Dominant Pied   
Comments by Bernie O'Connell

Following the arrival of the Dutch Dominant, or Continental Clearflight pied, among our English imports some interesting problems have been posed for pied breeders.

It has been suggested that some of the 'Dominants" imported may well be a combination of both the Australian and the Continental pied. In an endeavour to assist fanciers, Bernie explains identifying features of these two dominant forms. He suspects the bird we imported from Britain as an 'Australian Dominant Pied" is genetically different from the bird we have in Australia.

In earlier days when we paired two Australian Dominant Pieds together, we might not get any pied. young at all. The bird the British call an Australian Dominant breeds quite differently. Pair a single British dominant pied to anything at all and it will give you at least 50% pied young.  
Clearly the genetics of these "Australian Dominants' of British origin are different to the genetics of the old Australian Dominant Pled. In Britain they have their version of the "Australian Dominant Pied", the 'Continental Clearflight' the "Recessive Pied" and the bird they describe as a "Dark eyed Clear", which is a yellow or white bird without the white iris in the eye. I think that somewhere along the line all these mutations have been combined and the result has been this beautiful Dominant variety which we have imported and which is reproducing in large numbers  
Now let's look at the differences between the "Dutch Dominant" and the "Australian Dominant" pied varieties. Most pied breeders will be familiar with the Australian Dominant so I will concentrate on the Dutch variety. Actually, the term "Dutch Pled" is a misnomer. The British and European breeders have a variety which they call "Continental Clearflight" the exhibition specimen of this variety has seven clear yellow or white flights on each wing, a prominent head spot, and usually two clear long tail feathers. The mis-marked specimen, one which for example has an over large head-spot running down into the saddle, mis-marked flights .... some pied some not .... and/or unwanted variegation on the body, is the bird they describe as the "Dutch Dominant Pied".  
These birds differ from the Australian Dominant in one main feature. The pied feathers are grizzled like those of the Recessive Pied. When examined you will see that many of the apparently yellow or white feathers are actually partly white or yellow with black "grizzling" evident.  
Experience in Australia has been that mating two of these British version "Australian Dominants" together produces a percentage of youngsters which have grizzled feathers. They look almost like Recessive Pieds. I think that the British breeders have so mixed these two varieties that they now have a dominant which is capable of producing at least 50% pied young from a pied X non-pied mating.

The "Dark Eyed Clear" is a bird which exhibits both the dominant and recessive pied factors. Their identifying feature is the lack of a white iris ring in the eye and, of course, they are pure yellow or white. A "Dark Eyed Clear" mated to a normal will give you "Dutch" pieds and normal split recessive youngsters. The "Dutch" pied young are also split recessive. Some of the youngsters which we have bred from these imported pieds are marvellous birds. In fact the normals bred from them will stand up in any breeding team. They are a far cry from the non-pied young which we used to discard at the Pet Shop. When I was in England, I saw Doug Sadler's championship winning Grey Green. A superb specimen and bred out of a pied!

FLECKING

I visited many avaries in England and observed the people who had flecked birds in their aviaries were the people who had good birds, they were the successful exhibitors. Those who did not have flecked stock were unsuccessful. My view is that flecking is a blemish, it is a fault which we really do not want on the show bench, however you should not make the mistake of disqualifying all the flecked birds. Have a look at the good points they have and penalise them for the flecking. Penalise but do not disqualify flecked birds. If you do, people will get rid of them and thereby discard what are probably the best birds they have.

The idea is to breed with them and try to breed out the flecking while keeping the other good features.