

# THE NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY



SEPTEMBER  
OCTOBER  
1991



GWNOREEN

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Presidents' Message:

I want to express my sincere gratitude and admiration to the staff and management at:

Shuman/Heritage Printing Company  
 P. O. Box 5165, York, PA 17405.

These are the fine folks who have done this high-quality, reasonably priced Bulletin for NPS members for years. They are also the folks who have turned out these last few issues in record time with no loss of quality. It is due to their hard work that the Bulletin is now back on time and I want them to know that all of of us (not least of all, me) appreciate it. THANKS TEAM !!

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

=====

NFS Panel of Judges, 1991.....	2
A Word To Show Committees, by Jon Hoffman.....	6
Affiliates, Delegates and Show Dates.....	11
Breeding The Rufous-backed Mannikin, by Roddy Gabel.....	18
The Census As A Service, by The Prez.....	22
1991 National Finch and Softbill Society Census Form.....	24
The Pekin Robin, by Brenda Geesey.....	27
1991 Band Ordering Guide.....	34
1991 NFS Band Order Form.....	35
A Few Tidbits For the Bulletin, by Jodie Davis.....	36
New PINCHSHOP Items.....	37
The Overseas Project Update, by Tom Rood.....	38
On Feeding Musca Larvae, by Jack Kook.....	40
Classified Ads.....	42
Benefits of Joining NFS.....	44
NFS Membership Application.....	45
PINCHSHOP.....	48

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### ARE YOU A BIT TIMID ABOUT WRITING ?

Jon Hoffman, our Second Vice President, and well-known BIRD TALK columnist, has volunteered to help you! In a letter to me Jon wrote, "since some people are shy about writing and aren't comfortable about their ability to write, perhaps they could submit the outline or sketch of what they want to say, and then I can put it into an edited-form of article for them. The procedure might be that a breeder sends me the information or calls me to discuss what they want to say. I then write it up and it goes back to the breeder for approval. The breeder makes notes of any clarifications or requests for changes and sends it back to me. I put it into a final form and send it to the bulletin editor for publication."

=====

This is a very generous offer and I hope many members who have hesitated to write for the bulletin will be contacting you soon Jon! Thanks. The Editor.

Send your ideas to Jon at:

1226 S. 6th Street  
Louisville, KY 40203

=====

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**NFS PANEL OF JUDGES      1991**

=====

**CHARLES ANCHOR**  
 630 Lake Park Drive  
 Addison, IL 60101  
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 Nounds, OK 74047  
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 (817) 523-5568

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Panel Chairman

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5010 Mezel Circle  
Colo. Springs, CO 80916  
(719) 574-1594

NOTE: For more information on the  
Judges' Panel, contact Dr. Al  
Decoteau, at the address above.

=====

TO ALL CLUBS WHO WILL BE CONTACTING AN NFS PANEL JUDGE:

PLEASE...Be sure that you are using this current list. It is up to date.  
Sometimes addresses, phone numbers, etc. change and all other lists are now  
invalid. Thank you for your attention to this.

Dr. Al Decoteau.  
June 1, 1991

=====

Please remember that your "renewal date" is on your address label. Check it  
and please keep your membership and your correct address up to date. It'll  
save time and money if Russ doesn't have to send reminders to you.

RENEWALS AND ADDRESS CHANGES SHOULD BE SENT TO:

NFS Membership Services  
Russell Armitage, JR.  
345 Boston Road  
Middletown, CT 06457

=====

BAND SECRETARY IS MOVING !!!  
NEW ADDRESS FOR:

Denise Capazzi, NFS Band Secretary  
9 Eagle Ridge Drive  
Gales Ferry CT 06335  
New Phone: (203) 464 6961.

PLEASE MAKE A NOTE OF THIS !!!

=====



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## A WORD TO SHOW COMMITTEES:

=====

by Jon Hoffman

=====

We all know that mounting a bird show can be difficult, expansive and frustrating. Sometimes it almost seems as though everyone and everything are conspiring to make your show a failure.

I have recently heard from "usually reliable sources" that some show committees have experienced difficulties in dealing with Bird Talk, the magazine for which I write the monthly column "Show Notes". The problems seem to involve incorrect information published in the show listings and an apparent reluctance on the part of the Bird Talk staff to make corrections.

Now, I write the editorial (text) portion of the column, and I have nothing to do with the show listings, although some people seem to be under the impression that those, too, fall under my jurisdiction. I do, however, know enough about the way Bird Talk operates to do a little educating about the practicalities of dealing with a publication like BT. And emerging with some semblance of your sanity intact.

First, here are a few facts for the uninitiated:

1. BT is one of several magazines, including Cat Fancy, Dog World and Wildbird, published by Fancy Publications. While all these publications are processed, printed and distributed by a single outfit, each one is edited and assembled by a small editorial staff. Despite its size, circulation and general sleekness, BT is pretty much put together by four people. Four very overworked people.
2. Like most magazines with a large circulation, when one issue of BT is on the stands, the next one is being printed.
3. BT is aimed at a general bird-owning public. While it manages to touch a lot of bases (pet care, breeding, etc.), it is NOT a show-oriented publication. In fact, a recent poll revealed that "Show Notes" is probably the least popular feature of the magazine, although the editors deem it essential. Space in the magazine is not created for show listings; they are relegated to whatever space is available for them.
4. BT receives a huge volume of mail, and since the office is understaffed and the employees all wear seventeen hats, occasionally mail can get lost or delayed.



