

## **COCKATIELS or QUARRION: *Nymphicus hollandicus***

The cockatiel is second only to the budgerigar in popularity as both a childhood pet or as a subject for the showbench. These slender graceful mainly grey, white and yellow Australian quarrions with their long tail, red ear coverts, expressive crest and gentle behavior can be housed in flights containing even timid finches. Males will sometimes display much like a cockatoo does with outstretched wings and a swaggering gait but this behavior poses little threat to other pets or people and is entertaining to watch.

Cockatiels are another species native to Australia. They are related to the much larger cockatoos. There are many strong hints to this close kinship.

1. Cockatiels and cockatoos have a feathered crest on their head, which can be raised or lowered at will.
2. The feather structure itself does not reflect blue light so there can be no blue or green bird belonging to the cockatoo family.
3. Cockatiel feathers release a cleansing powder just like cockatoo feathers do.
4. Baby cockatiels and cockatoos not only look similar but also display comparable begging and feeding responses.
5. Adult gang-gang cockatoos share much of the same sexual color pattern differences as normal grey cockatiels. Gang-gang males are redheaded as compared to yellowheaded in cockatiels - hens of both species lack the head color.
6. There are more noticeable striation patterns found in hen tail feathers compared to the cock in many of the black cockatoo species.
7. Some cockatoos even show a cheek patch in varying degrees, which is always a striking feature in normal tiels. Yet the 13" long cockatiel is much smaller and more streamlined than any cockatoo and has a much longer tail for its size.

Instead of the raucous scream so common among the cockatoos cockatiels, in contrast, have a much more pleasant repertoire. The males utter warbling variations of a wolf whistle while hens are less vocal but more placid than cocks.

In Australia cockatiels search vast distances for food so they have developed long tapered wings for the purpose. This means that birds kept as pets must have all of their primary flight feathers clipped back almost to the coverts if flight is to be prevented. Domesticated cockatiels can be seen in colors ranging from yellow,

**cinnamon, white and silver in combination with pearl and pied patterns. These beautiful mutations are just another reason so many people enjoy the cockatiel.**