

de Zebra

International

Magazine

4

of

2022

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Belgische Zebravinken Club
Magazine

Our passion: zebra finches !

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Photo on the cover

Blackface orangebreasted blackbreasted isabel fawn cock
by ©Bart Houben

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Preface

1 2 3 ...Showtime!

Indeed, in our country, Belgium, the preparation of our birds for the shows is coming to an end. In a few weeks our 'champions' will be studied by fanciers, novices and visitors of our regional shows.

Australia was the starter with a show in Queensland. The show of Malta just finished. Portugal is ready to open for fanciers and visitors. We are on the break of the shows of Kuwait and Bahrain.

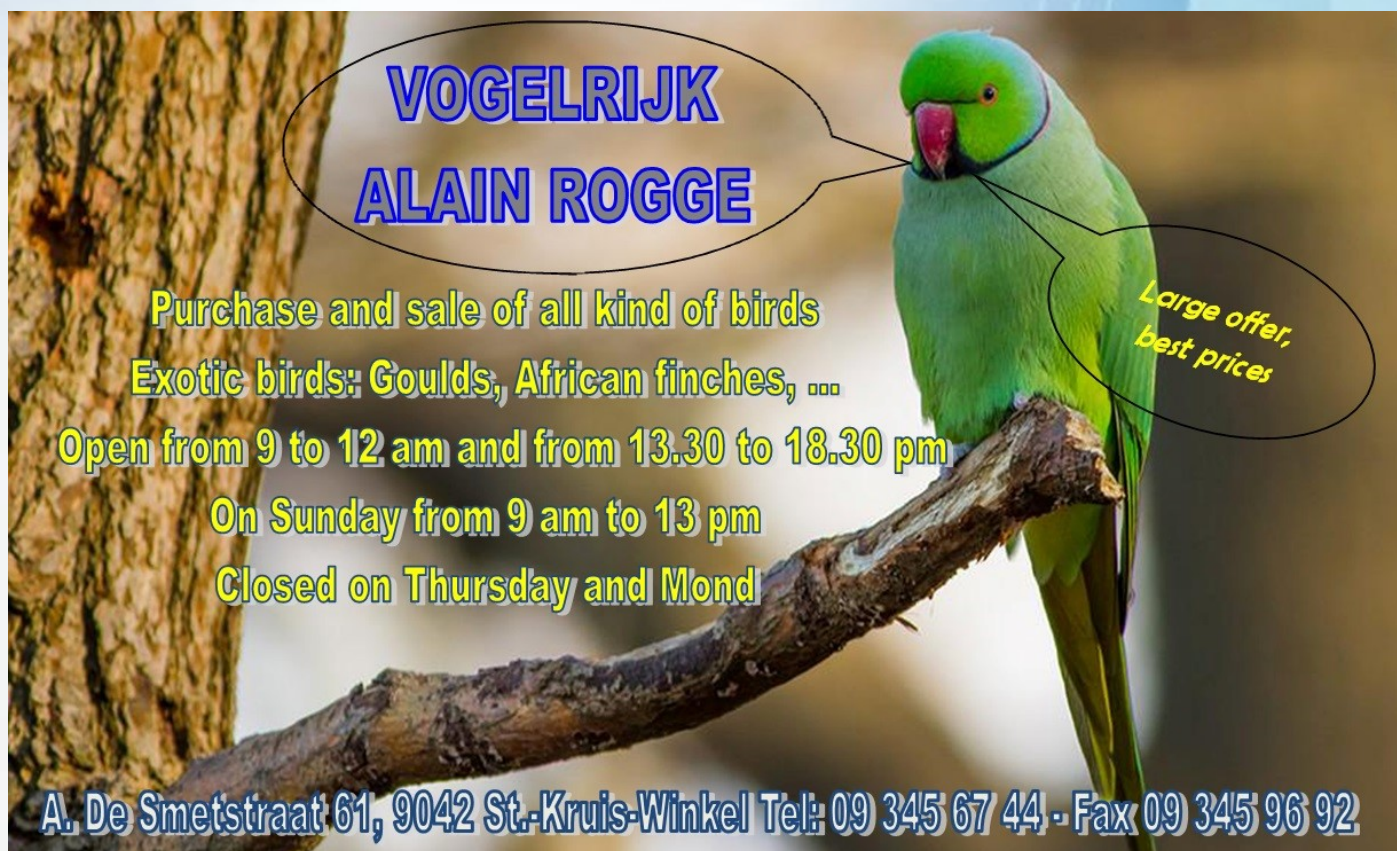
As you see the competition to present the best zebra finches is starting all over the world. Judges will be selecting the winners. And the winners will be proud.

Shows are the ideal promotion for our zebra finches, our hobby and our zebra finch societies. So we call all participants to share their hobby with their friends by inviting their friends to visit the shows.

We thank all organizations for their efforts and ask them to send us photos (and the logo of the show) of the winners. We promise them to publish a collage of the photos and logos to promote their show.

