



*Budgerigar,
Cinnamon opaline
owner/breeder Bill Porter*



*Budgerigar,
Sky-blue opaline
male
owner/breeder
Janet Fuqua*

*Budgerigar,
Normal cobalt male
6 week old fledgling
owner/breeder
Janet Fuqua*

Beginning in Budgies

by Harold Trethaway

I once took a beginner in the Budgie Fancy to task for writing the type of articles which led at least one other newcomer to call for a downward revision of the A.B.S. Standard, before either of these fellows had been involved long enough to have a true picture of the Fancy. Having done this, I feel it is only fair that I should submit an article or two, covering some aspects of the Fancy which have worked for me and for others and should answer some of the questions beginners pose.

Though I do not submit that I have all the right answers, I feel that a lifetime association with various breeds of live-stock and 40 years of successful breeding of bantams, pigeons, rabbits and covies, and since 1963, Budgies, that the experience has taught me some things that are worth passing on to new fanciers.

Of all the small stock with which I have been involved, the Budgerigars through the A.B.S. offers what I consider the best system of protection of newcomers of any of them. The periods which a breeder can spend in the Novice and Intermediate Divisions before having to compete with the more experienced Champions, is not found in other stock, where outside of Junior or Childrens' classes, one must exhibit against the veterans right from the start. With this system in mind, a sensible person will plan his career in Budgies accordingly. He should acquire birds that will make him competitive in the Novice Division and give him the experience in management that will lead to the next step up to Intermediate. He should avoid going all out as a novice, and buying high priced birds that he does not have the experience to use properly; the failure of such an investment often leads to the person quitting the Fancy. The old adage of creep before you walk is very good advice. As you acquire more experience, you should be able to see where your birds are lacking most and gradually buy birds that will help correct these faults. This gradual improvement of your stock is a great source of satisfaction and is the background you will need later as you reach the Champion Division.

There is a saying among horsemen that a good horse can't be a bad color. This applies also to Budgies, and in starting, one should buy the best birds he can for type, size and above all, head points which are so important, regardless of color. After you are established, you can add a rare color or two to work with. If you judge beauty only by color, you are in trouble to start with, and will never get to judge the "Miss America Pageant".

I would advise the Novice to read as many of the worthwhile books written on the Budgie as possible, but if you can only afford one, I would say that "required reading" is "The Cult of the Budgerigar" by W. Watmough. Mr. Watmough was not only a highly respected breeder of Budgies and Pigeons but was also a journalist, and his talent in this field is demonstrated by his excellent coverage in great detail of every aspect of the Fancy. His book is often referred to as the "Budgie Bible".

To sum up this article, a person should use his novice years to establish a bloodline, which is the key to success. Buy young stock birds from a breeder who each year comes up with some top class birds, not just a good bird now and then (blood will tell). Watch the leg bands of the winners in the Show Reports or lists of registered birds as it will tell you who has to rely on the same old birds to show. As you need new stock for improvement, go back to this breeder or one who has the same bloodlines. Don't overshadow your birds and never show your hens until you are well established. They belong home in the breeding cage, not in a show cage being hauled around the country. Once you have some reliable hens to work with, don't buy hens; put your money into one good cock that is strong in the points you need to improve. Breed him to several of the best hens, fostering the eggs to some of your lesser pairs, which are so important for this purpose as well as creating the chatter and atmosphere of a colony without which you will have difficulty in getting your birds to breed. Remember this, you don't start with show birds — you should end with show birds.

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