

Budgie Leg And Feet Skin Color

Does a budgie's feather color determine their leg and feet skin color?

By Margaret A. Wissman, DVM

These blue mutation budgies have darkly pigmented leg and feet skin.

Q: I have four budgies, and one of them has feet that change colors from a pink color to a dark blue/purple. At first I was extremely concerned because I thought his feet were not getting the proper circulation, but I noticed a picture of a blue budgie (just like mine) in a past issue of BIRD TALK, and his feet were a purplish blue color also. What might cause the changing of colors, and is this a normal occurrence in blue budgies?

A: You're a very observant bird owner, indeed! My pet budgies (parakeets) range in feather color from albino (white with red eyes) to pastels to dark blue and purple. My white and light colored budgies all have pink leg and feet skin, and my cobalt blue budgie and purple one both have more darkly pigmented leg and feet skin, which has darkened as they matured.

The budgie you mentioned seeing in BIRD TALK is actually Peanut, one of my birdy kids, so I know for a fact that he is in excellent health. His leg and feet skin have darkened in the months since I have adopted him, as have my young birds with the darker pigmented feathering.

One way to make sure that your budgie has adequate circulation is to gently assess the temperature of his feet by touching them, and then comparing that to what you feel in the feet of your other birds. While this is crude at best, it still can give you a general idea about the circulation in the feet. Visibly, legs and feet with poor circulation will appear swollen, perhaps, or if it's just a toe, it may appear dry and necrotic (dead), possibly peeling and will feel cold to the touch. If you have any doubts, don't hesitate to schedule an appointment with your avian vet to examine your blue budgie and put your fears to rest.

I'm happy to report that your bird seems to be perfectly normal, from what you have described and from your comparison to Peanut, my slate blue budgie.