We believe all will do their utmost: organizations, participants and ...zebra finches!!!
Success to all!

François



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Visiting Hamont (Belgium) and the zebra finches of

John Bergs

My name is John Bergs, I was born and raised in Hamont, Limburg.

How did you come to breed zebra finches?

In the year 1998 I had a pet bird aviary with zebra finches and other birds. I was looking for a blackface grey hen. I saw an article in the newspaper of 1999 about Jacky Meus who was then world champion with blackface grey. I contacted him for a hen. I visited Jacky and his breeding room and we started talking. One thing led to another and when I returned home, I had not just one hen but about ten couples of zebra finches in my car. That's the moment my passion for zebra finches started. Through Jacky I also got to know the BZC because he invited me to the show in Lummen. From the year 2000 till 2007 I have participated in several shows with nice results. At the end of 2007 I stopped my hobby because of health reasons. But I never got rid of my love for zebra finches and so in 2020 I started again breeding zebra finches.

You are known as a breeder of ... (mutation or colour combination). Why that colour/combination? What requirements do you set for that mutation/combination?

I am a breeder of the classic colours. I prefer fawn, because I like that nice warm colour. I try to breed my fawn zebra finches as warm as possible.

What does your breeding room look like? Do you have a separate room for your young birds?

I have a nice space for my zebra finches that is furnished with about 50 breeding cages and 40 training cages. For my young birds I have six flight cages in a separate room.



Cages for offspring

What does a day of 'zebra finches' look like?

The light goes on at 6.30 am and goes out again at 10.30 pm. I start in the morning by giving fresh water, giving them egg food and topping up the food bowls. Shortly after noon I inspect the nest and ring the offspring. In the evening, I visit my birds again to check that everything is in order.

How do you select and prepare your birds for shows? What kind of shows do you compete in?

Birds eligible for show are caged in training cages to train them. I select mainly on colour because I still consider the zebra finch a colour bird. I only participate in the regional shows of BZC.

Do you have any secrets about the food? What do you feed your zebra finches?

I do not have any secrets regarding the food. I give my birds the zebra finch mixture of Hoebregts supplemented with some weed seeds. I give them egg food from "de Witte Molen" and once a week I add vitamins to the water: Omni-Vit from Versele Laga. I give French yellow millet to my offspring when they fly out.

What do you use to cover the bottom of the cages?

I use shell sand because the birds like to scratch in it and I like the smell of anise.





How do you compose your couples? What is the base for your selection?

When selecting my pairs I look at colour, type and size. By this I mean, for example, a dark partner together with a lighter one, a big bird with a smaller one, etc.

Where do you get new blood and how do you choose it?

I get new blood from fellow breeders. Sometimes to improve the colour and sometimes to improve the size. This according to my needs.

Are you a member of a club? What are the advantages of such a membership?

I am a member of BZC because it is a special club for zebra finches. Within BZC you meet fanciers with the same passion.

Are you a winter grower or a summer grower and why?

My breeding season lasts from mid-October to about mid-April because I participate in shows. So my birds get the time needed to be in full colour and model, and to be trained.

Do you give vitamins in addition to seeds and egg food? Which ones and why?

I give Omni-Vit from Versele Laga to keep my birds in good overall condition.

What do you do with couples that take bad care of the offspring? And what do you do with the offspring of such a couple?

Couples that do not take care of their offspring are sold at the local bird shop. I always try to transfer their offspring to another couple. I always register in my book the relationship between offspring and parents.

What advice can you give young fanciers and starting ones?

Start with the classic colours and do not be tempted too quickly by combinations. Contact experienced breeders for the purchase of your birds and avoid buying birds from a shop. Do not be afraid to ask questions. And join a club such as BZC.

What do you find most difficult in the breeding of zebra finches? Maintaining the size? The model? The colour? Why?

I find breeding a good showbird the most difficult because you have to maintain a good size, a good model and a good colour in one bird.

Are you a breeder who pays only attention to the standard for the shows or do you also experiment? Why and what do you look for in particular?

Mostly I pay attention to the standard because I mainly breed the classic colours. Sometimes I experiment with a maximum of two couples, especially with blackface.



Cages
Preparing for show

Do you use split birds for breeding? If so, which ones? Why? And what do you look for in split birds?

I try to work with split birds as little as possible because this does not always benefit the colour.



CFW offspring



Blackface fawn

What do you think a special club for zebra finches should do to help its members?

Publishing a magazine with useful tips and information. Organizing a young bird day, etc....
But that is exactly what BZC does.

How do you see the future of the special clubs for zebra finches (BZC)?

The future depends on the youth. So there should always be new young members as the older ones drop out. This is necessary for the existence of our hobby.

How do you select your couples to maintain the warm fawn colour? What do you look for in the cock and what do you look for in the hen? Would you please put these criteria in order of importance?

I cannot explain clearly what I look for in the cock or the hen as every year I am limited to the stock of birds I have available. Regular insertion of new blood is necessary to keep the warm colour.

