

# Appleyard Ducks: breed profile (1)

By Christine Ashton

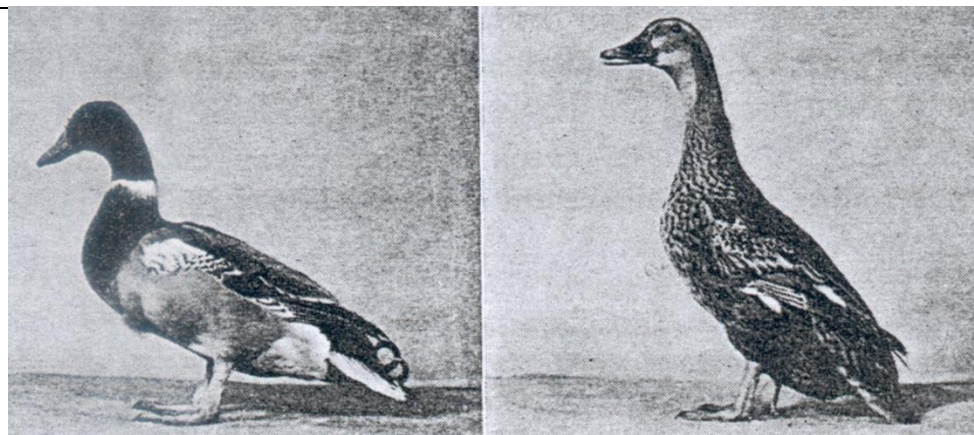
The Appleyard takes the distinctive name of its founder breeder, Reginald Appleyard. Developed as an attractive utility duck, the breed became known for its carcass and eggs. It took until the 1940s for verified photographs to appear, for its exhibition in a show (in 1947), and for a painting to be made by Wippell the same year. Reginald Appleyard never standardized it, or even mentioned it in his 1940s editions of 'Ducks'. It was listed in his sales pamphlet: a 'Combination of beauty, size, lots of big white eggs, white skin, deep long wide breasts. Birds have already won at Bethnal Green and the London Dairy show and ducklings killed at 9 weeks, 6 ½ lbs. cold and plucked.' The Standard was not published in a Poultry Club edition until 1982, following Tom Bartlett's initiative with the breed.

## Where did it start?



Frank Finn (1913) originally noted odd colours of 'mallard' in Regents Park. He described dark ducklings that we now know as the Dusky mallard. He also noted that some ducklings were yellow with a dash of black on the crown and back—a pattern succinctly now called 'Mohawk', and indicative of the Appleyard's lighter colour.

Earlier than Finn's written observation, paintings from the 1800s also show mallards with white wing fronts accompanied by 'Mohawk' ducklings. This evidence from the farmyard suggests that the colour type probably came from the Far East and accompanied the introduction of the Pekin. Farmyard mallards mingled with the white imports, and produced colourful ducks where the drake's white collar completely encircled the neck and the claret of the bib was split in the centre, and the feathers fringed with white.

R. George Jaap (1934) formally investigated the colour of the mallard plumage pattern: '... three down color types and their corresponding adult patterns have been designated as mallard, dusky mallard, and restricted mallard.' These were illustrated, and the four-spot mallard, dusky mallard and restricted mallard plumage illustrated in downies and in adults.



Jaap, 1934: "Adult restricted male and female. Note the white on the dorsal wing surface of the male. The white on the female's wing is limited to the wing front, which is nearly covered by body feathers. The feathers on the remainder of the dorsal wing surface have a wide lacing of buff."

	<p>F<sub>1</sub> wild mallard x Miniature Appleyard. This indicates that Jaap's examples (above) were heterozygous (split) for M<sup>R</sup> and M<sup>+</sup>, just like this bird.</p> <p>The upper wing bar (on the greater coverts) is already showing the white tipping which is a broader band in the pure form.</p> <p>The wild mallard's greater coverts are marked as in the Rouen—solid black line, no white tipping on the greater coverts.</p>
	<p>F<sub>1</sub> ducklings show the dominant Mohawk stripe (as did Jaap's ducklings), but they grew into quite dark brown ducks with white wing fronts (as illustrated above).</p>

The photographs of his restricted pattern birds mystified us until an accidental cross of wild mallard duck and Miniature Appleyard drake occurred in 2010 (*Fancy Fowl*, 'One flew over the Appleyards's nest'). One duckling was 4-spot mallard; the rest were Mohawks—the stamp of the Appleyard. They grew into mallards with light wing fronts (as in the photo). Clearly all F<sub>1</sub> individuals, even when heterozygous for M<sup>R</sup>, show this distinctive stamp and will not breed true. So, it's not enough for a duckling to have a Mohawk stripe to be a 'pure' Appleyard but, without a Mohawk stripe, it *cannot* be an Appleyard at all. This is just a starting point for selection.

