The Pigeon Genetics Newsletter

News, Views, and Comments.

Editor: R. J .Rodgers, Nova Scotia, Canada

Co-Editor: Jith Peter, Palakkad, India

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Section # (1) Beginner

Lal band Ghagra youngster Jith Peter, Ash - red ASR Gary Keith, Ash-red Ts1 RacerX Blondinette Bob R.

Header : (1) Cream BarEx. Homers Clint Robertson, Faded ash racer, Faded Cream and Ecru /Lemon Blue bar Gary Boo.

" This month we take a closer look at "LOOK - A - LIKES "

We sometimes hear them referred to as "MIMICS" , I have incorrectly used the term myself in the past , but in actual fact they are not mimics genetically. It is rare for genetic Mimicry to occur in Pigeons , and when it does , it is the result of centuries of natural selection . One might argue ; therefore , that the wing Pattern in the Blue series evolved as it looks today as a result of mimicking dark asphalt roofs on buildings and/or Rocky ledges. I have witnessed Feral pigeons darting for the roof tops of houses and in particular the areas partially shaded by trees in order to hide from eminent hawk attacks. Once there , it is very difficult to see them as they blend in almost completely. This would be a form of genetic

mimicry as a result of natural selection . The birds simply seek out a high vantage spot to hide , but since only the birds that blend in well due to their specific colour and pattern successfully fool predators , they are the ones that get to survive to breed on , thus sharing their colour and pattern traits with their young along with an inherent instinct to hide in this manner. The fact that the traits that are involved genetically are also Dominant , further ensures that the mimic effect is enhanced.

Likewise , the Barred pattern of the shield and tail of wild type Columba livia lends itself very well to the camouflage of the Rock Cliffs upon which it evolved throughout Africa ., the Middle East ., and China etc. The black bars and bands mimic the crevices and cracks in the rocks while the slate and albescent areas blend somewhat with the lighter sunlit tones . To the eyes of a Predator they blend in as a wall of rock.

Having said all that , there is very little evidence of any other forms of mimicry ., but we do have incidental look-a -likes. For example : An Ash red bar ., and a red phase recessive opal / Cherry , one is ash-red series and the other blue series so while they are completely different , they appear quite similar . No genetic mimicry is involved .

So let's take a look at as many of these cases as we can find .

Pigeons have no need or ability to mimic one another in colour . We may have any number of different traits that when combined in different ways , all give about the same result to our observation. It is simply a matter of coincidence and in some cases a stretch of the imagination ! They therefore at best , are simply " look-a-likes ".

Modifiers such as milky factor , smoky factor , Qualmond ., dilution ., either applied individually to the base pigments and patterns or combined in various ways may give phenotypes that would generally appear to be as a result of the same genetic make-up even thought they are known not to be . Below we see several blue series birds that have at least one modifier that causes them to appear as a soft silvery tone . One modifier to cause that is dilution ., another milky factor ., and still another Ice factor ., and the list goes on including various combinations of these traits. Sometimes it is not possible to tell one from another just by looking at the specimens .

Powdered show type Racer John Ferber

dilute blue /Silver , Bertus Kok.

Rakin Habib's milky Ice

Milky Blue racer by Danny Doneks.

Dilute Indigo Manuel Alvermaz

Milky Blue fantail Wild Briar Fans.


Indigo and recessive opal bred by Girard Cirillo . recessive opal Andy Hess.


Homo Saffron bred by Jith Peter. compared to an ash red bar split for recessive red Ameer Hamza .


reduced recessive reds and ash-red dominant Opal Isabel Jijo Thomas

Blue bar Tiger grizzle King Bassett photo and Stipper Blue Bar lacking bronze. Bruce Coons.

Silver dun bar (dilute blue bar Bob Rodgers) , and brown bar bred by Wayne Murphy

Ash-red Stipper Peed Lofts . Homo Indigo spread blue. Akhtar javaid

Wild type Blue Bar, bob R.

Blue Bar hetero Frosty by Tim Kvidera

Ash-red hetero for blue , and a Stipper ash-red bar het blue Fabio Zambon.

Toy Stencil full complex Photo Mick bassett

Dom. Opal spread blue black masking bar Steve Scott

Kurt Gossens Toy Stencil full complex plus frill stencil



Reduced Black Stephen Scott . Pure spread blue Ts, fs . Felice Australian Group.

third photo not reduced but resembles it (Pigeon Facebook)

Spread blue Stipper Wim Halsma

Spread blue Tiger grizzle Omar Blw Danube

Spread blue Homo Frosty Tim Tvidera

Spread blue Qualmond by Neww Yorrk Lofts.