The criteria I look for are:

1. The depth of colour (as warm brown as possible).
2. The depth of colour of cheek and flank.
3. The darkest markings possible.

Do you use other mutations to improve your strain? If so, which and why?

No, I do not.

Describe your method of mating. How do you bring your zebra finches into breeding condition? First the cocks or first the hens?

Before coupling I put the cocks in a breeding cage. A few days later I add the hens. During one week they get Omni-Vit in the water. Two days after coupling, they get the nest box and coconut fibre to build their nest.

Are you an experimental breeder? If so, which combinations do you try?

When I experiment I mainly try out the combinations with blackface: blackface fawn, blackface lightback grey, etc...

How do you maintain your cages and aviaries?

I clean the cages once every two or three weeks. I always put fresh shell sand on the bottom. Drinking bottles and food bowls are also cleaned.

Text and photos: ©John Bergs



Humidity conditions for zebra finches

**Text and photos: @Jesse van Es
www.ZebravinkenMutaties.nl**



How important is the right humidity is with birds is heavily underestimated. Also with the breeding of zebra finches, in fact with all birds. What many bird breeders do not know is that a bad breeding season in many cases is caused by the humidity. The Netherlands has a rather variable climate, with large fluctuations in temperature and rainfall, resulting in sometimes large fluctuations in humidity.

This article concerns the consequences of too high or too low humidity during the breeding season. We discuss what you can do about it. This article is aimed in particular at zebra finches and other bird breeders who breed in closed, ventilated or unventilated spaces. You can hardly influence the results of the fluctuations of the humidity in the outdoor aviary. Our purpose is to draw your own conclusions from this article.

A fluctuation in the humidity percentage is not a problem. After all, humidity is almost always higher at night than during the day because the temperature is lower at night. Warm air can hold comparatively more moisture than cold air. However, a prolonged (several days) too high or too low humidity in the breeding space can have dramatic consequences. After years of keeping track your data and percentages and consequences, and reading many scientific research reports, it can be concluded that the eggs of a zebra finch are demonstrably most sensitive in the first days. Especially from day 3 to 5 of the development of the embryo and from day 11 to 13 of the hatching.

An egg breathes!

Did you know that a zebra finch egg breathes? An embryo naturally needs oxygen even though it is in an egg! Because a zebra finch's egg is very small. Let's compare it with an egg of a turkey. Did you know that an egg of a turkey exchanges almost 1 litre of gases PER DAY? That's why humidity in the breeding space is also mega important for the development of an egg? An egg can literally drown or dry out!

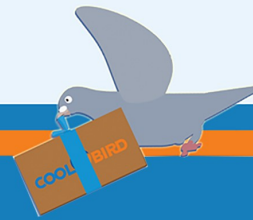
The right humidity level for birds

The right humidity level for birds, which should be maintained during incubation, is around 60%. Just before hatching and during hatching it must be a little higher: the ideal humidity is around 70%. Do you have several breeding couples and do your nests not hatch simultaneously? Then just try to stay between 60 and 70% humidity. Normally about 90 to 95% of the fertilized eggs will hatch. To be able to determine the humidity and maintain the correct humidity, you must of course first make sure that you can measure the humidity in your breeding space.

The right hygrometer

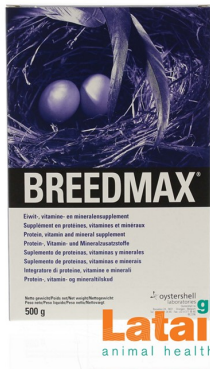
Make sure that you have at least two hygrometers of different brands in your breeding area at all times. Or one of which you are certain is working properly. Do the hygrometers not differ more than a few percent from each other? Then they are most likely reliable. Personally, I have 3 hygrometers of different brands for each room at different locations and heights. Some hygrometers are adjustable, others are not. Keep that in mind when buying a hygrometer.

Digital hygrometers seem to be much better than analogue hygrometers these days. They do cost a little more, but it's well worth it for the quality you get in return.

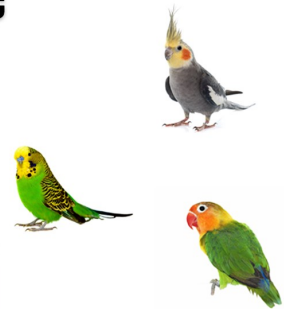
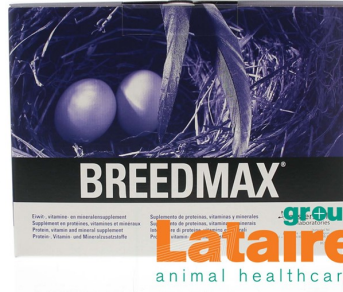


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Humidity too low

If the humidity in your breeding room is around 50% or lower for a few days, there is a chance that some or all of your eggs will dry out and the embryos will die. This happens especially around day 4 of incubation or around day 12 just before hatching. This can sometimes be seen at the air chamber of the egg, which in many cases becomes larger. This is because there is proportionally more air in the egg and less moisture. Obviously, the lower the humidity, the more eggs will die.

