

ADDENDUM

A pair of Cliff Swallows returned on 25 April 1978, were repairing the neck of the old nest with fresh mud on 5 May, and seemed to be incubating by 10 May.

On a House Sparrow Mutant from Fayetteville, N.C.

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On 7 April 1975, an accidental sighting of a mutant female House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) was made in the Tallywood section of Fayetteville, N.C. The bird was first noticed flying in the company of an apparent mate that was normally pigmented. Later the mutant was viewed on a lawn at close range through a 7x50 binocular.

At first glance this bird appears to be generally white. However, upon closer scrutiny, the coloring is more of a beige. Sightings of similarly pigmented birds have been reported from Europe (Rutgers 1966). If this mutant has been seen in North Carolina, I have not as yet seen it reported.

The characteristic pattern of the mutant is that of a normal female House Sparrow; however, the color is very much diluted. The underparts are a very light beige. The upper parts are darker, especially the tail and the outer wing feathers, which appear to have some pink-brown tints. The beak is beige. The legs and feet are also beige, but darker. The eyes are normally pigmented.

This bird has been seen repeatedly since the first sighting. By 6 May 1975, the mutant was accompanied by two fledged juveniles that were normally pigmented. The bird was again seen on 28 May 1975 carrying nest materials. The mutant was last seen in the company of two normally pigmented fledglings on 18 June 1975.

The particular interest in this bird is that it appears to resemble a similar mutation in the Zebra Finch (*Taeniopygia guttata*), which is called *Fawn*. Aiuto (1964) has explained that *Fawn* (F) is inherited as a sex-linked recessive gene. Since the female is hemizygous, such traits are always expressed. However, there is also a *White* mutant that is not an albino. This trait is inherited as an autosomal single recessive gene (Rutgers 1964).

It is expected that at least another season will be required in order to gain sufficient insights into the nature of the inheritance pattern of this mutant sparrow. Although the relative number of mutant offspring appearing in this population will have an important bearing in determining the inheritance type, the sex ratios of the mutants in this population will prove more conclusive (Sturdevant and Beadle 1939). To confirm the *Fawn* trait, controlled breeding of this mutant sparrow would very likely be required.

Another point of interest is centered on any apparent selective value that this mutant might possess. So far, it appears to be at least a neutral one. At present this mutant appears to be the only individual of this type in the population, and it has survived at least for a period of three months, the period of observation. It has also successfully produced two sets of offspring. Production of additional mutants in the local House Sparrow population may make it possible to assess any selective value that might be present.

LITERATURE CITED

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