

New Indian Ringneck Mutations

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American aviculturists have long kept Indian ringneck parakeets (*Psittacula krameri krameri*), due to their charm, elegance, and prolific nature. Most capable of withstanding the stresses and shocks of captivity, these parrots are found over a large range in the wild, and have been collected as pets all over the globe. This article hopes to deal with some new possibilities facing American aviculturists in developing some truly fabulous ringneck mutations.

Fortunately for aviculturists interested in Indian ringnecks, several primary color mutations have been established in this species. This has served to create and maintain a sincere desire world-wide to explore, develop, and work with the various color mutations of the Indian ringneck. Lutinos, blues, and albinos are now well established in many aviaries here in the United States. Within the last decade, European breeders have imported and introduced three new color mutations into their collections; the grey-green, yellow-headed, and cinnamon yellow-headed Indian ringnecks.

Grey-green ringnecks originated in India and were imported into both England and Holland in the mid 1970s. They are an olive or khaki green color, similar to the shade of the olive budgie. The grey-green is neither sex-linked or recessive, but dominant in its mode of inheritance. Being a dominant mutation, there is no possibility for heterozygotes, "splits" to be produced. Grey-green mated to normal green will result in 50% grey-green and 50% normal green youngsters. When grey-green is paired to blue, the development of the grey mutation is under way. The resulting progeny from this pairing is theoretically 50% grey-green/blue, and 50% visual normal green split blue. Pairing one of the grey-greens/blue with a blue, one would expect the following percentages of young; 25% grey, 25% grey-green/blue, 25% blue, and 25% green/blue. One can increase one's production or percentage of greys by pairing grey with blue. Either bird being either color, one can now expect 50% grey, and 50% blue young to result from the nest.

Mr. Barry Kyme in England, a very knowledgeable and prominent ringneck breeder, has informed me that when dominant grey-green is paired to lutino, the mating produces a pure yellow colored bird, without the typical green reflection to the feather. When lutino is paired to grey, the resulting albino will lack the usual blue sheen to its feather, exhibiting a truly white bird. Another interesting color which can be derived from the grey-green line is the cinnamon grey-green. I have seen only one such example thus far. The bird was in a Dutch collection, and was housed in a poorly lit aviary. Various names were given to the bird, which only added total confusion to the understanding of it. It seemed to be best described as a light rust color, attractive in appearance. The cinnamon blue mutations which I have seen were all juvenile birds and appeared as being overall white in color with just a hint of blue exposed on the feathers, a dilute blue so to speak. Although I've never seen a cinnamon grey, I'm sure one of the European breeders has produced it or is very close to doing so. Since cinnamon is a reducer of color, I would expect a cinnamon grey to be a light shade of grey.

Another extremely exciting Indian ringneck mutation is the yellow-head. The mutation was appropriately given its name, as it has a pure yellow head from the ring line up. Below its black ring, the body color is often a slightly darker green than the normal. It also carries a "plum" red eye. I have seen one yellow-headed cock bird whose tail was solid yellow as well. Yellow-heads were wild-caught birds imported from India to Europe, and have proven to be autosomal recessive in their inheritance.

The first breeding groups which I am aware of belong to Mr. John Postema in Holland, and Mr. Theo Slagmolen in Belgium. Both men are very capable mutation specialists and have already combined the yellow-head mutation into the blue, grey-green, and grey lines. Apparently the head color change is only visible in the cock birds of this mutation, and takes place during the second or third year moult. In 1985 I

saw the spectacular white-headed-blue. This bird was a result of properly combining the offspring of the yellow-head mated to blue. Properly combining the white-headed blue with grey, one would eventually produce the white-headed grey. I'm not sure what shade of yellow the grey-green-yellow-head will assume, but since the grey-green color is of a dark fashion, the contrasting difference between the head and body color may well reveal another extraordinary bird.

