

THE NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY



JULY
AUGUST
1989



JULY/AUGUST
VOLUME 6 NUMBER 4

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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Fellow members, a Nominating Committee has been appointed by your Board of Directors. Dr. Al Decoteau is overseeing the committee. The Committee chairperson is Steve Hoppin, 3836 Hidden Acres Circle, North Fort Myers, FL 33903, telephone 813-997-2237. The committee consists of Steve, Tom Rood of Illinois, Gene Miller of Oklahoma, and Marty Von Raesfeld of California.

As you can see our committee members are spread out around the country. This is not by accident. We would like all members interested in running for office to contact one of our committee members, or if you wish write to Steve at the above address. Nominees for all offices are needed. As you know I am not running again for President and there are other offices completely open. Support your Society, run for office and help NFS grow throughout the 1990's. Nominations will be presented at the National in New Orleans and voted upon in December.

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NFS NEWS AND NOTES

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Treasurer's Report: Balance as of May 31, 1989 was \$ 9057. Copies of the detailed report will be sent to all Board members.

Band Secretary's Report: 13,280 bands sold as of May 31, 1989. Size "D" by far the largest seller, a total of 6600 so far!

Judge's Panel Report: We have 26 NFS Panel Judges and B apprentices. The Board voted to drop from the Panel any judge whose fees are not paid after a reminder is sent. A problem with the timely submission of reports before, during and after the show season was discussed. Dr. Decoteau noted that he was willing to send certified letters to those judges who haven't sent reports on the upcoming season to him. The following paragraph will be added to the Judge's Handbook in an effort to prevent this situation from occurring again.

"Any request by the Judge's Panel Director for the return of dated material is to be carried out promptly. Any Judge not responding shall be notified by certified mail that he will be given an additional time (to be decided on by the Panel Director). If a response is not received by that deadline that judge shall be suspended from the NFS Judges Panel for a period of one year beginning January 1 the year following the occurrence. In the case of a second occurrence of any obligations not being fulfilled the suspension shall be permanent."

Standards Report: The Diamond Sparrow Standard will be available for the Board meeting held in conjunction with the AFA Convention in Phoenix in August. Dr. Decoteau noted that statistics show that the Star Finch is the most frequently exhibited bird without a standard. Also the committee working on the Society standard, which was tabled for further study at the November meeting, needs members to send in photos of both Chestnut and Dilute Chocolate Societies as this is one of the points of discussion. Please help if you can.

Membership and Affiliation Report: 795 members and 71 affiliates as of May 31, 1989.

Publishing Report: The Editor is still playing "catch-up", more successfully now. She is sure the July/August bulletin will be finished so that it will be in Phoenix at the AFA Convention. The Board authorized the Editor to look for a member who would be interested in being the "advertising director" for the bulletin. This person would look for individuals and businesses to advertise in the bulletin, help them with the layout, and would keep records of their payments and the term that their ad is to run. If this sounds like something you would like to do to help the NFS, please call or write to the Editor. Thanks.

Points Director Report: See Mar/Apr for 1988 standings.

FINCHSAVE Report: The FINCHSAVE program is developing and flourishing. More than 20 species are represented, including finches and softbills. NFS President Milliam Parlee has been invited to be a speaker at

the AFA Convention and his topic will be the NFB FINCHSAVE Program. If you have not joined this innovative program to save finch and softbill species yet, please fill out the application in this issue TODAY !!

Nominating Committee: Do you want to be involved in NFS to a greater extent? If so you should call the Chairman of the 1990-91 Nominating Committee, Stephen Hoppin at 813 - 997 2237, and ask that you be nominated for one of the 14 positions that are up for grabs. Incumbents will be re-nominated if they so desire and we hope for a lively slate of nominees for all positions. Requirements are simple. A nominee must be a member in good standing who is willing and able to attend the three annual National Directors meetings at the AFA Convention, the National Show and the Kaytee Great American Show.

The Nominating Committee is: Stephen Hoppin, Chairman, Florida; Marty Von Raesfeld, California; Gene Miller, Oklahoma; and Tom Rood, Illinois. Dr. Al Decoteau is advisor and liaison to the committee. They will be nominating persons for the following positions. President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, 3rd Vice President, 4th Vice President, Corresponding Secretary, Recording Secretary, Treasurer and all six Regional Vice Presidents. Descriptions of the duties of each office can be found in the NFS Official Handbook, available for \$ 5 from Jerry McCawley, NFS Storekeeper.

It is expected that the slate of nominees will be presented to the Board of Directors in August at the annual meeting at the AFA Convention. It will be published in the September/October Bulletin and all ballots will be sent to Stephen Hoppin for the official count. New officers will be announced in the November/December bulletin.

AFA Conventions: As usual NFS will have a booth with membership applications, bulletin past and present and other items for sale. All NFS members attending are cordially invited to assist in manning this booth. In past years coverage for the booth has been provided by just a few dedicated Board members. We hope that you will help this year so the workload is more evenly distributed. There is another chance to become more involved in your society's activities. The AFA Convention '89 is at The Pointe at South Mountain, Phoenix, AZ from August 9th to August 13th.

This year we will introduce the Official NFS pin at the Convention. It has a black border, gold lettering and a central white circular field with Gouldian finches in the center.

This being the last point to discuss the Board Meeting was officially adjourned.

CALLING ALL ARTISTS ! Designs are needed for the Official 1989 NFS T-shirt. Your ideas should be submitted to the NFS home office address as soon as possible.

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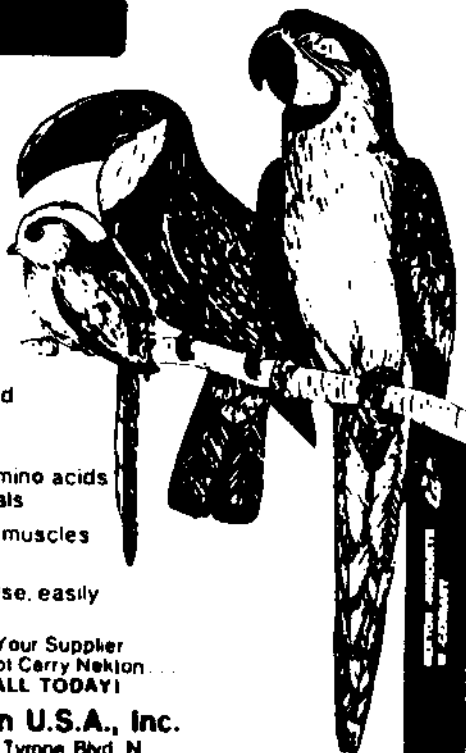
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Any of the items may be purchased by sending a check in the exact amount, made out to NFS, to Membership Services Store, c/o Jerry McCawley, 400 Charles Street, Luzerne, PA 18739. Check the items you wish and total the amount.

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How long have you been involved in finches and softbills? _____ yrs.

How many species have you kept? _____

How many species have you successfully bred? _____

Do you exhibit in bird shows? _____

Do you keep softbilled birds? _____

Please list an occupation or special talent that may be helpful to the NFS (printer, artist, lawyer, etc.) _____

Are you interested in participating in the NFS Judges Panel? _____

Please indicate below the items you are most interested in.

Nutrition _____ breeding _____ management _____ exhibition _____ bulletin _____

PLEASE MAIL YOUR APPLICATION AND DUES TO:

NFS Member Services c/o Russ Armitage Jr.

345 Boston Road, Middletown, CT 06457

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NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY
AFFILIATION AGREEMENT - 1989

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THE ONLY REQUIREMENTS THAT YOUR CLUB WILL HAVE TO MEET ARE TO PAY THE APPROPRIATE AFFILIATION FEE AND SELECT A DELEGATE TO REPRESENT YOUR CLUB IN DEALING WITH NFS. THE DELEGATE MUST BE A MEMBER OF NFS.

LEVEL ONE AFFILIATION

THIS IS DESIGNED FOR CLUBS THAT ARE NOT EXHIBITION ORIENTED. THE FEE IS \$ 25. YOUR BENEFITS INCLUDE ALL THE EDUCATION AND PUBLICATION MATERIALS OF THE SOCIETY. ALSO YOU WILL RECEIVE DURING, AUGUST OF YOUR AFFILIATION YEAR, A BEAUTIFUL PLAQUE FOR YOUR CLUB. THIS PLAQUE CAN BE A SERVICE OR BREEDER AWARD FOR ONE OF THE MEMBERS. (THIS PERSON NEED NOT BE A MEMBER.) THE PLAQUE ALONE IS WORTH THE AFFILIATION FEE. REQUESTS FOR THE TYPE PLAQUE AND WORDING MUST BE FORWARDED TO NFS NO LATER THAN JUNE 1ST OF THE YEAR.

LEVEL TWO AFFILIATION

LEVEL TWO IS FOR CLUBS WITH EXHIBITIONS. YOUR BENEFITS WILL INCLUDE BEAUTIFUL PLAQUES FOR FIRST AND SECOND BEST IN DIVISION AT YOUR SHOW. THE FEE FOR THIS LEVEL IS \$ 40, AND IS SIMILAR TO LAST YEAR'S AFFILIATION

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THIS LEVEL INCLUDES PLAQUES FOR FIRST AND SECOND PLACE IN THE DIVISION AS WELL AS A BEST SOFTBILL PLAQUE, 10 LONG STREAMER ROSETTES AND 3 ROSETTES FOR UNFLIGHTED BIRDS. TOTAL COST FOR LEVEL THREE IS \$ 90.

SEND YOUR APPLICATION AND THE FEE TO: THE NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL
ION DIRECTOR, C/O PAM LIDDY, 245 DRAPER ST., SPRINGFIELD, MA 01108
(413) 734 7053.

=====

BREEDING THE MAGPIE MANNIKIN

(*Lonchura fringilloides*)

by Kris Kroner

=====

Magpie Mannikins are the largest of the African Mannikins. Sexes are alike although there is some color variation in that the female has more buff feathering in her abdomen while the males appear more white. I have found that the color variation seems more apparent in wild-caught birds and is nearly impossible to detect in domestically raised birds. This, perhaps, is age related. The birds are approximately 4 1/2 inches long and have a strong, stocky body. Their bills are heavy and longer than other proportionately sized mannikins.