5. The printing schedule requires that any material submitted for publication be received several months prior to the publication date of the issue for which it is intended.

If you study these facts and think about them for a while, there are certain inescapable implications:

1. That office is busy. If you are so rash as to telephone, you will be talking to one of those four harried editors who is probably on the verge of a nervous collapse. S/he is very fragile and has probably been yalled at a lot today. Perhaps by irate bird club members. Be courteous and GENTLE with this person: tact and kindness will be essential to the successful completion of your mission.

2. If you write (instead of phoning) a friendly, politely-worded letter, you will become part of the day's routine (opening the mail) rather than an unwelcome interruption. Writing can be more effective than a call, especially if you include a word of appreciation for any extra effort you might cause.

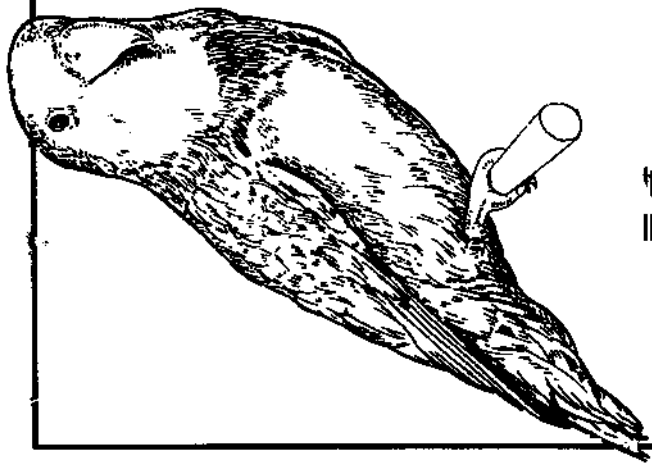
3. If you write or call to make a correction in a show listing, remember that the next issue is already in press. Your correction cannot be made until the issue after next at the earliest. It is unfortunate but true that it may not be possible to make the correction in time for your show, but there isn't a lot that can be done about that, and it is probably not the fault of the person to whom you are speaking or writing. In the play Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You, we are told that God answers all our prayers; it's just that sometimes the answer is NO.

4. Since the space for show listings is limited, yours may not appear until fairly close to the show date. If your announcement was lost or delayed in the mail, you may not know until it is too late to insert a new listing. That is lousy, but not much can be done about it.

5. If an error is made in your listing, it may be small comfort to know that the listing didn't cost you anything; but I have had similar problems with publications that do charge for listing shows.

6. Proofread your copy carefully. Not all errors in listings are made by the folks at BI, who are, all in all, pretty good at what they do.

7. No one at BI or any other magazine wants to get your information wrong; no one is out to sabotage your show. No one likes, either, to be the bearer of bad news, so if someone has to tell you that there is nothing that can be done, that person is probably as unhappy about it as you are.



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8. Do NOT send show listings to me in the expectation that I can somehow facilitate the process. I can't. All that happens when I get show announcements is that it takes longer for them to get to BT in Mission Viejo, because I have to mail them back there. If it isn't too late by then for the publication deadline. It is sometimes a month or more before I receive mail sent to me in care of BT, so sending show listings to me may very well be the kiss of death in terms of getting the information printed.

9. So, even if you send an announcement to BT in plenty of time, it is probably best to consider it as icing on the cake if the listing is printed. Don't rely on BT to publicize your show; consider our listings as supplementary to your other publicity efforts.

10. Remember that most of the information sent to BT does get printed correctly and on time. Mistakes are rare, but they do happen from time to time; sometimes they can be corrected and sometime not.

=====

Thanks Jon, both for the spirited defense of hardworking editors and for the valuable insights into the world of "slick" magazine publishing. I'm sure your comments on the time-frame for printing and distribution apply to the other major magazines as well as BT.

TO ALL 1991 SHOW MANAGERS: I bet that all of you are making a notebook to hand to the 1992 show manager that is full of "things you must do" and "things you must not do". If you'd like to have a printout of this article to include send a SASE to the home office address. The Editor.

=====

**ANOTHER NEWS FLASH !!!**

**NFS Second Champion Bird !!!**

**Normal Zebra Male  
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**Bred, banded and exhibited to his  
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**Tom Rood**

This Normal Grey Zebra has actually accumulated more than 65 points in his show career but some were won before NFS began tallying points for birds. He went over the 50 point requirement at the Springfield Pet Bird Club Show in his 4th season on the top bench.

=====

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Editor, NFS BULLETIN  
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5/6 '92

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

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THE NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETYS' NATIONAL SHOW: November 14 - 17.  
In conjunction with the 43rd National Cage-Bird Exhibition, hosted by the  
Mid-West Cage Bird Club at the Hyatt Regency Hotel - Dearborn, Michigan.  
NFS Panel Judge: Earl Courts. For information call : Patrick Vance,  
(313) 443 0643. For hotel reservations: (313) 593 1234.

ALABAMA

Central Alabama Avicultural Society; Danny Hall, (205) 491 B603  
Show: August 30 - September 1, 1991.

