

Exhibiting Cockatiels



This fact sheet gives guidance on exhibiting Cockatiels.

COCKATIEL SHOW STANDARDS

GREY COCK

The true grey colour (charcoal) sets the tone for the rest, with yellow in its face and the prominence of its red/orange cheek patches. Its additional white flight feathers, with tinges also in its face and crest, interrupt its colour variety. The melanin influence darkens its beak, legs, feet and claws, and its eyes are black in colour.

GREY HEN

Fully mature Grey hens make little or no change to the extent of colouration that affects the cheek patches and surrounding facial area from one moult to another. Hens change very little and the unmistakable barring on the underside of their tail feathers is distinctively female, whereas the males lose them completely. The colour of all other features, such as eye, beak, legs, feet and claws, remain unchanged and are very dark in colour. Prior to their initial moult youngsters of both sexes look very much alike.

WHITEFACED GREY COCK

This mutation bears a distinct resemblance to the original grey cock, except for the obvious facial colour difference. Like most mutation cockatiels, its name derives from a direct association with the male's appearance. A full white face covers the entire area: from the bridge, just above the cere, it curves down round to the neck and under its chin. The eye colour and melanin influence is the same as seen in the Grey.

WHITEFACED GREY HEN

The Whitefaced Grey hen is somewhat of a misnomer, since the hen's face retains a light grey colour throughout its life. The underside, tail bars and the colouration of all other features are similar to that of the Grey hen.

Note: This mutation, like all other mutations, can be deceptive in appearance when 'Pied' is known to be present. Pied distorts melanin grey in plumage, and also affects the beak and claws.

ALBINO (Cock or Hen) [Whitefaced Lutino]

The plumage of this mutation should be pure-white, with no signs of overlay or wash. Any form of additional colour, which interferes with its natural, pure white plumage, must be seen as a flaw. The beak, legs, feet and claws should be skin-white and their eyes unmistakably pink/red. This eye-colour description is a reference to change, as the bird gets older - pink being associated with youth.

Note: In some parts of the UK, albinos are classified in two categories, namely Albino (red eyed) and Albino (black eyed).

PIED (Cock or Hen)

The ideal is between 75% and 80% clear colour to 25% or 20% of the second more pronounced colour. The darker the second colour the more complementary the pied becomes. Disruption, by blotchy or mottled patches, is an obvious flaw to a show judge. The term symmetrical is used to describe shape and balance of the second and darker colours, which should form on the bird's back or wings. Although their eye colour is distinctly dark, their beak, legs, feet and claws are usually pink/white skin colour. The effect of pied often creates two-tone streaks appearing on the beak and claws, which should be judged similarly to blotchy plumage.

LUTINO (Cock or Hen)

The Lutino, often referred to as a 'white', has a similar appearance to the Albino, because of its red eye-colour and the predominantly white beak, legs, feet and claws. Despite its white appearance, its head and crest retain a degree of yellow colour, which is emphatic in the original grey cockatiel. The extent of yellow in some lutinos has no boundaries, spreading throughout its entire plumage, often made more obvious in the pearled version, which has a deepening effect. A lutino can only be judged fairly in its original form, i.e. white to pale yellow only. Pearled versions should be entered in the Pearl Class. Note: Lutinos are generally renowned for their nervous and skittish behaviour. Many lutinos bear a genetic curse, in the form of a bald patch on the top of the head behind the crest, which might well be attributed to their nervous disposition. This, therefore, makes the affected lutino unsuitable for the show bench.

CINNAMON (Cock or Hen)

Cinnamon, as a colour, is described as brownish yellow. However, since yellow is a separately established colour in other cockatiel mutations, judgment should come down clearly in favour of the darker and deeper brown.

Note: Some disparity may result between males and females, as is also the case in respect of other colours. The beak, legs, feet and claws should be pale, often recognised as cinnamon diluted almost completely. The eye is a deep red/plum colour in the mature specimen; it is lighter in an immature bird.

PEARLED (Cock or Hen)

Markings described as pearled seldom resemble set patterns. The effect of pearling is to disrupt the base colour by the formation of marks, which can be of various shapes like droplets, dots, curves and lines. Looking for set patterns can be further complicated by the extent in size between round and elongated shapes. The term 'lacewing' is determined by elongation, which can only be identified clearly on secondary flight wing feathers. For judging purposes, a balanced and symmetrical pattern, rather than a blanket covering, should be

favoured, similar to the pied description.

SILVER (British)

A 'true-bred' Silver cockatiel is unmistakable when it becomes fully feathered by its distinctive marks. It should have a grey skullcap and its eyes, beak, legs and claws are distinctly jet black in colour. There are, however, cockatiels that resemble the 'true-bred'. They give the impression that they also are silver in colour, but compared with the Grey they are clearly dilute forms (neither grey nor silver). They are referred to as 'dilutes', i.e. dilute grey - a lighter shade - and should not be confused with true Silvers.

CHEEKPATCHED SPLITS

These are cockatiels such as normal Greys, Whitefaced Greys, Silvers, Cinnamons or Yellow Pies with a mottled appearance or disruptions to their base plumage colour, normally found in the area of the bird's neck and particularly at the back.

GUIDELINES FOR JUDGING

DEPORTMENT

A healthy bird will display liveliness, which shows well by using the perch. Without some cage training, the cockatiel is more likely to remain on the floor of the cage or hug the corner if frightened by a viewing audience. Such birds cannot be judged properly, despite any visual attribute it may appear to display. It should perch preferably with a near-upright stance and be alert; as a guide, a 70-degree angle from horizontal. Legs, feet, toes and claws can therefore be clearly judged.

