

Silver Gouldians

by Peggy Dalrymple, Galesburg, IL

Now that the many mysteries of the Gouldian Finch are well on their way to being solved, the bird continues to further tantalize us with mutations of extraordinary colors and with patterns rivaling a color-by-the-numbers painting.

The Silver Gouldian is the most recent of these to become established and available in the U.S.

The Silver color is the result of crossing the recessive blue mutation with the



Large male Gouldian Finch, silver mutation.

yellow mutation. — the yellow being co-dominant sex linked (*A guide to Gouldian Finches*, Sammut & Marshall, The Australian bird Keeper, 1991).

The Silver mutation produced then apparently becomes sex linked co-dominant also, with single and double factor birds being produced. Single factor birds will be purple-breasted silver colored females, or pastel blue (blue dilute) males, or white-breasted silver males and females.

Purple-breasted males are double factor, and some white-breasted male Silvers may also be double factor.

Color mutations are often mis-named and this may well be the case here since "silver" would indicate a gray hue. While there is some variation in the predominant color of the silver bird, the overall effect is white with a slight suffusion of blue, primarily in older birds.



Silver hen and a blue male.


Color contrast is produced by the vivid blue line delineating the head color and a peach-colored head in the red- and yellow-headed varieties. The purple breast then becomes the focal point in a beautiful pastel masterpiece.

Black-headed dilute males (powder blue) are possible, with the black head becoming a deep gray/black color. However, the black head color, when bred into the Silver birds, along with the recessive white-breasted mutation, can produce the visual equivalent of an all white bird since the black head- edness on a true Silver will appear white. A white Gouldian can be considered a fortunate or an unfortunate occurrence, depending on one's idea

of beauty.

At hatching, Silver babies exhibit a pale whitish skin color. Just hatched dilute blue males are darker skinned, but still lighter than the recessive blue.

Silver Gouldians, if bred responsibly, seem to be a mutation of good health and extreme vigor. As with any mutation, closely related birds should not be paired together.

While there can be little doubt that the original colors of the Gouldian Finch are stunning, and there should be much effort to propagate a healthy and hearty strain of the normal Gouldian, the mutation varieties are a new challenge from a bird that has always been an avicultural fascination. 

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