Heart of Dixie Canary Club; Irene Miller, (205) 649 4524  
Show: October 19, 1991 Mobile, AL Panel Judge: Stephen Hoppin

CALIFORNIA

Aviary Assn. of Kern Co.; Hal Koontz, (805) B72 1063  
Show: December 7, 1991 Kern, CA Panel Judge: Clayton Jones

Capitol City Bird Society; Helen Caudle, (916) 933 1619  
Show: October 19 - 20, 1991 Roseville, CA

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

Fresno' Canary and Finch Society; Richard Lujan, (408) 984 1453  
Show: October 25 to 27, 1991 Fresno, CA Panel Judge: Joe Krader

Golden Gate Avian Society; Mary Payne, (415) 449 8719  
Show: November 15 to 17, 1991 Tracy, CA Panel Judge: Marty Von Raesfeld

San Diego Bird Show, Inc.; Janice Pritchard, (619) 442 1164  
Show: November 2 & 3, 1991 Del Mar, CA Panel Judge: Brian Binns

South Bay Bird Club; Gregory Aden, (213) 379 2416  
Show: October 19, 1991 Lawndale, CA Panel Judge: Clarence Culwell

COLORADO

Colorado Cage Bird Association; Martha Wigmore, (719) 574 1594  
Regional Show: Oct. 19, 1991 Colorado Springs, CO Panel Judge: Martha Wigmore

Rocky Mountain Society of Aviculture; Donald Locke, Jr. (303) 289 5721  
Show: November 1 - 3, 1991 Denver, CO Panel Judge: Marty von Raesfeld

## CONNECTICUT

Connecticut Association for Aviculture; Chris Voronovitch, (203) 649 8220  
Show: October 26, 1991 Gay's Inn, Meriden, CT Panel Judge: Jon Hoffman

New England Finch Fanciers; Russell Armitage, Jr., (203) 346 5875  
Show: November 30, 1991 East Hartford, CT Panel Judge: Brenda Geesey

## FLORIDA

Aviary & Cage Bird Society of South Florida; Len Brower (305) 931 3468  
Regional Show: August 24, 1991 Ft. Lauderdale Panel Judge: Dr. Al Decoteau

Exotic Bird Club of Florida; Walt Perry, (407) 632 7494  
Show: November 9, 1991 Indiatlantic, FL Panel Judge: Stephen Hoppin

Florida State Fair Exotic Bird Show; Claire Remo, (B13) 482 5352

Gold Coast All Bird Club; Cynthia Patten, (407) 439 6582  
Show: October 29, 1991 Ft. Lauderdale, FL Panel Judge: George Warren

Greater Brandon Avian Society, Inc.; Lillian Mount, (B13) BBG 6492  
Show: September 15, 1991 Tampa, FL Panel Judge: Cecil Gunby

Jacksonville Cage Bird Assn.; Jerri Weisenfeld, (904) 731 7173  
Show: September 21, 1991 Jacksonville, FL Panel Judge: Cecil Gunby

Suncoast Avian Society; Joe Ventimiglia, (B13) 392 9391  
Hosting the KAYTEE GREAT AMERICAN BIRD SHOW, October 4th and 5th, 1991  
Bellevue Nido Resort Hotel, Clearwater, FL Panel Judge: Stephen Hoppin

Sunshine State Cage Bird Society; Dale Laird, (407) 657 7989  
Show: October 12, 1991 Orlando, FL Panel Judge: William Parlee

## GEORGIA

Georgia Cage Bird Society; Cecil Gunby, (404) 254 1261  
Show: November 2, 1991 Atlanta, GA Panel Judge: Brenda Geesey

## HAWAII

Honolulu Canary and Finch Club; Cynthia Pregana, (808) 456 3793  
Show: Honolulu, HI Panel Judge: Brian Binns

## ILLINOIS

Greater Chicago Cage Bird Club; Jane Muscato, (708) 305 9043  
Show: November 2, 1991 Rolling Neadow, IL Panel Judge: Or. Al Decoteau

