

King Quail Mutations

Coturnix chinensis

Two New Mutations Found

While Australian breeders commonly only breed with silver and cinnamon mutations (in the US there are about 10), careful observation reveals an accumulation of mutations in Australian stocks. Two new, Australian mutations are currently being worked with and characterised. These mutations give rise to the colours: *caramel* and *smudge*.

Caramel birds are cinnamons which also carry an extra, autosomal, recessive mutation (a suspected colour deletion mutation). Lacking one of the pigments at the base of the feathers, they show a distinctive patterning down the backs of both males and females. Caramel chicks are distinguished from cinnamon chicks from birth as they lack dark patches on their head and back. (The difference is best observed by comparison.) I expect this mutation to be fairly widely spread within the Australian breeding population, having been observed in Lismore (north NSW), Brisbane, and possibly also in Wollongong. [For a photo of a female caramel see centre spread, *Ed.*]

Smudges appear to be rich, dark cinnamons but they throw brown chicks, not the expected yellow. I am still learning about smudges but suspect the gene involved to be an autosomal recessive gene affecting eumelanin distribution or production.

The above information was received from Robert Lingard, a King Quail hobbyist in N.S.W. He would like to hear from anyone with experience of these, or other, uncommon King Quail mutations.

Robert can be contacted on (02) 6625:2730 or roblyn@gotalk.net.au. Ed.