If the humidity is too low at hatching, below 60%, then there is a good chance that the young will not be able to hatch and may die just before hatching around day 12, because it dries out. Often you will see an (almost) fully grown young dead in the egg. Sometimes they have started hatching on day 13, but then get stuck because the membrane dries out and becomes too hard. They then do not have enough strength to break free from the hard membrane, dry out and die.

How do you recognize an early dead embryo?

Around day 4 a mini embryo with a few blood vessels is hardly visible with a fertilized egg. Then it is difficult to distinguish a dead embryo from a fertilized egg. The blood vessels of a dead embryo of 3 to 5 days old disappear visibly within a few days after death. The egg then becomes slightly more orange in colour. A dead egg can therefore also be recognized by its slightly more orange colour, instead of yellow.

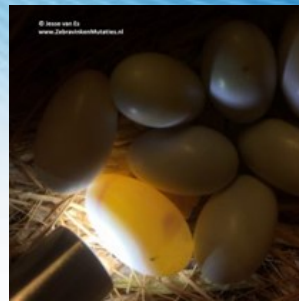


Photo 1: Fertilized and alive, Photo 2: Deceased (+/- 1 day dead), Photo 3: Deceased (+/- 3 days dead). Photo 4 : Fertilized

Humidity too high

A prolonged too high humidity in birds can of course also occur. An egg can literally drown in this. At a percentage of 80% or higher you will see a difference in the development of the eggs. However, because this fortunately doesn't happen very often in indoors: only with very prolonged rainfall in combination with ventilation. I can't draw any certain conclusions from this yet about when this, in most cases, happens and how to recognize it in the developing embryo/young. Presumably (based on only a few cases just before hatching) you can recognize them by young that are clearly fully developed in the egg and have died. When opening the egg, they are not dry but still very moist.

Increase air humidity

In an average indoor space in the Netherlands the humidity is between 40 and 60%, which is actually too low. You need a higher humidity for breeding. Raising the humidity can be done in many ways, depending on the size of your room and ventilation. Personally I look at the hygrometers every day. If the humidity is on the lower side or seems to be, I throw some water over the floor. Sometimes I do this several times a day. If the humidity is still too low then I have several humidifiers here. Three types of humidifiers are: Lucky Reptile Super Fog, Eurozoo Fogmaster and Princess Humidifier. All three actually work just fine.

Regulating humidity automatically

It is possible to maintain the desired humidity constantly by automating this. To do this, you need to use a hygrometer with an automatically adjustable switch-on/switch-off clock, to which you can connect a humidifier. An example is the Lucky Reptile Humidity Control, which can be set between 60 and 70% humidity. Connect a humidifier to this control and it will automatically switch on when the humidity drops below 60% (or otherwise adjustable). Setting an alarm for humidity (for example, too high or too low) is also possible.

This Lucky Reptile Humidity Control I use since December 2016 and it really works perfectly. The humidity can be set exactly the way you want it, up to 1% accuracy. The outcome of the eggs is also higher due to the constant humidity. So it's definitely worth it! I also have a Lucky Reptile Thermo Control PRO, which keeps the temperature constantly around 20° C and at night I keep it 2 degrees colder around 18° C.

Providing bathing opportunities

Zebra finches seem to be able to regulate the humidity in the nest themselves. Probably the use of bathing during breeding will increase the hatching rate. Because I haven't tested this myself, I can't say anything about this yet. I do suspect that the daily provision of bath to breeding birds will certainly have an influence. The opportunity of bathing also increases the humidity in your birds' environment. So even though a (domesticated) zebra finch cannot regulate this himself, it is still effective.

Reducing air humidity?

It is seldom necessary to lower the humidity in a bird room. However, it is possible that the humidity remains too high during long periods of rainfall and ventilation. Heating your accommodation can help to reduce this. Or you can ventilate the room when the humidity outside is lower. There are dehumidifiers on the market and other products. However, I have never used them myself and I personally think that the result of such devices is (almost) zero. Also because this conditions do not happen often in an indoor environment. Outside, too high humidity (e.g. in the aviary) happens more often of course. But there is nothing you can do about it. This is mother nature!



Three reasons you need a second finch aviary

The benefits of a "holding aviary"



Aviculture Hub

A holding aviary is used to store non-breeding birds to reduce the population density and resource competition in your breeding aviary. Such aviaries should be large enough that birds have plenty of room to fly around, but not so large that catching the birds is difficult.

Below are the three most compelling reasons to setup a second finch aviary:

1. Store young birds

Some finches take a long time to color-up, and generally you can't sell young finches until they've attained their adult plumage. Gouldian finches, for example, can take up to nine months to get their adult feathers.

Moving these pairs to a second aviary prevents them from becoming a distraction to your breeding birds. The aviary becomes less crowded and there's less competition for food. Having them in a different aviary also causes less disturbance to your breeding pairs when you need to catch young birds for buyers.