Illial Bird Fanciers: Tom Rood, (217) 774 5265

Show: May 18, 1991 Shalhyvillm, IL Panel Judge: Charles Anchor

National Institute Red-Orange Canaries: Catherina Wiegelm, (219) 922 1146

Show: November 29 - December 1, 1991 Elk Grove Village, IL

Panel Judge: Jon Hoffman

Springfield Pet Bird Club: Robert Huff, (217) 522 4164

Show: September 14, 1991 Springfield, IL Panel Judge: Dr. Val Clear

#### INDIANA

Indiana Bird Fanciers: Dr.Val Clear, (317) 642 0795

Show: October 12, 1991 Ft. Wayne, IN Panel Judge: Cecil Gunby

West Central Indiana: Tom Rood, (217) 774 5265

Show: August 10, 1991 Terre Haute, IN Panel Judge: Jon Hoffman

#### IOWA

Mid-America Cage Bird Society: Rhoda Shirley, (515) 243 2255

Show: October 5, 1991 Des Moines, IA Panel Judge: Earl Courts

#### KANSAS

Kansas Avicultural Society: Marilyn Galvan, (316) 524 8128

Show: October 12, 1991 Nichita, KS Panel Judge: Paul Williams

#### KENTUCKY

Central Kentucky Cage Bird Society: Mac Lewis, (502) 695 5168

#### LOUISIANA

Gulf South Bird Club: Evon Kruse, (504) 641 5510

Show: October 18 - 20, 1991 New Orleans, LA Panel Judge: William Parlee

#### MARYLAND

Baltimore Bird Fanciers: Deb Clark, (301) 242 8471

Show: October 19, 1991 Towson, MD Panel Judge: Brenda Geesey

Maryland Cage Bird Association: Theresa Brown, (301) 735 7662

Show: September 28, 1991 Timonium, MD Panel Judge: Roddy Gabel

#### MASSACHUSETTS

Massachusetts Cage Bird Association: Kim Rendigs, (508) 540 2248

Regional Show: October 19, 1991 Mansfield, MA Panel Judge: Roddy Gable

Boston Society For Aviculture: Denise Cabral, (508) 586 3293

## MICHIGAN

Mid-Michigan Bird Club; Mary Terwilliger, (517) 463 5695

Mid-Nest Cage Bird Club; Patrick Vance, (313) 443 0643

Show: Hosting the National, November 14-16, 1991 Panel Judge: Earl Courts

Motor City Bird Breeders; Patrick Vance, (313) 443 0643

Regional Show: Oct. 26 & 27, 1991 Detroit, MI Panel Judge: Conrad Meinert

Society of Canary and Finch Breeders; Bro. Anthony Michael, F.S.D.,

(616) 245 0049. Show: Oct. 19, 1991 Westland, MI Panel Judge: Conrad Meinert

## MISSOURI

Greater Kansas City Avicultural Society; Chris Hunsberger, (816) 461 5582

Show: October 19, 1991 Kansas City, MO Panel Judge: Cecil Gunby

Heartland Canary and Finch Club; Earl Courts, (816) 524 0921

Show: October 26, 1991 Lawrence, KS Panel Judge: Paul Williams

Missouri Cage Bird Association; Dennis Burhans, (314) 441 8525

Show: November 2, 1991 Eureka, MO Panel Judge: Jon Hoffman

## NEBRASKA

Greater Omaha Cage Bird Society; Elbert Traylor, (402) 435 7886

Show: September 28, 1991 Omaha, KS Panel Judge: Jon Hoffman

## NEW JERSEY

South Jersey Bird Club; Raymond Passaro, (201) 291 9224

Show: October 5, 1991 Panel Judge: Roddy Gabel

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

Birds of a Feather Avicultural Society; Larry DeLorenzo, (508) 927 5494

Show: September 21, 1991 Panel Judge: Dr. Al Decoteau

New Hampshire Avicultural Society; Larry DeLorenzo, (508) 927 5494

Show: October 12, 1991 Hudson, NH Panel Judge: Jon Hoffman

## NEW YORK

Astoria Bird Club; Leslie Leber, (516) 431 9267

Show: November 2, 1991 Hempstead, NY Non-Panel Judge

Finger Lakes Cage Bird Association; Rena Rouse, (315) 252 7673

Show: September 21, 1991 Waterloo, NY Panel Judge: Dr. Val Clear



Rochester Cage Bird Club; Jeanne Murphy, (716) 288 2145  
Show: November 9, 1991 Rochester, NY Panel Judge: Cecil Gunby

#### NORTH CAROLINA

Charlotte Metrolina Cage Bird Society; Wanda McCornick, (704) 825 1972  
Show: September 7 & 8, 1991 Hosting the "Carolina Classic Bird Show", co-hosted by the South Carolina Bird Buddies and the Palmetto (S.C.) Bird Club. Charlotte, NC Panel Judges: Sept. 7, Conrad Meinert and Sept. 8, Earl Courts.

#### OHIO

Cleveland Cage Bird Society; Maureen Mehozonek, (216) 234 7674  
Show: October 12, 1991 Parma, OH Panel Judge: Brenda Geesey

#### OKLAHOMA

Bird Fanciers of Oklahoma; Gene Miller, (405) 382 7066  
Show: September 28, 1991 Oklahoma City, OK Panel Judge: Clarence Culwell

OKLAHOMA CAGE BIRD SOCIETY; Laura Beuley, (918) 369 2580  
Show: October 26, 1991 Tulsa, OK Panel Judge: Laura Beuley

#### PENNSYLVANIA

Central Pennsylvania Cage Bird Society; Jerry McCawley, (717) 288 0529  
Show: October 26, 1991 Camp Hill, PA Panel Judge: Cecil Gunby

Chester County Bird Breeders; Kris Kroner, (215) 628 4143  
Show: September 14, 1991 King of Prussia, PA Panel Judge: Charles Anchor

Delaware Valley Bird Club; Kris Kroner, (215) 628 4143  
Show: November 9, 1991 Montgomery County, PA Panel Judge: Jon Hoffman

Greater Pittsburgh Cage Bird Society; Dr. Lindsay Clack (412) 323 7235  
Show: November 2, 1991 Washington, PA Panel Judge: Roddy Sabel

Philadelphia Avicultural Society; Rick Szlachta, (215) 635 2097  
Show: November 23, 1991 Intercourse, PA Panel Judge: Brenda Geesey

#### SOUTH CAROLINA

Palmetto Cage Bird Club; Earl Owens, (803) 855 3193  
South Carolina Bird Buddies; Earl Owens, (803) 855 3193  
Show: September 7 & 8, 1991 Charlotte, NC Co-hosts of "Carolina Classic" w/ Charlotte Metrolina (N.C.). Panel Judges: September 7, Conrad Meinert; September 8, Earl Courts.