### Light phase and dark phase

In a previous paper (1933) Jaap had also investigated the effect of light phase and dark phase alleles on mallard plumage. He showed that light phase dusky males still retained a claret bib, but that the light phase/dark phase females were almost indistinguishable. It is light phase, showing these characteristics, which distinguishes the Rouen Clair /Trout Indian Runner from

the Mallard/Rouen colour. We also established this by test crosses (*Colour Breeding*, 2002). Light phase does lighten the male plumage and reduces the precision and extent of the mallard female pencilling (dark marks across the feathers). It does not have to produce extensive claret along the flanks of the bird.

The Appleyard in its pure form is thought to be a combination of light phase (li) and restricted mallard ( $M^R$ ), plus additional face markings which are independent of these genes. In other words, it is a restricted version of the Rouen Clair. The combination of li and  $M^R$  produces an overall lightening of the plumage, hence the original use of the term 'silver'.

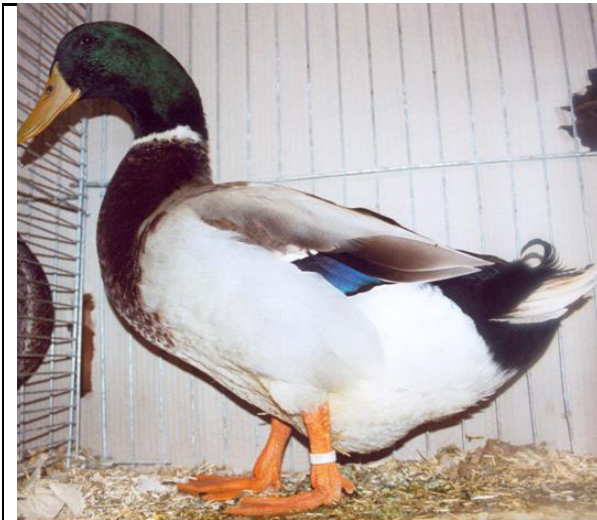
Unfortunately this word tends to confuse breeders. They associate 'silver' with the harlequin phase (Silver Runner, Abacot Ranger and Welsh Harlequin). As a result, many birds now being exhibited as 'Appleyard' no longer even fit the standard description. More about that next time.

### References

Finn, F, Some spontaneous variations in mallard and Muscovy ducks. *Avicultural Magazine* 1913, pp.82-84

Jaap, R George, Light phase mallard ducks *Journal of Heredity* Dec 1933, **24**.

Jaap, R George, Alleles of the mallard plumage pattern in ducks. *Genetics* 1934,**19**.



***Rouen Clair drake.***  
*Light phase mallard (pale stern)*

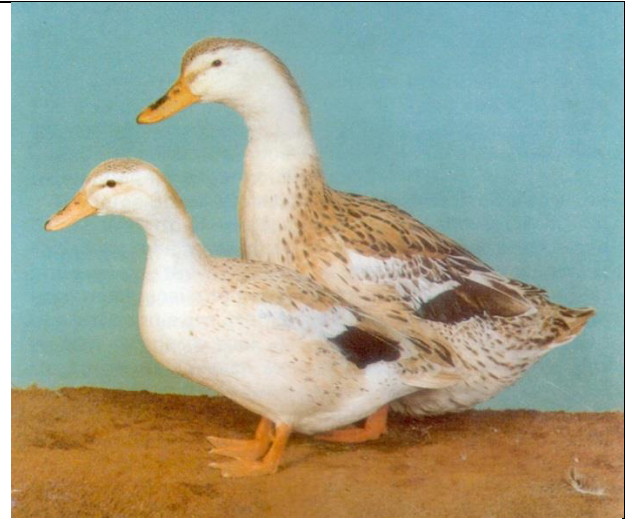


***Appleyard drake: Tom Bartlett***  
*1986. Split bib and pale plumage*



***Rouen Clair female***

*Paler face markings than the standard mallard; chevron pencilling only on the larger feathers. The precise pencilling of the Rouen is 'degraded'.*



***Tom Bartlett's full size and miniature Appleyard females (Fancy Fowl, 1986)***

***ENDS***