The males perform a typical mannikin type dance consisting of hopping up and down while gesticulating with the beak. The song, (which really isn't a song), is similar to a Mun's call, a type of squeaky, high pitched note. These birds do not share the "peering" behavior that is typical of the Muns however.

Magpies tend to be destructive with wicker nests, live plants and grasses. They enjoy stripping grasses and seeding heads of grasses and plants. Their large beak enables them to accomplish this with ease.

I have found these birds can be housed in small groups, providing the cage space is large and there are spots to escape and hide. However, when one pair decides to nest, the male will pursue and attack other "rivals" to drive them away from his perceived territory.

In my birdroom I also breed the Java Sparrow. This species has been a suitable companion in a holding flight situation. My holding cages are 5 feet long by 3 feet by 3 feet. There are some territorial and/or pecking order disputes that occur but the situation remains fairly peaceful. I would assume that the Magpie could also be housed safely with Weavers and Whydahs. I have not attempted to house adults with any other type of finch. I have thought about trying them with the small, super aggressive Black and White Mannikin, but have trusted my sixth sense and have not done so.

I started with four birds and hoped for two pairs. These four were placed in my quarantine room in a cage 3 feet long by 2 feet by 2 feet. I supplied a large wicker nest since I assumed (correctly) that they would use it for roosting. Plastic asparagus fern was hung in various spots from the cage top and sides. Past experience had taught me that most birds like to hide in the fern and, it being plastic, it is indestructible. I color banded the birds for identification.

All four used the wicker nest to roost. After my self-imposed 30 day quarantine had expired, I moved the four birds to the birdroom to a similar

sized cage. Various sizes and types of nests were offered. The natural perches are of pesticide free tree branches. The four roosted again in a large wicker nest until two birds paired off. The pair built a free-form nest using the plastic asparagus fern as a base. The male became aggressive during this building and I removed the other two birds. Nesting material consisted of dried grasses, coconut fiber, burlap strands and wicker pieces from the roosting nest. To get these, they cheerfully bit into the woven fabric of the nest and pulled the horizontal pieces through. In about an hour, I had a Conestoga wagon-type frame left. Their nest resembled a hornet nest with one tiny opening near the bottom. The nest cavity itself is built lower than the opening. The male appears to have a small cock's nest near the opening. Both spend most of the time in the nest.

Varieties of live food are offered to my birds as well as eggfood, a modified version of Dr. Kray's diet for bookbills, (rice, corn, pinto beans and crumbled dog food) and greens. The Magpies love the large Proso millets and prefer a Budgie-type mix to the standard finch mix. They eat live food (mealworms) only when in breeding condition. They consistently refuse wax moth larvae and white worms. I also offer mineral grit and oyster shell. My eggfood recipe is from Mr. Robert Black's book Nutrition of Finches and Other Cage Birds. These mixtures and foods are well accepted once the birds are acclimated.

The hen laid four white eggs and incubated tightly. The young, unfortunately, hatched while I was away for the weekend and a new caretaker was tending my flock. When I returned I found all four chicks had been killed and thrown from the nest. I assumed that this, was at least partially, due to the fact that there was a change in routine. However, as anyone who has dealt with African species knows, they have a nasty tendency to hatch young but not feed them. I share the commonly held belief that this is due to the pairs feeling that unsuitable nestling food is being offered. I refuse to offer termites which is probably what they want and instead try different types of live food.

The pair tore that nest apart and built elsewhere. Again she laid four eggs, incubated tightly and killed the first chick hatched. I fostered the other three eggs to Societies who successfully hatched and raised the chicks.

The birds then rebuilt in a more inaccessible location and prepared the next nest like a fortress. I assumed it was in response to my taking their eggs. One problem you will note is, that with the type of nest that they built, I was never sure when the first egg was laid. Since I was lucky if I saw the hen once a day I knew that the cycle had started again. I toyed with the idea of taking the eggs immediately for fostering but I didn't. Instead I continued to offer different insects and foods, hoping they would feed them to the chicks.

The pair continued to lay eggs, incubate and hatch them and then kill their first chick. I assumed it was the hen doing this. They never did

feed chicks. The remaining eggs were immediately fostered to Societies. The Magpies largest clutch was six. Their incubation time is approximately 13 to 14 days. I now have 20 domestically raised chicks from this pair. The producing pair look magnificent. And why not? All they did was eat, lay eggs and rest! I have moved them now to a resting flight and they are busy building in the corner. They obviously like this deal!

The second "pair" turned out to be two males. I am very interested in breeding a domestically raised hen to one of these males to determine their parenting behavior. I still do believe that it was the hen who killed the chicks.

The chicks are greyish-pink when hatched and are readily accepted by Societies. Three is a nice number to foster, although I have fostered four to one pair of Societies. I found that was expecting a lot from the Societies however, and I did some supplemental feeding around the banding/fledging time for the smallest in that clutch.

The chicks develop slowly. I find the best day to band these chicks is on the 13th day, with a NYS "8" band. Yes, I did say the 13th day. I do not believe that this is due to any nutritional deficiency. I believe that it is purely this species development. I tried earlier but the bands slipped off or up. These chicks develop body size first and the feet and legs grow slowly, mostly the second week of life. The 13th day I use some lubrication and slide the band right on. I have had no problems with this timing. Juvenile feathering is typical Mannikin. Brown upper body, light brown-gray underside. Once they have fledged at 18 or 19 days of age the chicks are approximately the size of an adult Society finch. They then have an impressive growth spurt, most noticeable in their beak. Fledgling age birds have a larger beak than Societies but it grows like Pinocchio's in the 3rd and 4th week. They wean about 2 to 3 weeks after fledging and I move them to holding flights around 30 days after fledging. They are then about about 1 1/2 times as large as Society finches, weighing close to 20 grams.

They molt into adult color at approximately 3 months of age. The domestics are about 1/4 to 1/3 larger than their parents and the other imports I possess. I presume this is due to better nutrition thanks to the availability and acceptance of an excellent diet.

Youngsters are allowed to remain together as a clutch until about 6 weeks old when the clutch is put with slightly older Magpie Mannikins. As with many species, small groups can be added to existing "flocks" but single additions are not well tolerated. The youngsters are not kept with Society finches once removed from their foster parents. An interesting note; the domestics, although raised in a wicker nests, refuse these nests once they molt into adult color, choosing instead to build their own (and demolish the wicker nests to use to supplement their nesting grasses).

I very much enjoy working with these fascinating birds. I encourage and challenge each of you to choose a species and work with it to establish captive bred domestic populations. We, as aviculturists, are perhaps the only



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**NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY
AFFILIATES, DELEGATES AND SHOW DATES**

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ALABAMA

Central Alabama Avicultural Society;

Show: September 2, 1989 Panel Judge: Clarence Culwell.

CALIFORNIA

Aviary Association of Kern County; Hal Koontz, (805) 872 1063

Show: Dec. 2, 1989 Kern Co. Fairgrounds. Panel Judge: Brian Manderich

Capitol City Bird Society; Helen Caudle, (916) 933 1619

Show: October 21, 1989 - Panel Judge: Daron Decoteau

Central California Cage Bird Club; Marty Von Raesfeld, (408) 985 2712

Show: Nov. 3-5, 1989 Modesto, CA Panel Judge: Joseph Krader

Finch Society of San Diego County; Larry Russell, (619) 274 2095

Fresno Canary and Finch Society; Richard Lujan, (408) 984 1453

Show: Oct. 27-28, 1989 Madeira, CA Panel Judge: Joe Krader

Golden Gate Avian Society; Dawn Senna, (415) 449 8719

Show: November 10, 1989 Panel Judge: Ray Johnson

San Diego Bird Show, Inc.; Janice Pritchard, (619) 443 6684

Show: Nov. 10-12, 1989 DelMar Fair Gds. Panel Judge: Hal N. Koontz

Santa Clara Valley Canary and Exotic Bird Club; Marty Von Raesfeld

(408) 985 2712 Show: Nov. 24-26, 1989 Panel Judge: Clayton Jones

COLORADO

Colorado Cage Bird Association; Martha Hignore, (303) 574 1594

Show: October 14, 1989 Panel Judge: Martha Hignore

Rocky Mountain Society of Aviculture; Donald Locke, Jr. (303) 289 5721

Show: October 28-29, 1989 Panel Judge: To be announced

CONNECTICUT

The Connecticut Association for Aviculture; Christine Voronovitch,

(203) 649 8220 Show: Oct. 28, 1989 Panel Judge: Ray Johnson

The New England Finch Fanciers; Russell Areltage, Jr., (203) 346 5875
Show: Nov. 25, 1989, E. Hartford, CT Panel Judge: Cecil Gunby

FLORIDA

Aviary and Cage Bird Society of South Florida, Len Brewer (305) 931 3460

Exotic Bird Club of Florida, Inc., Teddy Richens, (407) 783 3205

The Gold Coast Exotic Bird Club; Karl Kline, (305) 276 8711
Show: October 21, 1989 Panel Judge: Cecil Gunby

Greater Brandon Avian Society, Inc., Andrea Whiling, (813) 888 5935
Show: Sept. 17, 1989, Holiday Inn, Sabel Park. Panel Judge: Stephen Hoppin

Greater Miami Avicultural Society; Hector Ugalde, (305) 673 4899
Show: Sept. 24, 1989 Panel Judge: George Warren

Jacksonville Cage Bird Assn., Jerri Weisenfold (904) 731 7173
Show: Sept. 30, 1989 JAX Airport Hilton Panel Judge: Juanita McLain

Miami Parrot Club; Marco Arrida, (305) 251 3895

Suncoast Avian Society; Joe Ventleiglia, (813) 392 9391
Show: October 7, 1989 Panel Judge: Ray Johnson

Sunshine State Cage Bird Society; Dennis Lewis, (407) 657 7151
Show: October 14, 1989 Panel Judge: Daren Decoleau