## TENNESSEE

Middle Tennessee Cage Bird Club; Eva Duffey, (615) 361 5949

Show: October 26, 1991 Nashville, TN Panel Judge: Ray Johnson

## TEXAS

Bay Area Cockatiel & Cage Bird Club; Karol Deem, (409) 737 1557

Show: September 7, 1991 Galveston, TX Panel Judge: Ray Johnson

Capital City Cage Bird Club; Sarah Goodrich, (817) 491 2535

Show: October 12, 1991 Austin, TX Panel Judge: Narty Von Raesfeld

Fort Worth Bird Club; Clarence Culwell, (817) 523 5568

Show: October 5 & 6, 1991 Fort Worth, TX Panel Judge: Narty Von Raesfeld

Texas Bird Breeders and Fanciers Assn; Clarence Culwell, (817) 523 5568

Show: November 1 & 2, 1991 Killeen, TX Panel Judge: Clarence Culwell

West Wings of Houston; Dan Easter, (713) 855 7161

Regional Show; September 21, 1991 Houston, TX Panel Judge: Ray Johnson

## VIRGINIA

Peninsula Cage Bird Society; Linda Oja, (804) 874 8581

Show: September 21, 1991 Newport News, VA Panel Judge: Harold Bowles

## WASHINGTON

Northwest Exotic Bird Society; Nancy White, (206) 523 3602

## WISCONSIN

Badger Canary Club; Patrice Ripple, (414) 527 1980

Show: October 26, 1991 Oak Creek, WI Panel Judge: Pawl Williams

Milwaukee Bird Society, Ltd.; Sue Feldstein,

Show: October 5, 1991 Milwaukee, WI Panel Judge: Charles Anchor

## INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATES

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

Show: September 21, 1991 Toronto, Canada Panel Judge: Brenda Geesey

CANADIAN NATIONAL SHOW Pickering, Ontario

Durham Avicultural Society of Ontario; Vincent Noase, (416) 723 1978

Show: September 27 - 29, 1991 Panel Judge: William Parlee

Essex-Kent Cage Bird Society; Alfred Nion, (519) 948 6398

Show: October 19 & 20, 1991 Non-Panel Judge: John Bennett

New Zealand Finch Breeders: New Zealand, Mrs. E. M. Foster

Queensland Finch Society: Queensland, Australia Gavin Dietz

Zebra Finch Society, England: Brian Binns, Manchester, England

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**TO ALL DELEGATES AND JUDGES:** Please read the list carefully!! If you see errors or omissions please call me at (717) 854 2604 immediately!

Thanks, Brenda.

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**BREEDING RUFIOUS-BACKED MANNIKINS**  
**(*Lonchura bicolor* subsp.)**

=====

by Roddy Gabel

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In the fall of 1988, I was in a local pet shop and spotted an odd, unfamiliar bird in a cage of Bronze-winged Mannikins (*Lonchura cucullata*). After returning home, with mental notes on the bird's coloration and markings for reference, I searched through Goodwin's (1982) *Estrildid Finches of the World* until I found the species whose description matched the bird in the shop - the Rufous-backed Mannikin. I promptly returned to the shop and purchased the bird which was sold as a "miniature Tri-colored Nun" which, indeed, they do resemble. By August 1989, I had managed to obtain four more of these birds at another shop.

Bates and Busenbark (1970) indicated that the Rufous-backed Mannikin was rarely imported into the United States and gave this species only cursory treatment in their book. Similarly, other general avicultural texts give only a brief mention of this bird (Rogers, 1975; Martin, 1983). Goodwin (1982) provided some notes on captive breeding that occurred in Germany, but the most extensive descriptions of courtship behavior, nesting and other breeding characteristics, as well as management of this species, were provided by Borlase (1987), based on his breeding success in New Zealand.

Here I describe my own experience in breeding this species, which may constitute a first U. S. breeding.

Taxonomy and Distribution: According to Goodwin (1982), Rufous-backed Mannikins include three subspecies: *L. b. nigriceps*, *L. b. woltersi*, and *L. b. minor*. The latter two are distinguished from the first by a darker coloration and smaller size, respectively. These subspecies share species status with the Black and White Mannikins, *L. b. bicolor*, *L. b. poensis*, and *L. b. stigmatothorax*, which resemble the Rufous-backed Mannikin except that the black replaces all brown coloration. Other close relatives are the Bronze-winged Mannikin and the much larger Magpie Mannikin, *L. fringilloides*.

Rufous-backed Mannikins generally inhabit open areas such as grasslands, marshes, and other clearings, although they may be found in palm groves and forested areas adjacent to open areas. Geographically, they exist from southern Somali and Kenya southward to south Africa in eastern Africa. *Lonchura bicolor nigriceps* is more widely distributed than the other two subspecies (Goodwin, 1982). Although it is most likely that my birds belong to the *nigriceps* subspecies, this is not a certainty.