2. Stockpile valuable spares

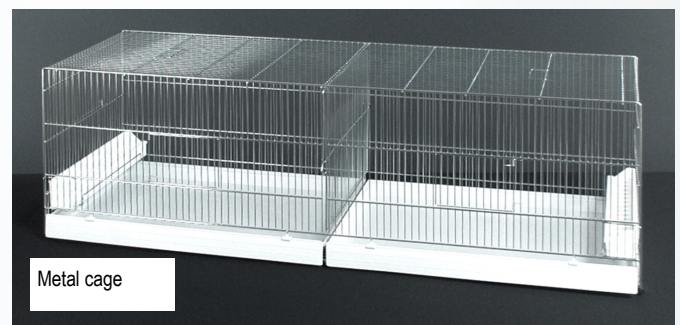
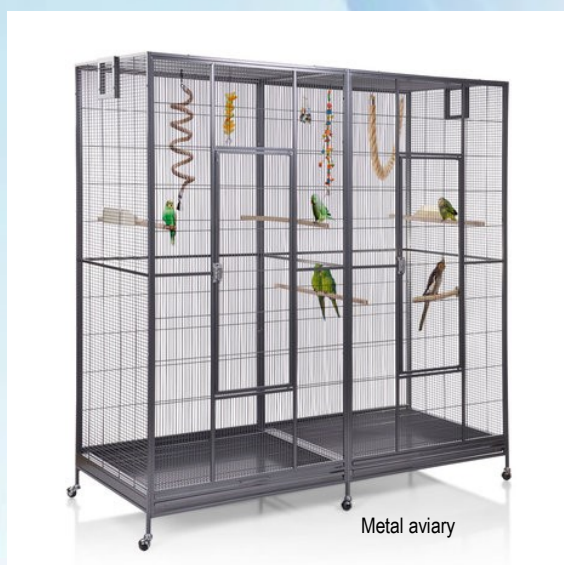
Finches typically produce more male offspring than females. Subsequently, spare hens can often be challenging to source and expensive to buy. If you've bred a particularly valuable species, a second aviary lets you hold onto a few spare hens without needing to keep disruptive single birds in your breeding aviary. If you lose one of your hens, you can retire its partner and form a new pair with your spare hen and another cock bird, which should be cheaper and easier to find that spare hen.

3. Retire old birds

Finches are short-lived and only have a couple of good breeding years before they begin to slow down. A second aviary lets you "retire" your older birds after four or five good years of breeding, freeing up space in your aviary for younger and more productive birds.

A retirement aviary lets your old birds enjoy their last couple of years without the stress of breeding. As experienced breeders, they can also be used as foster parents for eggs and chicks abandoned by younger, less experienced pairs.

Text: ©Shane Gowland January 12, 2018



Yellow billed lightback grey cock

Head: shape and eyes

The head is nicely rounded, big and in good proportion to the body.

The eyes are round and have a good shape.

The head colour is good, still some hammering is present.

The colour of the head and colour uniformity is ok.

Cheeks:

Fine chestnut cheek colour.

Teardrop: good colour but is interrupted at the bottom.

Backline:

The backline is curved towards towards the tail.

Wing cover:

The back is evenly coloured.

The tips of wing look good.

Flanks:

Very deep coloured flanks with clear white dots except near the end of the flanks.

The beak:

The shape of the beak is ok.

Beak colour corresponds with the leg colour.

The face:

ok, does not extend beyond the eye, but shows

Chest and belly: colour and transition

A broad breast band and a clear zebra pattern.

Colour uniformity on chest and underbelly is ok.



Legs and nails:

Leg colour ok. Nails and thigh show a good colour.

Tail:

Good closed form with slightly irregular tail blocks.

Depth of the colour: ok.

Overall assessment

General impression:

Very good type but the depth of colour this is definitely a plus. Good tail blocks which is often a problem.

The beakline is ok and the face is a little impure at the bottom: remains of dark feathers in the face. Beak and leg colour are fine for a yellow billed bird.

Global assessment for show:

Due to its colour this specimen especially will be succesful and will achieve a good score at the shows.

Global assessment for breeding:

This bird can certainly be used in grey breeding (for its beak and leg colour as well as the depth of colour and the body shape). Hopefully the bird will pass on his good qualities to his offspring.

This male is certainly useful in the grey series and combination breeding. A bird of colour every breeder of grey would like to have in his stock (CONGRATULATIONS)

Photo: ©Bart Houben

Yellow billed lightback grey hen

Form and type: ok

Head: form and eyes

The head is big, rounded and in proportion to the body.
The eyes are ok.
The head colour is good, there is some hammering present. The depth of colour could be better as well as the head-neck separation.

Cheeks:

These should be a little deeper in colour.

Chest and belly: colour and colour transition

A nicely filled out chest. Colour uniformity on chest and under-belly is ok.