Southwest Florida Bird Club, Jerry D'Agala (813) 774 2062

GEORGIA

Georgia Cage Bird Society; Cecil Gunby, (404) 251 2877
Show: November 4, 1989 Panel Judge: Al Decotoau

ILLINOIS

Greater Chicago Cage Bird Club; Charles Anchor, (312) 543 3757
Show: Nov. 4, 1989 Holiday Inn, Hillside, IL Panel Judge: Jon Hoffman

National Institute Red-Orange Canaries, Calherlno Wingeln, (219) 922 1146
Show: Nov. 24-26, 1989 Panel Judge: Daren Decoleau

INDIANA

Indiana Bird Fanciers; Dr. Val Clear, (317) 642 8795
Show: October 14, 1989 Panel Judge: Charles Anchor

IOWA

Mid-America Cage Ofrd Society; Rhoda Shirley, (515) 243 2256

Show: Oct.7, 1989 Airport Inn, Des Moines, IA Panel Judge: Charles Anchor

KANSAS

Breater Kansas City Avicultural Society,

Show: October 2f, 1989 Independence, MO Panel Judge: Laura Bewley

Kansas Avicultural Society

Show: October 14, 1989 Nichita, KS Panel Judge: Nifliae Parfee

LOUISIANA

Capitol Area Avicultural Society; Tie Schexnayre,

Show: October 21, 1989 Panel Judge: Charles Anchor

Gulf South Bird Club; Evon Krese, (504) 469 2435

Show: Hosting the N.C.S.S. Nov. 16-18. 1989 Panel Judge: Charles Anchor

NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY'S NATIONAL SHOW November 16-18

In conjunction with the 41st annual National Cage Bird Show, hosted by the Gulf South Bird Club at the Clarion Hotel, New Orleans, LA

NFS Panel Judge: Charles Anchor

MARYLAND

Baltimore Bird Fanciers; Brenda Geesey, (717) 854 2604

Show: October 21, 1989 Panel Judge: Jerry O'Agata

Maryland Cage Bird Association; Marge Stanley, (301) 486 2567

Show: Sept. 29-30, 1989 Panel Judge: Oaren Becoteau

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston Cockatiel Society; Helen Jabre, (617) 641 3430

Show: Sept. 23, 1989 Panel Judge: Jon Hoffman

Boston Society for Aviculture; Kathy Nilcox, (508) 339 7684

Exotic Cage Bird Society of New England; Roger O'Connell, (617) 899 8523

Massachusettes Cage Bird Association; Shirley Eaton, (401) 333 5594

Western New England Cage Bird Society; Bob Clark,

MICHIGAN

Mid-Michigan Bird Club; Mary Rue, (517) 394 1047

Show: October 21, 1989 at U. of Michigan Panel Judge: Ray Johnson

Mid-West Cage Bird Club; Jean Wiley, (313) 326 2424

Show: November 11 & 12, 1989 Panel Judge: Conrad Meinert

MINNESOTA

The Minnesota Cage Bird Society; Cathy Overland,

MISSOURI

KAYTEE GREAT AMERICAN BIRD SHOW For info: Jerry Cox, (314) 928 3551

Hosted by Gateway Parrot Club, St. Louis, MO at the Stouffer Concourse Hotel, St. Louis Int. Airport, September 29 to October 1, 1989, NFB Panel

Judge: Clarence Culwell

Greater Kansas City Avicultural Society; Earl Courts, (816) 524 0921

Missouri Cage Bird Association; Eileen Laebort, (314) 962 8186

Show: Nov. 4, 1989 Gay's Inn at Eureka Panel Judge: Charles Anchor

NEBRASKA

Greater Omaha Cage Bird Club; Wayne Eicholberger, (308) 872 2947

Show: September 23, 1989 Panel Judge: Ray Johnson

NEW JERSEY

South Jersey Bird Club; Kristino Kroner, (215) 628 4143

Show: December 2, 1989 Panel Judge: Conrad Meinert

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Birds of a Feather; Ken Black, (508) 462 3822

Show: September 16, 1989 Panel Judge: William Parlee

New Hampshire Avicultural Society; Ken Akey,

Show: October 14, 1989 Panel Judge: Al Decoteau

NEW YORK

Astoria Bird Club; Douglas Olsen,

Show: November 4, 1989 Hempstead, NY Non-Panel Judge: Joe Corrado

Rochester Cage Bird Club; Jeanne Murphy, (714) 232 5477

Show: October 14, 1989

NORTH CAROLINA

Charlotte Metrolina Cage Bird Society; Pat Gibson, (704) 588 1616

Show: September 9, 1989 Panel Judge: Oaren Decoteau

OHIO

Golden Crescent Cage Bird Club; Joan Bangle

OKLAHOMA

Bird Fanciers of Oklahoma; Gene Miller, (405) 382 7066
Show: November 10, 1989 Panel Judge: Clarence Culwell

Oklahoma Cage Bird Society; Laura Bewley, (918) 369 2580
Show: October 21, 1989 Panel Judge: Jon Hoffman

PENNSYLVANIA

Central Pennsylvania Cage Bird Society; Jerry McCawley, (717) 288 0529
Show: Nov. 11, 1989 Holiday Inn, Mechanicsburg Panel Judge: Jon Hoffman

Chester County Bird Breeders, Joe Kessler (215) 326 5109
Show: Sept. 9, 1989 George Washington Motor Lodge, Valley Forge Panel Judge:
William Parlee

Delaware Valley Bird Club; Kris Kroner, (215) 628 4143
Show: November 11, 1989 Panel Judge: William Parlee

Greater Pittsburgh Cage Bird Society; Or. Lindsay Clack (412) 323 7235
Show: Nov. 4, 1989 Century Plaza Inn, Wash., PA Panel Judge: Oaren Decoteau

Philadelphia Avicultural Society; Rick Szlachta, (215) 635 2097

TENNESSEE

Middle Tennessee Cage Bird Club; Eva Duffy, (615) 361 5949
Show: October 28-29, 1989 Panel Judge: Jon Hoffman

TEXAS

Avicultural Council of Texas; Kevin Burch (713) 485 8424

Bay Area Bird Club;
Show: Sept. 9, 1989 Houston, TX Panel Judge: Conrad Meinert

Capitol City Cage Bird Club; Sarah Goodrich,

Fort Worth Bird Club; Clarence Culwell (817) 523 5568
Show: October 7, 1989 Panel Judge: Clarence Culwell

Texas Bird Breeders and Fanciers Association; Sarah Goodrich

VIRGINIA

The Peninsula Cage Bird Society; Linda Oja, (804) 874 8581
Show: October 7, 1989 Panel Judge: Steve Hoppin

The Commonwealth Avicultural Society,

Show: October 8, 1989 Panel Judge: Jon Hoffman

WASHINGTON

Northwest Exotic Bird Society Nancy White (206) 525 0941

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee Bird Society, Ltd., Susan Faldstein (414) 968 4514

Show: Nov. 11, 1989 Airport Quality Inn Non-Panel Judge: Ron Philip

Wisconsin Cage Bird Society, Edward Zuidema (715) 359 4655

Show: Oct. 21, 1989 Oskosh Holiday Inn Panel Judge: Paul Williams

INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATES

Australian Finch Society, England, Martin Mogg.

Budgerigar & Foreign Bird Society of Canada John Bennett (416) 473 5612

Show: Sept. 16, 1989 Toronto, Canada Panel Judge: Charles Anchor

New Zealand Finch Breeders, New Zealand, Valerie Hughes

Zebra Finch Society, England, Chris Blactwell, Durham, England

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Thanks, The Editor

way many species will remain available and perhaps their only future since habitat is being so quickly destroyed worldwide.

Editor's note: Please go back and re-read Kris' last two sentences. I hope you accept her encouragement and her challenge. This lady is deeply committed to the welfare of all the birds and all the birdkeepers, as can be seen by her support of local, regional and national organizations and her dedication to the propagation of the Mannikin family. Thanks for the article Kris. I always learn from your observations.

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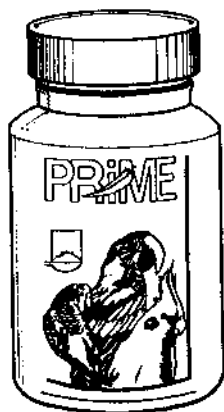
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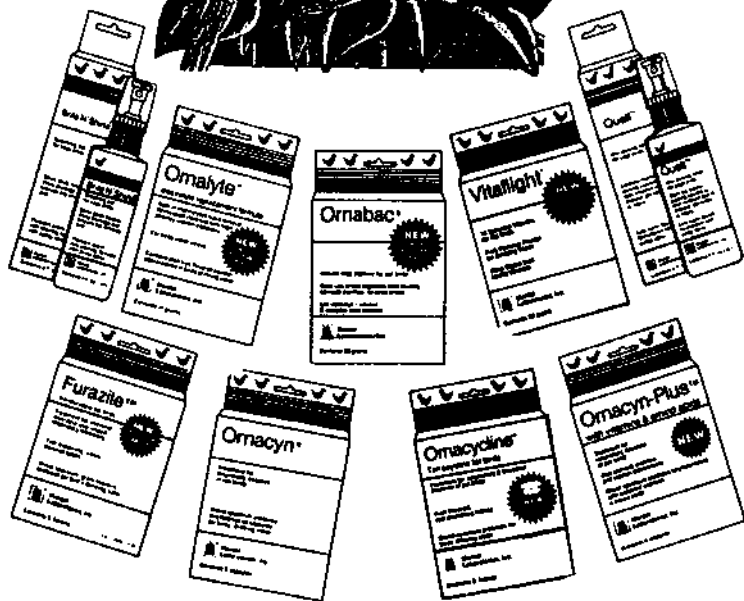
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BUT, WHICH NEST SHOULD I USE?

by Bill Parlee, East Hartford, Connecticut.

