



**United Budgerigar Society Inc.**

## **Toolkit for distinguishing Normal Spangle from Opaline Spangle**

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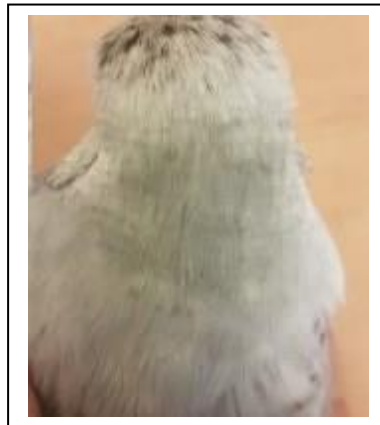
There are four key areas of the Spangle that can assist in determining if it's Normal or Opaline. Some are common sense, but some are specific to the Spangle variety itself, and while none on its own may be foolproof, used in combination it has a very high degree of accuracy.

The four key areas to assess are:

- **The back of the head** Dense striations on the head of the bird is evident in Normals. Unfortunately, many spangles have varying degrees of opalescence on the back of the head making an assessment of this area more challenging.

### **The back of the head.**

The pictures below compare a Normal Spangle Cobalt to an Opaline Spangle Grey.



Striations on the back of the head should be discernible in Normal. Patches of body colour on the back of the head of Spangles can make it harder to see markings, but nonetheless, they should still be noticeable.

It is opalescence, which is borrowed from Opalines, but it does not an Opaline make!

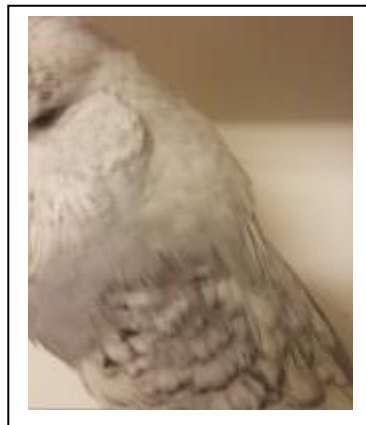
- **The mantle, or saddle.** Body colour in the mantle is a sign that the bird is Opaline. Again, the intrusion of body colour into the ground colour areas of Spangles challenges us.

### **The mantle, or saddle.**

The Standard requires that Normals have ground colour in their mantle (white for blue series, and yellow for green series), and body colour in the mantle for Opalines. Fairly straightforward.

However, the increasing presence of body colour on the back of the head and through the wings of some Normal Spangles has created confusion.

The pictures below provide an insight into the differences between the two varieties.



You can clearly see the Spangle Cobalt has white ground colour between the wing butts, whereas the Spangle Grey has grey body colour in the mantle.

- **The wing markings.** Body colour can be evident in wings of Opaline birds, but unfortunately we are increasingly seeing body colour enter the wings of Normal Spangles as well.

### **The wing markings.**

Spangles are required to have black, clearly defined and symmetrical markings on appropriate ground colour. For Cinnamon wings you can amend the colour to cinnamon.

The key difference between Normal and Opaline Spangles is that the Standard allows a modification for Opalines. Their markings can include body colour, and can be lighter in intensity. However, there is still a requirement for markings in Opaline Spangles.

Unfortunately, many Normal Spangles are now seeing the intrusion of body colour in the wings, which can lead some to assume they are Opalines, instead of seeing this as a fault in a Normal Spangle.

The pictures below attempt to show the difference.



- **The rump.** Normal and Opaline Spangles have different colouring in the rump that assists us to distinguish them apart.

Remember, these are tools that are most benefit when the bird is lacking sufficient varietal content to easily distinguish if it is Normal or Opaline.

When a bird is showing poor varietal content on the show bench it's losing points for variety and/or markings, with the greater the deviation from the standard, the greater the penalty.

## The rump.

Normal Spangles show a patch, or grizzling, of ground colour on the rump leading into the primary tail feathers. The intensity of the ground colour will vary from bird to bird, but it is unique to Normal Spangles and not evident in the Opalines.

So blue series Normal Spangles would have some white grizzling on their rump leading into the Primary Tail Feathers, and for green series birds it would be yellow.

You should now have four key measures with which to determine if a Spangle is in fact a Normal or an Opaline. Try it in your own aviary using all four assessments and it is a very reliable means of determining underlying variety.



By contrast, Opaline Spangles show only body colour.

