



The Avicultural Society of New South Wales (ASNSW)

(Founding in 1940 as the Parrot & African Lovebird Society of Australia)

Eastern Rosellas and My Experiences with Mutations (*Platycercus eximius*)

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Glenn Malin interviewed by Graeme Phipps

Graeme Phipps Rosehill NSW. Rosellas – called Rosellas because it is a corruption of Rosehillas. Just down the road from here is Rosehill where the first Rosellas were trapped and taken to Sydney for pets for everybody. They are just fantastically beautiful birds. Europe must have been agog when they first saw them.



Eastern Rosella Pair
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What is the attraction for you for Rosellas Glenn?

Glenn Malin For me it's mutations. Originally I wasn't into specialised birds, because I liked having an aviary full of birds, beautiful birds, [Princesses](#) and birds that got on with each other. So I kept away from Rosellas until I got taken in by the mutations.

Graeme Phipps So mainly Eastern Rosella mutations? Or are we talking about other species?

Glenn Malin All Eastern Rosellas. It was a bit by accident. I had a pair of Rosellas. The cock bird was split with Cinnamon and Black and the hen was split with a Dilute and out of that combination I got a Cinnamon/Black/Dilute hen.



Cinnamon/Black/Dilute hen (photo taken by Glenn Malin)

I spoke with Col Duncan and Peter Rankin in Melbourne and they had never seen one before. I believe it was the first Cinnamon/Black/Dilute hen and it just took off from there. I put that bird over a Dilute/Split Cinnamon and it actually happened that it was a Split Cinnamon/Red and Black. I ended up with a Cinnamon/Red/Black/Dilute and that was a hen as well, so it was a four colour split. That was the start of it for me I think.



Cinnamon/Red/Black/Dilute Hen (Photo taken by Glenn Malin)

Graeme Phipps Wow, what is the probability of that?

Glenn Malin I am not too sure of the possibility of the second one; I didn't know that the cock bird was Split and that it had Black as well.

I bought a Red/Black/Split Dilute and Cinnamon for fresh blood and bred a Red/Black/Dilute/Split Cinnamon cock bird from that. I put that back over another Cinnamon/Black/Dilute trying to breed a Cinnamon/Black/Dilute cock bird.



Cinnamon/Black/Dilute cock (photo taken by Glenn Malin)

Graeme Phipps Obviously you are very good at breeding Rosellas, there is no doubt about that, because you are getting good results in producing all of these mutations.

Glenn Malin I don't know, I just think I was lucky.

Graeme Phipps Oh I don't know, we might just be the judge of that. So how are they all set up? How are yours set up?

Glenn Malin I have 12 flights for the Rosellas. The aviaries are about three metres long and about 900 millimetres wide; and I have got a 600 millimetre type awning out the front where they have got access to the rain and their droppings go straight through to the ground.

Graeme Phipps So like a sun porch?

Glenn Malin Yes.

Graeme Phipps What diet do you use for the Rosellas?

Glenn Malin I use Peach Face mix as a staple diet for them, and endives. They get endives just about every day of the year. Coming into the breeding season I add sprouted seed with a bit of calcium carbonate sprinkled on it and vitamin powder; and that is about it.

Through the winter months I never see my birds apart from weekends so I need to know that the birds are able to look after themselves. Luckily my wife is there to keep an eye on the water. Rosellas like to bath a lot so it is good that she can look after them for me and give them their endives through the winter months.

This year I have introduced pellets to see if that will help with the rearing of the young ones. Some of them eat them and some of them don't. I have had pellets in there for them now for four or five months and when the young ones start coming through it's there if the parents want to feed them to them.

Graeme Phipps Have you got friends that are successfully using pellets with Rosellas? Is it parrot pellets that you are using?

Glenn Malin Yes, mini parrot pellets. Steve Fitzsimmons was using it for his Princess Parrots and his [Scarlets](#) and they were eating it, so I will see how it goes with the Rosellas.

Graeme Phipps So did Steve find it superior to feeding seeds? Or is it more about giving the birds a choice?

Glenn Malin Yes, it's about choice. It's a supplement to the seeds. When Steve was using pellets he was getting bigger young ones and he noticed that it was helping them with their growth.

Graeme Phipps So what challenges do you find that come with Rosellas? You live in a built up area. Do you get complaints about the noise with them?

Glenn Malin No not at all.

Graeme Phipps They have got a very musical call.

Glenn Malin The Rosellas are not noisy. The Princess Parrots are noisier during the breeding season with the hen begging and the cock bird calling out. The wild birds are noisier. Where I live there are a lot of Lorikeets in the trees like the rest of Sydney.

Graeme Phipps **Do you have any wild Eastern Rosellas coming in and getting interested in hens or cocks through the wire?**

Glenn Malin Yes they do. The interesting thing about that is that they always seem to pair up with a normal looking hen. They don't go anywhere near the mutations.

