

***Waterslager***  
***Song Tours, Point Distribution***  
***and***  
***Song Characteristics***  
*compiled by Darrell Horst*

Positive Notes	Max. Pts.	Song Characteristics (also see below)
Klokkende	12 pts	Water Drops - sound made by air escaping out of a bottle submerged in a tub of water, Wuut, Wuut, Wuut. The note is scored based on duration, clarity and depth. The waterslager that masters slowing the note to give a deep penetrating beat in water affect will captivate any listener. A score of 6 or 7 in this tour is very good
Bollende	9 pts	Bubbling Water - the sound made by the bubbling of boiling heavy fluid. A good waterslager gives this note a deep series of Bluu, Bluu, Bluu. A 5 or 6 score in bollende is very good.
Rollende	6 pts	Rolling Water - cascading sound of rolling water. A waterslager will enlase either the klokkende or bollende note in a faster shorter pace giving a wavy affect, wutwutwuutwutwut or blublublublubu. The more common is the bollende series. This tour without any score on the other two water tours is considered minimal qualifications to consider a canary a waterslager.
<a href="#">Staaltone</a>	9 pts	Steel Tones - the metallic beat note. This note is like the two or three beats of the pipes in an orchestra to spice a musical piece, Choong, Choong, Choong. The sharper yet still appreciated version is the beat of metal on metal like a hammer on an anvil, ping, ping, ping. A score of 4 or 5 means this waterslager has good pitch.

<a href="#">Fluiten</a>	9 pts	Flutes -This note is where a waterslager really shows his freedom of interpretation. The flute note can be as deep and smooth as that of the best roller or it can be accented with water sounding just short of a Klokkende note. A score of 5 here means very nice flutes, a 6 means he does a variety of flute sounds.
<a href="#">Fluitenrol</a>	6 pts	Flute Roll - a series of short rolling flute notes where the difference between a 2 or 3 score is on the depth and smoothness of the tour. A few waterslagers have such a beautiful flute roll resembling a rollende and these are awarded 4 points.
<a href="#">Chorr/Knorr</a>	6 pts	Chorr/Knorr -is the note that a waterslager performs as a deep from within force note to open his throat muscles, choorrrr or the bass knnoorrr. Compared to a warm up note made by an opera singer. Most waterslagers will go with a just above average Chorr for 3 points, but the exception is the Knorr for 4 points.
<a href="#">Woeten</a>	6 pts	Nightingale phrases - a tour that has been lost but is not removed in hopes of someday rediscovering it through a not impossible genetic imprint brought forward.
<a href="#">Bellen</a>	6 pts	Bells - punctuated bells.. Awaterslager shows his talents by a rendition of distinct bell sounds from the Lu, Lu roller bell to the hollow bell having a water echo in the vowel (U) part of the note, to the beautiful double sound church bell, the te-lon. A score of 3 is average for the roller bell, while a 4 or even a 5 means he has a nice variety of bell notes.
<a href="#">Belrol</a>	6 pts	Bell Roll - a series of short rolling bell notes where the difference between a 2 or 3 score is on the lower sound of the vowel U versus the higher pitch affect of the vowel I, in other words a lululululu is preferred over a lilililili

