

**Getting
Started
With
Exhibition
Budgerigars**

**By David Botha
of The
Mount Gambier
Budgerigar
Society
Inc. 2**

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FOREWORD

David Botha joined the Mount Gambier Budgerigar Society in 2003 after moving to Australia from the Republic of South Africa, (Orange Free State) in 2002. David saw the need for a Handbook to present to Beginners in the fancy.

On reading David's "Getting Started with Exhibition Budgerigars" I found the contents simplistic enough for Beginners to understand and give them guidance to commence in the hobby and advanced enough to assist more Senior Breeders.

The Hobby is both enjoyable and challenging. There are positives and negatives, there will be years that nothing goes wrong and years where everything appears to be a disaster, that is Budgerigar Breeding.

You will enjoy this hobby even more if you take the attitude that winning is not everything, but the challenge of improving is. The big bonus is that Everlasting Friendships can be made through this wonderful and enjoyable Hobby.

Good Luck

Nigel Tonkin (Secretary MTG BS S.A.)

History of The Mount Gambier Budgerigar Society

They started out as a **Caged Bird Club** in 1979 and in August of 1984 they split into the **Mount Gambier Budgerigar Society (MTG BS)** with 27 members, and a **Canary Club**.

We have held a successful diploma show every year since 1985 and since 2002 we have synchronized our show date and venue with the Mount Gambier A&H show.

We currently have 21 members of which 3 are Life Members:

- 1) Nigel Tonkin – June 1994
- 2) Doreece Brunton – June 1995
- 3) Frank Tilley -

Our current Management Committee stands as follows:

- 1) **President: Frank Tilley – 0887254303**
- 2) **Vice President: David Botha – 0417859566**
- 3) **Secretary: Nigel Tonkin – 0887254229**
- 4) **Treasurer/Ring Steward: Doreece Brunton - 0887256052**

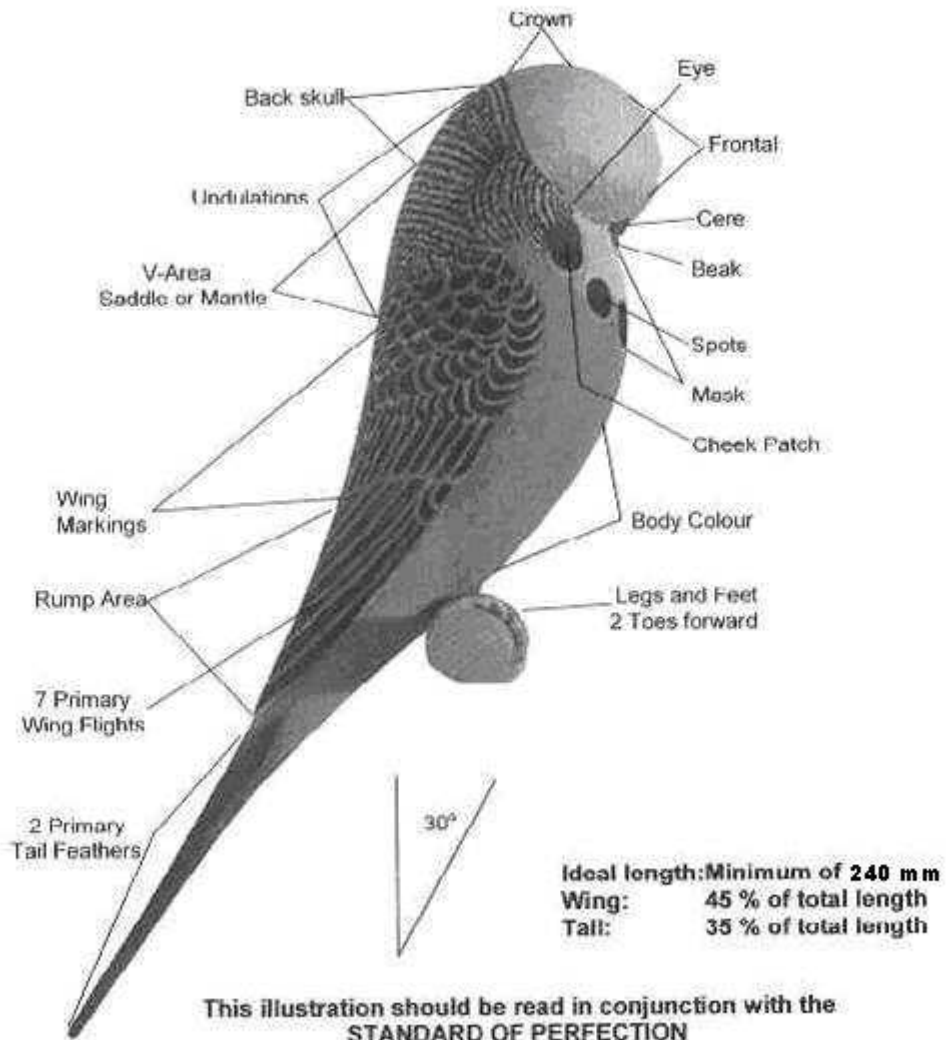
History Of The Exhibition Budgerigar

The Word **Budgerigar** stem from the Aboriginal word **Budgerygah**.

