

# Campbell Duck Varieties

Although the Khaki Campbell is one of the most well-known of all domestic ducks, it is not the only variety in the breed, nor even the original of the famous Campbells. Like most of the egg-laying strains in Western Europe, these were the result of crosses between Indian Runner ducks and other traditional breeds. The 'light ducks' are therefore smaller than the Rouen or Aylesbury table ducks and less upright than the Indian Runners. The Campbell ducks are very special for their extreme egg production and also for a distinctive size and shape.



Light Campbell pair, light phase, dusky without brown

It should be possible to inter-breed the varieties of Campbell without changing the shape, size or productivity of the basic 'type'. The only differences lie in plumage colour and markings. Below is a brief table of general characteristics and colour genotypes.

**Form:** Semi-upright (Light)  
**Weight:** 2.0–2.5 kilos  
**Colour Varieties:** Dark, Khaki, White (Standard)  
 Apricot, Blue, Light (Non-standard)  
**Genotype:** primarily dusky mallard (*ml/ml*) and dark-phase (*Li+/Li+\**)

<b>Dark Campbell:</b>	<i>ml/ml</i>	<i>Li+/Li+</i>	<i>D+/(D+)</i>	<i>bl+/bl+</i>	<i>C+/C+</i>
<b>Khaki Campbell:</b>	<i>ml/ml</i>	<i>Li+/Li+</i>	<i>d/(d)</i>	<i>bl+/bl+</i>	<i>C+/C+</i>
<b>White Campbell:</b>	<i>ml/ml</i>	<i>Li+/Li+</i>	<i>d/(d)</i>	<i>bl+/bl+</i>	<i>cl/c</i>
<b>Apricot Campbell:</b>	<i>ml/ml</i>	<i>Li+/Li+</i>	<i>D+/(D+)</i>	<i>Bl/Bl</i>	<i>C+/C+</i>
<b>Blue Campbell:</b>	<i>ml/ml</i>	<i>Li+/Li+</i>	<i>D+/(D+)</i>	<i>Bl/Bl</i>	<i>C+/C+</i>
<b>*Light Campbell:</b>	<i>ml/ml</i>	<i>li/li</i>	<i>D+/(D+)</i>	<i>bl+/bl+</i>	<i>C+/C+</i>

**HISTORY**  
 Produced directly from crosses involving Indian Runner Ducks, the Campbells remain the most famous of the specialist egg-laying breeds developed at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Khaki variety, in particular, achieved top honours in the popular egg-laying trials early in that century. Further developments generated the White Campbell, the Dark Campbell, the Welsh Harlequin (a simple mutation of the original Khaki), the Abaco Ranger (a cross back to the Runner) and the Whyatesbury hybrid (Harlequin and Aylesbury).

'This breed,' writes Captain R A Long, 'was originated in 1901 by Mrs Campbell in Gloucestershire and was produced by mating a Rouen drake with a Fawn and White Runner duck, some Wild Duck blood being added later. Mrs Campbell writes of her ducks that they were meant for utility layers—not show birds—but that since some people wished to show them (and the birds must be bred to a definite type), she drew up a standard of what she would like

them best to be in plumage.'<sup>[1]</sup>

It was from Mrs Campbell that the following 'standard of perfection'<sup>[2]</sup> was drawn up, approved by the breed (Khaki Campbell Duck) club and accepted by the Poultry Club:

**DRAKE**

*Head, neck, stern and wing bar bronze, brown shade preferred to green bronze; rest of body an even shade of warm khaki; legs and feet dark orange; bill green, the darker the better.*

**DUCK**

*Khaki colour all over, ground as even as possible, back and wings laced with an even shade of khaki, lighter feathers in wing bar allowable. Bill greenish black; legs and feet as near body colour as possible; head plain khaki, streak from eye considered a fault.*



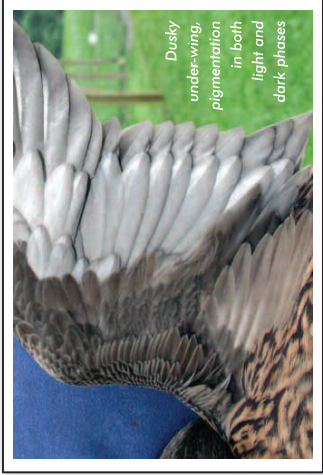
Original Campbells: the female with light phase markings

2008] are also recommended as the authoritative guide to exhibition breeds of domestic waterfowl.