Backline:

The backline is straight line towards the tail.

The beak:

The shape of the beak is disturbing. The colour of the beak is slightly tinted orange.
The beakline is not straight.

The face:

The face is even in colour but mounts slightly above the eyes.

Wing cover:

The back is even but the separation with the head is not clear. The wing tips look a bit messy.

Flanks:

A clear flank deeply coloured flank (melanisation).

Legs and nails:

The yellow colour of the legs should be more yellow

Tail:

Is well closed with and regular blocks showing a good depth of colour

Global assessment

General impression:

Type seems ok and especially the tail is nicely blocked, which is often a problem. The hammering on the head is beautiful. A minus is the flowing out of the beakline and the slightly mounted face above the eyes.

The beak and leg colour is a little too orange.

This bird shows a too brown haze.

Global assessment for show:

For me this bird has a too brown haze. This bird is of lesser quality in terms of colour. The wrong form of the beak will attract the attention of all judges.

Global assessment for breeding:

Breeding with this bird will be a challenge to get good offspring taking into account the colour and the shape of the beak.

Photo: ©Bart Houben

From Kuwait
Tareq Alazmi
KZF



My name is Tareq Alazmi, Electrical engineer, Kuwait city. I started breeding zebra finch since 2015 as a hobby. I started as professional zebra finch breeder in 2017. I started with 12 breeding cages in 2017 then I upgraded my room until 40 cages in 2019. Now I have 108 breeding cages separated in two rooms, one room for the breeding and the other room have 8 flight cages.

I breed zebra finch for several reasons which are: the variety of colour and genetics behind the bird, the ability to improve the shape and the colour of the birds. I breed different mutations, grey, light back and fawn, orange chested black chested mutations; orange breasted black breasted, blackface and some pastels. What I'm looking for is to improve the color and the shape as possible. My favourite mutation is orange and pastel in different colour. Now for three year I focused more on back orange birds with different colour.



For breeding I have a room of about 60 m² equipped with 60x40x35 cm breeding cages. After the first moult of the youngster, I moved them to another room where I have 8 flight cages. It is also in these flight cages that I put my breeding zebra finches after the breeding season. I use natural and artificial light to make sure all the birds get enough UV so it improves the health and the breeding of the birds.

I breed birds all over the year in the summer and winter, so I prepared my breeding room with air-condition and heater so I can maintain good weather condition for the bird around the year 23 °C with around 40% humidity. Last year I bred more than 800 birds in different mutations and colour. In Kuwait we have very hot weather in summer where it reach around 55 °C which make it very hard in the summer to achieve good condition for breeding. In addition, my room equipped with humidifier to increase the humidity because we have a dry weather most time of the year.





In 2017 I join Kuwait zebra finch club (KZF). Then I started learning the mutations in our monthly competition and lectures. Then I start showing my birds in the monthly meeting which prepare me to the yearly shows. The first year show for me was 2020. I got 6 prizes in that show. The next show was on 2021 which I accomplish 24 different prizes. I would like to thank KZF for the effort of teaching and encouraging the members to improve the quality of the birds and the knowledge about the standards. Our club is the first and biggest club in the Middle East with more than 60 members, it was established in 2008.

Selection of pairs depend on the shape, size , mutation, colour and type of the feather. I focused as I said earlier on back orange and improve the quality of the birds with the colour. The final result I achieve is back orange with good colour in both the back and the front. I would like to thank again KZF for letting me showing the back

orange in separate class.

The success behind good breeding season is the feeding variety and the supplement which I provide for the birds. Personally, I prefer to provide healthy food and different variety for my birds. I use mixed seed and soft food for the birds with different supplement that I mix with the soft food which I prepare daily for the birds. I would like to thank Quicko Kuwait there support and advice regarding feeding the zebra finches.

I would like also to thank BZC for everything they provide to our zebra finch world. Also I would like to encourage the young breeder to be patient and join the local clubs to learn more about this beautiful birds. In addition, less birds with good quality better than too many birds with regular quality.

Finally, I wish in the future I can show my birds outside Kuwait to show the world how we improve the birds in Kuwait.



Text: ©Tareq Alazmi
Photos: ©Tareq Alazmi & KZF
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KZF show
2021
an impression



Ali Bouresli, president of KZF at work



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The use of the square of Punnett

part 2

Used symbols

Bf: blackface zw: blackbreast zb: blackcheek cin: fawn P: pastel

Last time we gave an example of how the sex-linked inheritance is placed in the square. Now we are going to give an example of the dominant inheritance and the autosomal recessive inheritance.

The dominant inheritance

The dominant inheritance, such as Blackface and Pastel, are placed with a capital letter in the square.

As an example we take : Blackface grey x grey

Cock → Hen ↓	1 Bf	2 Bf+
5 Bf+	Bf Bf+	Bf+ Bf+
6 Bf+	Bf Bf+	Bf+ Bf+

1-5 and 1-6: blackface grey

2-5 and 2-6: grey

This are both cocks and hens.

