

Violets

by Mike Rankin

One day, some years ago, Crawford Maddux said to me, "Stop by I have some birds for you." That was the start of my love affair with violets. And, by the way that was the most expensive free Budgie I ever received. The Budgie Crawford gave me was a yellowface cobalt. Unknown to me that bird was really a yellowface violet sky. I mated that bird to a cobalt hen and that was the start of my love affair with violets.

I have bred violets for over twenty years now. Along the way, I've learned many interesting things about violets. Much of the initial information I received does not stand the test of time. But let me start with some historical information on the violet.

The violet mutation occurred in several countries about the same time. As more dark greens and blues were bred, the violet appeared. According to Australian records, violets were developed in the early 1930s. A Mr. Burton of Sydney bred violets prior to 1934, and violets were exhibited that year in Australia by a Mr. Harold Pier. References to purple or violet colored budgerigars in Germany and Britain go back to the mid 1920s. Interestingly, most books state that violets first appeared in the 1930s. Cobalts appeared for the first time in 1920, having been bred from dark greens. Dark greens were first established at Blanchard's Aviaries in France in 1915, but it is unclear whether they arose from a new mutation or were imported in consignments of wild budgerigars. There were reports from importers in Europe that dark greens were found among the consignments of wild greens. As you may have noted violet greens look very much like dark greens. It takes a trained eye to tell the difference. In the same vein violet skies look very much like cobalts. It has been suggested that the violet factor was not a new mutation but rather arose from wild caught birds imported from Australia. Peter Bergman of Sydney, Australia suggests this is the reason we saw the mutation in several countries at about the same time.

The first record of violets in Great Britain was in the mid-thirties. Mrs. Brown of Morecombe imported whitewing violets from Australia. Soon after the distinguished Mr. Wathough purchased several birds from Mrs. Brown. In 1939 there were several references to violets culminating with a pair of violet Budgerigars shown at the Crystal Palace Show.

It is not my intent to hold a genetics class, however a little genetic information is needed to understand the violet factor. The violet factor is a dominant factor. As a dominant factor, violet cannot be masked. The violet factor always has an affect on the color of a bird regardless of the base color. The depth of the base color will regulate the intensity of the violet affect. The violet factor can be both single and double factor. In the double factor violets, the color is more intense and even. A violet trait on the same gene as a dark factor produces a more intense color than a violet factor on a normal gene.

It is in the blue series that we recognize as the show violet. In the blue series we have the Sky, Cobalt and Mauve. With the addition of the Violet factor, the colors get a little more difficult to identify. The violet skyblues color ranges from a very well colored sky to a normal cobalt. The telling factor is the main tail feathers. The violets tend to have a turquoise edging on the tail feathers. Birds with a violet factor tend to have a glossier turquoise iridescence when viewed under florescent lighting.

Just when you feel you have the violet sky-cobalt issue resolved, let me introduce the double factor violet sky. Double factor violet skies are similar in color to single factor violet cobalt. At this point let me add the term visual violet. This visual violet is the color that we call a show violet. This bird usually consists of a single dark factor and a single violet factor. However the double factor sky violet is very similar in depth of color to the cobalt violet. In many cases the color is the same to an untrained eye.

This realization explained my initial experience with violets. From my first sky violet I bred double factor sky violets. These birds appeared to be normal visual violets. But I never produce true

cobalt or mauve from this gene pool. This led me to understand that I did not possess a dark factor in my violet gene pool.

Another factor I did not understand was the linkage of the violet factor and the dark factor. When I would show my early violets against Crawford's, I would always note a shade difference. This difference was very notable as a shade darker. Later I acquired the second line of violets from Crawford and learned the secret. In the new line, the dark factor was located on the same chromosome as the violet factor. This made the violet cobalt substantially darker bird than the double factor sky violet.

This new violet line that I acquired from Crawford was named the "Mikie" line. Crawford and I selected this bird in the nest. Mikie was not my first choice of the chicks in the nest. The best was actually a violet white cock. This bird would make Crawford's eyes light up, a real stormer. I was well pleased with Mikie. Mikie was a true violet cobalt, visual violet with the violet and dark factor on the same gene. This was the foundation of my second line of violets. I paired Mikie to a cobalt hen that was not part of the original violet line. This produced several nice violets and two cobalt hens. And so the Mikie line was born.

At this point I could compare cobalts, sky violets, double factor sky violets and violet cobalts. In four show cages I had the four birds in one place under the same light. The cobalt was the lesser shade of color than the violet sky. The difference being a luster in the color of the violet sky. Both of these bird would be classified as cobalts based on initial review. The double factor violet sky was a violet in the true sense. When the double factor sky was compared to the violet cobalt the difference was clear. The violet cobalt was shade deeper in color. I then compared a cobalt violet with the violet factor and dark factor on the same gene. This cobalt violet same gene Budgie was again a shade deeper. So we now have five shades of color. Now I understood what Taylor and Warner were discussing in chapter ten of their book *Genetics for Budgerigar Breeders*. They detailed the same experiments that I spent years duplicating. I actually read the book several years before, but lacked the understanding of their words. But they stopped their experiments with violet cobalts and double factor sky violets. Peter Bergman conducted extensive research on the violet factor. Much of what Bergman offers for your consideration is substantiated by my breeding results.

At this point you are probably thinking, "what more could be said about violets?" Well, there are several more issues to consider. We should discuss the double factor cobalt violet. Then we have the mauve, violet mauve and double factor violet mauve. Then the anti-violet factor must be discussed. We'll leave these matters for another day and let you go out to the aviary and look at your cobalts and violets. With this new knowledge you will probably view your cobalts and violets with a keener eye.

This is the chart of the different genetic variations. This chart only considers the violet and dark factors for our discussions.

dv/dv	Sky
dv/dV	Sky Violet Single Factor
dV/dV	Sky Violet Double Factor
Dv/dv	Cobalt
Dv/dV	Cobalt Violet Single Factor
DV/dv	Cobalt Violet Single Factor Same Chromosome