Cinnamon Blues

Visual Identification and Inheritance Modes

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Cinnamon Blues...sounds like a good title for a song doesn't it? There's actually nothing melancholy about this group of color mutations in the Indian Ring-necked Parakeet. Cinnamon blue mutations are some of the most beautiful and sought after birds these days.

There are two distinct genetic forms of cinnamon in the U.S.A. today, sex linked and dominant. When either of these two are crossed with blue, the cinnamon blue color is produced. The two types of cinnamon can also appear on the same bird, producing an even paler shade of blue.

Sex linked cinnamon works just like lutino. Only male birds can be split for a sex linked mutation, and can pass the mutation trait on to offspring. Female birds can be visual for the mutation color, but never split.

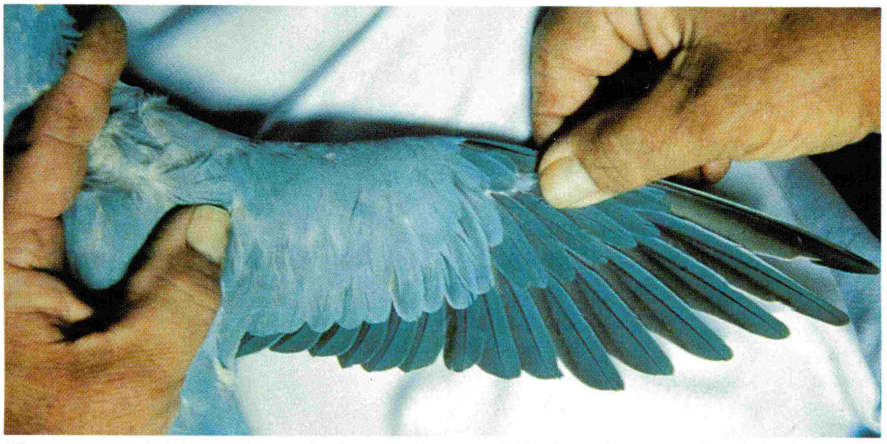
In order for a bird to be a visual dominant mutation, one or both of the parents must be visual for that mutation color. A bird can't ever be split for a dominant mutation. You would never find a green bird that is split to dominant cinnamon. In other words, with dominant mutations, what you see is what you get.

We have heard and read that there is a recessive cinnamon in European aviaries. It is probable that recessive cinnamon is in the genetic background of quite a few Indian Ring-necked Parakeets in the U.S.A.. To our knowledge, however, this bird does not exist as an isolated mutation. A red-eyed recessive cinnamon mutation is also referred to as "fallow."

Distinguishing between sex linked and dominant cinnamon is not as difficult as you might think, even though there are only slight differences in the body color. The trick to correct identification is in looking at the flight feathers. Variation in pattern, amount of color, and melanin deposits of flight feathers and tails exists between the two types of cinnamon.

Additionally, variation in pattern and color exists between individual birds that are dominant cinnamons. This will be true for dominant cinnamon-grays, dominant cinnamon-blues, dominant cinnamon-graygreens, dominant cinnamon-sex linked cinnamons, etc.

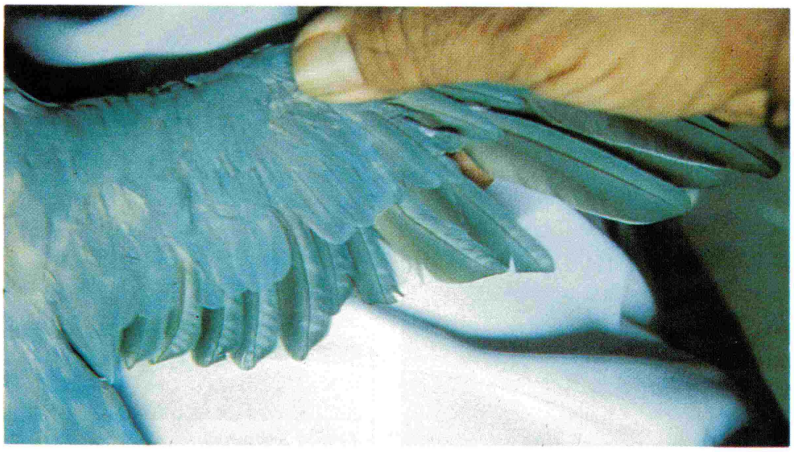
Flight feathers, which are only partially visible when the birds are on the perch, exhibit dramatic differences when the wings are extended. Study the photograph of the three birds together sitting on the perch. Then compare the three photographs of the birds with extended wings.



Photos by Fred and Lyrae Perry

This is a normal blue. Notice the heavy deposits of black melanin in the flight feathers. There is some blue coloration extended onto the flights also.

This is a sex linked and dominant cinnamon-blue. Notice the lack of heavy black or brown melanin deposits in the flight feathers. Usually, we see a fair amount of brown melanin in the flight feathers on sex linked cinnamons. Blues tend to have fewer melanin deposits than other sex linked cinnamon mutations so the flights appear to be more white.



This is a dominant cinnamon-blue. Notice the pattern of brown melanin deposits in the flight feathers. Feather margins and some of the feather shafts will be whitish. There will be varying amounts of light blue color and areas of what appears to be bleaching on the flights. Some birds will have definite "hash" marks on the flight feathers closest to the body. These whitish hash marks will be perpendicular to the shaft.