**WHY YOU DON’T GET AS MANY PIEDS AS YOU SHOULD IN EACH NEST**

Most dominant pied breeders report that a single factor (SF) pied mated to a normal rarely produces 50% pieds in the nest. Usually there are rather less than 50% pieds. Equally, double factor (DF) pieds rarely produce the 100% pied babies that the theory predicts. Why is this so?

I breed pied horses called Paints, and here too we fail to get enough pieds. Due to gene testing, however, the answer has been found. For many years now, we have genetically tested all of our adult & baby Paints. Some pied horses have just one blue eye or a tiny white area on a foot. In extreme cases, a newborn foal may have a white area on one hoof, which grows out and disappears. Remember that a hoof is a toenail. When these sorts of horses are tested for the various pied genes, it turns out that they are all indeed pieds….and they DO breed as pieds.

Years ago I produced many Dutch pied clearwings over a number of years – they popped up out of nowhere. I traced them all back to just one hen that I had purchased from Merlie Melrose in Brisbane. Though very old, she was still alive, so I checked her out thoroughly. Sure enough, she had one pink toenail – she WAS a pied.

Thus we now know that quite a few pieds appear to be normal. It seems that nature has equipped budgies with pied pattern modifiers that “hide” the pied gene to prevent these birds being noticed and killed by hawks etc.

The proof of this again lies in horses; there are normal stallions that almost never produce visible pied babies when they are mated to pied mares. Yet 50% of their babies ARE genetically pieds. Obviously, these stallions carry a modifier element that hides the pied colouring.

In budgies, some of these Minimally Marked dominant pieds have a pied head spot that is very hard to see when the bird is an adult. These birds are true pieds but are best discarded since they do pass on the Minimal Marking modifier every bit as much as Banded pieds pass on the band mechanism.

It is also true that in general, male budgies show greater areas of pied markings than females do. This again is obviously for camouflage reasons in the wild: nature protecting precious hens. Which brings us to…

Recessive Pieds

About one in every three or four male budgies split for recessive pied has a pied head spot. This is a very useful indicator of split recessive pieds produced from matings of split to split or split to normal. Despite the very small size of the pied head marking, these birds are excellent for breeding recessive pieds. In this respect, dominant and recessive pieds are totally different.

Similar to dominant pieds, DF (visual) hen recessive pieds usually have less areas of pied colouring than males do and it is very rare for any split recessive pied hen to show a pied head spot. Actually, I have never seen a split hen with a head spot.

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