<a href="#">Tjokken</a>	6 pts	Choke, Chong - a note borrowed from the call note of the European Nightingale. A more similar phonetic version for English is probably tchoke, which can be made in a series called tjokken rol. The strong th sound lead to the long O vowel abrupted with the strong K sound will give a 3 for the tour. A 4 score usually means the bird does both the single note and rolling tour versions. However, a beautiful deep tjok note series can earn a 4 in this tour. It is a noticeable impressive note when performed deep and clear
<a href="#">Schokkel</a>	3 pts	Schokkel in waterslagers is very different from the schockle associated with the roller song. In waterslagers it is a unique pretty bubble sound (Blub) that seems to come out of nowhere in a repertoire. It is seldom done more than 2 times in a row. .
<a href="#">Onvoorziene loon - Unexpected Tours</a>		Improvised phrases
<a href="#">Indruk - Impression points</a>	3 pts	A judge is given the freedom to give up to 3 points for song impression..
Sub Total	X 3	Total points from above tours are multiplied by 3.
<b>Negative Notes (Faults)</b>	Max Pts	Waterslagers have inherited a few fault notes that may cause a bird to have points deducted or even get disqualified. A breeder must weigh the fault against the overall quality of song before discarding a waterslager with a fault like riet. It all depends on how often a bird will disrupt his song pattern by releasing this high pitch riet sound. There is no hesitation however in eliminating a bird with the horrible annoying spitting/lisping fault called snetter. The less offensive nasal sounds are tolerated by judges and are therefore the most commonly heard faults. The exhalation (wheeze) in particular may be considered an inevitable evil, because it is more of an acceleration of breathing rate than a true negative tour.
<a href="#">Ophaal - Riet</a>	-3 pts	
<a href="#">Hoge Spitse - Shriill Notes</a>	-3 pts	
<a href="#">Snetter - Hissing</a>	-3 pts	
<a href="#">Neuzig</a>	-3 pts	
<a href="#">Tjip-tjep-tsiet - Cheep, Chip</a>	-3 pts	
<a href="#">Tjap - Chop</a>	-3 pts	

### More detail about the Waterslager song:

Water notes contain three melodies which bring to mind a fluidity of sound representing dripping water. The Klokkende, called Klok, Bollende, called Bol, and the Rollende or Rol. These notes are differentiated by the duration of the interval from syllable to syllable. The problem is that the canary's tendency is to merge the syllables and shortening the vowels. The Klok must have a deep tone which is extremely dependent on the vowels used.

The best **Klokkende** (Plopping Water) notes start with the consonants W, Bl, Kl, or L and are finished with the rich, round, vowel sounds such as of 'oyt', 'ooeet', or 'oo' resulting in the following sounds:

woyt - woyt – woyt...  
wooeet- woeet - woeet...  
bloyt- bloyt- bloyt...  
blooeet- blooeet – blooeet...  
loyt- loyt- loyt...  
looeet- looeet- looeet...  
kloyt- kloyt – kloyt...  
klooeet- klooeet- klooeet

These full, round sounds are known as 'soft' water. Other consonant starts and vowel finishes, such as a long 'a', 'e', 'o' or 'u' lend less value to the water note. Since the sound is somewhat harsh and flat it is known as 'hard' water. The more slowly, distinctly, and deeply mellow the soft water notes as they bubble up from the canaries throat, the more pleasant they are to the human ear and the more points they earn in competition.

The **Bollende** (Bubbling Water) has a less deep tone and its sound is simpler with regard to its syllables. The Bol is exemplified by the sound of large drips falling into a full container of water. It is important that they lack a resounding quality which instead is the prerogative of the Klok.

In this tour, the water notes are delivered in a fast enough repetition that each is individually indistinguishable. What is heard instead is a continuous background sound accented with a distinctive pulsation of a water-like sound beating out a tempo ranging from a slow to a fast bubbling. The presence of the consonants W, B and L along with soft, rounded vowels. The result is a rhythmic repetition like:

woy^woy^woy^woy^woy...  
boy^boy^boy^boy^boy  
loy^loy^loy^loy^loy

Bubbling water has a similarity to what was previously called 'soft' water. Similar to 'hard' water is what Mr. Peleman referred to as 'boiling water'. In this tour there is no deep water sound produced, but instead, harder tones are presented with faster repetition and sounding similar to water under a full boil. As a result, this type of tour cannot be as clear or as pleasing to the ear as the softer and deeper tours of softly plopping or bubbling water notes.

