

## Important Aspect of the Irish Fancy Canary

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The most difficult feature to fix in the Irish fancy canary is the head. The head in the Irish fancy canary in my opinion is a very important aspect of the breed as is the rest of the standard. I have noticed a lot of the Irish fancies appearing on the show bench lack head. The standard of points for the head in the Irish fancy canary are as follows: to be small narrow and neat rising from a small beak with a good clear eye 25 points.

Number one: "small" but to be in proportion with the body, balance is required. Number two: "narrow" looking from the point of the beak the head should not show any width, it should be narrow not like of the fife or the border canary. A slight rise is required from the top of the beak to create a small forehead not too much just enough to complement the head. Number three: "neat" to be elegant trim and tidy with a good clear eye. In my opinion the basic faults in the head of the Irish fancy canary are flat headed birds with no rise from the top of the beak resulting in the eye appearing to be positioned too near the top of the head, also when there is no forehead present you do not get the slight rise over the head to develop back skull leading to the head and shoulders appearing to be all as one with no neck visible in the bird. Other faults in the head are birds showing eyebrows and too much width in the head.

To try and fix these problems or faults one has to be very disciplined when pairing your birds. If you want to eradicate bad-headed birds you must be ruthless in the selection of your birds for breeding. If you are not line breeding you can only pair your birds visually. As from only breeding your birds can you see what they are capable of producing if you breed from quality birds you have a better change of producing quality. The Irish fancies selected for breeding must not possess any of the faults already mentioned. I have been keeping Irish fancy canaries around eighteen years and as in other breeds the Irish fancy canary has developed over the past twenty years and I am delighted to say that the Irish fancy of today is a vast improvement from yesteryears.

About seven years ago I was doing ok with my Irish fancies but I found that a lot of my birds lacked head so I set out to try to improve this fault. I assessed my stud of birds and any bird that was showing major faults in the head was let go I then obtained a pair of birds from an Irish fancy breeder in southern Ireland who I knew had excellent headed birds as to say his birds in every other aspect of the standard were excellent. This pair of birds breed me four chicks, a clear

yellow cock, two variegated yellow hens and a clear buff hen of which all were very good headed birds. The next year I paired the clear yellow cock to my best two hens a clear buff hen and a variegated buff hen which then produced me nine chicks I kept the best of these young and I paired the half-brother to half-sister the next year. Then the young of these pairings I put back to the grandparents and from then to the present my Irish fancies are producing very nice headed birds.

I must also state that all other aspects of the breed standard must be taken into consideration. I do not believe you can breed a faultless bird but as long as it is as near the standard as possible you will be ok. I must also mention there is no short cut to breeding a line of quality birds and you must have a plan when breeding birds to a standard of excellence It takes a lot of patience and hard work and unless you plan your journey and have a final destination you will probably get lost along the way.

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