

# The Plague Of The Hobby - French Moult

In breeding budgies for 50 plus years in my experience there has been a pattern when FM appears.

On all occasions I recall the FM occurred soon (3-4 months) after birds from multiple sources were mixed together, or new birds were introduced to an established flock.

Research at Universities in the US has determined the FM is a type of virus.

This virus is carried by all budgies and varies (mutates) from aviary to aviary.

If a flock is kept isolated like many established studs (no new birds constantly introduced) the birds in the flock build up a resistance to their strain of the virus and FM does not appear.

However when new birds are introduced it triggers the FM virus to activate, and if the birds are put up to breed FM may result.

The researchers say it takes 3-4 months after introducing new birds for the virus variations to adjust (mutate), so if you wait 3-4 months absolute minimum after introducing new birds to pair up an outbreak is far less likely.

This may be why we see FM outbreaks in beginners aviaries when they buy birds from many sources to get started, and in aviaries where the breeder is a constant outcrosser.

Other “stressors” appear to also trigger the FM virus.. Poor nutrition, over crowding, over breeding, to name a few.

When returning to the hobby in 2009 after a break of 9 years I obtained start-up stock from several breeders. In my impatience to produce chicks I set most pairs up soon after they arrived. First round went fine but the second round had a high percentage of moulters. I broke up all pairs and left them in flight cages for five months before setting up again. That was nearly two years ago, and no FM since.

Coincidence?? Not sure. But something worth considering.

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