Graeme Phipps **That is interesting because in very old literature in American aviculture, a guy used to breed Indian Ring Neck mutations and he bred all sorts of colours. This is going back into the late 1920s/30s. He used to dye them all the green of the normal because he found that they accepted the normal colour better. Have you found that to be a problem in any of your breeding setups?**

Glenn Malin That might be one of the reasons that some of them won't go down or some of them don't mate I guess. Most of the Rosellas go down and most of them lay eggs, but they are not always fertile. You learn from experience if birds aren't compatible, you can try them for a couple of seasons or mix them around and see if that improves it.

Graeme Phipps **Yes, well mind you, if you were trying to paint the normal colour of the Eastern Rosella, you would be painting for quite a while!**

Glenn Malin Yes well that is quite true. I put a lot of effort into selecting the colours and creating the mutations and my wife likes the normal one the best!

Graeme Phipps **Well the normal Eastern Rosella does take a fair bit of beating, doesn't it? It is a most beautiful bird, it really is. You can see how it would have captivated the world and certainly they captivate you. So did we get what any of the challenges are in keeping Rosellas?**

Glenn Malin I don't have an incubator and don't incubate, so I am relying on the hens to incubate their own eggs. Some of them don't lay, some of them don't sit, some of them eat their eggs, and some of them will hatch them all the way through and then kill the young ones. So I have learnt what hen does what and then move them just prior to hatching. I move the eggs around and have had had no problems with moving the eggs from one nest to another.

Graeme Phipps **Do you do any hand rearing at all Glenn?**

Glenn Malin No I don't, but I have this cock bird that will kill the young ones when they come out of the nest. So they rear them up until the time that they are ready to fledge and then I give them to another guy to feed them, but they are good parents up until that stage. You can't sell them to someone else because it's going to be the same for someone else.

(Graeme gave members the opportunity to ask any further questions that they may have for Glenn about Rosellas.)

Paul Henry **How many would they have in a clutch?**

Glenn Malin They lay around five to seven eggs but not all them hatch... probably four to five or less. As I said I don't take them and hand rear them but some of them will double clutch. They will start laying the eggs while there are other young ones still under them. It depends on the hen. Some are terrific and others are not as good.

- Robert** **How many clutches do you get out of them in a year?**
- Glenn Malin The most I have had is two. Last year I had three pairs that went down a second time. I was at work on that day in January this year when Sydney had temperatures of around 45° / 47° or whatever it was. I had 11 young ones in three different nests and they were all dead. All cooked in the nest box. All the ones that were outside were okay.
- Graeme Phipps** **What a tragedy.**
- Josh** **What type of nest boxes do you use and do you have any problems with diseases?**
- Glenn Phipps I use a "Z" box. I use the same for the Rosellas and the Princess Parrots. I just put a spout on the outside of the entrance hole. I don't know if it helps but if the hen comes off the nest they seem to come up to the spout and look out as opposed to exiting the nest box.
- Rosellas are pretty resilient. I worm them once a year. I usually do that on ANZAC Day. Living in suburbia I don't have a lot of space so my aviaries are actually back to back for the Rosellas. Even though it is well protected there is a draft that goes through there in winter. It wouldn't be any good for Princess Parrots or Scarlets, but the Rosellas seem to be able to handle it okay.
- Graeme Phipps** **What about substrate. What kind of substrate do you use?**
- Glenn Malin Just a bit of rotten wood and orchid mix.
- Graeme Phipps** **What about 50% of each?**
- Glenn Malin Yes about that.
- Graeme Phipps** **He isn't here tonight but Patrick was having trouble with his Northern Rosellas and asked about them at our last meeting. He said that they were throwing their eggs out of the nest.**
- Glenn Malin I would just put them under another one.
- Graeme Phipps** **Someone suggested that the nests might be too small or too big. What are the dimensions of your nest boxes?**
- Glenn Malin About 10 inches x 10 inches. It is not square box, it is a "Z" box and they walk down into it.
- Graeme Phipps** **We have a lot of keepers here at the meeting tonight Glenn and if you do need any help with hand rearing the young ones, we have some people who can hand rear. That could be of help couldn't it?**
- Glenn Malin Absolutely.
- Rosellas don't make good pets.
- Graeme Phipps** **Oh no, that's right. They do not. It is almost like that cock that kills them when they come out of the box. Thank you very much for "Bird of the Month" Glenn. That was a great segment, and congrats on your Dilutes, Red and Black and Cinnamon work and may you achieve your goal. What is your "mutation" goal?**

Glenn Malin

At the moment I am working on a "fiery", it's a bit like a red fronted Turquoise, it's just red on its stomach. I am putting that across the Dilutes. I am trying to get a yellow bird on the back but red on the front. I have got one that is about three quarters now. It has taken four seasons so it is a long process.

Graeme Phipps

Well may you achieve your goal and enjoy your Rosellas immensely. Thank you mate.



Cinnamon/Red/Dilute hen and Reverse Pied cock. Photo taken by Glenn Malin

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