Flecky, Coalface and Blackfaced Budgerigars

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Is there a relationship between these three forms? Today the answer is “who knows…”

What do we know about the three forms:

1. Flecking

It was in late 70’s that breeders notice “spots” of different degrees on the heads of our budgies. Particulary the opalines were effected. Some called them flecky’s others frosted, suffused, ticking etc. Question is would we tolerate those birds? Therefore we have to do an explanation...

Dots of black melanin appear on the cap of the bird, sometimes they can be heardly seen or they can take over the hole cap of the bird. It has evolved as our birds have improved overall, especially by the use of big spotted opalines we practice to develop our birds to the “Ideal”. What is the reason that those dots appear? Is there a relationship between heavy flecked birds and big spotted birds? Is it hereditary? Only scientific research can give us an answer.

What will we do on the show bench with those birds? In W.B.O. GUIDELINES FOR JUDGES AND EXHIBITORS you can read and I quote: “FLECKING is defined as any dark mark (flecks, grizzle or zebra) on the crown or frontal of the head, these markings should be penalised severely bearing in mind that the standard for every variety denotes THE FRONTAL AND CROWN MUST BE CLEAR AND FREE FROM ALL MARKINGS.” end of quote.

In practice we see that judges and breeders decided that these dots have to be judged as faults but to ban completely any birds carrying flecks failed. The judges realised that a clean headed pet bird could defeat a super show bird for that reason and they decided to use their common sense and Judge what is in front of them. Result: not one flecked bird will be considered for higher awards and that is acceptable. If we all use our common sense then we try to breed those clean headed birds keeping in mind the “standard”. That is the only chance to get rid of flecky birds on the long term.
2. Coalface

Coalface appeared in the aviary of Mr. Darren Jones (UK). C | D Jones have been breeding budgies for 30 years and have been members of the Budgerigar Society since 1984. They have been champion breeders since 1995.

What they call “coalface” is a result of a Dominant pied as father and a Opaline Greygreen as the mother. Neither bird was heavily marked or flecked, nor were the siblings. The mask and back of the bird is black. The bird was selected as a baby to be sold as a pet. It was available for sale for over 4 months, but nobody wanted it. As it got older it also got blacker. They don’t know if this is a new mutation but they are now breeding from the hen and her sisters so they will try and reproduce the variety over the next few years to see if they can establish it’s genetic make up. They call the bird “coalface” because they are based in the town of Coalville, Leicestershire, so what is in a name.

This “Coalface” is in my opinion genetic different from the last item in this article the “blackface”

Heavy flecked, mottled perhaps or an other form of Coalface?

Picture taken by Mrs. Toni Poad (New Zealand)

Could be melanistic just like Coalface. Melanistic or Melanism is the scientific name of the occurrence of an increased amount of dark pigmentation in an organism.
More coalface budgies

This Coalface is very similar to the bird of C/D Jones

This two hens are born in December 2010 in the aviary of Mr. Lilliot Ronning Norway. Parents are Greywing Violet cock/Recessive pied x Yellowface Blue Recessive Pied. Just like in Blackface budgerigars this form is related with Recessive Pied. No further details available for the moment.

More information not available.
3. Blackface

In a previous article that I wrote and that you can find under “articles” on my website I give details about Blackface budgerigars. This mutation is Melanistic and his inheritance is Recessive. It can be bred in all colours and it is perhaps the most interesting of all as it exhibits an overall increase of melanin in all areas, through this we have enlargement of spots and deepening of body colour. Features of Blackface are:

- Darker body colour
- Melanistic Lines over the whole body
- Remember that the first cocks were related with Recessive Pied. In the offspring we saw birds with a small headspot, indication to split Recessive Pied.

It could be a new challenge for the hobby but like I already put forward in my first article illness came along and we have to accept that the mutation is **extinct**. What a loss to the hobby.

Read more about Melanin in the book *A guide to Colour Mutations & Genetics in Parrots* by Dr. Terry Martin BVSc Where you also can find my pictures.