

**(BBC colour standards review)
reviewed by Roy Stringer
Exhibition Standards for British Birds
Revised by the British Bird Council**

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FOR the second time in as many years, members of the British Bird Council (BBC) have received a free book. This most recent publication is entitled 'Exhibition Standards for British Birds' but, in truth, it is a far more than that. Until this revision was undertaken, the standards had remained unchanged since 1954 – since when many species of exhibition birds have improved greatly. Some years ago, London & Home Counties BB&MC put forward a proposal that the exhibition standards for hardbills, mules and hybrids should be revised. The discussions about what revisions were needed were, to say the least, varied and lively. For whatever, reason, the proposal was shelved.

Much more recently, the BBC set up a committee to co-ordinate all of the views that had been put forward by its members. The final proposals were put to the AGM in March 2007 and were ratified. The exhibition standards for softbills, revised by the British Softbill Society in 2006 have been incorporated into the new book.

I stated earlier that this book is more than just a show standards publication. I would go further and say that of the many show standards, for many species, I have seen over the last 50 years, this must surely be the best.

The standard for each species not only refers to size, type, colour, markings and points, it also offers advice on sexing, faults to look out for and guidance for judges.

Take the greenfinch as an example. The differences in colour and markings between cocks and hens are spelt out and then common faults are described: "Colour impurities such as smokiness or too much grey suffusion, giving dark appearance, deformities, pear shaped, overweight on chest and vent area causing bad posture, poor presentation, insufficiently trained."

Judges are advised as follows: "Where yellow and buff exhibits are of equal merit, yellow to take precedence. However, where a buff of good rich colour is of superior type, buff must then take precedence."

The pages are generously decorated with black and white illustrations of British birds and there are four full colour plates of paintings by Eric Peake. The cover, designed by Bernard Williams, is very striking. There is an article advising absolute beginners on how to enter birds at shows, with a full description about the way that shows are run.

You can learn which is the correct show cage for each of the species, what size closed rings are required and how to fit them. Recommended show classifications and show rules are included as is legal advice on the buying and selling of British birds, including those on Schedule 3.

It is good to see the BBC using its commercial acumen to attract so many advertisers whose products and services can be used by British bird breeders.

From within the pages of this book you can buy a new birdroom or aviary, fit it out with the latest equipment including electronic aviary accessories, and of course, birds. You will find a full range of seeds, softfood and livefood, medications to treat all conditions, the correct paint for your show cages, books, videos, paintings and greeting cards. You can choose a specialist solicitor to suit your needs, book a foreign tour, get a website designed and save money when buying Cage & Aviary Birds.

What more could you want? Well done the British Bird Council!