From these few examples you can readily see that various genetic combinations may create phenotypes that are similar . In some cases they are almost identical. Guessing the genome of a bird from a photo is almost impossible for this very reason . Obviously other conditions will also make it more difficult , such as lighting either natural or artificial . The age of the bird also plays a significant role as they often undergo rather drastic colour changes as they age . Some traits darken over time such as Sooty factor and Undergrizzle , while others such as The stencils and certain grizzle traits may become lighter .

Then we have modifiers that break up colour pigment causing a whitening effect that then undergo a reversal in effect to allow the base pigment (ground colour) to express almost fully as the bird ages , we see this in our "Almonds" where the Stipper gene gradually decreases in its "breaking" effect .

A superb Classic Almond with Blue series foundation , Residual bronze , and Stipper Break photo Trave Pigeon Poultry.

I have had people sell birds to me that they did not recognize one year later as the colour change was so dramatic.

These effects may play a significant role in your Breeding Programs also . I have seen cases where people have bred certain colours for years based upon their belief that they had this or that specific trait ., and were adamant that they knew what they were doing and indeed what traits they had , when in fact they had allowed MODIFIERS to creep in that had changed completely what they were actually breeding. They knew that all the expected rules of genetics seemed to have been contradicted by their breeding results ., but refused to accept that it was because they were not breeding the traits they initially thought they had .

Traits that you may want to avoid when you are establishing your strains within a specific Colour trait are : smoky , milky., Dirty., and Sooty. Many people confuse smoky and Sooty as well . Milky and dilution are often confused . In addition , it should be realized that the base "patterns" DO play a significant role when it comes to the overall effects of many of the colour traits.

A Stipper/Almond barred pattern will present a very different colour effect than a checkered or even a T-pattern for example .

Stipper blue Checker lacking recessive red ,Bob R. & Stipper Blue Series T-Pattern Joe Power.

When spread factor is added ., the resulting colour will depend upon which pattern is hidden by the spread as well as any other modifiers that may or may not be present.

Pedro JP Bento's Sooty Blue Bar . light blue check , not sooty Mahabab Alam Rifat.

Ts1 bronze Spread blue/black Mick Bassett and Brander Bronze Mick Bassett.

Frosty blue bar T. Tvidera , smoky Dirty F. blues Gopal Gadhavi , Anthracit T-pattern Barry Croes.

smoky blue bar David Scott. smoky T-pattern (slate) Ahmed Elhossieny

  

undergrizzles , but each different . (1)het.(Ug) Barry McPhee , (2)homo Ug Jith Peter , (3) unknown trait Jith Peter.

Making a change !

We have been discussing whether or not to change the frequency of Newsletter Publications from the current Monthly issues to Every three or four Months . Four or three per year. We have a full -time , non- paying job , to put together Monthly Newsletters of at least 12 pages , and we need more assistance from you the readers. We know you have breeding programs ., and in some cases you are working on testing or breeding various interesting colour traits , and we realize that that takes a great deal of time and that you may not wish to reveal any details until you have completed your work.

However , I am certain that each of you who support this Publication by signing up ., get a great deal more enjoyment out of each issue IF you are seeing new pictures ., and gaining new information etc. That is our aim but we need input from you to spawn the new ideas and bring it all together.

A few have suggested that we let you know what the next Issue (s) topics will be , so that you can plan to send in material. Often we do not know what we will do until the last moment. The idea is that we collect all material whenever it comes in ., and then apply it accordingly. The more we have to work with , the more creative we can be. There are some major topics that we hope to take on in the future . One is simply put - "PIED" factor. This will not be a topic that we can do in just one or even two or three Issues , as it is huge .

During our talks with some of you ., we discovered that Brian Heck of Canada has a large collection of Rare colour Archangels ., some tracing back to Dr. Paul Gibsons stock. Then when I mentioned that in a couple of Issues back ., another fellow told me that he knew of a fellow in Europe who also has a large collection of Rare colour Gimpels , so we would just love to do at least one if not more Issues on that .

I hope to have your support so that we can continue providing a quality Colour Genetics Publication.

Until next time that is it from the Pigeon Loft ~ Bob R. - Canada & Jith Peter- Ohman .