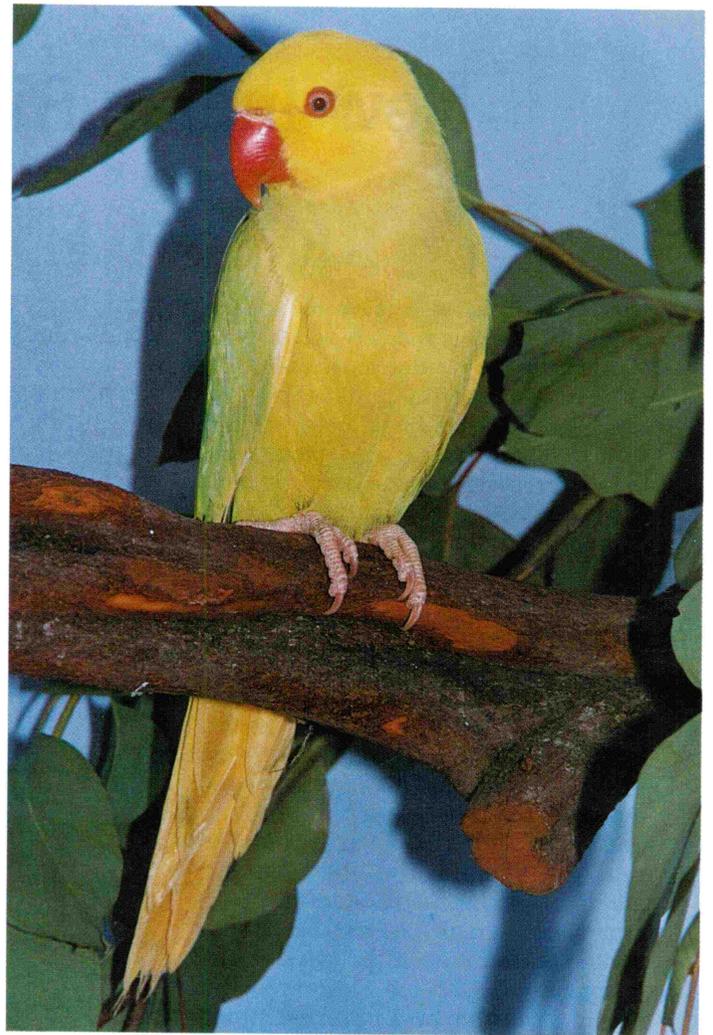
An altogether different mutation than the autosomal recessive yellow-head is the sex-linked cinnamon yellow-head. My knowledge of this mutation is quite limited and comes from Mr. Slagmolen, who has been successful with this mutation. At birth, the cinnamon yellow-head has a lutino red eye. Gradually the eye color changes as the bird matures, and in adulthood it retains a plum red eye. It is said to be dominant when paired with lutino, thus demonstrating itself as an allele of ino. The body color is more yellow than our "normal" cinnamon here in the U.S., and the head color is a rich yellow. It's interesting to note that the yellow head is visually present in this mutation coming out of the nest, and in both cocks and hens. Beautiful pastel colors can be expected when this mutation is bred into the blue and grey lines. Properly recombining the offspring, eventually cinnamon-white-headed blues, and cinnamon white-headed greys will be produced.

It may be best to leave the discussion of proper color combining, and the genetic possibilities involved to a later article. It's important for aviculturists interested in Indian ringnecks to realize that a new generation of mutation ringnecks is upon us. The feasibility for the development of new colors has never been as positive and tremendous as now. Great challenges face the mutation enthusiast, but the eventual rewards shall be even greater.

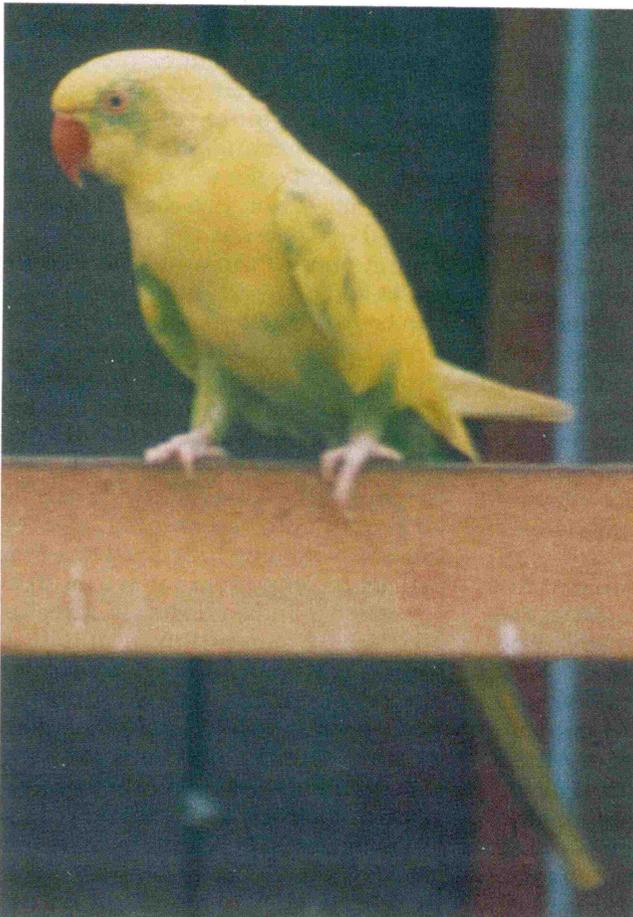
I'm interested in hearing from anyone who has knowledge of new mutations, or who wishes to comment on the above article. Please telephone (213) 877-1831. (See photos on next two pages.)