Description: The Rufous-backed Mannikin is slightly over three inches long and is similar in size and shape to the more common Bronze-winged Mannikin. The mantle, back, wing coverts, and parts of the secondaries are a dark, rich, chestnut brown. Wing coverts have straw-colored streaks along the

feather shafts that vary in intensity from bird to bird. The exposed edges of the secondaries are barred with dull white, reminiscent of the wing coloration of the Owl Finch (*Peophila bichenovii*). The head, upper breast and tail are black, and the lower breast, abdomen and vent area are white. The flanks are scalloped in black and white. The irides are dark brown. Legs and feet are blackish, and the bill is blue-grey, almost silvery in appearance. Sexes are alike. Before they molt into adult plumage, juveniles are a grey-buff color on the underparts and brown above; flight feathers and the tail are an even darker brown. The bill of young birds is also a dull black rather than the adult color.

Diet: The birds receive a diet of a standard, commercial finch seed mixture and an eggfood mixture. The eggfood consists of three hard-boiled (or microwaved) eggs, three slices of whole-wheat bread, two heaping teaspoons of 95% soy protein powder, and two teaspoons of Vionate powdered vitamin supplement. These ingredients are combined and chopped to a fine, crumbly consistency in a food processor. Cattlebone and crushed oyster shell are both provided as sources of calcium for laying females and are available at all times. Fresh water is provided daily and is available continuously.

Breeding: The greatest difficulty in breeding Rufous-backed Mannikins is distinguishing the sexes. Although the males do sing and perform a courtship ritual in the presence of females, these activities can be difficult to observe and may not be exhibited by the birds in the presence of humans. I have attempted to sex the birds on the basis of bill size - male mannikins reputedly have a stouter, larger bill, although this can be difficult to distinguish in birds this small. A female in breeding condition can also look fuller in the abdominal area, indicating the expansion of the reproductive tract in preparation for egg-laying. However, these indicators are not always reliable, and a presumed pair may never lay because they are two males, or may lay lots of infertile eggs because they are both females.

The breeding cage I used was a large, wire-fronted, box type cage with a 20-watt fluorescent light in the top. The cage measures four feet wide by three feet high by two feet deep. The light is on a timer set for 15 hours of light per day (7 a.m. to 10 p.m.) year-round. Juniper branches were placed in one end to provide cover and potential nest sites. Large and small domed wicker nests were also placed in the cage to provide additional nest sites. Fine dried grasses and strands of burlap were placed in the cage for nesting material. The cage bottom was covered with about one inch of small hardwood chips.

Three wild-caught birds were placed in the cage together in the fall of 1989. I believed these to be two males and a female. After a couple of weeks, one of the males appeared to be harassing the other male, and the subordinate male was removed. The remaining birds promptly began nest-building and constructed a nest in the juniper branches. The nest was essentially a grass shell lined with burlap and was covered over with an

### Breeding Rufous-backed Mannikins

entrance hole on one side.

A clutch of four eggs was laid in early December; all four were infertile. The birds produced five more eggs in the last week of December 1989. These eggs were all fertile and all hatched on January 13, 1990. The chicks were reared without any live food or additional supplements other than those described above. Four chicks fledged at about 20 days of age, but returned to the nest to roost, both during the day and at night, so they may have actually fledged a day or two earlier. The chicks became very active and inquisitive, and gradually destroyed the "roof" of their nest, although they continued to roost in the open-topped, cup-shaped platform that remained. While the chicks remained with them the parents attempted to re-lay twice, in mid- and late February, but both times the chicks destroyed the nests and eggs because of their constant activity and tendency to pick and tug on everything in the cage. These chicks were removed from the parents on March 3 and were already showing signs of molting into adult plumage. By April 13, they had completely molted and acquired their adult coloration.

Once the chicks were removed, the parents immediately re-nested, this time in one of the small wicker nests, which I had wedged in some juniper branches. They laid a single egg, which they failed to incubate. This was removed, and beginning on March 20, six eggs were laid, which were all fertile. All six hatched (the first on April 6), and five chicks were reared and fledged at 21 days. They had been closed-banded at two weeks of age, which caused no disruption to their care and feeding.

Another chick was later raised by the original pair while they were housed with a pair of Gouldians and a pair of Shafttails in a cage similar to the original breeding cage. At the time of this writing (December 1990), a female from the second brood and the subordinate male from the original three birds have bred and are rearing an unknown number of young. They built a nest in juniper branches in the upper back corner of the cage so that the top of the cage forms the top of the nest. They, too, are rearing their young with no live food or supplements outside of the basic breeding diet described earlier.

Final Comments: Rufous-backed Mannikins appear to be relatively easy to breed and tolerate normal disturbances such as nest checks and closed-banding of chicks. They do well on a fairly simple diet. They can be somewhat aggressive toward one another, however, and must be watched for signs of fighting. Subordinate birds must be separated, and often only two birds may be housed together at one time. This aggression appears to only be aimed at others of the same species. Even small waxbills (e.g., Gold-breasted, *Amandara subflava*) do not seem to be bothered by them in group cages.

I encourage others to breed these birds and other species that have been neglected in American aviculture because of their low cost. When importations of such species are halted, what a loss it will be if we have failed to establish them in our aviaries!