The **Rollende** (Rolling Water) can be defined as a Bollende without intervals. The effect must be that of water running continuously over stone in a brook. The tone should be sufficiently deep. The Rollende tour is composed of such a rapid repetition of water notes that one can talk about a merging or flowing together of the vowels which are now only the very soft 'o', 'oo', or 'ohoo'. The flowing impression is reinforced by the fact that the predominant consonants heard are only L or W softened even further by a reduction in their loudness relative to the vowels. The result is heard as a continuously rolling sound rather than a plopping or rhythmically bubbling sound. Phonetically the best representation seems:

wowowowowo....

lololololololo....

woowoowoowo....

loolooloolooloo....

wohoowohooohoo....

lohoolohoolohoolohoo....

The force of air necessary to sing rolling water is less than for bubbling water which is, in turn, less than for plopping water. A tour requiring less force to sing means it can be sung for a longer duration. This is the reason that rolling water can be sustained longer than the other water tours. This difference of force is also the reason that any pulsating quality in the Rollende tour is less pronounced or deep in pitch than in the Bollende tour.

Water tours sung with a closed beak have a full and mellow tone; opening the beak results in a less full and more harsh tone. Another quality that increases the value of a good, soft rendition of any of the three water tours is an discernible variation of loudness through the tour. Such a performance is called 'bent' water and can be bent upwards (soft to loud) or bent downwards (loud to soft). Most valuable is a performance where the notes are presented in a rocking or undulating manner.

**Chorr / Knorr** notes contain simple sounds of a single vowel and lacking, therefore, any hint of water sound. These two tours, best sung with closed beaks, are similar to each other in many respects, including the key they are sung in. It is mostly their duration that distinguishes them and determines which specific tour name applies. The Chor is a short tour. It is often a connecting passage between two songs or tours. In Chor it seems the bird distinctly sings the English word 'chore' with a clearly audible 'R' at the end. He makes a tour of it by repeating the word quickly three or four times in a beating manner and sometimes with an almost laughing quality. If the beak opens as he is singing the tour it deteriorates immediately becoming clattering and unpleasant to the ear.

In contrast, the Knoorr is performed in a rolling manner and the singer sustains it for a longer duration than is true of the Chorr tour. As in other rolls, it can be performed in a bent fashion or in a less valuable style where the volume does not modulate. The tour begins with the consonants Kn followed by the vowel groups 'o' or 'oo' and ended by repetitively trilling R's at the end.

Phonetically the tour sounds like:

**Knor-r-r-r-r-r-r**

**Knoor-r-r-r-r-r-r**

Only if the tour is sung with a closed beak does it have the melodious sound which makes the tour so beautiful. Mr. Peleman said that it is a true thing of beauty when two birds are singing Knoorr simultaneously and in harmony but with differing vowel sounds.

**Staalton** (Steel notes) Can be defined as the metallic sounds. After the water tours the most distinctive tours sung by the Waterslager are the "Nightingale" tours. One of these tours in the Staalton which literally translates into 'Steel Tones'. The Steel Tones tour is so named because its sounds are strong, resonant, and have a distinctly metallic accent. One can reproduce the sounds by tapping a small, steel hammer against a piece of metal pipe hanging suspended by a string. The tones produced are pure, clear, full and metallic sounds which last awhile and then slowly fade until the next tap repeats the process. The more slowly the notes are repeated the longer the resonance and the more impressive the sounds and the score in competition.

**Fluiten & Fluitrol** (Flute and Flute Roll) Sounds like a short pulse of air blown through a flute instrument. The possible pitches of the Waterslagers flute notes range all the way from shrill to low-pitched. Shrill flutes are, at best, worthless and often are faulty enough to receive negative scores. High-pitched flute notes which are clear and pleasing to the ear are called bells because the sound resembles the ringing of a small bell. Low-pitched flute notes are simply called flutes. A grouping of individual flutes is known simply as a Fluiten or Flutes tour. When the flute note is repeated rapidly enough to produce a continuously rolling sound, then the tour is known as Fluitrol or Flute Roll.

