# The Pastel-faced Cockatiel Color Mutation

*by Bob Crossley, Stafford, England*

In 1989 when visiting another Cockatiel breeder, I spotted an unusually colored Cockatiel. It was an adult normal gray cock however its face and cheek patches were diluted. The rich yellow of a normal cock was diluted to a pale lemon and the orange cheeks were diluted to a pale peach. As the breeder had no plans for this bird, I purchased it hoping that it was a new mutation.

Initially I paired the cock to a Lutino hen but, unfortunately, the hen died prior to laying. I then paired it to a spare White-faced hen. They hatched and reared four chicks; three were White-faced but the other was a young normal gray which appeared to have diluted cheek patches. The bird turned out to be a cock and molted out to be identical to its father.

The White-faced chicks could easily be explained—the father must have been split for White-faced. The appearance of the young Pastel-faced caused me a few problems.

I then embarked on a breeding program to determine whether or not this was a genuine new color mutation and how it was passed from parent to young.

After several years I determined that the Pastel-faced was an Autosomal Recessive mutation when paired to non-White-faced birds. However, when paired to a White-faced or a split White-faced, it acted as a dominant gene.

Although the mutation is Autosomal Recessive and is inherited the same way as, for example, the Pied and the White-faced, it is new in that it is carried on the same pair of chromosomes as the White-faced color mutation. All the other Autosomal Recessive color mutations are carried in different matching pairs of chromosomes.

This is a first in the Cockatiel world but the phenomenon is known in other species, for example, in Budgerigars the dilute (black-eyed yellow) and the White-wing are carried on the same chromosomes.

For the Pastel-faced to be visible in Cockatiels without White-faced in them, the mutation must be present in both matching chromosomes. If the Pastel-faced mutation is present in one chromosome and White-faced is present in the other, then the Pastel-faced is dominant to the White-faced and the bird is a visual Pastel-faced.

It will be seen that there are two types of visual Pastel-faced, one that is pure and carries the mutation in both chromosomes and one that is half Pastel-faced and half White-faced (i.e. Pastel-faced split White-faced).

I have now bred the mutation into several other colors and this has shown me the overall effect of the Pastel-faced mutation. It affects the psittacin color pigments by diluting the rich yellows to a pale lemon color. This affects the entire body. The orange-red of the ear patches are diluted to a pale peach. It has no affect on the melanin gray or brown apart from reducing the affect of the yellow ground color, if present.

The affect of this mutation is most noticeable in the plumage of the face and head of cock birds in normal grays. The melanin present in a normal gray hen's face does inhibit the clarity of the Pastel-faced.

In other color mutations like the Lutino, Cinnamon Pearl and Pied, where no melanin appears in the face of either cock or hen, the Pastel-faced is just as striking in both sexes.

To date (February 1995) I have successfully combined the Pastel-faced with Lutino, Cinnamon, Pearl, Pied, Dominant Silver, Cinnamon Pied, Cinnamon Pearl, Cinnamon Pearl Pied and Lutino Pearl.

The Pastel-faced Dominant Silver is a striking bird and has provided me with the first true dilute Cockatiel—the Pastel-faced dilutes the yellow psittacin color pigments and the Dominant Silver dilutes the melanin gray.

The expectations from different types of pairings with the Pastel-faced color mutations are:

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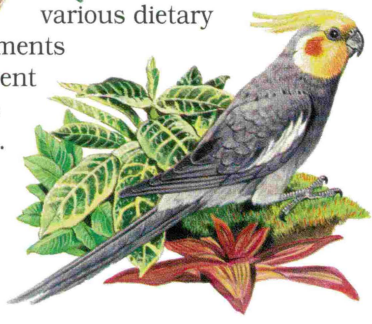

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### Color Expectation Chart

The birds above each line are the breeders. An X means "crossed with." A slash / means "split." The birds below the line are the types of babies that come from the pairing above the line.

1. Non White-faced/Pastel-faced X Non White-faced
Non White-faced/Pastel-faced; Non White-faced

2. Non White-faced/Pastel-faced X Non White-faced/Pastel-faced
Pastel-faced; Non White-faced/Pastel-faced; Non White-faced

3. Pastel-faced X Non White-faced
All NonWhite-faced/Pastel-faced

4. Pastel-faced X Non White-faced/Pastel-faced
Pastel-faced; Non White-faced/Pastel-faced

5. Pastel-faced X Pastel-faced
All Pastel-faced

6. Non White-faced/Pastel-faced X /White-faced
Pastel-faced/White-faced; Non White-faced/Pastel-faced;
/Pastel-faced; /White-faced; Normals

7. Non White-faced/Pastel-faced X White-faced
Pastel-faced/White-faced; /White-faced

8. Pastel-faced/White-faced X Non White-faced
Non White-faced/Pastel-faced; /White-faced

9. Pastel-faced/White-faced X /White-faced
Pastel-faced/White-faced; White-faced;
Non White-faced/Pastel-faced; /White-faced

10. Pastel-faced/White-faced X White-faced
Pastel-faced/White-faced; White-faced

11. Pastel-faced/White-faced X Non White-faced/Pastel-faced
Pastel-faced; Pastel-faced/White-faced;
NonWhite-faced/Pastel-faced; /White-faced