The first Budgerigars were believed to have been brought to Europe by John Gould where the first exhibition budgerigars were developed in the early 1890 's. The first Budgerigar Club was formed in 1925 in the U.K. and the name of the Club was changed to the **Budgerigar Society** in 1930 at the request of King George y when he became a patron.

Exhibition Budgerigars look a lot different from their native ancestors in the wild as is clear from the Ideal Standard that we have today. This was achieved through many years of selective breeding.

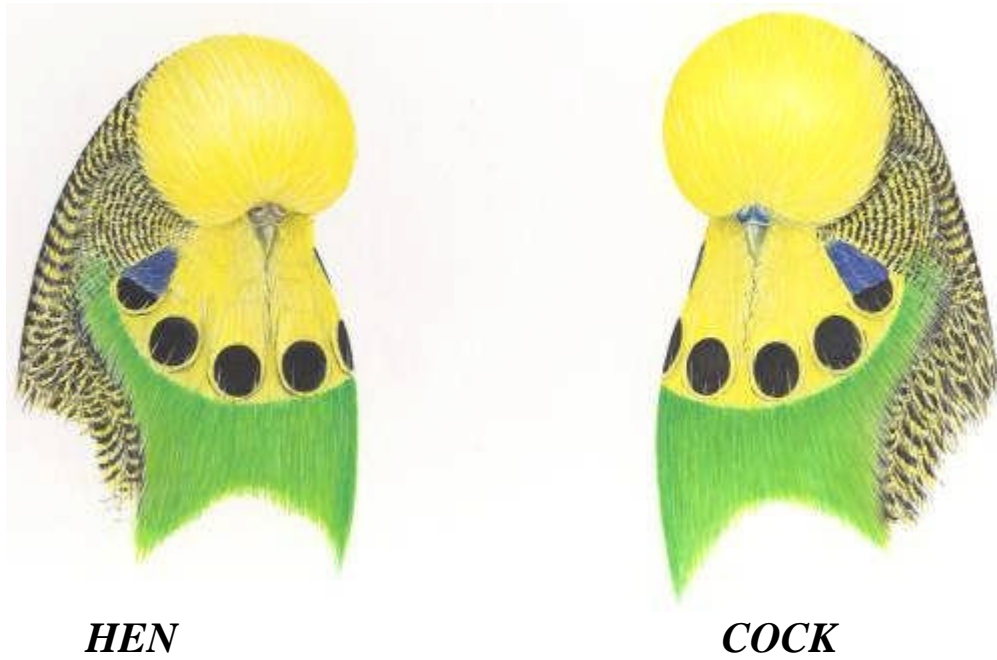
THE MAIN FEATURES OF A BUDGERIGAR



Ideal Australian Exhibition Budgerigar



Copyright ANBC



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Looking at the sketch of the Modern Ideal Exhibition Budgerigar as commissioned by the ANBC and painted by Roy Aplin of the UK, one soon realizes that it is impossible to Breed a bird that looks exactly like that but ,it has proved invaluable towards breeding the birds we have today. The aim is to breed a bird which has as many of ideal features as possible and achieving this is the whole attraction in breeding Exhibition Budgerigars.

Getting Started

If you are interested in breeding Budgerigars and think you have enough persistence to breed Exhibition Budgerigars (make no mistake you will need a lot of patience and determination to realise your dream of one day breeding a Show Winner), the best way to start is to join your local Budgerigar Club, get to know the Club Members and ask them for advice.

You will need to build an aviary to keep the birds in when they are not paired up, breeding cages, nest boxes and a cage about twice the size of a breeding cage (nursery cage) to put your youngsters in when they are first weaned before transferring them to your aviary.

Following is some suggested sizes for the above and will be greatly influenced by the amount of space and money you have to put towards this new hobby of yours.

Aviaries

Rectangular: 6m long, 1.5m wide and 2.2m high with perches on opposing ends and if possible one half covered on all sides for shelter.

Nursery Cages

Rectangular: 900mm wide, 400mm high and 500mm deep with at least the front side covered with wire and with two doors in the front about 150mm square.

Breeding Cages

Rectangular: 600mm wide, 400mm high and 350mm deep with at least the front covered with wire, a 150mm square door in the front and a 80mm round or square hole either on the front or the side to hang the nest box over.

Nest Boxes

Rectangular: 150mm high, 150mm wide and 200mm deep with a 80mm round or square hole for the birds to enter and an inspection opening through which you can check the eggs and the chicks.

Buying Birds

If you are new to all of this, take a moment to distinguish between Cocks and Hens by looking at their ceres that is the fleshy part just above the upper beak. In Cocks the appearance can vary between Dark Navy Blue to Light Pink depending on the variety. In Hens the colour of the Cere can vary between White to Dark Brown, the latter is visually suggesting that the Hen is likely to be in breeding condition.