**Bellen and Belrol** (Bells and Bell Rolls) Bells are pleasant, high-pitched flute notes. They are usually sung rapidly with a small interval discernible between each note. Such a tour is called Bells and begins with the consonant 'L' which is completed with

either an 'ee', 'ing', 'ung', or 'oo'.  
The resulting possible sounds are:

lee.lee.lee.lee.lee. . .

loo.loo.loo.loo.loo

ling.iing.ling.ling

lung.lung.lung.lung....

All Bells have a tinkling quality somewhat like a bicycle bell. The Waterslager can also sing bells joined and sung in a rolling fashion in which case the tour is known as Bell Roll. These tours have a deep or hollow sound because their vowel groups are the 'oy' or 'o'. But with a Bell Roll the sound is more like a telephone or doorbell ring which conveys qualities of both ringing and rolling. Melodious Bell Rolls begin with a softly sounded 'r' consonant followed by the vowel groups "o", "ee", or "o".

The resulting sound is more like an uninterrupted

rororororo...

reereereere... or

rooooooroo...

which, particularly in the latter two, is accompanied by a pleasant metallic tone. Mr. Peleman felt the Bell Roll to be among the most valuable tours of the Waterslager and found it often forming an exciting transition to the deeper hollow roll tones. But, he went on to point out, it was a 'dangerous' addition to the song repertoire as it so easily became faulty. Technically this happens if the "R", becomes dominant; if the 'ee' or 'oo' becomes too sharp or soft; if the tone becomes coarse, nasal or hard; or if the 'ree' becomes 'Shree'.

#### **Tjokken** (Choke, Chong and Chonken sounds)

As mentioned, two other Waterslager tours besides Steel Tones were said to be nightingale-like. Mr. Peleman names these Tjokken and a sister tour, Tjocken. The beginning element of Tjokken is the Flemish Tj for which our closest English sound is Ch. To this beginning is added the vowel 'o' finished with 'ng' or 'nk'. Thus, the two possible sounds are 'chonk' or 'chong'. To Mr. Peleman this was the most valuable of the nightingale sounds. He felt the sound to be refined and an embellishment to the Waterslager song as it adding dramatic versatility. In 1929 he stated that it was heard only rarely, but, he said, "All breeders should endeavor to teach their singers this tour through knowledgeable and purposeful cross breeding. Almost as beautiful to Mr. Peleman was the Tjocken tour. In this tour the bird seems to pronounce the English word 'choke' so clearly that "it can neither be ignored nor confused with any other tour". As Mr. Peleman said, "Tjok (Choke) are just like steel or tjonk (Chong) tones: genuine nightingale tones. They clearly increase the value of the Waterslager song". As with Steel Tones, the rating of Choke and Chong depends on a full, clear pronunciation of their respective sound in a slow repetition. Quickly repeated tours do not achieve high values. If one hears 'oy' instead of 'o' in a Choke tour, the wonderful sound is no longer present, and if one hears a long 'a' or an 'ah', the tour is faulty and can be punished with negative points.

**Schokkel** (Chuckle notes) Schokkel is a tour that many people find difficult to hear but easy to explain. It is a tour that sounds like human laughter. I have read various explanations for the derivation of the name but it seems most derived from the Middle Dutch word 'schocken' which literally means 'jolted' or 'shaken'. This note requires such force of expiration to sing that the Waterslager is literally shaken all over. He moves and sounds like Santa Claus laughing. Combining a forced 'h' sound with an 'o', 'oo', 'a' and sometimes even an 'ee' the birds lets loose with one of the following repetitions:

ho - ho – ho

hoo - hoo – hoo

ha - ha – ha

hee - hee – hee

The Schokkel and **Woeten** are two melodies which have virtually vanished in the Waterslager, and judges normally indicate they are lacking without actually expecting them to manifest themselves.