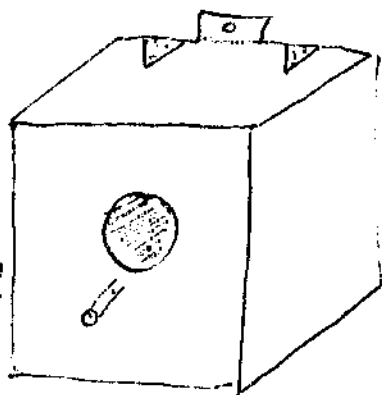
Attending conventions, judging bird shows, and speaking at bird club meetings all have something in common. It's a question. And it's always asked. "What kind of a nest do I use for this bird?" If I have successfully bred the bird or know of someone who has I will always pass on the information that I know. But that is not what this article is about. It's about trying different types of nests to find the one that is suitable for your pair of birds. Many times I tell someone that from my experience this is the type of nest to use. The only problem is that it may not work out well for the breeder that I have told about it. It's the old adage "what works for some doesn't necessarily work for others.

So with that cumbersome introduction to this article I would like to get you thinking and introduce you to some nests you may not have thought of.

THE FINCH NEST BOX

The finch nest box is a common nesting site for most Australian birds. I have seen it made out of wood, plywood, masonite, press wood, and even out of cardboard. It is quite conventional and functional if it works. Normally the box is roughly 4x4x4 inches and is hinged on the top so that you can look in. I have seen some that have sides that slide open. I would prefer the top opening box so that eggs, nesting materials and the like don't fall from the nest when checking on chicks.

Some boxes have 1 1/2" round openings in the front for bird entry, with a perch below for perching prior to entry or feeding. Some boxes have a 1 to 1 1/2" slit below the top on the front to facilitate entry, with a rail below (usually a 1" piece of wood that reaches across the front).



4x4" OR 5x5" BOX

Breeders use a wide variety of nesting materials for the box. Some use hay, grass clippings, cat litter, pine shavings, shredded cloth or string, cob bedding, or purchased nesting materials. Boxes affix easily to the outside of breeding cages. If you buy your boxes make sure that they are for outside mounting as they do come both ways. The inside mounting variety will look more like a outside bird house with a top that hangs over the entry hole.

THE WICKER NEST

The wicker nest is available in several sizes and shapes. The smaller ones are usually about 4" top to bottom and 3" side to side. The hooded variety is woven in such a way as to create a hood at the top with an entry hole just below. The hooded variety comes in a couple of different sizes. The most popular is the size just described and a 6" tall variety. Some of these hooded nests can be purchased made out of spray millet. These are very natural looking. I'm not sure how they look to the birds.

Wicker nests work for many types of birds including the Australians. I have been very successful with them for Zebras, Owls, and Starfinches.

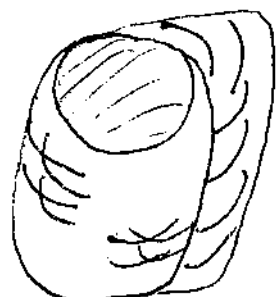
There are other varieties of Wicker nests. The Cone nest and the Open nest. The cone is just that. if you turned a drinking glass with base toward the wall you'd get the idea. The opening is in the front. One not so nice feature is that when the bird moves around in the nest or the nest loosens from the cage side, the eggs fall out to the bottom of the cage.

The open nest is a wicker variety of the standard wire canary nest. it works very well with the Serins.

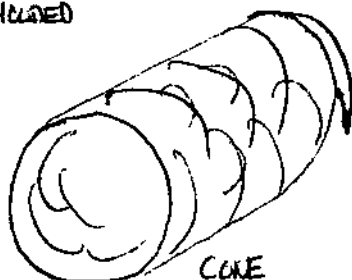
THE BERRY NEST

The berry nest is made of two pint berry containers. Simply take two of them, use crazy glue and press the open ends together. Cut an entrance hole in the plastic and fill loosely with grass or hay leaving the entry hole area open.

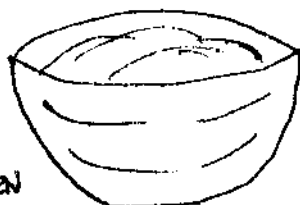
I have also used the corrugated type of fruit container or the pressed paper type. These you also glue together and cut an entry hole.



HOODED

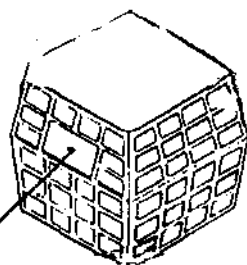


CONE



OPEN

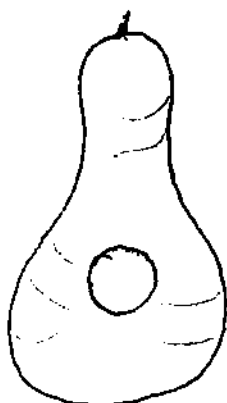
AS YOU CAN SEE
I'M NOT AN ARTIST!



BERRY NEST

THE GOURD

There are several gourds or squashes that can be used for nesting sites. You can use Acorn, Butternut, and many of the more exotic varieties. All you have to do is let them dry out and hollow them once they are dry by poking a hole in the wide part and pulling the seeds and loose fibres out of the gourd. This is how it was explained to me. I found this process extremely difficult. I eventually started buying the squashes and cutting them in half. After letting them dry I would clean them and glue them back together again. Some people say these are great. I never could even get my birds to look at them.

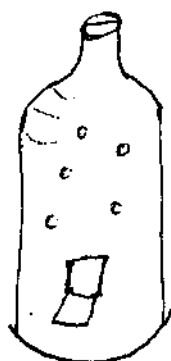


GOURD

THE COLA NEST

Get a plastic soda bottle, quart size or half gallon size punch a bunch of vent holes in them and cut an entry hole in the front with a razor so that it flaps down creating a perch. This type of nest was used quite successfully with a pair of Goulds that would not use a box.

You can either hang this nest or fasten it to the cage with fine wire. Wrap wire very tight so bird claws will not get caught.

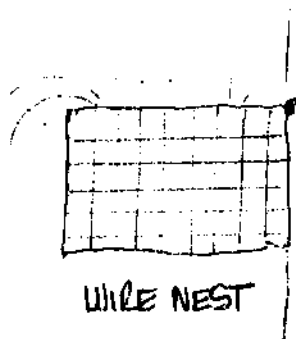


COLA NEST

THE SQUARE WIRE NEST

The square wire nest is made from hardware cloth. Cut a bottom and four sides, use cage fasteners or crazy glue to fasten the nest together. Be careful no to leave any wires sticking out for claws to catch on. Fill with hay or grass.

This type of nest can be made as tall as you wish. The taller the nest the more privacy that is afforded your birds.



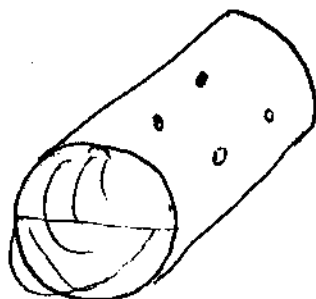
WIRE NEST

THE OLD CAN NEST

The old can nest is just that, an old can. You can use a vegetable or fruit can. You know, like Del Monte pineapple comes in. Cut half of the top with a can opener and pull down to create both an opening and perch.

With a pick, punch a few ventilation holes in the sides and two holes next to each other at the end opposite the opening. Through these holes run fine wire to fasten the nest to the cage.

The can nest fastens flush to the cage so that you don't have the same problem as with the wicker cone nest.



CAN NEST

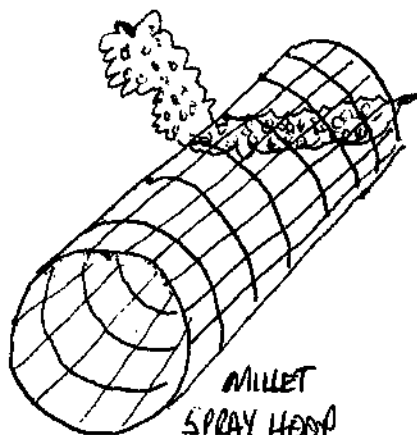
THE WIRE HOOP NEST

The wire hoop nest I first used when I had a pair of Stars that wouldn't nest in anything.

I took a six by twelve inch piece of hardware cloth and rolled the two longest ends together. I bent the wires together and wrapped them.

Then I took millet spray and wove it through the wire. I used about thirty pieces to cover the wire, leaving both ends open.

The Stars nested in this homemade wonder and did not close either end to my surprise.



MILLET
SPRAY HOOP

THE YOUR GUESS IS A GOOD AS MINE NEST

This is the nest you make. The one that everyone says won't work, but does. Remember it's not what it looks like, it's how it works. When the nest you should use doesn't work, improvise.

Don Thorschmidt, 96 Fulton Blvd., Commack, NY 11725 makes and sells cardboard nest boxes. Don is a NFS member that claims these nests are sanitary, disposable, easy to hang and are economical. He sells them for \$15 per dozen including shipping. He also sells them at a discount in larger quantities.

=====

TELL ME, WHY DON'T THEY SING ?

by Carl Naether

=====

The following article is reprinted, with permission, from THE AVICULTURAL BULLETIN, a publication of The Avicultural Society of America, 2220 Pacific Avenue, # E, Costa Mesa, CA 92627. I thank them for this courtesy. The Editor.
From the April, 1968 issue.

=====

Softbill enthusiasts are in a class by themselves for various reasons: first of all, most softbills require extra care in their feeding and keeping; secondly, there is no money breeding them in most cases. So the total number of these enthusiasts in this country is small, indeed very small, as compared to the number of keepers of seedeaters of various types. In my many years of keeping softbills, I have met many an interesting character more or less devoted to the hobby of enjoying softbills, especially singing softbills.

More or less typical of this group of hobbyists was Tenacious Tom, an aggressive young chap who corralled me at the Southern California Bird Exchange, where Lyle Wickline and Buddy Ragan held the fort at that wonderful time. Since I was in somewhat of a hurry to get home with some birds I had bought - softbills, of course - he got hold of my phone number and what use he made of it!

Practically every weekend my phone would jingle and there at the other end would be eager Tenacious Tom, ready to fire questions at me:

"Mr. Naether, would you name, in their proper order, the best singing softbills you know? I'm trying to get a nice collection together."

