



Different views of the beautiful blue Pennant mutation in Dr. Peter's aviaries.



The Blue Pennant

by Dr. Robert Peters
Germany

Editor's Note: The popularity of parrot mutations among European breeders has grown to levels never encountered before in aviculture and the end is nowhere in sight. Some mutations are interesting simply because of their rarity, but other undoubtedly rival nature's finest creations and are stunning by whatever yardstick one uses. Among some of the new and colorful mutations are a great variety of lutino, blue, cinnamon and yellow grass parakeets, yellow Kings, lutino and blue Princess, (already reported on in a previous AFA issue) lutino Slatyheads and Plumheads, lutino, blue and cinnamon Mustached and Quakers, yellow Swifts, rosyred Bourkes, and yellow and blue Pennants. This last mutation is the subject of the article below written by the German aviculturist Dr. Robert Peters.

(Editor: R. Erhart)

The arrival of a new mutation is always an exciting and happy event among aviculturists. It provides new challenges, new ambitions and hopes of seeing the new mutation in your own aviaries. Such was the case when in 1970 a friend discovered one silver blue Pennant Parakeet in a box of other, normal looking, young. The color photo accompanying the article clearly shows its striking coloration. There is no difference between the color markings of male and female, but the young show a more greyish blue, slowly changing to a silver blue as the birds mature.

The first blue Pennant, a hen, appeared in the nest of a normal colored pair of Pennants. The second clutch again produced a blue bird. This second bird was a male and thus clearly showed that silver blue is a simple recessive mutation. In 1971 these two blue birds were mated together and produced five silver blue young. My father and I acquired two of these young birds and discovered soon that both were females. This was quite a fortunate circumstance because it forced us to mate them to normal unrelated males. These two pair produced a large number of normal-looking but split blue birds which in turn formed the base for producing more blue Pennants the following year. Today we own several strains of nearly unrelated blue birds, but we still prefer to

pair blue times split, rather than blue times blue.

Since the blue Pennant is a recessive mutation, breeding expectations are as follows:

- (a) blue x blue = 100% blue
- (b) blue x split blue = 50% blue, 50% split blue
- (c) blue x normal = 100% split blue
- (d) split blue x split blue = 25% blue, 25% normal and 50% split blue.
- (e) split blue x normal = 50% split blue, 50% normal

Of the five possibilities, the ones under (d) and (e) present some problems because it is impossible to identify visually the split blue birds from the normal birds. Hence only repeated test-breeding will sort out the true genetic make-up. Such test can be very time consuming and frustrating.

Breeding the silver blue Pennant is basically no different from breeding the normal, crimson colored Pennant. However, better results are obtained breeding split to blue rather than blue to blue. A normal clutch consists of from four to six eggs, which are incubated for an average of 20 days. The young leave the nest after about 32 days. My pair rear their own young — no foster parents are used.

Even though this silver blue strain originated in a German aviary, I was very much surprised to see the blue Pennant in the aviaries of an Australian breeder. He had caught the old blue hen in the wild in 1972 and by 1978 he had succeeded raising his first blue young bird. There is no difference in the blue color between the Australian mutation and the one raised in German aviaries.

There is also a sad note to my story of the blue Pennant. In 1978 some of my most valuable Australian parakeets including some of my blue Pennants were stolen from my aviaries. Unfortunately, my flights were not equipped with an alarm system at that time, something I have since rectified. None of the stolen birds were ever retrieved.

In wishing all of my American avicultural friends an exciting and rewarding breeding season, I also want to invite anyone to visit me and my aviaries in the near future •

*Fine
Feathered
Friends*

proudly presents

Topper's Bird Feed

(average protein 17%)

This seed is coated with all vitamins, minerals & amino acids recommended by most prominent veterinarians.

We have distributors from Chicago to the West Coast. In the Los Angeles area, Your distributor is Fine Feathered Friends.

WE ALSO HAVE

**Diamond Doves, Silver/Normal
Button Quail — Cockatiels
& Eye-Ring Lovebirds**

by Special Order

All Birds Raised On Our Ranch

Hours: 2:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Mon.-Fri
Sat.-Sun. 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

FOR INFORMATION:

FINE FEATHERED FRIENDS

P.O. Box 1486

Canoga Park, CA 91304

(213) 340-6318

*Ed Essington
Enterprises*



**IMPORTED
AND DOMESTIC BRED
EXOTIC BIRDS**

**NATIONAL
SALES REPRESENTATIVE
FOR "SELECT"
BIRD QUARANTINE STATIONS
AND
PRIVATE BREEDING FARMS
WHOLESALE ONLY**

**1466 - 19th Street
Manhattan Beach
California 90266**

(213) 546-4555