

Feather Loss - Balding Birds

Summarised from Articles sent in by Cath Jones

Well, I was having problems with some of my Gouldians losing their head and neck feathers and starting to look, as one person put it, "like Turkeys". Bernadette also had a bit of the same problem, so we hit the web and came across these articles.

Anyway, nothing tried nothing gained so gave iodine a go.

Clinicians Iodine Oral drops...8 drops per 2 litres of water and gave it to them in their drinking water. It took about 4-6 weeks for their feathers to start coming back, and another month to be fully feathered. I now cut it down to 4 drops per 2 litres, and give it for 3 days once a month. I also give them Cider Apple Vinegar in their drinking and bath water once a week at 5 mls per 2 litres. This also stops the water going green. I hope this will help you.

Letter sent in from Cath Abridged to remove the copyright material - Ed

I have summarised the info in the collection of articles sent in by Cath, since I can't breach copyright and print the articles themselves... (ED)

Gary & Barbara Solomon say that there are three main reasons for feather loss in Gouldians (the Turkey look). The reasons are:

- 1) Lack of iodine due to there not being enough iodine in the seed, water and supplements normally fed to Gouldians. Without Iodine the thyroid gland doesn't function properly, and this is related directly to lack of feather growth, this is called goitre. Iodine needs to be added to their diet, but as it is possible to poison your Gouldian by using too much so don't think more is better. Apparently once iodine is introduced to the diet it can take from 4-6 weeks to grow feathers back, if lack of iodine is the cause of the feather loss.
- 2) Stress from overcrowding can cause feather loss, especially when breeding.
- 3) Feather mites are another possible cause of feather loss.

The recommendation is to add a small amount of iodine to the diet and reduce any overcrowding issues there may be. Then after 6 weeks or so if there is no improvement, treat for feather mites.

If you would like to read that article it can be found at:

<http://www.gorgeousgouldians.com/a-balding.asp>

Cath also printed out for us a photographic journal of some Gouldians that suffered

severe feather loss, and their journey back to being fully feathered.

The full article and photos (these are well worth looking at) can be found at :

http://www.ladygouldianfinch.com/features_rescue.mgi (the 'gap' is an underscore)

It stresses the feather re-growth was brought about by use of supplements, mostly in the drinking water or sprinkled on soaked millet as the birds refused to eat soft food. The article states the number one deficiency causing death in female Gouldians is from lack of Calcium. Lack of the appropriate protein and amino acids can cause feather re-growth problems and can be rectified with the use of a multivitamin/mineral supplement designed to correct feather problems that includes the protein and amino acids. The reduction of pollutants and contaminants in the water is vital. Use of products in the water that act as antiseptic and antibiotic are recommended.

In another article the use of apple cider vinegar is raised. It can be used as an antibacterial (it contains good bugs which are unfriendly to infectious microorganisms) and antiseptic (it kills germs on contact), addition to the drinking water. Its use dates back 10,000 years when vinegar was used in human medicine. Apple cider vinegar will help prevent the growth of bacteria and fungal growth on fresh foods as well. It acts as an aid for digestion, breaking down fats, minerals and proteins. Apple cider vinegar is a useful addition to your feeding regime - it offers minerals, acids, and enzymes to keep your bird in excellent health with just a tiny amount in the water. While I couldn't find the exact website to give you the address for this specific article- I can say that this is a subject well worth researching. There are many articles on-line if you type 'apple cider vinegar Gouldians' into a web search.

Another supplement well worth researching is powdered Kelp. According to the article in front of me Kelp is high in potassium and iodine. This article says that deficiency in Gouldians can cause breathing problems as well as difficulty in moulting. It has 12 vitamins, 21 amino acids and more than 60 chelated minerals.



*Photo: Healthy Male Gouldian
taken by Kent Hutchins*