"Offhand I would say the European Nightingale, the European Blackbird, the Blackcap, the Songthrush, the Shama Thrush, the Clarino, the Jilguero and others."

"Well, where can I get any of these birds, and how do I know that they will sing for me, or that they really are good songsters?"

"You simply have to call at various dealers and importers time and again in the hope that they will have one or more of these singing species in stock. Nobody can tell whether or not they will sing for you. That depends on many factors: the way you keep them, whether in cage or aviary; how you handle them once you get them, whether patiently and gently, or otherwise; and how you feed them. In order to be reasonably certain of getting a real songster, you would have to watch them at the dealer's: take a chair near their cages and listen for half an hour or so, and then perhaps you can detect a good singer in the lot, as in a group of singly caged Shammas. However in most cases you have to take what you can get since most dealers

seldom offer the above-mentioned softbills in large numbers. So you pick a healthy specimen from the birds available and take him home with the expectation that he will finally burst into glorious song for you."

"How long before a softbill will sing for me, once I get him home?"

"That's hard to say. Some Shamias will sing almost the moment you get them home. Most European Blackbirds, Nightingales, etc., have so-called seasons of song, starting in early spring and continuing till late fall, excepting the molting period. With them you'll have to be very patient."

"Tell me, is there any way of 'speeding them up' - of getting them to sing really early in the year. I bought a Songthrush two months ago, but the bird is very wild and won't sing at all."

"How do you keep this bird and what do you feed him?"

"Oh, I have him in a large wire cage indoors. He gets soft food every day and some mealworms. He's awfully shy and won't tame down for me, banging against the cage-bars whenever I go near him."

"From your description the bird is not at all happy in this cage, apparently not used to it. A box-cage, all enclosed solidly except for the front, a wire front, would be much more suitable for this bird; in such a cage he would tame down gradually. Of course, an outdoor spacious aviary would be best of all. I don't think your bird will sing for you till he feels at home in his cage, which may take months, all depending on the treatment (gentle and patient) which you give him meanwhile. As with most softbills you'll have to exercise a great deal of patience."

A few weeks later, on a Saturday morning, Tenacious Tom was again on the phone: "Mr. Maether, which is the better singer, a Shama or a Gold-fronted Fruit-sucker? I got both, but neither seems to have a continuous song. My Shama warbles a few cheerful notes, and the Fruit-sucker makes all sorts of funny sounds which you can hardly call singing. I paid a lot of money for them; now I'm wondering if I got stuck."

"The singing of the two birds you have can hardly be compared, since the one bird is a Thrush and the other is a so-called chatterer. Both, however, are well known mimics. If you get a wild caught Shama, one that in its young days listened to the voices of many other birds in the vicinity of its own nest and is now able to mimic them, you may have an interesting songster. I've had Shamias that would mimic the barking of our Cocker Spaniels, the crowing of roosters, etc., besides having some loud and clear notes of their own. The same holds more or less true of the Fruit-sucker. In buying any so-called singing softbill, you just have to take your chances of getting a good one. When it comes to judging bird-music, each person usually has his own preconceived tastes as to what is pleasing and what is not. Your tastes may be entirely different from mine, and probably are. Why don't you get yourself a collection of recordings of bird songs, play them over and over again, and then decide which songs you like best of all, and then, if possible, get the desired birds? These records are usually advertised for sale in English and other bird papers and magazines. They don't cost very

=====

**YES VIRGINIA, YOU CAN
BREED CORDON BLEUS IN A
TWO FOOT CUBE CAGE !**

by Joe Kessler

=====

The first linch I owned back in 1982 was a male Red-Cheeked Cordon Bleu. I named him Piorro LePiep and he had free flight in a sun room filled with plants - of which his favorite was a 7 foot ficus. I thought it was really neat to see this little blue bird darting from branch to branch in the tree picking off any insects he could find and despite my lack of knowledge on finches Pierre lived for 3 years before meeting his untimely end at the claws of a murderous Siasese.

In 1986 I mentioned to my next door neighbor, who shared a love for birds, that I would like to get another Cordon Bleu to liven up the sun room. Shortly before Christmas she called telling me to come over and get my present. Expecting maybe a bottle of Canadian, I was really surprised when she handed me a basketball sized cage with a pair of Bt. Helena waxbills jumping around inside. She explained that she wanted to get me the Cordon Bleus, but at \$ 79 a pair she couldn't afford them. She thought the St. Helenas, at \$19.95 were cute, so I went home with my little cage, 2 linches and a small bag of seed. How innocently we begin this hobby (obsession ?) of ours.

Nearly 3 years, 115 birds, and a lot of success, failure, joys and heartaches later, I would like to relate some recent success I have had breeding Cordon Bleus in cages rather than in aviary flights.

Following the methods outlined in Gretchen Barker's booklet on breeding Cordon Bleus and other Waxbills (which I recommend to any novice) I had successfully bred Strawberry Finches, Firelinches, Cutthroats, Spice, Tri-Colored Nuns, Green Bingers and of course Cordon Bleus. My initial successes were in a flight cage measuring 80" x 36" x 80" but it wasn't long before overcrowding forced me to set up some additional cages.

After hearing Brenda Geesey's description of her bird room, I decided to try using the 2' x 2' x 2' cages she used for her Bouldians on a pair of my Cordon Bleus. Like Brenda, I put a generous portion of hay on the bottom of the cage, but unlike the Gouldian set-up I did not use a nest box since none of my waxbills had ever used one. Instead I attached a large wicker finch nest in the back corner of the cage and camouflaged it with a plastic fern. I then created a mini-forest in the back half of the cage with pine and boxwood branches. This gave the birds a lot of privacy near the nest, and maybe added to their sense of security. The natural branch perches were arranged so that the birds had full view of the room and yet could stand near the nest without being seen. I also put pieces of cardboard on the sides of the cage so that they would not be distracted by neighboring cages or noisy

Societies and Cutthroats. In addition to the hay, I added a large handful of shredded burlap for nesting material.

After a few days I noticed the cock bird carrying pieces of burlap back into the "forest". Whenever I approached the cage to change food and water, he would come right up to the front and chatter his annoyance at my intrusion. As I feared, the wicker nest was ignored, and the male built his woven, baseball sized nest on top of the wicker basket and it was all but hidden from view. Shortly afterward, I noticed that the hen didn't come forward to scold when I entered the room or opened the cage door to change food or water. On the few times that she was visible, the male wasn't, so I assumed that they were sitting on a clutch of eggs. Since this was a young pair, and their first attempt, I didn't want to get my hopes up too much.

After the birds were sitting about three weeks and I hadn't heard any sounds from the nest curiosity got the better of me and I reached back into the cage and poked a finger into the nest. Both parent birds were beside themselves with anger at this intrusion and I quickly withdrew when I felt what was unmistakably a live chick. I left the room convinced that this intrusion would cause the new parents to desert the nest but my fears were unfounded. About 2 weeks later I walked into the bird room and a tiny Cordon Bleu chick was sitting on a perch between its parents. When I approached the cage the chick immediately flew back into the "forest" so I completed my daily food and water change as quickly as possible and left the room. A few hours later I returned to see a second chick out on a perch. By the next day 4 chicks had fledged. At this point I decided to try to band them with "C" bands. There was so much panic in the cage that I only banded one chick before deciding that I didn't want to risk upsetting the parents to the point that they might not feed the fledglings. The irony is that they did stop feeding the chick with the purple 'B9 band and it was dead within 48 hours. The rest of the clutch thrived, so I have decided against any further attempts at banding Cordon Bleus.

The parents went back to nest within a week and have so far fledged 9 chicks from that 2' x 2' x 2' cage. Using the same setup, except with holly branches instead of pine, a second pair has just hatched their first clutch, but this pair built their nest of woven burlap on the floor of the cage concealed in the thicket of holly. I have also had success breeding Cutthroats in this size cage (devoid of the forest) and have just set up another 2 foot cube cage with Firefinches to see if they will breed in a similar environment.

As for diet, I use the standard diet for finches that has been written about several times in this journal, but I particularly think that the egg food recipe developed by Robert Black and which Brenda Geesey mentions in her lectures is very important to the success I have had with my birds. Mealworms are important too and my breeding birds have just about all the mealworms they want when they have chicks - I go through 10,000 every three weeks. I am now experimenting with the "flay wigglers" but if you use

then be prepared to deal with the resulting swarm of houseflies.

One footnote to this experience involves the relationship between lighting and the sex of the young. Like most breeders, I have been using "Vita-Lites" in my bird room but a few months ago I read a note in the newsletter of the Erie Cage Bird Club on the relationship of lighting which leaned toward the red end of the spectrum and the preponderance of male offspring, versus the tendency to produce females under the blue end of the spectrum. I replaced the "Vita-Lite" in the light over the Cordon Bleu breeding cage with a cool white fluorescent tube. Out of 6 chicks which are old enough to determine sex, 4 are hens. More research obviously needs to be done in this area but it is interesting to note that mink and chinchilla breeders have been using blue lighting in their breeding cages to produce females because they have a more desirable quality of fur. Maybe we can learn something of value from this "industry". Any further information on this matter would be appreciated, but if there is any truth to this theory, I'm going to start calling my bird room "My Blue Heaven !"

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Editor's note: Thanks for the nice article Joe. I hope lots of members contact you with their observations on the lighting changes. I know there is a theory that sex can be influenced by the judicious use of black light tubes too. Perhaps members will also send you their experiences with that.
=====

(NAETHER)
↓

much and their use might save you much time in picking the sort of singing softbills you like best. But just keep in mind that you can't turn a softbill on in the way you do a phonograph record. I have had birds that would not sing a note for a whole season, then develop into glorious songsters. I have had birds whose initial repertoire seemed flimsy, the birds hardly worth keeping for the sake of their singing; but year after year they would improve, add new notes or new variations to their stock of tunes, thus maturing into really lovely singers. When it comes to enjoying softbills for the sake of their singing, wpi simply cannot hurry them up. Nature doesn't function in that artificial way. Good luck to you and your birds."

