

# A Guide to... Colour Mutations & Genetics in Parrots

By Dr. Terry Martin BVSc

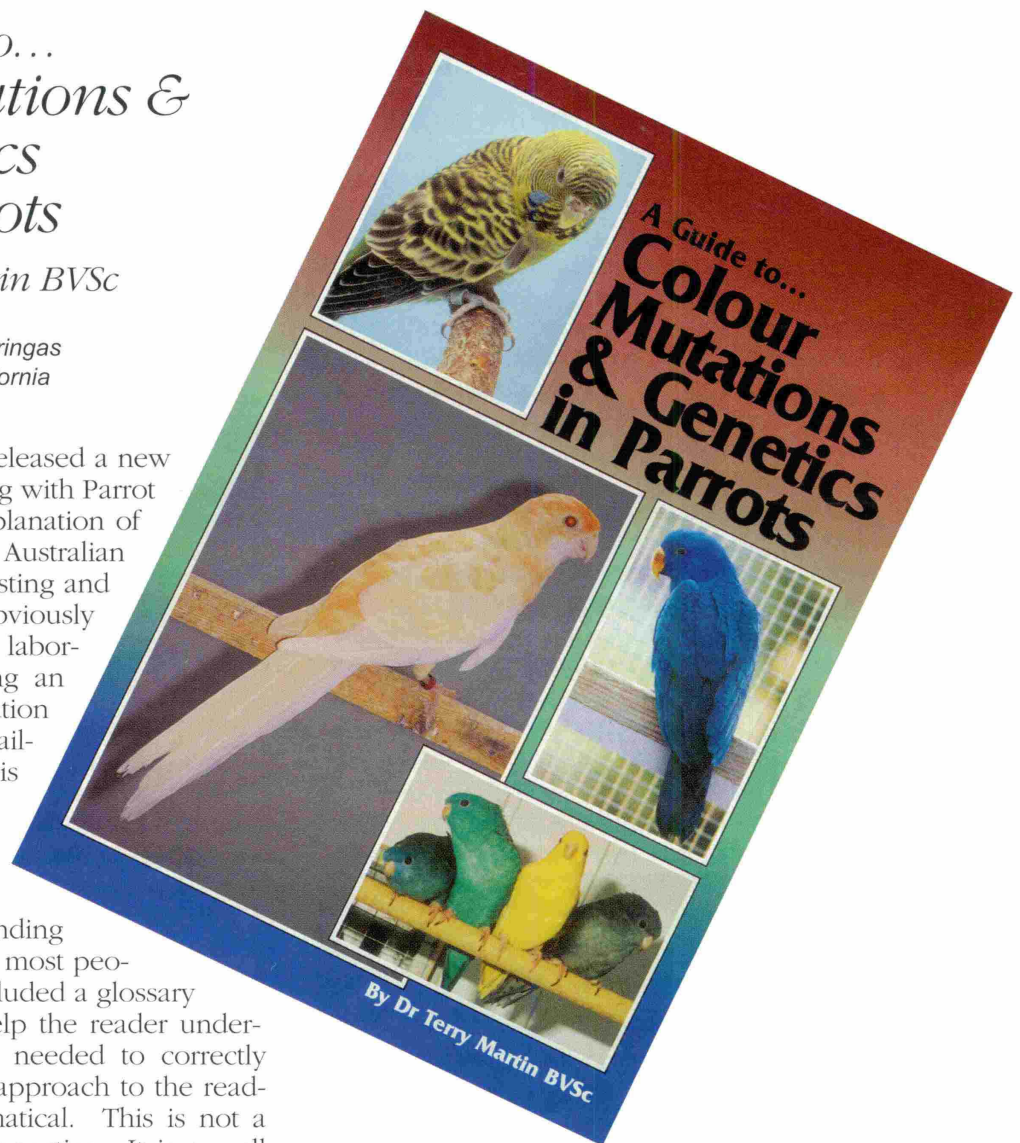
Reviewed by Roger Bringas  
North Hollywood, California

ABK Publications has just released a new "Guide to" book, this time dealing with Parrot mutations in general and an explanation of genetics. Dr. Terry Martin, an Australian veterinarian, authored this interesting and somewhat controversial work, obviously spending many passionate hours laboring over the text and compiling an extraordinary collection of mutation bird photographs. The book, available in both soft and hard cover is divided into three parts.

**Part one** concentrates on a general understanding of mutations and basic genetics. I know first-hand that understanding genetics is a difficult concept for most people to master. Dr. Martin has included a glossary of terms three pages long to help the reader understand the basic scientific terms needed to correctly explain the subject matter. His approach to the reader is straightforward and systematic. This is not a simple or basic explanation of genetics. It is a well thought-out and thorough work aimed at the mutation bird breeder/enthusiast who has the desire to understand and learn more about the birds he may be working with. Primary color mutations are discussed in part one accompanied by many fine photos appearing adjacent to the relevant topic, thus aiding the reader in comprehending the color being discussed.

Part two of the book deals with the ever increasing difficulty of naming combined mutations, as well as some examples of expected breeding results when pairing various primary mutations together. It would be virtually impossible to include in any publication a complete compilation of all breeding possibilities. Dr. Martin has included many examples of expected outcomes for numerous combined mating possibilities. These can serve as examples to the reader and hopefully guide him in his attempt to understand and follow the text. Again, many interesting photos accompany the examples of combining different mutations together to specifically illustrate the various projected outcomes.

**Part three** of the book begins with an ominous warning. "Enter at own risk." This section gives a good explanation of genetic terms that need to be



understood by the reader in order to understand the more complicated explanations of why different colors of birds exist. I read and then re-read this section and am still not certain I comprehended everything. This is definitely not light reading and the author prefaces the section as such. It does give individuals who are interested in more in-depth analysis information that they can use to gain a better understanding of why and what makes mutation colors physically and genetically possible.

The bottom line, if one is interested in mutation parrots, Dr. Martin's book is worth every penny! The number of photos alone demonstrate an incredible compilation of mutations from all over the world. No, it is not a complete work by any means, and yes, there are many photos that are not quite accurate and are somewhat misleading. But the true aims of the book are to present information about genetics and mutations and to discuss the more complex topic of genetic theory. I believe any mutation enthusiast will derive much pleasure from just looking at the many rarely seen color mutations and at the same time will gain a better understanding of genetics if he reads the book and studies the text. ❖