PLUMAGE / GENERAL CONDITION

This refers to the overall visual condition of the cockatiel, which should be clean, especially in the vent area. It should have good tight feathers with particular attention being paid to wing and tail flight feathers. Broken, frayed or split flight feathers make for a poor quality exhibit. Cockatiels undergoing an annual moult are never at their best and, without the full compliment of flight feathers (wing and tail); do not make suitable show birds. Having gone through the initial first full moult, cockatiels should not display a fanned tail. A full, proud crest with gentle, upward curve approximately 40 millimeters is expected.

A cockatiel yet to experience its first moult (chick moult) can create an impression of being much older by giving the illusion of greater size. For this reason it is given its own class until it matures, by which time its actual size can be more accurately determined.

BODY AND SIZE

Like the head size, the body of the bird should be large in proportion, with a well-rounded chest and a broad shoulder span. A cockatiel's body size can sometimes be enlarged by selective diet with a high fat content. A plump cockatiel affected by such a diet is likely to be inactive and lethargic. A hump-backed stance is often associated with obesity. A lively bird should be favoured.

HEAD

A cockatiel with a large round head (golf ball shaped) and large eyes is a type to look for. This combination is difficult to achieve as most cockatiels have small, narrow heads, which can also be flat on top as well as at the back. A strong neck is an advantage too. Judges should check for any possible mucous discharge from the nostrils, cere damage or any beak deformity. All of which are detrimental to good condition.

LEGS, FEET AND CLAWS

Many cockatiels suffer from short legs, which do not compliment a large frame. Long, strong legs and feet are important, keeping size by proportion in mind. Cockatiels should be examined for toe loss or shortening together with claw deficiency, which is often overlooked. Extra long claws are not an advantage in cockatiels.

COLOUR PROMINENCE

Any colour mutation, be it cinnamon, grey or silver, should be well defined, especially if regarded as the principal attribute for consideration. However, when the classification for judgment is pied, the dark colour should be symmetrical. Clear plumage should not be interrupted by blotchiness. In particular, the head and face should be completely without blemish.

WING DEPARTMENT

This issue, often associated with small-framed cockatiels, generally goes unnoticed by most enthusiasts, as it does not impede the bird's ability to fly. It is very much a question of how the bird manages to carry its wings. Most birds have no difficulty in carrying their wings in a natural position, however, it is not unusual to find the occasional exhibit with drooping shoulders, which results in the crossing of the wing tips. This is unfavourable in a show bird and, although not seen as a serious issue, it must be a judging consideration.

GENERAL GUIDANCE

Whitefaced combinations should be entered in the obvious class determined by the cockatiels most prominent colour feature, e.g. Pied, Cinnamon, Pearl, Silver, etc.

Plumage & Markings of Pearls and Lacewings—This mutation is difficult to judge without consensus of opinion by a panel because of the variations created by disruption of the pearled marking, droplets, dashes, lines and curves. The patterns formed by these markings make shapes, which should be carefully examined. The beauty of the pearled effect should be judged similarly to colour prominence favouring a balanced design, which does not need to blanket the entire area of the birds back. Fifty per cent of its primary flight feathers (wings) would constitute an ideal specimen for an award.

The cage, cage front and perches, must be presented with an obvious sense of personal pride, borne out by its appearance. Dirty, cracked or splintered cages are not acceptable. Poor quality cages, i.e. those made with soft ply, crack and splinter posing the risk of injury to both the bird and handler.

The floor of the cage should be covered with a parakeet seed mix to a depth of not more than 10 millimeters (3/8th inch)

A white, water drinker (70 x 50 mm) should be positioned to the front, at the bottom right-hand corner. Topping up should be done without removing the utensil.

Under no circumstances should the practice of placing a hand inside the cage be permitted. In the case of an injured or sick bird, only the show manager is entitled to authorise assistance with the removal of the cage. Stewards should carry out regular spot checks.

Each entry, irrespective of colour mutation, should be judged firstly and within its class for 'Type'.

Judges, and only judges, are permitted to use pencil-sticks to aid perching.

Judges may be required to complete a judging sheet and, using the guidelines issued, should award points on a 1-4 basis for each category for Type and Standards. The exhibit that totals the most points will be deemed the winner. Where awards are made for 2nd and 3rd places, the principle of most points will apply. In the event of a tie, the judge will be required to re-assess the standards and arrive at a final individual placing for Class, Best In Show, etc.

If possible Judges should be available for consultation if an exhibitor seeks clarity on a particular decision. This is not an entitlement for challenge, but simply to explain his or her reasons and how the rules were applied.

Any cockatiel wrongly classified should be re-classified by an appointed show

official.

Specimen copy of a judging sheet

The judging sheet lays down the criteria in order of priority. A maximum of four points can be awarded for each criterion (attribute), which means that the highest possible score is 28 points. In the event of tied score, the judge uses a discretionary right to alter, by adding or subtracting a point or in some cases a half point, to separate the cockatiels for final placings.

| SCORING SHEET FOR JUDGES | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| CLASS | | DESCRIPTION | | | | | | | | |
| Bird Cage No.'s → | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | |
| Attributes : | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Department | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Plumage (General condition) | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Body Size | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Head | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. Feet, Legs & Claws | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6. Colour Density | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7. Wing Department | | | | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL | | | | | | | | | | |
| Final positions | | | | | | | | | | |
| Judge's name : Signature : | | | | | | | | | | |

This fact sheet has been produced for:
The NCA —Spring Gardens, Northampton NN1 1DR
www.nca.uk.net