If the + sign appears once, you get in this case the blackface mutation. If the + sign occurs twice, then it is just grey.

The autosomal recessive inheritance

We take as an example a blackcheek grey cock and a blackbreast grey hen.

With the autosomal recessive inheritance we note all possible inheritances from cock and hen in the square. In our example we put the blackbreasted inheritance of the side of the blackcheek cock but we add a plus sign. Even so we note at the side of the blackbreast hen the blackcheek inheritance of the cock with a +-sign.

The scheme according to Punnett's square is as follows:

Cock → Hen ↓	1 zw zb+	2 zw zb+
5 zw+ zb	zw zb+ zw+ zb	zw zb+ zw zb+
6 zw+ zb	zw zb+ zw+ zb	zw zb+ zw+ zb

All combinations (1-5 , 1-6 , 2-5 , 2-6) are grey and split for blackcheek and blackbreast. This are both cocks and hens.

Now we give an example where both the cock and the hen are split.

Our example: a blackcheek grey male split blackbreast x blackcheek grey hen split blackbreast.

The scheme according to Punnett's square is as follows:

Cock → Hen ↓	1 zw zb+	2 zw zb
5 zw+ zb	zw zb+ zw+ zb	zw zb zw+ zb
6 zw zb	zw zb+ zw zb	zw zb zw zb

1-5: grey split blackcheek and split blackbreast

2-5: blackbreast grey split blackcheek

1-6: blackcheek grey split blackbreast

2-6: blackcheek blackbreast grey

Again, these are be both cocks and hens.

As you can see, a split bird has on 1 chromosome the symbol for the mutant and on the 2nd chromosome the symbol with the plus sign.

Now an example of a sex linked dominant together with a recessive factor.

We take as an example a blackbreast pastel fawn cock and a blackbreast grey hen.

Cock → Hen ▼	1 cin P zb	2 cin P+zb
5 cin+P+zb	cin P zb cin+ P+ zb	cin P+ zb cin+ P+ zb
6 __ P+ zb	cin P zb __ P+ zb	cin P+ zb __ P+ zb

1-5: blackbreast pastel grey cock

2-5: blackbreast grey cock

1-6: blackbreast pastel fawn hen

2-6: blackbreast fawn hen

In this combination the difference between the cocks and the hens is due to the sex-linked factor.

For the autosomal recessive inheritance the symbol appears twice. The dominant factor appears only once. The dominant factor can not appear double for a Pastel within the zebra finches: the double factor Pastel is lethal. Therefore we place a plus sign at the 2nd chromosome of Pastel.

The explanation of the dash in Punnet's square is as follows: for sexlinked inheritance the factor is present on both chromosomes of the cock. The hen the factor has only one chromosome with the sex-linked factor. Therefore we put a dash on the second chromosome of the hen.

So on the first chromosome you put the symbols of the hen and on the second chromosome you do the same, except if the cock has a sex-linked mutation like fawn, cfw, etc ... Then you put a dash together with the other symbols for the recessive or dominant factors.

I use the square for the many combinations that are being bred nowadays. I place the symbols in the square and get a review of all possible outcome on paper.

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BZC: our yearly shows by region

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Venue: l'Orneau, chaussée de Namur 32, 5030 Gembloux.

Open for public:

saturday 17 september 2022 at 18 pm

sunday 18 september 2022 at 10 am

info: 0474/73 48 58 mail: ludolaur@hotmail.com a.paulus@hotmail.be



AZC show: 8 & 9 october 2022 (Antwerp)

Venue: Evenementenhal De Populier, Populierenhoeve 22, 2240 Zandhoven

Open for public:

saturday 8 october 2022 at 10 am

sunday 9 october 2022 at 10 am

Info: 014 58 07 16 mail: jos_vansant@hotmail.com



OVZC show: 21 & 22 october 2022 (Eastern Flanders)

Venue: Ten Bos, Ten Bos 33, 9100 Nieuwkerken-waas)

Open for public:

saturday 23 october 2022 at 8 am

sunday 24 october 2022 at 8 am

Bird selling: Sunday 24 october from 8 am till 12:30 pm

info: 0486 68 25 18 mail: lens.e@pandora.be



ZCB show: 28 & 29 october 2022 (Brabant)

Open for public:

saturday 28 october 2022 at 20 pm

sunday 29 october 2022 at 1 am

Bird selling: 29 october 2022 at 10 am

Info: Johan Korthout 0498 57 50 32 mail: jo.korthout@telenet.be



ZCL show: 27 november 2022 (Limbourg)

Venue: GCOC Oosterhof. Dr. Vanderhoeydonckstraat 56 3560 Lummen

Open for public:

sunday 27 november 2022 at 8 am

Info: Christophe: 0473 32 78 39 mail: vloemans.christophe@hotmail.com



WZC show: 3 & 4 december 2022 (West Flanders)

Venue: Expo hallen Schiervelde – Diksmuidsesteenweg 400 – 8800 Roeselare

Open for public:

saturday 3 december 2022 at 9 am

sunday 4 december 2022 at 9 am

Info: Nico: 0479 40 88 39 Tino: 0479 33 32 44 Koen 0477 69 38 62 Steven: 0478 64 62 08



Being patient and staying patient is a nice virtue



A novice fancier should get in touch regularly with successful and experienced breeders. The regional meetings are the right place for this.