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NEW FINCHSAVE DIRECTOR

Linda Oja  
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If you have previously enrolled in FINCHSAVE and have not been regularly in contact with the former director or if you have hesitated to enroll I encourage you to contact Linda now. She and her group of assistants are working to sort out the records and would welcome an update from you. The Board of Directors is hoping for a report at the November meeting and it would be helpful if you would take the first step and introduce yourself to Linda. The Board thanks all who have tried in the past to make this program work and wishes the new director and her group great success. They will need your help.

The Editor.  
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**THE 1991 NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL  
SOCIETY CENSUS  
OR - A CENSUS AS A SERVICE**

**by the President**

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Well, OK - I'm asking for some of your time to fill out a form and I'm asking you to mail it in aod to meet a deadline. But it really is a service for you and for other NPS members.

Consider these points:

- \* do you need new bloodlines of a common species?
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- \* do you really need to find a mate for that great, but aggressive, bird who is lonely aod becoming a problem?
- \* do you want to find out if your breeding success is rare or if others are raising the same species?
- \* do you want to branch out into aootber species but only if you can find domestically raised stock?
- \* do you want to contribute to the pool of information that is needed to help to prove that captive propagation is valuable?

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The second is identifying species that are not being raised frequently enough and linking those members who are working with those species together for the birds benefit.

The third most importaot is the "dating game" service - pairing up birds.

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**HELP PROVIDE THIS SERVICE TO THE BIRDS, YOURSELF AND ALL NPS MEMBERS**

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## THE PEKIN ROBIN

*Leiothrix lutea*

by Brenda Geesey

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Several of the frequently available snfthills are so easy to maintain and so charming to aviary inhabitants that they are popular around the world. They are called snfthills because their diet consists of snft foods rather than hard seeds. Although their diet is completely different from that of finches, for some species it can be very simple. Many have talents as singers, beautiful plumage with vivid colors and charming personalities that endear them to all bird lovers. The subject of this article, *Leiothrix lutea*, the Pekin Robin, has all of the characteristics listed plus being a hardy, small and non-aggressive species.

If ever any bird has had a lot of unsuitable "common" names it is this bird. It has been called the Pekin Robin, Japanese Robin, Hill Robin, Red-billed *Leiothrix*, Chinese Nightingale, Japanese Nightingale, Pekin Nightingale, Hill Tit, and probably more. Despite these names, the bird is not a Robin, not a Nightingale, and not a Tit. It isn't native to Japan, its range isn't confined to China, and it doesn't inhabit the part of China around Peking. I have always thought that at least some of these names were invented by folks who wanted to make the bird seem more mysterious. Since "Pekin Robin" seems to be the best known of the common names, I'll use it in this article. My intent is to make the Pekin Robin less mysterious, and better understood. It is one of my favorite species and I hope more aviculturists will take the time to become better acquainted and to keep and raise these charmers.

Werner Steingard, in his excellent book "The New Snfthill Handbook" gives the best and most accurate description of their distribution in Asia. "The Himalayan area from Kashmir in the west to Assam in the southeast; western and northeastern Burma and northern Tonkin; from southern China northward to Szechwan and southern Szechwan and eastward to the Yangtze River estuary."

They are Passeriformes or passerines, which means that they are members of the perching songbird order. They are Timaliidae Family members. This is a large and very diverse family which includes more than 280 Old World (mostly Asiatic) forest birds. This family has members with more different shapes, sizes and colorations than practically any other avian family. Some are as small as wrens, some as large as crows. Most are noisy birds who travel the brushland or woodland undergrowth in small flocks. All eat some insects, some also eat fruits and/or seeds. All of this family nest on or near the ground. All have rather soft fluffy plumage and comparatively large feet and legs. All have relatively short rounded wings that curve to hug the body. Many Timaliidae have great songs and many are brightly colored. This

family is often called the Babbler Family, a reference to the sounds they make as they travel on and near the ground in search of food. Some have become highly prized cage birds around the world. Some of the earlier authors said that there are four subspecies of Pekin Robins. I can't find any modern confirmation of that. In the wild, they travel in groups or small parties out of the breeding season. In season, in pairs. They are found at elevations from 5000 to 6000 feet, and perhaps as high as 9000 feet. They are on average, about 6" to 6 1/2" in length. I will admit that they do remind me, (somewhat) of our native Robins, in that they have approximately the same body shape and a similar large, dark eye.

Pekin Robins are the most frequently imported of all softbills and are very often an aviculturist's first softbill species. They were ours. They are ideal for beginning softbill keepers as they're hardy once acclimated, easy to feed and not finicky about their diet. They're reasonably priced, even now. They're lively, inquisitive and easily taught to take mealworms from your hand. For several years we had a pair flying free in our aviary and they took mealworms from our hands, from the dishes we had prepared for other birds, from the mealworm aquarium and anywhere else they happened to find them. They also kept our basement aviary free of spiders and any fly daring enough to invade their territory was the object of a tandem "search and destroy" mission. Their easy going nature and curiosity were really displayed to advantage in that free-flying setting. They were seldom more than a foot or two from any activity and darted around, over and under the cages in some really great displays of acrobatic flying. The male of that pair was undefeated in the softbill section of all the shows he entered in two seasons. We had plans and high hopes for him in the National that year. During the season we had been careful to lure him into a cage the day before a show, with mealworms and a fresh dish of bath water. This time we forgot. Beginning at the crack of dawn, (Bruce says slightly before), we pursued him and his hen for nearly two hours. They seemed to think it was a great game. We never could corner him and we went to the show without him. Dr. Val Clear describes them as "about the fastest birds I know short of hummingbirds. It is no exaggeration to say that you can be looking at a bird sitting eastbound on a twig, then suddenly realize that he has switched tail and head while you were looking at him and is now westbound." A lot of that went on during that chase.