**FOOTNOTES**

- 1 Campbell chapter in Ducks ('The Feathered World'<sup>[1]</sup> 1925)
- 2 Ibid
- 3 Joseph Petifer, ('Khaki-Campbell' chapter for 'The Feathered World' Year Book 1923)
- 4 Duck-keeping on Money-making Lines
- 5 A letter from Mrs Campbell to C.A. House (Ducks: Show & Utility, c.1923)

This very concise standard was published in the addenda to the 1926 Poultry Club Standards with slight modifications: 'Duck' Back and Wings laced with lighter shade of khaki.' It was to take another four years for the 'General Characteristics' to be finalized. Mrs Campbell's reluctance to consign this



Dusky under-wing pigmentation in both light and dark phases

**Apricot Campbell**

This is the dark-phase dusky equivalent of the Apricot Call plumage colour. The males have pigeon-blue heads but no chest markings or white neck ring. The females lack eye stripes and are a shade or two paler than the Blue Campbells. This variety, of course, is stable with homozygous blue dilution genes (*Bl/Bl*).

**Dark Campbell**

The Dark Campbell, first standardized in 1954, was the product of attempts to breed auto-sexing ducks. Mr H. R. S. Humphreys of Devon is credited with creating this variety in the September 3, 1943, edition of *Poultry World*. The element of sex-linkage is caused by a lack of the brown dilution normally in the Khaki. Because this is a sex-linked gene, it is possible to cross a Khaki drake with a Dark Campbell female to produce Khaki female ducklings and Dark-looking male ones, thus allowing breeders to cull unwanted males in their day-old fuff.

Essentially the Dark Campbell has the same chromosome (colour form) as the Dusky Mallard Call. Quite simply it is a Khaki without any brown dilution.

**Light Campbell**

Light-phase Campbells emerged from a pair of Dark Campbells about 2001. The females are very similar to Dark Campbells, merely a shade or two lighter in overall ground colour. The males, however, are remarkable for having faint white neck rings and chest breasts similar in density and extent to Trout Indian Runners. These are genuine 'dusks' with pigmented under-wings and obscured specula.

## Campbell

**Original Campbell**

Photographs of the first Campbell ducks can be seen in Harrison Weir's 1902 edition of *Our Poultry*. As a flock they look something like a cross between an Abaco Ranger and a light-phase bird. The illustration here, of a pair, shows a drake clearly with harlequin phase genes and a female virtually identical to the Light Campbell of a hundred years later. It remains a matter of speculation whether some of these recessive characteristics emerged in later decades to produce the 'sports' for the Abaco Ranger and the Honey Campbell (Welsh Harlequin).

Joseph Petifer<sup>[3]</sup> wrote: 'Perhaps it may not be generally known at the present day that at the outset the original strain was what might roughly be termed a grey duck.' W. Powell Owen, writing in 1918<sup>[4]</sup>, describes it as follows: 'The original Campbell males had dark green head and bills, grey backs, yellow legs, pale claret breasts, black sterns and a slight ring round the neck. The ducks had greyish-brown feathers, pencilled with dark brown, brown heads, yellow legs and dark bills.'

**Blue Campbell**

Following a deliberate attempt to obtain the same chromosome as the Blue Dusky Call, blue dilution genes were introduced into Dark Campbells. The heterozygous form (*Bl/bl+*) dilutes the male and female plumage to a blue/fawn shade, but otherwise has key characteristics of the Dark Campbell (no eye stripes in the females; no neck ring or chest markings in the drakes; complete pigmentation in the under-wing coverts and obscured specula).

Bred together, Blue Campbells are unstable: like all blue duck breeds) yielding offspring in the following proportions:  
 25% Dark Campbell: 50% Blue Campbell: 25% Apricot Campbell

**Khaki Campbell**

The mother of the first Campbell ducks had the basic dusky, dark-phase and brown dilution genes of the later Khaki. It was an unremarkable-looking specimen of a Fawn-and-white Indian Runner but one with an enviable track record for egg-laying, 195 eggs in 197 days, according to Mrs Campbell. Near the beginning of the twentieth century she worked to produce a buff-coloured duck like that made popular by William Cook of Orpington, but, in her own words, she 'failed'. 'They would come Khaki,' she wrote to C. A. House<sup>[5]</sup>. What Mrs Campbell ended up with was a duck that coincided with the surge of patriotic feeling for khaki-clad soldiers fighting in South Africa. In spite of the colour, its success was almost entirely due to its egg-laying capability. One of her own Khaki Campbells laid 225 eggs in as many days, another 220.

She concluded the above letter with the prophetic warning: 'There is no doubt it is easy to breed a duck looking like a Khaki-Campbell outwardly, but the laying inheritance is quite another thing.'

**White Campbell**

The white variety was developed by Captain F. S. Pardoe in 1924 and standardized in 1954. It was declared as having identical utility properties to the Khaki but with more attractive selling appearance, at least for the table. The white plumage is the result of a recessive (*l/l*) gene that hides other colours. The White Campbell has also a gene that makes the bill appear yellow rather than pink.

In all honesty it is very difficult to be sure that a so-called 'White Campbell' in a show cage is the genuine article. Any white duck of the right size and shape can be claimed as a White Campbell. Without progeny testing for dusky and brown genes, it is impossible to vouch for the authenticity of the birds on show.

## Varieties