An adult yellow-head. This type yellow-head is recessive, and also has a yellow tail.



A juvenile cinnamon yellow-head. This sex-linked mutation displays the "yellow head" in its first feather.



A well marked pied Indian ringneck. This mutation has been crossed with the blue to produce blue peds.



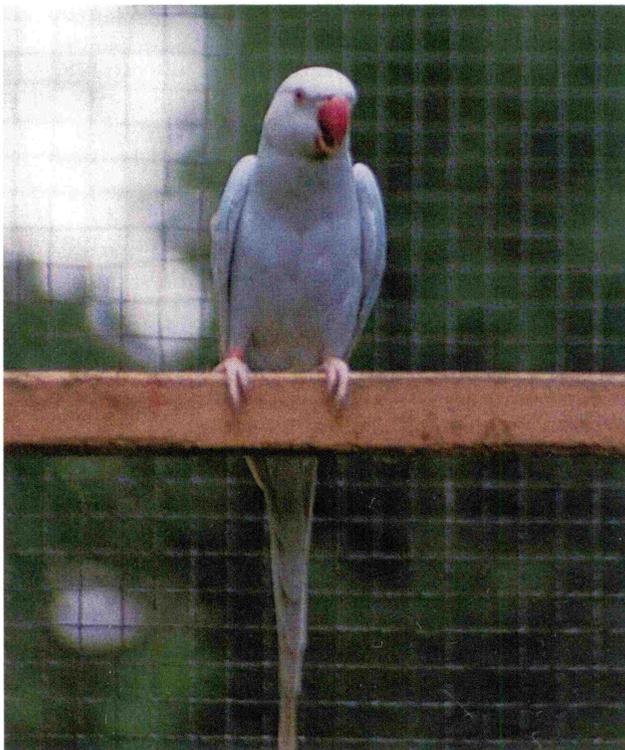
A pair of turquoise blue ringnecks. The cock bird is labeled type I, and has more blue throughout its body. The hen is a type II bird and shows only a small amount of blue on its abdomen and tail areas.



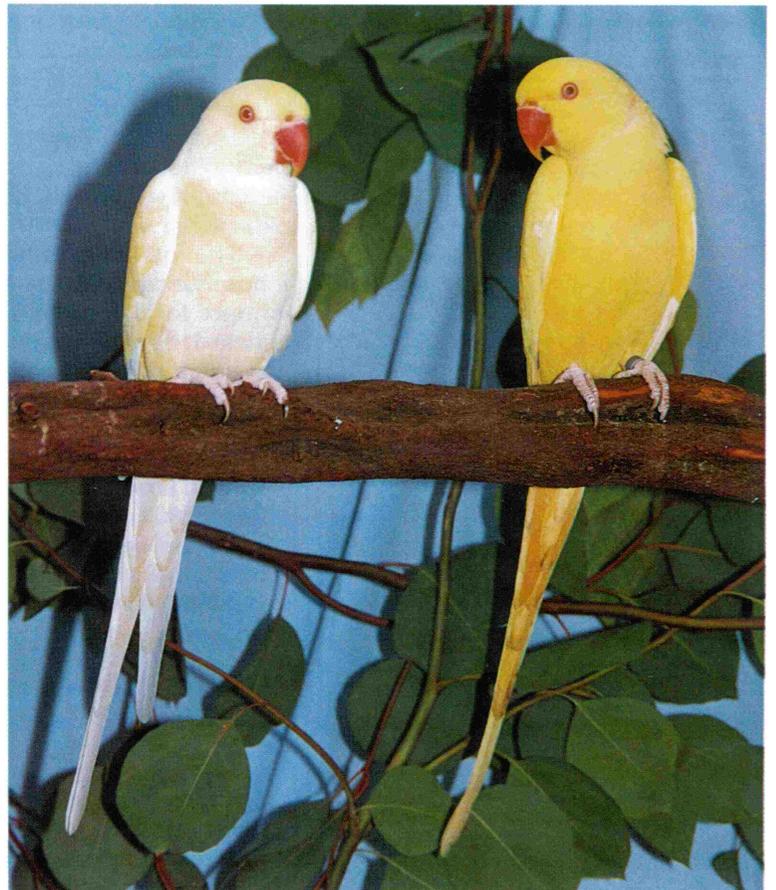
A grey cock bird with its blue mate. This pairing is expected to produce 50% grey and 50% blue young. The dominant grey mutation adult will obtain a black ring as in the normal green.



A two year old grey-green/blue cock bird. Perhaps not the most attractive mutation on its own, this mutation when paired to other colors has the potential to produce some spectacular specimens. Here is seen the grey-green with the normal green.



The cinnamon blue mutation.



A two year old cream albino hen, with its two-year-old lutino mate. The cream albino is a derivative of the turquoise blue mutation.