12. Pastel-faced/White-faced X Pastel-faced
Pastel-faced; Pastel-faced/White-faced

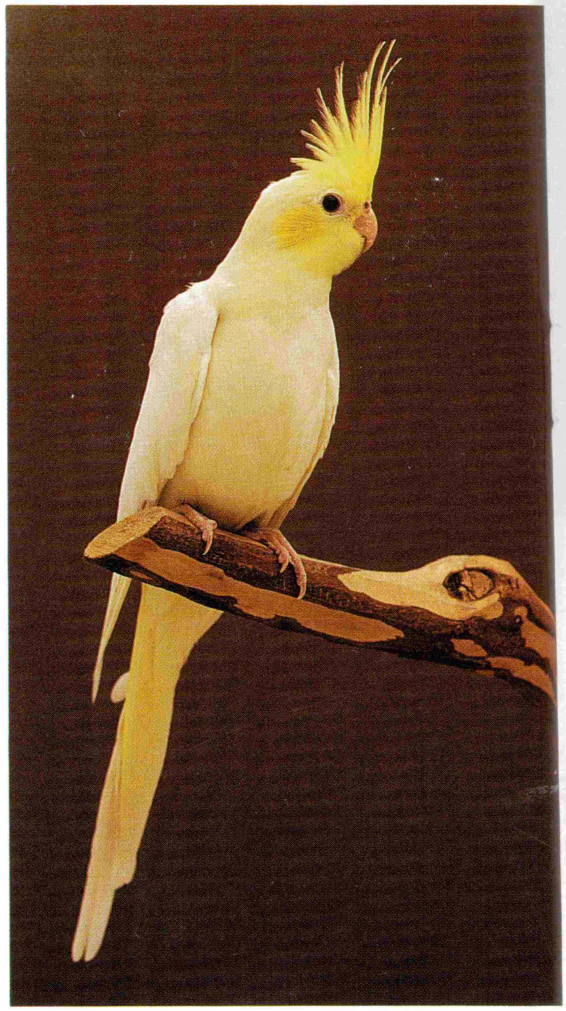
13. Pastel-faced/White-faced X Visual Pastel-faced White-faced
Pastel-faced; Pastel-faced/White-faced; White-faced

14. Pastel-faced X /White-faced
Pastel-faced/White-faced; Non White-faced/Pastel-faced

15. Pastel-faced X White-faced
All Pastel-faced/White-faced

For additional information regarding these Cockatiel mutations please contact Bob Crossley, "Yew Tree", Milwich, Stafford, ST18 OEH, England or telephone Crossley in England at 01785 228178.

Photo by Hershel Bergin



*Lutino Pastel-faced Cockatiel.*

# Dominant Pastel-faced Cockatiels

*by Nancy Rocheleau*
*Blythe, CA*

Dominant Pastel-faced Cockatiels are a new mutation in the United States. They were developed by Bob Crossley in England. Two normal White-faced were bred and one of the babies in the clutch developed "pastel" colored cheek patches and a yellow head. This was a cock baby and when it became old enough, Mr. Crossley bred it to a White-faced hen. This cross produced another Pastel-faced cock baby. Over the years, Mr. Crossley experimented with different cross breedings to develop the Dominant Pastel-faced we have today.

Photos by Bob Crossley

*Normal cock and Pastel-faced cock. Note the differences in the cheek patches.*

*An adult pair of Pastel-faced Cockatiels.*

The "Pastel-faced" looks very similar to a Yellow-faced Cockatiel with the "peachy yellow" cheek patch, the head coloring being diluted. It's the breeding that is different. While the Yellow-faced is a sex-linked mutation, the Pastel-faced is unique in that it is *dominant* when bred with a White-faced and *recessive* when bred to other mutations.

In 1994, I imported four Pastel-faceds along with some dominant Silvers, Elsie Burgin, Kathi Flood, Carl Helton and I each getting one Pastel-faced.

The Pastel-faceds have proven to be prolific breeders. We have exchanged Pastel-faced babies with each other to produce a larger gene pool. This year we were able to import 15 more Pastel-faceds. While we have already produced some beautiful Pastel-faceds, Lutino Pastel-faceds and Pearl Pastel-faceds, this coming year we will be breeding Lutinos, Pearls, Cinnamon Pearls, Pieds and Dominant Silver Pastel-faceds. In the Dominant Silver mutation the body is diluted in color.

We will also breed Pastel-faced/W-f X Pastel-faced/W-f trying to get a pure Pastel-faced not split to White-faced. A lot of test breeding will be going on in 1997 to see which babies are *not* split to White-faced. Statistically, that should be only ¼ of them.

Theoretically, a pure Pastel-faced (one not split to White-faced) should produce all Pastel-faceds when bred to a White-faced. I might have been lucky enough to have received a pure Pastel-faced in this year's shipment. I will be test breeding him this Spring. If he proves to be a pure Pastel-faced, I will then bred him to one of my Pastel-faced/W-f. Half of the babies from this breeding should be pure Pastel-faceds.

Working with the new mutations takes time and patience but I find new mutations exciting. Learning how color genetics works and good recordkeeping are very important parts of this process.

New mutations are appearing all over the world as well as in the United States. Black and Green mutations as well as Orange/Red headed Cockatiels are being worked on and developed as I write. I expect to see some major color development in Cockatiels in the very near future.