its inaugural All-Gloster show later that same year.

In 2021, the club received support and guidance from Michel Abou Khalil, the ambassador of the GFCC-UK for the Middle East

and North Africa. He offered assistance in aligning the club with the high standards set by the GFCC-UK and implemented classes, crafted a new logo and established a set of regulations.

International secretary of the GFCC-UK and judge at the 2023 show, Mario Zahra, said: "The enthusiasm for the Gloster fancy in Tunisia is not only considerable, but also harbours a promising future. This is evident in the steady growth of both membership and exhibit participation across the three shows hosted so far. Notably, this year, the club has already surpassed the 400-exhibit milestone, and there are anticipations for even greater numbers in



Winners and club officials on the day: the 2023 Tunisie Gloster Fancy Club show was a huge success, with more than 400 birds entered

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— Mario Zahra, GFCC-UK international secretary



Tunisie Gloster Fancy Club formed in 2020 and has just held its third All-Gloster show

the upcoming years, indicating a positive trajectory for the club's expansion and influence."

Ramzi Mannai took home best Gloster in show with a beautiful unflighted buff corona hen. Nidhal Hassairi achieved the honours for best opposite head in show and best yellow. Additional winners included Zied Hattab for best three parts dark, Riadh El Heni for best cinnamon, Aneur Behir for best clear, and Khaled Alouani for both best white and best grizzle. Special awards were also presented to Ramzi Mannai for best corona and Nidhal Hassairi for

best consort.

"A positive aspect in Tunisia is the substantial participation of young individuals in this club. The remarkable and friendly atmosphere they foster is noteworthy. Following the judging process, myself and the other judge dedicated ample time to visit every bird, providing each exhibitor with individual attention and guidance on the next steps for their Glosters," added Mr Zahra.

● For more information, visit: www.facebook.com and search for "Club Gloster Fancy Tunisie".



GFCC-UK international secretary Mario Zahra judged the Tunisie GFC 2023 show

Park Life

with Chris Green



THANK GOODNESS THE freezing cold, windy month of January is behind us. Despite the weather, we have managed to complete some re-branching, re-barking and re-sanding of many of the enclosures in the walled garden and around the park. This is a laborious task, but has to be done before the breeding season begins and also before the wildlife park becomes busy with visitors when we open again fully in a couple of weeks' time.

We have started work on rebuilding the old macaw enclosure. This will become a new enclosure for our flock of southern masked weavers (*Ploceus velatus*), which we believe is the only one of their kind on show to the public

in the UK. This species of weaver differs from many others owing to its size and range in the wild. Typically, the birds kept in zoological collections are the bigger, hardier and more robust village weaver (*P. cucullatus*). When breeding, male southern masked weavers can typically make up to 25 nests and mate with several females. We are hoping that a taller and wider exhibit will allow these weavers to show off as many of their natural behaviours as possible and build up numbers.

When they are moved into their new enclosure, we will renovate their old enclosure and hopefully add a small reedbed before moving in our

14-strong colony of bearded reedlings (*Panurus biarmicus*). This is a species we have been particularly successful in breeding from over the last few years. We will then freshen up their

"This species of weaver differs from many other species owing to its size and range in the wild"

enclosure at the other end of the walled garden for a species we haven't kept for many years, which is definitely one of my favourites – so watch this space.

January is always a quiet month for nesting birds and for almost ten years, the first birds to lay for us were our old trusty pair of red-crested turacos (*Tauraco erythrophus*). Sadly we no longer have the female, but do have the male and its offspring, who are content living out their days in the tropical house.

The new species taking over from them is the Mindanao bleeding-heart dove (*Gallicolumba crinigera*).

They are sitting on their second egg this year after clumsily smashing their first having spent a week incubating it. These birds were particularly successful last year, rearing two squabs. Let's hope we

can continue this success, as these are a managed species. As soon as a recommendation is received by us, the two 2023-bred youngsters will be leaving the collection.

During the recent cold spell, I was worried about my two red whiskered bulbuls being outside in all weather, but they never cease to amaze me with their tolerance for it. I stapled some sheets of bubble wrap to the side of the block of flights to stop the cold wind from bothering them too much and it seems to have worked!

Chris Green is a birdkeeper at Cotswold Wildlife Park & Gardens. www.cotswoldwildlifepark.co.uk

Park Life returns on February 28