



## *The Avicultural Society of New South Wales (ASNSW)*

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

### **The Bourke's Parrot (*Neopsephotus bourkii*) (Previously known as *Neophema bourkii*)**

*(ASNSW Meeting - August 2012)*

#### **Paul Henry interviewed by Graeme Phipps**

- Graeme Phipps**      **Tonight we have Paul who will tell us all about Bourke's Parrot. Paul, how long have you kept Bourke's Parrots and what got you into them?**
- Paul Henry            I started off with Bourkes in about 1998. I bought just a pair of Rosa Bourke's which both turned out to be cocks so after about a few years I bought a few more hens. Now that's one of the problems with the mutations, they're hard to sex. While in the normal ones they're quite simple. With the normal cock birds, the cock birds have blue on the forehead just above the sear but in the Rosas and Pinks, they're exactly the same.
- GraemePhipps**      **Okay so you started with Bourke's in 1998, how many of them have you got? How do you keep them? Do you keep them on their own or with anything? You know that kind of stuff - their housing, etc.?**
- Paul Henry            I've got about five pairs just now. I keep them in mixed cages with finches and [Scarlets](#), so you can keep Bourke's with Scarlets or [Turks](#) and they don't hybridise or fight. You can colony breed Bourke's but you never know what you're going to breed from those. So I try and keep one pair to a cage with a pair of Scarlets and a few finches and that sort of thing and they are very quiet birds - they never fight.
- Graeme Phipps**      **So what kind of challenges do they present? Because it sounds like they're just about the ideal aviary bird Paul. Still, do they have any challenges? Things to look out for like health issues or something like that, you know, things that they're forever getting?**
- Paul Henry            Bourkes are a very hardy bird. I've only ever had (I think) one bird die, one Bourke. I think it probably had worms. They are truly hardy. The thing which I like about them is their various mutations that are occurring now, so I try and concentrate on those. So on the slides I'll be showing some of the ones I've got and some of the different mutations which there are in Europe now. There are a lot of very pretty birds coming out of there and their requirements are very simple. I just feed mine on some finch mix with some greens.
- Graeme Phipps**      **And they rear on that?**
- Paul Henry            Yes, they rear on that. With the Rosas and the Pinks I think you would normally get about four to a nest. In the normal Bourke's you might get one or two more. I had one cock bird there a few years ago who used to rear about 20 between two hens. He'd always have two hens down and he would rear about 20 odd birds per year.
- Graeme Phipps**      **One of their names is Night Parrot; obviously you're not going to get [Night Parrot](#) money are you?**
- Paul Henry            No.

**Graeme Phipps**

**But are they active at night, have you noticed that?**

Paul Henry

Yes, birds do fly around of a night especially at dusk, they're very active then. They feed right up until dark. Some people don't like them with finches because they fly around during the night but I don't think that worries the birds at all. They all settle in after a while. But they do fly of a night and call.

**Graeme Phipps**

**In fledging them, etc., you've got no periods where there's like last time, we had with Scarlet-chested parrots; there was a problem with fledging the birds if you had earth floored aviaries? You've got them in with finches, but that would be earth floored, but you've had no trouble with them whatsoever?**

Paul Henry

No.

**Graeme Phipps**

**Well then, has anyone got a particular question that you would like to ask about the Bourke's Parrot whilst we've got Paul in the hot seat?**

**Colin Morgan**

**Yes mate. Paul you said sexing the Rosas and the Pinks is hard, is there any clues about it at all, or is it impossible, or is it just hard?**

Paul Henry

It's quite hard. What I find with the Bourke's, once the Bourkes get to say about three months of age, you can whistle and the cock birds will call back to you. But the problem with this is that there's always one dominant cock and I had this example once where I had about eight or nine Pink birds in one cage and I whistled and one cock bird had started to call back so I catch him out, put him into a side, and then one more cock would come up; and in the end I think of about thirteen birds, there were 10 cocks.

So that's one way. With the Rosas, the hens have normally got a dirtier face. The cocks are fairly clear and the hens are dirty. But with the Pinks it's quite hard.

**Ian Ward**

**Does the hen carry the stripe under the wing or not?**

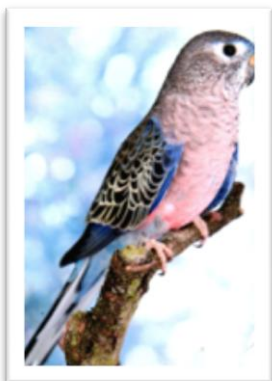
Paul Henry

Rosas always carry the stripe - it's a wide stripe. With the normals, supposedly the hen carries the wide stripe but I don't think it's reliable and with the Pinks, they're the same as the Rosas, they've got quite a wide band underneath the wing.

**Graeme Phipps**

**Okay thanks Paul, well how about we have a quick look at your mutations that you've got now.**

## **Presentation of slides (Paul's Bourke's Parrot mutations)**



### **Normal Cock**

This is a normal Bourke's cock bird. See how just above the ear there's blue and that's the tell tale part.

You also have the blue on the cream Bourkes as well - the cock bird will show a blue there but Rosas and pinks don't.



### **Dark Pastel Yellow Cock and Yellow Hen**

It's a bit dark this one but these are a pair of cream birds.

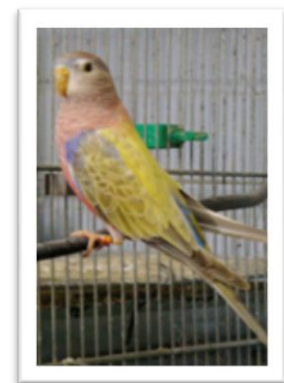
The cock bird is on the front side here. He is a lot darker than the hen.



