

A PLANNED MUTATION

by Dave West

Approximately twelve years ago among some birds that Mr. Rae Anderson and I owned jointly a male Alexandrine (*Psittacula eupatria nipalensis*) paired off with a lutino female Indian Ringneck (*Psittacula krameri*).

Such a mating had already taken place at the Keston Foreign Bird Farm in England. At Keston they took the young males from this mating (which were split for lutino) and mated them back to normal Alexandrine females. From this mating they got some lutino female Alexandrines according to the genetic formula. The lutino Alexandrines were bright yellow but retained the prominent red wing bar found in pure Alexandrines. This combination resulted in a very beautiful bird — a planned mutation.

The hybrids tend to favor the Alexandrine in appearance with the exception that they have duller red wing bars and less powerful beaks.

The pair Rae and I had reared small clutches of two or three babies each year for several years. When the young matured the males were mated back to normal Alexandrine hens and from these matings some lutino Alexandrines have appeared.

Alexandrines are not easy birds to breed and unless they have very large flights fertility seems to be poor. Also, Alexandrines tend to lay small clutches of eggs; two or three being an average clutch.

The results of our mutation hybridization to date have not followed Mendel's laws of inheritance in that the percentage of lutino babies has not been what one would expect. This has been a disappointment but since the results tend to average out there should soon be a breeding season where a higher than average number of lutinos will appear.

It would also be possible to produce a

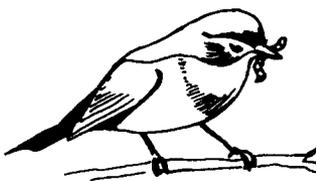
blue Alexandrine by mating an Alexandrine with a blue Ring Neck. All the babies of this mating would be split for blue as the blue mutation is not sex-linked. It would be fairly easy to produce blue Alexandrines by mating the split-blue babies together. To my knowledge, no one has attempted to produce blue Alexandrines by this method.

A well known European aviculturist has two wild-caught blue Alexandrines which he obtained in India where Alexandrines are a common bird.

Alexandrines and Ring Necks hybridize quite readily and Hank Johnson of Fresno, California, has raised lutino Alexandrines by using a male Ring Neck split to lutino mated with an Alexandrine hen. Since the split lutino Ring Necks are more common than split lutino Alexandrines this is probably the easiest way for others to produce lutino Alexandrines — a planned mutation.

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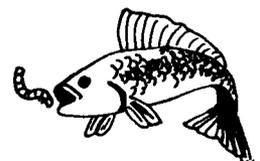
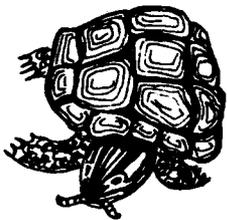


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