

WHERE SHOULD THE YELLOWFACED BLUE BE PLACED IN THE MATRIX?

The following proposals relate to the Yellow Faced Blue mutations and where they should be placed in future revisions of THE STANDARD. Although the conservatives in our hobby will take a superficial glance and see the proposals below as too radical, I suggest that they should look deeper and understand the scientific (genetic) basis that supports the proposed upgrade. THE STANDARD has always been based on recognition of different mutations from wildtype; however, previous arrangements of the Matrix have not adequately made the distinction between COLOUR MUTATIONS and VARIETY MUTATIONS. Furthermore, few would argue against the urgent need to make the birds more attractive, along the lines suggested, both in the aviaries and on the show bench in order to promote a hobby that is clearly in decline, as evidenced by Australia-wide declining club memberships and declining ring sales.

Colour mutations

The three COLOUR MUTATIONS from Green are Blue, English Yellowfaced Blue and Australian Yellowfaced Blue. These three mutations with blue body colour are different mutations of the same gene from wildtype Green (because intercrossing the three blue bodied mutations fails to cause reversion to wildtype green, which would inevitably occur when intercrossing nonallelic mutations). These three blue bodied mutations together with Green represent the four underlying colours in budgerigars.

Variety mutations

Reading down the Matrix, the VARIETY MUTATIONS are Blackeyed Self, Red Eyed Self, Clearwing, Greywing, Cinnamonwing, Opaline, Lacewing, Fallow, Spangle, Dominant Pied, Danish Recessive Pied and Crested. As an aside, Blackeyed Self, Clearwing and Greywing are perhaps the same VARIETY MUTATION with its phenotype diverging in three directions by selection at modifier genes, and Lacewing may be a composite of two VARIETY MUTATIONS, Red Eyed Self and Cinnamonwing. All VARIETY MUTATIONS have in the past been allowed only in two of the four possible COLOUR MUTATIONS, green and blue. This proposal advocates expanding each VARIETY MUTATION to include all four COLOUR MUTATIONS.

Positioning of the (English) Yellow Faced Blue in the Matrix

Currently Yellow Faced Blue sits above Spangle and the Pies, which retain their primary designations irrespective of whether the blues in these varieties have yellow or white faces. Conversely, Fallow, Lacewing, Clearbody, Opaline, Spangle Double Factor, Cinnamonwing, Greywing, Clearwing, Albino and Blackeyed White all lose their

primary designations once we put yellow faces on them, and for the purposes of exhibition we are then forced by the current Matrix to regard them all as Yellow Faced Blue. The outcome – as Yellow Faced Blues and despite their attractive appearance many of these other varieties are rendered uncompetitive, never seen on display on the show bench and therefore there is no incentive to breed them. The reason why Spangle Double Factor recently changed position in the Matrix was to make it consistent with Albino – when both have yellow faces both are now regarded as Yellow Faced Blue rather than the previous situation where Spangle Double Factor with a yellow face remained a Spangle Double Factor. The “correction” in the new Standard in my view was done the wrong way round. Instead, the Matrix should have been changed to leave Spangle Double Factor where it was but reorganized so that Albinos with yellowfaces remained as Redeyes. They do, after all, still have red eyes despite their yellow faces!

The critical point in determining where Yellow Faced Blue sits in THE STANDARD is the genetic basis for the Yellow Faced Blue, and recognition of it as another COLOUR MUTATION of Green rather than incorrectly as another VARIETY MUTATION as is currently the case by the way it is positioned in the Matrix. To keep the argument simple, of the yellowfaces, consider only the English Yellowface at this point. Green, Blue and (English) Yellowfaced Blue are allelomorphs – products of different colour mutations of the same gene. Thus, Yellow Faced Blue should follow Normal Green Series and Normal Blue Series in the Matrix, and the Yellow Faced Blue in this position should be restricted to the normal variety, in the same way as the current Green and Blue Series above it in the same section (all COLOUR MUTATIONS) are restricted to normal.

So if this change was made where does that leave all of the other varieties that have yellowfaces? That is easy. The only COLOUR MUTATIONS on THE STANDARD as Standard Primary Varieties, which are mutations of the wild type Green, are Blue and Yellow Faced Blue. All of the other Standard Primary Varieties on the Matrix are VARIETY MUTATIONS rather than COLOUR MUTATIONS. Therefore, it is logical for all of the Standard Primary Varieties that are VARIETY MUTATIONS to be represented in all of their COLOUR MUTATIONS – Green, Blue and Yellow Faced Blue. Currently the Matrix has a blank line between Spangle Double Factor and Opaline. If Yellow Faced Blue is inserted below Normal Blue Series it would be appropriate to insert another blank line in the Matrix, this time between Yellow Faced Blue and Blackeyed Self, highlighting the distinction that needs to be recognized between the COLOUR MUTATIONS recognized as the first three Standard Primary Varieties above the blank line and all of the VARIETY MUTATIONS recognized as Standard Primary Varieties below it.

What would we achieve by reforming the Standard in the way suggested? The VARIETY MUTATIONS recognized in the Matrix as Standard Primary Varieties would all be represented by all of their COLOUR MUTATIONS, rather than just two as currently is the case. The COLOUR MUTATIONS must first be given due recognition as distinct from VARIETY MUTATIONS by placing them ahead of the other Standard Primary Varieties, at the head of the Matrix. Thus, there would be a much more interesting range of colours, extended to Yellowfaced Blue, seen in all of the VARIETY

MUTATIONS. That would do wonders for promotion of the hobby, as well as being more scientifically based than the present arrangement of the Standard Primary Varieties in the Matrix.

The Australian Yellow Faced Blue

This is another colour mutation of Green, another allelomorph in the Green-Blue-English Yellow Faced Blue-Australian Yellow Faced Blue Series all based on different COLOUR MUTATIONS of the same gene. The genetics of the Australian Yellow Faced Blue is much more complex than that of the English version for reasons I won't go into here, other than to say that it relates to its genetic linkage to the dark factor (physical proximity on the same chromosome) and the need for the Australian Yellowfaced Blue to be double factor for the blue colour to remain unsuffused with yellow. This mutation is very popular among backyard breeders as evidenced by their occurrence at pet shops. Yet it is rarely seen on the show bench. That needs to change. It is in reality one of the most attractive varieties, especially when combined with violet. Albino, Clearbody and Crested have all made recent remarkable improvement, coinciding with their inclusion as classes on the national show schedule. The same would happen with Australian Yellowface, once it is separated from English Yellowface.

The Yellow Faced Blue on the Matrix needs to be split into the English Yellow Faced Blue and the Australian Yellow Faced Blue, the latter then needs to become a class in its own right in the Nationals. As a Standard Primary Variety it would need to be exhibited as a double factor yellowface as is the current requirement, but when present in the varieties below it on the Matrix the single factor version should be allowed which would substantially increase the range of colours further adding to the interest of each class. That is, the single factor Australian Yellowface should not be penalized for colour except at the head of the Matrix where it appears with the other normals, immediately below blue. What could be more attractive than blue and yellow peds – with the single factor yellow faces suffused through the parts of the body that would otherwise be white, or sea-greens and modified cobalts in addition to the existing colours of all of the Standard Primary Varieties?

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