

African Grey Feather Discoloration

Learn more about feather coloration and the cause of abnormal feather coloration in birds.

Q: I have a very intelligent Congo African grey. We carry on conversations most everyday. Her feathers are all turning red – not just her tail feathers, but her chest, back legs, etc. She eats a wide variety of fresh fruit, veggies, seeds and pellets. This has been happening for a few years now (she is 7 years old). I have had Savannah since she was 6 months old. I'm looking forward to your help on the issue of red feathers. Thank you in advance.

Jean Pattison, also known as "The African Queen," explains:

I have seen this presentation in a few adult birds. In greys with unknown history, sometimes it is a result of earlier feather picking that damages the feather follicle. Since you have had your grey since she was young, this is not the case. Some research has been done in this area, and we have found no known cause and nothing negative regarding health. In the early days of importation, people thought it was a symptom of psittacine beak and feather disease (PBFD), but testing these birds has shown that it was coincidence and not a symptom of the disease. Kevin McGraw, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Arizona State University, is leading a study regarding feather coloration and the cause of abnormal coloration of feathers.

[View his paper here.](#) (PDF format)

Kevin McGraw will be giving a lecture (Feather Pigmentation and Coloration) at the Avicultural Society of America conference in Phoenix, AZ in February. Please see this site for details.