

Fife Fancy

by Antony B. Olszewski
Jersey City, New Jersey

Description of Points

- 10. **Head.** Small, round and neat; beak fine; eyes central to roundness of head and body.
- 10. **Body.** Well filled and nicely rounded, running in on almost straight line from gentle rise over the shoulders to the point of the tail. Chest all also rounded, but neither heavy nor prominent.
- 10. **Wings.** Compact and carried close to the body, meeting at the tips, just below root of tail.
- 5. **Legs.** Of medium length, showing little thigh.
- 10. **Plumage.** Close, firm, fine in quality.
- 5. **Tail.** Close packed and narrow being nicely founded and filled in at root.
- 10. **Position and Carriage.** Semi erect, standing at an angle of 60 degrees. Gay, jaunty with full poise of head.
- 10. **Colour.** Rich, soft and pure, as level in tint as possible throughout, but extreme depth and hardness such as colour feeding gives, debarred.
- 5. **Health.** Condition and cleanliness shall have due weight.
- 25. **Size.** Not to exceed 4 ¼ inches.

Description of Markings

- Clear Bird:** A clear bird is one which has no dark feathers.
- Ticked Bird:** A ticked bird is one which has not more than one dark mark coverable by a new penny or three dark feathers on wing or tail side by side.
- Varigated Bird:** A varigated bird must be less than 50% dark. **Heavily varigated** to be 50% to 75% dark.
- Three Parts Dark:** Must be 75% dark.
- Self Bird:** A self bird must be all dark.
- Foul Bird:** A foul bird is one which has not more than one light mark coverable by a new penny or three light feathers on wings or tail side by side.

Green Fife Fancy

The correct colour should be a rich grass green, sound and level throughout, free from bronze or olive tint, pensilling on back to be clear and distinct, but neither broad nor heavy, flank pensilling to be finer but in harmony with that on back. Beak, legs and feet dark; light beak, legs or feet not to be disqualified, but to count against a bird according to extent.

Points to be avoided are: head too dark; light throats or thighs; lightness on abdomen, towards vent or on rump.

The Cinnamon variety must also conform to the Society's standard in all but colour. The colour to be of a rich, deep cinnamon tint throughout, with faint markings on back and flanks. Greenish or too light tints to be avoided.

The current concern over size is nothing new to enthusiasts of the border fancy canary. After World War II, "Norbords" began to appear on the British show benches. These were Norwich-border mongrels being exhibited as borders. The supposed advantage of this pairing was an immediate increase in head size. Of course, the overall size also was increased. Feather lumps also became a problem.

By 1957 many border breeders became compelled to leave the mainstream of the sport. They declared that they were raising a different breed, the Fife fancy canary. The standard remains the same as the border's in all respects except for size. Four and one quarter inches is the maximum allowed, one and one quarter inches smaller than the border.

The proponents of this variety maintain that they raise the true border, the wee gem. Occasionally, Fife-border crosses are used. Fife fancy cocks are paired to small border hens. This is done at rare intervals to improve type.

Fife fancy canaries occur in all the usual type colors: yellow, dominant white, brown (cinnamon), dominant white ground brown (silver fawn), dominant white ground blue, green and yellow or dominant white variegated. Of course, hard and soft feather versions of each color exist. The overwhelming majority of Fife fancy canaries are yellow variegated. Clear yellow and any form of white are comparatively rare.

Until the late seventies interest in this breed was meager. At the 1978 English National show only sixty-six Fifes were benched. Up till then Fife fancies were almost a curiosity. From that year the popularity of the breed has skyrocketed. At the 1981 National show over three hundred Fifes were exhibited.

Why this sudden gain in stature? This youngest of the canary breeds is perceived as the only kind that suits both beginner and expert alike. Production of a winner always is a challenge. Fifes are relatively easy to procure and raise. Prices are reasonable. Initial stock is not difficult to find. No particular problems are encountered with this type canary. Feeders are definitely unnecessary and the Fifes do not suffer from feather lumps.

Unfortunately, the Fife fancy canary is uncommon in the states. Hopefully, this situation will soon be remedied. Perhaps Fifes might be used in the production of the American singer!

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