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Editor's Note: I have been the feminine version of "Tenacious Tom" in the past and will probably be again in the future. From this I have learned a wonderful thing about the "softbill guys". They have great patience with novices and they are willing to share their knowledge now in 1989 just as Mr. Naether was in 1969. I thank them all for their help and I hope all their nests are full!
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TANAGERS

by J. F. Woolham

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The following article is reprinted, with permission, from the THE AVICULTURAL BULLETIN, a publication of the Avicultural Society of America, 2220 Pacific Avenue, NE, Costa Mesa, CA 92627. I thank them for this courtesy. The Editor.

From the March 1973 issue.

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Tanagers are a group of birds which are found chiefly in tropical South America. Almost all of them are vividly coloured and certain species, such as the Superb Tanager, have a shining plumage resembling highly polished metal. In fact, the Superb Tanager is perhaps the most brilliantly coloured of the whole group. This glittering beauty is quite commonly imported nowadays and is deservedly popular with foreign bird enthusiasts.

Feeding as they do on soft fruits, tanagers do not present any great problems in this direction to the birdkeeper. Many species tend to be of a somewhat sluggish disposition in captivity and it is essential that fattening foods are kept to a minimum with such birds. Banana should be almost completely excluded from the diet and if the species concerned happens to be partially insectivorous, mealworms must be rationed.

Most of the tanagers are somewhat delicate and not at all suited to life in an outdoor aviary in our climate. Scarlets, Blue and blacks, Silver-blues and White Shouldered are among the more hardy species which may be allowed out of doors during the summer months. Needless to say, none of these birds should be allowed to remain out of doors for longer than we experience tolerably warm nights; they should be back indoors long before the first autumn frosts arrive.

Box-pattern cages provide the best type of accommodation for these and other foreign softbills. These cages should be as large as possible - certainly not less than 36" in length for the smaller species - and provided with a metal tray. Metal is far superior to wood in this instance, for the watery droppings of this type of bird will quickly eat into and decay wood. The tray may be carpeted with sawdust, peat, blotting paper or even sheets of old newspapers. Whatever medium is used the essential thing is that it is highly absorbent. The cage will probably require daily cleaning and the perches should be removed as soon as they become sticky. Large glass or china vessels should be provided for both food and water. They may be set in a small "turn-out door" in the bottom rail of the cage (in a similar fashion to the drinker in a Budgerigar show cage) and it will be necessary to provide a

perch within "feeding distance" of each vessel. In addition to the actual drinking vessel it is as well to provide a larger open dish in which the birds may take a bath.

An outdoor aviary to house Tanagers should be fairly well sheltered from the elements and it is quite essential that a comfortable sleeping shed is available. An abundance of plants is advantageous for these somewhat nervous birds. When danger in the shape of a prowling cat or hawk threatens, they will feel much more secure and happy if they are able to immerse themselves in a thick bush. Again, heavy cover is always useful as a sleeping place for those birds which refuse to enter the shelter. A heavy clump of privet or some similar bush will save many a broken neck - birds resting in the center will feel that they are safe and are not likely to go hurtling into the wire roof or sides of the flight in frenzied efforts to escape. In addition to serving useful purposes such as those outlined, living plants within the aviary add a good deal to the general appearance and if Tanagers are the only occupants of the enclosure, they will certainly not damage the foliage as many hardbills are inclined to do.

In captivity, Tanagers should receive a diet consisting of 60 % fruit. For the rest, one of the proprietary brands of insectivorous mixtures should be given together with suitable items of live food. Sweet apple, cut-up grapes, soft pear, etc., provide the bulk of the required fruit and certain species will accept dried fruits such as currants, raisins, sultanas, etc., which have been given an overnight soaking in warm water. Be absolutely certain that the fruit offered is wholesome and not "going-off" and take care, also, that with apples and the occasional slice of orange which one may offer that the fruit is quite sweet. Slightly tart or bitter oranges, while being acceptable to the human palate, can wreck havoc with the tiny and extremely delicate stomach of a small bird. Live food should be given each day. Gentles and one or two mealworms will probably provide the mainstay of this item of diet but the really keen foreign bird keeper will make every attempt to add variety with the help of small insects caught in the garden.

Freshly imported Tanagers require careful handling and should not be exposed to cold or damp. They are best housed in roosting cages in a quiet part of the house or bird-room. For the first few days the temperature should be maintained at a steady 65 F (therefore decreasing to 60 F. The latter should be maintained if the birds arrive during the winter months. During the spring and summer the heat may be decreased over a period of five or six weeks until it is down to 50 F. On no account should birds be turned out into an outdoor aviary until they have undergone this precautionary measure.

Before closing this subject of the general management of Tanagers, we turn to what may well be described as the "personal Hygiene" of the birds themselves. A large vessel should always contain sufficient water for the birds to take a bath. It is a little unfortunate that not all of the members of this family may be relied upon to take a voluntary dip. For those which refuse, a spray is the only effective answer. I consider it quite essential

that they should come into frequent contact with clean water, for the very nature of their diet decrees that they will speedily soil their plumage with sticky fruit juices, etc.

The Scarlet Tanager (*Rhamphocelus brasilius*) is a very beautiful bird which has the additional merit of being fairly easy to keep once established. It is, as its name implies, predominantly scarlet in colour with black wings and tail and a conspicuous white lower mandible. The female is a dull brown edition of her mate and lacks the white mandible. Scarlet Tanagers will live in an outdoor aviary during the summer months but should not be allowed to remain out of doors when the nights become cold. Pairs should have an aviary to themselves, for they can be quite aggressive; an odd cock makes a striking addition to a collection of mixed, male softbills. On no account should these birds be associated with species smaller and weaker than themselves.

The Superb Tanager (*Tangara fastuosa*) is a magnificent creature. Quite impossible to describe accurately. The colours of this bird include velvety black, bright orange, emerald green, purple, yellow and various shades of blue. Females are very similar to males but tend to be not quite so vividly coloured. This species should not be allowed out of doors except during the very hottest part of the year. The months of July and August are really the only safe period in which to allow these birds a little freedom and I believe that they are much better kept permanently indoors in roomy cages. There is no doubt at all that Superb Tanagers cannot stand cold or damp in any degree and in our very uncertain climate I have always preferred to keep my own birds indoors. Although these birds are somewhat restless and nervous by nature, I have known several which became remarkably tame through frequent contact with the live-food box. A specimen which I owned some years ago made no bones about coming on to the palm of my hand to consume his ration.

I am particularly fond of the little Violet Tanager (*Euphonia violacea*) which, although not at all colourful - at least when compared with the preceding species - is sufficiently small and dainty to command attention in the aviary or bird-room. I have found this to be a particularly hardy species and a cock of the species has spent most of the spring and summer in one of my flights, spurning shelter at all times - even during some of the extremely wet and unpleasant weather that we experienced last year. On many occasions when seeing him perched in a bush, soaked to the skin in a torrential dounpour, I have been sorely tempted to bring him inside. On each occasion however, as soon as the rain ceased he resumed his cheerful and active round of the enclosure looking none the worse for wear. Cock Violet Tanagers are chiefly blue-black in colour with a bright yellow breast and forehead. The females are quite dowdy brown birds.

Another hardy species is the Blue and Black Tanager (*Tanagraella cyanomelaena*). This is quite a drably coloured little bird by comparison with any of the previous species but, being so tough and easy to keep, is perhaps the best species for a person with no other experience of these birds. The

sexes are alike, being a combination of blues, blacks and grays in colour. These four species are the ones most frequently offered on the market. None of them is particularly expensive to purchase - prices range from approximately L3 for a Blue and Black to L6 for a Superb. Various other species are offered for sale at intervals. The general rules outlined at the beginning of this article may be applied to the care of most of these birds. Some require more fruit than soft food, whereas others are highly insectivorous. Even individuals of a particular species vary a great deal in this respect and a balanced diet for your own particular bird or birds can only be arrived at by a process of trial and error.

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Not only are these articles from the past full of good advice and the wisdom of experience, they show clearly how importations have changed and how they are still changing. They also show how common and scientific names vary from time to time and place to place. Aviculture is certainly not written in stone. Indeed it may be the most variable of all the animal husbandry disciplines.

The Editor.

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**ATTENTION NFS "FINCHSAVE"
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MAKE SURE YOUR BREEDING RECORDS
ARE ACURATE AND COMPLETE FOR YOUR
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MAKE USE OF THE FREE "FINCHSAVE"
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THE PEKIN NIGHTINGALE

Author Unknown

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The following article is reprinted, with permission, from the THE AVICULTURAL BULLETIN, a publication of the Avicultural Society of America, 2220 Pacific Avenue, NE, Costa Mesa, CA 92627. I thank them for this courtesy. The Editor.

From the November, 1974 issue.

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Why this bird should be called a Japanese bird I could never understand as they are not native to that country. There is a small robin in Japan but it is more like the English Robin Redbreast than any bird. This bird is really the Bird of the Sun of China. This name describes them admirably. Pretty and bright, active like no other bird, of a kind and always cheerful disposition, they are more like welcome sunshine than any other bird I know of.

There are several varieties of them. The most popular and freely imported is the variety coming from Southern China with a dark olive green body and orange colored breast and wing feathers. An attractive and therefore popular aviary and cage bird, very fond of their daily bath. If kept in an aviary with bathing facilities they develop into truly magnificent beauties.

Very fond of fruit, they will do nicely on this in an aviary where they will take some seeds and capture flies and other insects. Chinese bird brokers used to import on a diet of hulled millet. This millet without the hard, indigestible hull agrees with them.

Oriental bird-keepers usually feed them on finely cracked rice and I have also seen them fed baked yams and sweet potatoes. A male kept by himself is a good, cheerful singer; a delight to most any fancier with his agreeable notes. A pair of them kept in a cage are the most agreeable of cage birds, nesting up to each other and twittering. Kept in close confinement they should be fed a good insectivorous food, a few mealworms daily and fresh fruit. Our diet consists of beef-heart besides the other ingredients; not desiccated meat scraps from which all nutrients are extracted before it is sold. These may do for chickens and other scavengers but to confine these birds and force them to live on such is simply cruelty. Most commercial softbill foods are ground too fine; birds do not like to eat dust. You will find by observing your birds that they eat the lumpy part of the food first. When we use the prepared, finely ground foods we recommend mixing them with grated carrot. This moistens the food and makes it so much more digestible.