**Onvoorziene loon** - (Unexpected Tours or improvised melodies), are now almost completely diminished to the point that they are virtually ignored by the judge. And, ultimately, these can come to be considered negative melodies which in general can be said to offend the ear of the listener. Even an optimal singer is not always exempt from such faults. These sounds are those which pollute the song and have their source in the songs of other races of canaries or from sparrows and so on.

**Indruk** or Impression notes

Every type of tour received a separate rating under its own heading but also a collective rating under Indruk or the Impression heading. Summarizing all the qualities one evaluates in the birds song. If the tour in its tone pattern, speed, duration and undulation in intensity is so pleasant that one cannot wish for a better one, it receives the maximum of points.

## **NEGATIVE TOURS**

In the preceding description of the tours it was pointed out that each tour could be sung with varying expressions. As the sound increasingly deviates from the best tour expression there appear negative aspects or faults which sooner or later result in the tour being considered a detriment. Faults are categorized as minor, moderate and severe. One point is deducted for minor faults which do not "overly agonize the ear." Two points are deducted for moderate faults. For shrill faults which are most bothersome, three points are deducted.

How many points are deducted also depends on how frequently the faults occur. If faults are brought briefly and rarely one can forgive them since it is not too annoying. However, if the singer brings an entire tour in faulty notes and/or repeats them constantly, it becomes disturbing, even intolerable. These faults will then be taught to other birds and become rampant. Some of the severe faults are so aggravating that the culprit will be ejected from a competition since the other contestants could easily



pick up the severely faulty tour.

During his discussion of faults, Mr. Peleman shared a little about the development of the Waterslager song. 'The development of song knowledge among our breeders came about through association with trained admirers and experts so that now one can more easily recognize faults and remove the offending bird from the strain in order to strive for a pure, aesthetic, well sounding song. This is how tjappen (Chop-ping), tjippen (Cheeping) and tjeppen (Chip-ping) and the screeching flutes disappeared as did schnetter and schnitter in the ensuing years. If selection in regards to song quality would cease, these faults would suddenly reappear and spread as they did before'.

**Ophaal** - (Riet / Inspiration Noices)

These are noises similar to the previously described aufholer or "breath catcher" noise which is a loud inhalation often heard after the bird finishes a water tour. Often produced with the beak open, these are peculiar, hard sounds usually combining the consonant "R" with a very hard 'ee' and sung at a very high pitch.

**Hogespitse** - (Shrill noises)

The fact that shrill noises can be faulty has been discussed before.

**Snetter**- (Hissing sound)

Schnitters, schnetters and schnatters is a German colloquial expression for the chatter that geese make. These hissing noises are one of the problems of the Waterslager and are based on a very sharp Flute note which has 'Sr or Ts' as the beginning consonant. Such flutes can be repeated rapidly as tours sounding like sri-sri-sri-sri or tsi-tsi-tsi-tsi. Such sounds always decrease the value of the performance. Mr. Tielens shared that these very dangerous faults are rarely heard nowadays in purebred Waterslagers, but can often be heard in the offspring where a Waterslager has been bred to a color canary.

**Neuzig** - (Nasally sounds)

This fault is where any tour is sung as if the bird had a very bad cold.

**Tjip - tjep - tsiet**- (Cheep, Chip, and Cheet)

Mr. Lode Tielens of Belgium provided the above as phonetic transcriptions for the Flemish names. He stated that pronouncing the names very accurately reproduces the sound of the faulty tour. These were specifically mentioned by Mr. Peleman as faults which breeders must be ever vigilant against.

**Tjap** - (Chop or Chopping notes)

Another fault that sounds like the name, Chop is mentioned in a couple of sources as the worst possible fault and the one that will cause a singer to be thrown out of a contest immediately. The song of most type and color-bred canaries has a lot of Chop tours in it and is the reason why song canary fanciers often call them "Choppers". This is the reason it is so dangerous to raise song and non-song canaries together if you plan to exhibit your birds.

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*References:*

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*"Waterslager / Malinois Canary", Tom Trujillo, Lode Tielens*

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