

# FOREIGN BIRDS

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## Danish breeders and exhibitors lead the way in Europe Rosemary Low

In Europe bird shows are staged in a way which is more attractive to the public than the lines of small show cages we see in the UK. The exceptions are the shows held by the Parrot Society, including the National Exhibition where, in recent years, aviary displays make the events more appealing and informative.

**FUGLE Udstilling**  
22. - 23. - 24. OKTOBER 2021

FREDAG KL. 15.00-20.00  
LØRDAG KL. 09.00-19.00  
SØNDAG KL. 10.00-16.00

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In Europe it has long been the practice for foreign birds to be exhibited in aviaries rather than small cages, usually decorated with foliage. Recently Claus Nielsen from Denmark sent me a video of the show held in October by the Koege Bird Association. You can watch it on youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXnMgCCzuFc>

Founded in 1934, the club is the second oldest in Denmark. It

has about 130 members. The show, normally an annual event, opens at 4pm on the Friday, after judging, and closes at 4pm on the Sunday.

The video of the Exotic Bird section amazed me. More than 50 species were exhibited in small aviaries, each one with its own



lighting. Some birds were in pairs; others were pairs with their young of the season! The range of species being bred by members was extraordinary. Some of them are perhaps no longer or not represented in aviculture in this country. They included Long-tailed Glossy Starlings, Ferruginous Pygmy Owls, Sulawesi Ground Doves and Trumpeter Finches. Perhaps my favourites were a pair of Green Aracaris (small toucans) with young one.

Claus Nielsen told me that the birds are divided in groups,

1. Australian finches
2. African finches

3. Other finches
4. Fruit- and insect-eating birds
5. Dove and pigeons and quail.

Finches included Grey-headed Silverbills, Cuban Grassquits, Tri-coloured, Red-headed and Fiji Parrot Finches and Painted Finches.



Parrots are in the following groups:

6. Australian parakeets
7. Parakeets from other countries
8. Grass parakeets
9. Lovebirds and parrotlets
10. Lories, lorikeets and hanging parrots
11. Other parrots.

Plumheads, various grass parakeets, Barraband's Parakeets and their young and beautiful Papuan King Parrots were in evidence but the only conures depicted in the video were Emma's and Painted. Notable among the parrots were Vinaceous and Lilac-crowned Amazons, and Ornate and Red-flanked Lorikeets.

Each group is divided into breeding and non-breeding sections. In the breeding group, the young are exhibited alone or with their parent. They must be from the year up to the exhibition.

How is the breeding group judged, I asked Claus? This is based mainly on difficulty. For example: Rosellas are considered to be medium-difficult, Bluebonnets difficult and Golden-shouldered Parakeets very difficult.

After difficulty the judge looks at the number of young compared to their normal clutch size for the species. Then they are judged on their feather condition compared with the difficulty in keeping the species in good condition. Some species need special foods to obtain good plumage.

In the non-breeding category all birds can participate, as single birds, pairs or in groups. They are judged only on their condition and coloration, including of course healthy nails and beak.

Young visitors to the show are not forgotten. There is a popular painting competition to depict the birds seen in the show. The winner gains two tickets to Copenhagen Zoo.

Another Danish friend, Povl Jorgensen, belongs to the same club. He told me that several other bird clubs stage similar shows, but most are not as big as this one. At the Koege show, canary clubs were also invited to exhibit their birds in show cages – but more than 90% overall of the exhibition are birds in family groups or just the offspring.



Hand-reared birds can be exhibited but are they are not judged against parent reared birds. Mutations can also be exhibited but there are so many new mutations it is impossible to make standards for all.

Povl told me: “Sometimes mutations cause the normal coloured birds to disappear from aviculture. One example is the pied green mutation of the Green (Tasmanian) Rosella (*Platycercus caledonicus*). Germany, Denmark, Holland and Belgium had, until a few years ago, a wonderful strain of natural coloured birds. Then a pied mutation turned up in Germany and a lot of people paired their nice natural-coloured birds with these. The gene for pied is dominant so now all, *and I mean all*, the natural Green Rosellas are gone in Europe. We had many hundreds of these fine birds only 10 years ago.”

But back to the exhibition. Povl continued: “A team of members make the decorations outside the cages and aviaries (which are the club’s property). The week before the exhibition about twenty people go to a wood where we have a permit to collect branches, twigs and other natural items for decoration. Each person who exhibits birds decorate his own cages or aviaries. Some do a lot and others only a little since you need to be able to see the birds and not allow them to hide from the public and the judges.”

Povl participates because it is a good way to show our hobby to the public and to recruit new members. This year he exhibited a clutch of four blue-fronted Amazons and they gained the Best in Show award! Congratulations Povl and to every-

one else who made this such a remarkable event, and thanks to Claus and Povl for their information.

All photos by kind permission of Claus Neilsen