A while back, I had an inquiry as to breeding these birds in captivity. My advise was, "forget it." Nothing but a waste of time and effort. The nest that can come of it is a lot of disappointment. Sun birds being strictly insectivorous require live insects for their broods and unless one can supply hundreds of mealworms and maggots daily the young will hardly ever live to leave the nest.

They have been bred in Germany, building a pretty hair-lined nest laying from three to five greenish-blue eggs with tiny brown dots. Both male and female incubate alternatively. The eggs hatch in about 13 days. In that country however, fresh ant eggs are available daily as a commercial bird food and they are the very best of live food.

Both sexes sing, but what a contrast! While the male has a nice agreeable song repertoire, the female sings (or calls rather) like a young turkey hen: "tia-tia-tia". The male is usually of deeper orange on breast and head but I have owned excellent songsters with almost no orange on breast or head.

One sure way to sex them is the European style. Cage each bird separately. Place them where they can hear but not see each other and you will have them calling to each other at once, so indicating their sex.

Most Pekin Nightingales coming to the Pacific Coast are females, because the European and Eastern American fanciers keep these birds for their song and, as such, only the males are in demand. When the buyers for these markets make their purchases they select males. The balance are sold at a lower price and usually come to the West Coast. Among these importations are, at times, found specimens with little or no orange coloring on breast or wings. Others are almost gray with bluish markings in their wings. So, while the same species comes from China, India and other countries west of China, none have as pretty characteristics as the birds from China.

Silver-Eared Mesias from India are quite a bit larger than Pekin Nightingales, similar in appearance except black forehead and crown and silver cheeks. I saw the first of them in San Francisco many years ago. They are as the rest of the family of Sunbirds, similar in habits and food requirements. They also have been bred in Germany, rearing one chick of three to maturity. They fed it primarily on live cockroaches. This reminds me of the first live Greater Bird of Paradise I ever saw. In Boston harbor many years ago a sea captain had him. I asked the captain what the bird fed on and he said "I have one of my cabin boys catch a supply of live cockroaches every day." These despised insects are of some good after all!

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Thanks to the ASA for permitting us to copy this. I wish we could also credit the author but unfortunately she/he was not identified. The Editor.
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1989 NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY CENSUS

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The voluntary bird census can be a valuable tool to the finch and softbill breeder. By filling out the census and mailing it in, you will furnish the census department with the necessary information to connect you with other interested parties.

Letters from members wishing to buy babies or odd birds to complete pairs at the NFS office, are a constant occurrence. Very often we can not help because the information is not available. Thus the purpose of the census. NFS has had a census for four years now, last year was the best response so far. We heard from 63 members reporting on 122 species.

This is our first attempt this year in gathering this information. Please take the time to rip out the page or Xerox it, fill it out, and mail it in, even if you had done it last year (update please).

If we can gather a meaningful amount of breeder information, we will publish it in the Sept/Oct issue. This will make the information available to all for the show season.

Here's how it works. You fill out the form and mail it in. The information is computerized. When a member calls or writes (writing is better as the computer is not always immediately available) we punch in the species, and out pops a few members telephone numbers that they can call. This sells your babies and odd birds. On the other hand, when you need something, it works for you also.

We are constantly surprised to find that a member is breeding a particular species that we did not realize anyone was breeding. We usually find out this information in a casual conversation at a show or other event. If this same information was available to other members, babies could be sold, odd birds swapped, and most importantly, breeding information shared. The info is even more important now, for the Finchsave program.

Your address will never be given out by NFS. We only use telephone numbers to connect members, so be sure when filling out the census to clearly print out your area code and number. Your cooperation with this census makes it work. Sit down right now, or as soon as you can and fill it out. Check off yes if you sometimes have babies for sale. Many finches are getting harder and harder to obtain. When giving out information we will try locate the members closest to you for convenience in shipping.

Mail form to NFS C/O TOM ROOD, 313 N. BROADWAY, SHELBYVILLE, IL 62565.

Name Patrick + Mary Krichten
 Street 412 E. Walnut St
 City HANOVER State Pa. Zip 17331
 Telephone (717) 632-8092 Exchange information - Yes NO

Name of Species Common	mutation or type	Number in flock			Breeding Success?	Babies Available
		male	female	Unkn.		
Zebra	fawn	9	7	6	yes	yes
zebro	normal	3	1	4	yes	yes
zebra	fawn	0	3	4	yes	yes
Society	choco + fawn	8	8	18	yes	yes
strawberry		1	1	2	yes	no
Shafttails		1	2	0	No	No
R. Cheek Cordon Bleu		2	2	0	No	No
Gouldians	Orange Head	3	3	0	yes	no
Gouldians	Red Head	2	2	0	yes	no
Gouldians	Black Head	2	2	8	yes	yes

If you are willing to trade information with other breeders, please check yes above. You must give your phone number as it will be the only way another breeder will be able to reach you. NFS does not publish or give out members addresses. If you wish this information to be for statistical purposes only, check off no.

PLEASE LIST FINCHES AND SOFTBILLED BIRDS ONLY !!

FINCHSAVE APPLICATION AND PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

This Agreement is entered into by and between the undersigned (hereafter referred to as "Participant") and the Finchsave program, a specialization breeding program of the National Finch and Softbill Society (hereafter referred to as "the program").

Participant represents that Participant believes himself/herself to have sufficient experience breeding finches/softbills to successfully participate in the program, and

Participant represents that he/she has the breeding facility to breed at least five pair of the species designated below (hereafter referred to as "the species"), and

Participant represents that he/she has at least five pair of the species and will attempt to raise at least 25 chicks of the species each year for at least the next five years, and

Participant represents that he/she has a copy of the Rules of the Finchsave Program and has read them, and

Participant represents that he/she is a member of the National Finch and Softbill Society.

The undersigned hereby applies to become a participant in the program for the species and, if accepted, agrees to comply with the rules of the Finchsave Program, specifically including the following rules:

1. Participant will devote as much time and energy to the program as is necessary to meet the goals of the program.

2. Participant will complete and return each year's annual report (questionnaire) by January 31 for the previous year of participation ending on December 31.

3. Participant will first offer to sell surplus stock through the Species Captain if requested by the Species Captain or the Director of the program.

4. If Participant changes his/her address or telephone number or determines that he/she can no longer participate in Finchsave or continue with the species, he/she will notify the Species Captain and the Finchsave Director in writing immediately thereafter.

5. If Participant does not timely return the questionnaire or comply with Finchsave rules, Finchsave may, at Finchsave's discretion, drop Participant from the program.

6. Birds for sale through the Species Captain or to another participant in Finchsava shall be accurately described by Participant by pointing out the age of the birds, the sex, if known, and whether the birds have any known defect.

7. If Participant does not want his/her name and telephone number disclosed to the other participants working on the same species nor recognition for meeting the program's goals, Participant shall notify the Director of the program of this fact in writing at the time that this Agreement is returned to the Director. Failure to so notify the Director shall mean that the program may disclose said information to others in the discretion of the program. The program will make every attempt to maintain privacy if requested by the Participant.

8. Participant agrees that the National Finch and Softbill Society, the Finchsava Director, the Group Managers and the Species Captains will not have any liability to Participant arising out of any transaction or communication with respect to the program. Participant releases said individuals from liability even if they make a false statement about the quality of a bird offered for sale or fail to maintain privacy when requested to do so.

9. Participant will close band all chicks raised under the program in accordance with the rules of the Finchsava program.

10. If the program requests the Participant to write an article on the species, the Participant agrees to either write an article on the species or fill out a detailed questionnaire so the editor of the NFS Bulletin can prepare an article from the answers to the questionnaire.

In order for the Director to determine whether the Participant qualifies to participate in the program and to help the Species Captain understand how the Participant intends to breed the species, the Participant agrees to fill out the attached questionnaire and send it to the Director with this Agreement.

Participant represents that all of the information in the questionnaire is correct and encloses the \$5.00 application fee with this Agreement. (Please make checks out to "NFS".)

Name of species for which participation
is being applied (send a separate
application and fee for each species): _____

Date: _____

Participant's Signature

The Finchsava program hereby accepts Participant's application thereby making this Agreement effective.

Date: _____

Hal M. Koontz, Finchsava Director

APPLICATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of species for which participation
is being applied (complete a separate
application for each species): _____

Name of Participant (please print): _____

Mailing address of Participant: _____

Telephone number of Participant: () _____ Home

() _____ Work

NFS number _____

Breeding experience in general (number of
years, types of birds raised, etc.): _____

Breeding facility in general (number and size
of aviaries, breeding cages, etc.): _____

Breeding experience with the species for which
application is being made (number of years
kept and breeding results, etc.): _____

Number of chicks of the species raised in 1987: _____

Description of how Participant intends to breed the
species (type of cage, single pair vs. colony, etc.): _____

Number of birds currently owned in species: _____

How many are: Males _____ Females _____ Unknown sex _____

Supply the information requested below for each bird Participant owns in the species applied for (attach additional sheets if necessary):

<u>Band No.</u>	<u>Date (or Year) of Hatch (if known); otherwise Date of Acquisition</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Source of Bird (e.g., hatched by Participant or bought from importer or breeder (please state name, if known))</u>
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Do you have any interest in being a Species Captain? _____

MAIL APPLICATION AND QUESTIONNAIRE TO HAL M. KOONTZ, 2604 Auburn Court
Bakersfield, California 93306.