The **First** thing to remember is to buy from reputable breeder, to determine this you need to speak to other breeders about what they think of their fellow breeders birds and look at recent and long term results. Get to know the breeders you intend to buy birds from.

The **Second** thing is to buy healthy birds. Although it is hard to be certain of the health of the birds, there are some things you can look out for that will give you a fairly good idea of that requirement.

- 1) If the breeding room and aviary's are neat, tidy, clean and well maintained you will know that the birds will be well taken care of.
- 2) If during the day a bird does not move around a lot and sits on the perch with all of its feathers puffed up and sometimes with its head tucked under its wing and it is not chirpy, you can be certain that bird is not 100%.
- 3) If the cere in healthy looking birds be it Cocks or Hens are smooth and a nice Dark Blue or Brown colour without any signs of moisture discharge from the nostrils, you can be fairly satisfied that you are getting a healthy bird.

Note: Do not buy Deformed or Badly shaped birds!!

The **Third** point to keep in mind is the Quality of the birds you want. For most, the better the quality, (having more characteristics towards the Ideal) the more expensive they will be.

You buy as good a quality bird as you can afford, hopefully from good genetic material, and through selective and special breeding techniques you breed the best bird you can. When you can afford to buy better visual material that is genetically related to your initial purchases, you can upgrade your whole stock.

Going through the process of breeding and upgrading your stock is what makes breeding Exhibition Budgerigars worth while. It is like an artist painting a masterpiece, it does not happen over night, it takes time and thought and patience and different techniques to finally achieve the final result.

There are so many different colour varieties out there that you can breed, I would suggest however that you just go out and breed a good Budgerigar before starting to go for specific colours.

Good Luck and Enjoy!!

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Feeding

Once again you will find there are as many views on what to feed your birds as there are breeders. The thing to remember is that like us they need a balanced diet with lots of protein.

The greater variety of foodstuffs you give them, the more expensive it is going to cost you, so I suggest you start with the basics:

As dry food (seed) give them a mixture of White Millet and Canary seed.

As soft food (soaked) give them Oats or Wheat soaked over night.

As greens give them Spinach or Silver Beet (make sure they have not been sprayed with poisons and rinse them in water before giving them to the birds).

Give them Calcium supplements like Cuttlefish or special Calcium-Iodine blocks.

You will find that they really enjoy a Gum branch with soft new leaves on.

During the breeding season and especially when the chic's are emerging you can give them a special Budgie Starter mix with the soft food to supplement extra vitamins, minerals and protein.

Make sure you give the birds' fresh water daily and discard any leftover soft food every day.

Remember that Feeding is half of your Breeding!!

Things That Can Go Wrong

It would be unfair to get you all excited about breeding Budgerigars and not tell you about the things that can go wrong and frustrate you, not to mention causing you to want to give it all up and take up drinking or smoking. These things happen to all breeders at some time or another and is a learning curve that we all must accept and make the best of, as long as you don't let it get you down you will be right, just remember it happens to the most experienced breeders out there.

There are too many things to name and it is best if you have a look at the website links at the end of this booklet or get a hold of some of the Literature mentioned from your local Library if possible. You can also go on the internet and type in www.google.com.au and then type the subject you need information on and you will be amazed at the amount of information available out there.

A really good way to minimize your chances of Diseases, Parasites or Bacterial Infections is to Quarantine newly purchased birds for a period of 3-4 weeks and make sure you do not introduce sick birds to your aviary. Do not give them any food that has been fermenting and keep your aviary and breeding room clean, dry and free from rotting material especially during the Wet Season.

Pairing Your Birds

Pairing is an exciting time; it is when you get to decide where you want to go with your budgerigar future. Look at your birds, they will tell you when they are ready to breed. Overall they are nearing breeding condition when they have finished losing their old feathers (Moulting) and totally finished growing new ones and when they are lively, chirping and displaying by raising the feathers on their head and when the Cocks and Hens are feeding each other. Nature also gives you an idea when wild Birds commence to breed.

When you pair the birds up, think about the Standard and pair birds that you think will cancel each other out in terms of faults so you end up with an end result as close to the Ideal as possible. Don't be disappointed if the chicks do not turn out the way you imagined, it will depend on their Genetic makeup and the features you sometimes cannot see, plus experiences over a period of time.

The literature available is excellent and I strongly recommend you read up on breeding as things will become much clearer once you do.

Books and Literature

The most important book and one that can be considered as the Budgerigar Breeders Bible is: **The Cult of the Budgerigar** By W. Watmough.

Another good one is: **Best In Show** By Gerald S. Binks.

There are many other good books on Genetics in Budgerigars and good books by Cyril Rogers.

Following is a couple of website links that have a lot of useful and important information on Budgerigar Breeding, Feeding, Diseases and so on.

<http://www.tuxford.dabsol.co.uk/articles.htm>

<http://www.birdhealth.com.au>

<http://home.clara.net/np21/normal.htm>

http://www.poozleanimus.com/dir_budgerigar.htm

<http://www3.sympatico.ca/davehansen/links.html>

Remember the more you read up on budgerigars, the better understanding you will have on how to care for and breed them to obtain the results you want.