Do not miss the opportunity to learn as much good advice as possible from such breeders. Always remember that success largely depends on the letter P: Patience, Luck and Money, which the novice needs when buying birds.

Maybe you do not agree for 100% with the third word Money. By doing so we would give eagerness to learn and perseverance a less important position.

That little bit of luck should be on our side practically every day of our lives, both in our hobby and profession.

Becoming a champion

Here is a list of several points the importance of which should not be underestimated. The desire to become a champion is obviously a long road. This road will not always be as the novice breeder would like it to be.

When a novice breeder visits an exhibition and looks with admiration at the champions that are present, he or she may think that the breeders of those champions have come a long way. I know that at the sight of so much beauty the novice breeder will dream for a while. To get there, pep yourself up and think I can do that too, I have to go for it, but it will take a lot of willpower. Learning and gaining experience is part of the game. Some beginning breeders already win prizes during their first exhibition season. Others have to wait longer for their first successes, but with patience success will come, perseverance is the message.

Breeding

Never be tempted to start breeding suddenly. Many fanciers have already had a disastrous year through lack of patience. First of all, wait until the conditions are ideal, but also until the birds are ready.

Never let yourself be tempted to put your birds together in a hurry, just because John or Jack told you his birds are already breeding. Just be patient and respect your own breeding plan.

What do you mean by breeding plan?

When you are a cold breeder, no problem, let nature take its course. The further spring advances, light and warmth will be your allies. But this is not everything: you must support your birds by offering them a little extra during the rest period: egg food a few times a week. Adding some vitamins to the drinking water is also highly recommended and then you can start looking forward to the breeding season. According to the legend of the bird breeders and highly respected by our ancestors, 19 March was the high day of Saint Joseph, the patron saint of bird breeders. On that day, if the weather was favourable, breeding was started. If you prefer breeding during winter, start with increasing the light at least two months in advance in order to eventually achieve about 14 hours of light in the breeding room. Heat is of less importance but 14 to 18 degrees gives a much more pleasant feeling. Also bear in mind that heat reduces humidity. When is the moment to pair your birds? A breeder who knows his birds knows when they are in breeding condition. Cocks are constantly singing, the hens fly around with everything they can find. Do a test and give them some nesting material. You will immediately know whether they are ready.

Hasty decisions will usually turn out negatively. Once your breeding has started, you as a fancier will be put to the test again. Some of you will be very tensed, certainly at the beginning of the cultivation, but you have to keep calm.

You can't force it and before you realize it, the cultivation is already in full swing.

Make it a habit to check the nest every day. Preferably do this in the morning and in the evening. Nest control is necessary when the eggs are laid, when the hen starts to breed, on the date that the first offspring is due to hatch, when the youngsters are big enough to ring, but above all to make sure that everything keeps running normally. A daily check of the nest will allow you to intervene if anything goes wrong. However, impatiently disturbing the birds on their nest many times is certainly not conducive to good breeding results. Nest control should be done quietly and calmly, this avoids a panicky flight of the parents from the nest box.



Hatching of the eggs

The birth of the youngsters is always a big event, this as well for the experienced breeders as for the starting breeders. Therefore, the hatching of the eggs is always expected with great impatience. Always keep an eye on the hatching date. When the cycle runs normally, the hen starts to breed after the 3rd egg, add 13 days and you have the hatching date but it happens regularly that the hen does not breed from the 3rd egg and then the hatching of the eggs can be 1 or 2 days later.

Another possibility is: the hen lays 8 or 9 eggs, this is

certainly not rare, the first five eggs are unfertilized. There is no need to draw a picture here.

Don't act rashly, don't throw away eggs that are already laid, wait a few days. It is not the first time that future champions have been moved to the dustbin alive with the white eggshell still around their pink bodies.

Offspring in the nest

If there is offspring, check them again as usual. Around the sixth day the chicks must be ringed, usually this will not cause any problems. The next crucial phase is from the 15th day onwards, avoid nest-checking as much as possible. At the slightest disturbance the offspring will leave the nest. They jump out easily but getting them back in is another matter. A helping hand is usually required here.

A golden tip is to give the offspring millet when they fly out, they are crazy about it. After the offspring have flown out for good, you can separate them from their parents between the 30th and 35th day after you have ascertained that they eat independently.

Then move the offspring to a breeding cage for a few weeks, preferably together with an adult zebra finch, so they can become completely independent. Once this period is over, they are transferred to an aviary and have to wait until they are mature and grown out.



Text: ©Etienne De Bock

Photos: ©Erwin Lens & ©Jesse van Es

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