

## **Back in history: Subject: Fallows by (Late) Peter Needham 28 March 2005**

### **Background**

Our first fallows came about by chance, in 1973, when we imported two lutinos and a sky blue cock from U.K. breeders, J. and R. Dennis. We bred a red-eyed chick from the sky blue paired to a grey green hen from Dr. Robertson. At first we presumed it was a lutino, but as it feathered up it was obviously a grey green. When it came out of the nest-box it clearly had plum-coloured eyes, without an iris.

The Dennis brothers confirmed that they had no record of ever having had a fallow, but Dr. Robertson told us that his hen was a split fallow. It later transpired that the Robertson fallows had descended from imported birds, which were known as the Scottish variety. We persevered with them for approximately five years, but they suffered from a heredity blood condition, which caused them to haemorrhage internally and die at 5-8 days old. Surviving chicks were never robust and the line died out. However' we eventually were able to import some English fallows from UK breeder, Dr. Margaret Young in 1994, and have bred with few, if any, problems.

### **Colour description:**

Fallow budgerigars have a pale body colour with brown wing markings, tail and spots. There are two mutations-English and German. English fallows have plum-coloured eyes, without an iris, while German fallows have red eyes with a white iris, similar to inos. German fallows also appear to have a slightly darker body colour.

In both mutations, the blue series birds have a white body suffused with blue, which is more pronounced on the rump and under parts. Green series fallows are mustard yellow with green suffusion. It was this colouring that attracted us to fallows when we first saw them in Dr. Robertson's flights in Durban during the 1960's.

## **Breeding information.**

For those with little knowledge of fallows, it should be emphasized that because they are recessive mutations, it is difficult to improve their size. To achieve this end it is necessary to continually outcross them to big normals and then pair split fallows together.

Unfortunately, the theoretical expectation from split X split pairings is only 25 percent visual fallows. And there is another drawback. There is a large amount of wastage because non-fallow progeny from normal/fallow X normal/fallow pairings all look alike. One cannot tell split fallows from those that do not carry the fallow factor. As a result, we feel, non-visual fallows from this type of pairing should be discarded, unless there is space to do numerous test matings.

In selecting outcrosses for our fallows we restrict ourselves to good normal hens because they cannot, of course, be split for Cinnamon, which should be kept out of fallow families at all costs. In addition, we do not recommend the use of greywing or clearwings as outcrosses in a fallow-breeding program. The aim is to increase size, without detracting from the brown wing markings or further diluting body colour, which will surely happen if these varieties are used as out crosses.

In order to improve the size and colour of our fallows we have used dark-factor hens, including violets. This is working, albeit slowly.

It was a dream of Peter that Mutation Breeding would be given much more prominence in the budgie game. We trust that the AWEBSA initiative to actively promote the breeding and exhibition of mutations and giving them a rightful place in the show schedule would make Peter smile!

**Contact Details:**

For anybody interested in discussing more about this fascinating colour can contact  
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