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A Book Review by Roger Bringas
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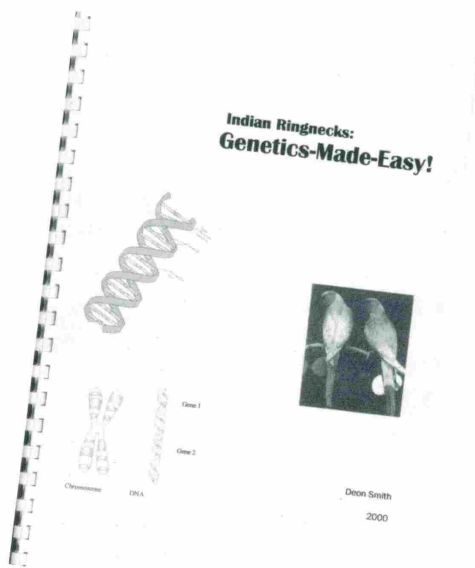
Indian Ringnecks Genetics Made Easy

By Dr. Deon Smith, M.B.Ch.B. (Stell) DA (SA),
49 color photos, many tables, graphs, charts,
and exercises, 74 pages, soft cover, 8 1/4 X 11
1/4, US \$45.00 postage paid.

In November of last year, I had the wonderful opportunity of meeting with Dr. Deon Smith, author of an exciting and timely book *Indian Ringnecks: Genetics Made Easy*. Our visit took place at the beautiful home of Mr. and Mrs. Kippie Herholdt where we had the chance to have a wonderful roundtable discussion with various South African Ringneck enthusiasts. A physician by profession, Dr. Smith is well respected in his country and is quite active internationally on the Internet with various genetics discussion groups.

Inevitably the subject matter of genetics came up in our discussions and Dr. Smith presented me with the second edition of his book and asked me to read through it and give him my opinions. He has since revised the book to include the most up-to-date information on various Ringneck mutations.

The book, really more of a manual or workbook, is packed with 74 pages of good, useful information. Dr. Smith has produced the book using a high quality ink-jet printing system. It has a



plastic binding and clear plastic dust cover. The focus of this book is to teach the reader basic genetic principles with an emphasis on Indian Ringneck color mutations. Although there are several interesting photos of various mutations, this is not by any means a photo pictorial. However, many photos are included to help illustrate, stimulate, and spark the interest of the reader.

It's a popular notion that the subject of genetics is a difficult and foreign science, beyond the grasp of most laymen. Dr. Smith has presented a well-written comprehensive manual that takes the readers through an introduction of genetics. He starts with describing how color is displayed in birds through the presence of pigments, feather structure, and the incidence of light and its affects on color. He then touches on the basics of heredity with a brief discussion of chromosomes, genes, and DNA, continuing on to the general nature of mutations.

He proceeds to classify, explain, and teach the reader how to predict and work out pairings and expectations for sex-linked, autosomal recessive, and autosomal dominant mutations. Excellent diagrams aid in the ability to comprehend the text, which

has been written in a very straightforward and understandable manner. Dr. Smith encourages and challenges the reader to perform basic genetics problems as a means of learning how to calculate and predict numerous genetic and color possibilities. Included are various tests throughout the book for the reader to gage his or her overall comprehension and understanding of the material.

Other aspects of interest are covered such as incomplete dominance and combined mutations, allowing the reader to grasp the broad spectrum of the mutations that are now being worked with in aviaries throughout the world. Specific mutations such as Turquoise, Fallow, Lacewing, and Yellow-head-cinnamon are given special attention, as they are somewhat more complex to understand. The Pied mutations are covered extensively and Dr. Smith has gone to great lengths in trying to investigate and explain the different forms of pied that are in existence around the world.

The subject of the "Dark factor," dark-green, cobalt, and violet has been elaborated on and his ideas are both interesting and controversial. For those who purchase his book and are having difficulties or who have more advanced questions, incredibly, Dr. Smith is willing to answer all genetics related inquiries via e-mail and fax!

This book is not something that can be read through once allowing the reader a mastery of genetics. I know of no such text or publication that can make that kind of magical promise. It demands study and practice so that knowledge and technique are properly assimilated and employed. Ideally, the reader can use this book as an excellent resource, going back to it when doubt, uncertainty, or questions arise. I have read many genetics books and in my opinion this is a must-have for anyone interested in learning the basics. People raising Indian Ringnecks have been waiting for something like this for a long time.

The price for the book is US \$45.00 postage paid and may be ordered by faxing Dr. Smith for further details at **011-27-53-353-1382** or by e-mailing him at **deon11@xsinet.co.za** ❖