

Northwest Roller Canary Club

A Description of the Song of the Roller

The song of the Roller canary is unique among the bird world. It consists of a variety of different song patterns named "Tours" by the old German song Masters. While it is very difficult to accurately describe a sound, we would like to give you a very simple idea of what the Roller judge is looking for when he listens to your team of birds.

The Roll

The most common song (and the easiest to identify) made by the Roller canary is the Roll. This will be a continuous and rapid rolling song (like a drum roll would be) with a distinct 'r' sound to it. The 'r' will be followed by a vowel such as 'riririri' or 'rorororo.' The 'o' or 'u' vowels have a more mellow sound than the 'i' or 'e' vowels. Variations on the roll will have different names. "Hollow Roll" is a deeper, softer roll (using the 'o/u' sound), and a higher pitch (usually the 'e/i' sound) is called a "Bell Roll." The lowest pitch roll is called the "Bass Roll" and this is really deep (just think of a man's low Bass voice). A good Bass Roll is not common, and is a highly desirable Tour.

Bells

The Bell Tours are a slightly slower version of the Roll, and you will hear more of a separation or distinction between the notes such as 'lee lee lee lee.' Hollow Bell will use the 'loo' or 'luu' sound, but the pitch can also run up to the higher 'i/e.' The Bell Tour should always have a very beautiful and melodious sound. Any harshness or nasal sound notes are considered a detraction, and if bad enough will be considered a fault.

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The Flute

The Flute notes are clear, individual notes or calls, often 3 or more, called out at the end (or sometimes at the beginning) of a Hollow Bell or Roll Tour. These notes should be distinctly separated, and have a somewhat mournful sound. The Flutes must never sound sharp or harsh. The Flute should be an easy sound for the novice to identify.

Other Tours

There are several other less common Tours. The added sound of bubbling water to a Tour (often a Roll) is very beautiful, and done in a low enough tone is called a Water Roll. The Glucke Tour can be done at the speed of a Roll, or sung more slowly and will have a distinct 'gukgukgukguk' or glukglukglukgluk' sound. The Shockel is rare and almost sounds like a laugh, a 'ho ho ho ho' sound, and is pushed out from the belly, not the throat.

Whether you understand what you are hearing or not, one thing you will have to admit is that it all sounds beautiful! Don't worry if you can't figure it out right away; just sit back and enjoy the wonderful sound and song that comes from these beautiful birds.