

Lizard Canary Association Classic 5th November 2023 Roade, Northampton.

Judges Tomas Hernandez (COM Spain, LCA panel judge) and Andy Williamson (LCA panel judge)

It was pleasing for us both to walk into a hall with a good entry of lizards (about 200). We would like to thank every exhibitor who benched their birds for us to adjudicate. The vast majority were colour fed as they traditionally should be. We went to get a drink and met Noel [Sidney] and Bob [Sneddon] doing the honours and after some chat I went and sat in the show hall while others went to the AGM. Although not paying any particular attention to it I did hear LCA Chairman, Jeremy Goacher commenting on his judging of the previous season and observations from Stafford and I fully agree with his comments, untrained birds, light patches under and around the vent and lack of real ground colour have all gotten worse over the past few years. That said, today Tomas and I had some really good quality Lizards in front of us to judge.

In discussion with the show manager, David Newton, we decided that I would start judging with the champion colour fed section and Tomas the champion naturals for the classes then combine to do all the specials awards. This suited our stewards (David & Paula Newton) for me and Gary McCarthy for Tomas which split the hall up nicely for all of us. Such was the volume of colour fed champion birds with classes as much as 22 Tomas joined me for the non-cap classes.

We staged all the winning champion colour feds on one staging and the novices on another. Winning the champion section was a lovely broken-cap gold hen from David Newton, a real fine example with lovely spangling and delightful rowings and true even colouring as it should be. 2nd was one of the best clear cap silver cocks I have seen in many years. Benched by Ian Adcock, it had it all, depth of ground colour, neat well coloured cap, darkness throughout and a straight short tail, it only defaulted to the gold hen due to definition of spangles but boy were we being picky there. (This bird won the champion highly commended award). 3rd was a broken cap gold cock from David Newton, again another almost faultless lizard canary, 4th was a very nice clear cap gold cock from Daniel Richmond with lovely rowings for a cock bird. Not in the specials but of very worthy mention was the clear cap silver hen class, 5th and 6th champion colour feds were 1st and 2nd in this class. Although the 2nd placed bird was a tad down in ground colour and not of the roundness of the winner, it to me had the perfect spangled back, it truly was a joy to see with the lineage starting small and increasing as it went towards the rump tipped with clear distinct half-moons, stunning.

We moved on to the novice colour birds and found a few really nice birds but just lacking the overall quality of the winning champion birds, Ray Anthony had a good day winning best novice colour fed with a lovely clear cap gold hen, 2nd best with a nice non cap gold hen, 3rd went to Bob Sneddon with a clear cap gold cock and Ray Anthony benched 4th best novice colour fed with a broken cap gold cock.

The champion naturals had some lovely birds, but many did not have everything needed to really press for the top honour except one bird, the non-cap gold of Tony Horton. This bird stood out on our walk round before starting to judge and did not disappoint Tomas in the class while judging, it stood-out big time. Tony also benched 2nd best with a broken cap silver, 3rd was a nice clear cap silver of sound type to display features from David Newton, and 4th a non-cap silver from Huw Evans (these 4 birds took 1 to 4th best naturals overall and Tony's non-cap best bird in show (outstanding for everything required)).

The novice naturals next and Bob Sneddon benched a few nice birds, gaining 1st (non-cap silver) that was a lovely bird but just didn't have the quality of the winning champion birds, that said it was a very worth winner of the novice highly commended award. Bob also benched 2nd with a clear-cap silver. 3rd was a broken cap silver of Toby Ashpole (this bird was best junior) and 4th Bob again with a clear cap gold.

Best over year bird went to Andrew Beesley with a non-cap silver.

As for the negatives, as Jeremy had said at the AGM, some birds were clearly untrained, some had light patches underneath, some had been colour fed too late which allowed patches to be seen. Some had to long a cap running down the back of the head into the neck area (a major fault that very hard to correct) if clear caps.

Several birds in the champion section were in the wrong classes. Where cap types were concerned, if borderline, exhibitors were given benefit of the doubt. Please study the 10% rule as we could of easily wrong classed 10 birds Sunday it was that tight.

Also, the drinkers (a well known pet hate of mine) but when judging to rules we must all obey. There was also an issue with positioning of some of the tube drinkers. [Editor's note: for the 2024 season the rule on drinker positioning requires the drinker to be positioned between bars 2 and 3 on the left of the cage].

Overall, I have to say it was a good selection of high-quality lizard canaries. Thank you exhibitors from us both.

Tomas Hernandez & Andy Williamson