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Classified ads:
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FINCH LOVERS: Our book on finches, "LET'S TALK BIRDS" covers breeding, feeding and more. Please send \$14.50 for your copy to Finch Society of San Diego, P. O. Box 178153, San Diego, CA, 92117

CHEAP AND CNEERFUL FINCH NEST BOXES: Disposable, sanitary, strong diecut corrugated cardboard. No nails or glue. Just fold and hang. Successfully used by finch breeders for years. Full instructions. \$15.00 per dozen, postpaid. \$40.00 per 50 plus U.P.S., \$75.00 per 100 plus U.P.S. Don Thorschaidt, 96 Fulton Blvd., Commack, NY, 11725. (516) 864 3504.

FOR SALE: Owl finches, \$60 each; Lady Gouldians, White-breasted and splits. Red and Yellow-headed Parrot finches. Call Rose Gianferrara, (813) 992-6331.

GOULDIAN MUTATIONS: Blue-bodied, Yellow-bodied, Dilute-bodied & others. All raised here. Most NFS close-banded. Terry Dunham (813) 527 0252, 8 to 10 p.m. EST and weekends.

SHAFTTAILS: Chicks from all three of our Best in Show males. Normals, fawns, whites and split to whites. Lutino Blue-faced Parrot finches. Orange-headed White-breasted and split Gouldians. Pagoda Mynahs, 4 chicks hatched 3/20/88 and parent raised. Brenda Geesey and Bruce Evanick (717) 854 2604

BIRD POSTERS: Colour canaries, type canaries, Budgies, Zebras, Amazon Parrots, Lovebirds, Australian Finches, Macaws and Cockatoos. Send for current pricelist. Avian Imports, 62f Peacock Place, Box 36, Victoria, B.C., Canada, V9E 1B9

FINCHES; Domestic and imported. Our specialty: Outdoor cage and aviary breeding. Australian, African and Indo-Pacific. SASE for list. A-f Aviaries 5503 Axiom Ave., Briando, FL 32809 (407) 352-1593

BEST BIRDS - BEST PRICES: Australian finches, rare and common African Finches, snail Softbills. Suppliers of Best Foreign Bird at '86 and '87 Canadian National Show. Send for current pricelist. Avian Imports, 62f Peacock Place, Box 136, Victoria, B.C., Canada, V9E 1B9.

WANTED; New Bamboo Parrot finches. (*Erythrura hyperythra*). Call (609) 783-2039 (NJ) after 5 p.m..

RARE PERUVIAN FINCHES, softbills, bananaquits, hummingbirds; new shipment, limited numbers. FINCHSAVE participants get fifth pair free. Also cagebred Pacific Parrotlets (third generation), male lutino Ringneck Parakeets, magnificent true pair Malachite Sunbirds. Val Clear, 1001 Martin, Anderson, Indiana 46012; (317) 642 0795

MULTI-PURPOSE FINCH BREEDING BOXES: 12 for \$ 15.00. Will ship today. Send \$ 1.50 for sample of box and nestling material. A-1 Aviary, 3503 Axion Avenue, Orlando, FL 32809 (407) 352 1593

FINCHSAVE Classified ads:

Needed: New blood for Cherry Finches. Could use two extra hens. Jose Aleman, A-1 Aviary, 3503 Axion Ave., Orlando, FL 32809 (407) 352-1593

WANTED: Black-Crested finches. (*Lophospingus pusillus*) for Finchsave program. Need hens, however singles and pairs accepted. Stephen Hoppin, (813) 997-2237 after 7 p.m.

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FRANTIC EDITOR'S NOTE !
I have only one article to print in the next bulletin ! PLEASE HELP YOUR SOCIETY'S BULLETIN ! I am certain that many of you have had unique experiences that would be very valuable to other members. Please share your wealth of experience. Send something to be printed in the bulletin. Thanks. The Frantic Editor.
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AFA in brief

July 1989

Legislative Round-up

TEXAS - HB1687. "dangerous wildlife" bill. This bill passed as amended. In its original form, HB1687 would have categorized all wildlife as Type 1 or Type 2. Type 1 wildlife would have been totally prohibited from possession as a pet. Type 2 wildlife would have required a permit (\$100 each) per individual animal. Wildlife meant all animals except domestic dogs, cats and livestock. HB1687 was amended to cover only 15 species of dangerous animals such as big cats, rhinos, bears, etc. Any change to the list of affected animals will require an act of the legislature.

CALIFORNIA - AB2232, requiring permits for "wildlife." Linda Snn, AFA Southern California Region Vice-president, reported AB2232 is dead. A large number of aviculturists calling to voice their concerns was given as the reason birds were exempted from the bill before its demise. California's Fish and Game Code is being rewritten, and some of the offensive parts of this bill may resurface in the rewriting of the Code. Concerned aviculturists should contact Linda Snn (714) 688-4907, or AFA Northern California Region Vice-president Lanrella Desborough (415) 372-6174 for more current information and additional details.

OHIO - SD209, concerning exotic animals. Ohio State Coordinator Michaelen Rogers reported this bill, which states "no person shall import, transport, transfer, sell, buy or possess any exotic animal without a permit issued by the Department of Aviculture." Only captive-bred canaries, finches, parrots and parakeets, pigeons, doves, ducks and geese and domesticated races of chickens, turkeys, guinea fowl and pea fowl are exempt. AFA Legislative Vice-president Janet Lillenthal is reviewing the bill. For more details contact Michaelen Rogers, (419) 639-3673.

ALASKA - HB38, non-commercial farming of captive bred grouse. AFA Legislative Vice-president Janet Lillenthal is reviewing information forwarded by Alaska State Coordinator Jim Banman. This bill would allow aviculturists to import, export and propagate captive-bred grouse in the state of Alaska, as well as allowing the disposition of these grouse and/or their offspring. To date, the Board of Game has denied all permits to export native grouse from Alaska, as well as denying permits to import native or non-native grouse into Alaska.

MODEL FOR STATE REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO CAPTIVE WILD AND EXOTIC ANIMALS, prepared by Dr. Victor S. Neufles, University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine. Walter Sturgeon, President of International Wild Waterfowl Association Inc., forwarded a final copy of the Model Plan to Janet Lillenthal, AFA Legislative Vice-president. Dr. Neufles has never responded to correspondence from AFA, nor did he provide a final copy to AFA as requested. The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA), which commissioned writing of the Model Plan, has not endorsed it, neither has the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). It is believed Dr. Neufles may have gone far beyond what he was originally requested to develop. Even though the Model Plan has not been

endorsed by USDA or USAHA, "animal rights" and "inhumane" groups have picked up on the Model Plan. The cumbersome permit system it contains will probably surface in the future in different state legislatures across the country.

OVERVIEW. 1988-89 has been an active legislative season for aviculturists. At least 16 states have been involved in legislative or regulatory challenges, almost one third of the states in the entire country. In addition, challenges have been met on the federal level. As long as AFA has been permitted to be involved and be heard, AFA has helped fight back the encroachment on our right to keep and raise birds. The Regional Vice-presidents, State Coordinators, club presidents, and AFA members who have been there are to be commended for a job well done.

1989 Convention, Phoenix, Arizona

The 15th Annual Convention is almost here and, from all indications, it is shaping up to be the biggest and best yet. This year's convention, hosted by the Arizona Aviculture Society, will be held August 9-13, 1989 at the Pointe at South Mountain. The address is 7777 S. Pointe Parkway, Phoenix, AZ 85044, phone (800) 528-0428. Accommodations are two-room suites for \$60 per night, single or double occupancy. Featured speakers will include Joseph Forshaw of Australia, John Stoodley of England, and Jeffery Atwood of England. Additional speakers will include Dr. Noel Snyder on the Thickbill Release Project; Antonio DiDios on Spix Macaws, Golden Conures and Other Endangered Species; John Vanderhoof on Lories and Lorikeets; and additional speakers on topics ranging from Avian Genetics to Pheasant Husbandry and Breeding, and on birds from finches to macaws and curassows to kingfishers. Featured speakers for the Veterinarian Program include Robert Cliphsham, DVM; Susan Clubb, DVM; Kevan Flammer, DVM; Scott McDonald, DVM; and Joel Murphy, DVM. Local tours scheduled in conjunction with the Phoenix convention include trips to the Grand Canyon, the Sonoran Desert Museum, a shopping trip to Nogales, Mexico, Mile Hi/Ramsey Canyon (the "Hummingbird Capital of the U.S."), and a tour of local aviaries that will include a stop at the world's largest display of curassows and the only public lory feeding exhibit in the United States. For additional information and forms, see the center insert of *Watchbird* (June/July '89) or call Opal Crosset, 1989 Convention Chairman, (602) 853-0348.

State Coordinators

Anyone interested in becoming an AFA state coordinator should contact Dr. Amy Worell, (818) 704-0223, prior to the convention. State coordinator positions will be opening up soon for the following states: Alaska, Arkansas, California - northern, California - southern, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia - Washington, Hawaii, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Vermont, West Virginia and Wyoming.

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BIRD ROOM PLANTS ANYONE ?

from Indoor Gardening
by Katherine B. Walker
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The following article is reprinted, with permission, from the THE AVICULTURAL BULLETIN, a publication of the Avicultural Society of America, 2220 Pacific Avenue, SE, Costa Mesa, CA 92627. I thank them for this courtesy. The Editor.

From the October 1970 issue.

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Carrots can be grown into lively, temporary plants. Don't scrub or pare the roots but wash them gently to remove excess soil without damaging the "eyes". Cut off the top end with about an inch of root attached, then trim off any damaged leaves. Set the tops in a shallow bowl, either spiking them unto needle holders or holding them in place with small stones or pebbles filled in around them. Add water to the base of the leaves. Within a day or two the tops will begin putting forth fresh, ferny foliage and the root end may send forth new growth too. Change the water in the container and scrub the container itself as often as necessary to keep it fresh and clean. As the water evaporates, add more so that the level remains at the base of the leaves.

Other root vegetables such as beets, parsnips and turnips can all be handled the same way. These are all short-time house plants, of course, but most kitchens can furnish a constant succession of fresh "starts" to replace the worn-out tops.

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ALL JUDGES PLEASE NOTE:

Please be sure to send your show reports within two (2) weeks to the Panel Director, the Points Registrar and the Editor.

The Judges Panel Director.

=====

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