### **Pastel Yellow Hen**

This is one of the birds I'm trying to concentrate on now. This is a very pale yellow bird.

This hen is yellow on the back - it's like a saddle back on the back.



### **Pastel Yellow Cock**

This is a cock bird of the same mutation; he's quite a nice cock bird. He has the blue on the nose and quite blue shoulders.



### **Pale Fallow Opaline Hen**

This is a Pale Fallow Opaline Hen. Well at least that's the European name - but we would just say it was a Pink Head.



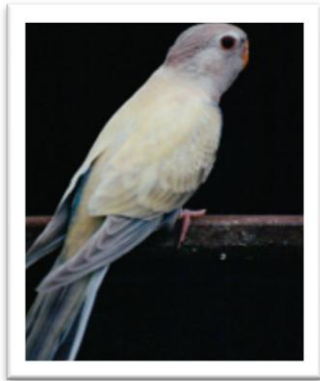
### **Dunn Fallow Opaline Cock**

This is a Dark Pink. Some of the Europeans call them Dunn Fallow. They are quite a nice bird - they're a very dark red. You can see on the bird's wing there that there is a white stripe. That shows that it's a Rosa.



### **Dunn Fallow Opaline Cock and Pale Fallow Hen**

These birds are a breeding pair. The cock on this side with the dark pink and the hen is a Cream.



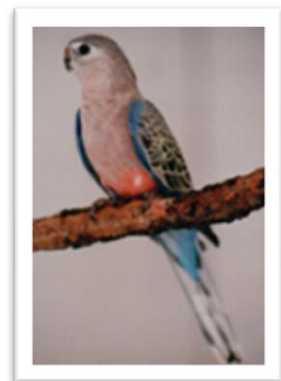
### **Pastel Yellow Hen**

This is a European bird the same as the one before, the Yellow Pastel. I don't think it is a really attractive bird but that is what they have been breeding.



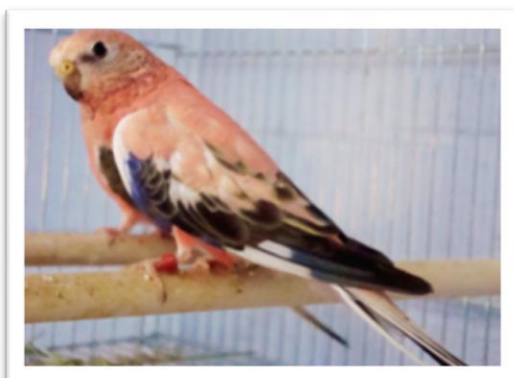
### **Yellow Pastel Cream Hen**

This is another European bird - Yellow Pastel Cream. It is quite red on the stomach.



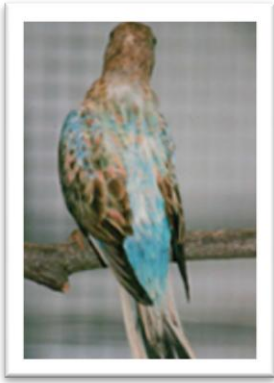
### **Pink Lacewing Fallow Yellow Cream Cock**

This is what they call a Pink Lacewing. You can see on this bird it has got that Lacewing part like a normal bird but it's actually a Cream so it's got a red eye.



### **Opaline Cock**

This one is just a normal Rosa.



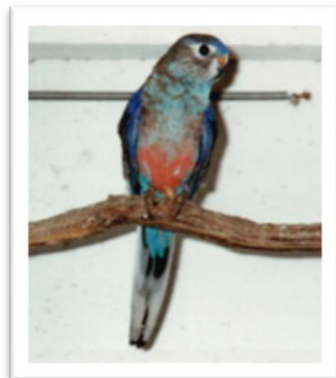
### **Blue Backed Opaline Cock**

There are a few birds that are being bred around Australia with blue. There's quite a few people now trying to breed blue through the backs and the rumps and there are a few birds now which are fairly blue all round.



### **Sky Blue Cream Hen**

This is another blue one. It is a blue coming out in a cream.



### **Blue Fronted Normal Cock**

This is a blue-fronted normal cock. So just down the front there, there is a fair bit of blue and you'd also find on that cock bird his back was quite blue as well.



### **Dark Pastel Yellow Cock**

This just shows some of the blue that can come out on the birds. I'm afraid my finger is on the wrong spot there, but that cock bird has got a very dark blue rump and very blue shoulders



### **Spangle Cock**

These are some of the European ones - the Spangle. As far as I know there is nothing like this in Australia.



### **Spangle Female**

Same thing with a Spangle Hen but I'm sure that there will be a few of these flown in soon.



### **Lutino Cock**

This is a Lutino Cock bird. Again this is a European bird.



### **Lutino Hen**

The Dutch and Belgians have quite a few of these - Lutino hens.

Paul Henry

...and that's it!!

Graeme Phipps

Okay Paul, well thank you very much.

---

**The Avicultural Society of New South Wales (ASNSW):** <http://www.aviculturalsocietynsw.org>

**Contact Us:** <http://www.aviculturalsocietynsw.org/contactUs.php>

**Join us on Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/AviculturalSocietyNSW>

**Follow us on Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/#!/AvicultureNSW>

**Disclaimer:** The opinions expressed in the Avicultural Review and/or on this website do not necessarily represent those of the Avicultural Society of NSW. No responsibility is accepted by the Society, the Editor, the author/s, Webmaster and/or Administrator/s for the statements, opinions and advice contained herein. Readers should rely upon their own inquiries in making any decisions relating to their own interests.