Softbills, as a rule, are extremely lively and are happier in aviaries although roomy cages are sometimes acceptable. Small cages are too confining and too easily soiled. The Pekin Robin, being a small softbill makes a good cage bird in roomy quarters. I cannot imagine these birds being able to get enough exercise in anything smaller than 4' by 2' by 2' and that is probably just barely enough room for a pair to breed. If kept in a cage, they can be allowed free flight in a room for an hour or so each day. Since they spend most of their time on or near the ground, they will hop around the floor and perhaps investigate plants, without damaging them. They are easily lured back into confinement by bribery...mealworms in their food dish. They are

quite hardy when acclimated. A friend of ours has kept them outside near Carlisle, Pennsylvania year round for quite a few years. His aviaries are enclosed in heavy gauge plastic in the winter and have a solid roof but so heat is supplied. His birds are in superb condition. It might be a good idea if you place an outside aviary to supply some supplemental lighting as extending the daylength in the winter months will give the birds a longer period each day in which to find and eat food. If you have an outside flight attached to a building, lights in the building in the evening will attract the birds into the shelter, which then can be closed for the night. Pekin Robins can be kept safely in a mixed collection of smaller, seed eating birds. They are not aggressive to smaller birds but they will probably rob nests. They are best kept as pairs on their own, especially in their breeding season. They may terrorize other birds by tearing nests apart and destroying the others eggs and young. Although they can't swallow eggs whole, they will hold them down with one foot and peck them to pieces. Although, to me, the most attractive thing about them is their demeanor, their plumage is lovely. Their heads are dark olive shading gradually to grayish-olive over their shoulders and backs. The outer fineline webs of the primary flight feathers are edged in bright yellow with a deep rust-orange shade as about one-third of the inner length. When the wings are folded this is an attractive and prominent feature. The remainder of the wings are dark olive green. The underparts are dominated by a broad fan-shaped flare of bright yellow starting on the chin and covering the throat. The lower part of this yellow is a deep rust-orange and extends down over the upper breast. The lower breast shades into yellow again and the remaining underparts are pale olive to pearly gray. The tail is slightly forked, with rounded ends, and is darker than the body. The upper tail coverts stand out, covering about one-third of the actual tail length of two inches, giving a double-layered look. The beak is shorter than the shall, narrow and red on the outer half and dull brownish-black at the base. The eyes are large and very dark, surrounded by a small area of pale yellowish feathering which also extends forward to the junction of the mandibles. Most also have a tiny bit of yellow on the forehead. The legs and feet are pinkish-gray, quite sturdy and the feet are rather large for the birds size. They are frequent bathers, four or five times on a hot day if fresh water is supplied, and so their plumage is always immaculate and smooth. Plumage colors will not fade in indoor captivity if the birds diet is adequate in carotene and they are receiving plenty of light, plenty of exercise and a balanced diet.

They are difficult to sex by the appearance of their plumage. Various plumage differences have been suggested, but none are certain. The females are said to have a paler shade of red on the beak and less of a flare to the throat patch. In some cases the yellow is paler, but this is not reliable. The brightest orange-red on the wing may be subdued on the hens but, again this is variable and very subjective. Cocks are usually colored more brightly than hens, hens often are paler with grayer lores, although a mature hen may be more brilliant than a young cock. The surest way to decide is by song. The

cocks song is unmistakable and quite different from the call of the hen. Cocks sing and hens call and twitter. The cock's song is varied and strong, pleasant and not disturbingly loud. Dr. Val Clear describes the song as "the richest and warmest full-throated warble of any of the commonly imported softbills. It has much the quality with which an American Robin greets the sun on an April morning after an all-night rain." If a Pekin Robin cock can hear another good singer, or a recording, of the same or different species, he can and will learn that song in addition to his own. If a true pair is separated the hen will call with a high pitched "pee, pee, pee-" or "tea, tea, tea." The cock will answer with burst of song. If both birds call and neither sings, you probably have two hens. To my eye, the cocks also have a bolder, "cockier" look, and a more swaggering style of movement. Both sexes do a scolding, chattering "churr, churr, churr" that can continue for quite a long time at if they are irritated by something or somebody. A pair we kept in a 4' by 2' by 2' cage in the dining room were always annoyed if I put the electric typewriter on the dining room table and often scolded me until I took the offensive machine and retreated upstairs! Although they were thriving in this cage and seemed to enjoy the high level of activity and traffic, those two factors apparently inhibited them from any attempts to breed in that location.

These birds are undoubtedly happiest in pairs. They spend a lot of time side by side, often touching and sometimes overlapping each other with their wings, looking like Siamese twin birds. They spend a lot of time preening each other and seem quite affectionate and quite deeply bonded. A true pair will do almost everything together, eating, bathing, sleeping, etc. Even in a large aviary or in free flight in a room they are seldom out of sight of each other and keep in constant contact by calling. They will live for quite a few years, perhaps as long as 10 to 12 years.

In nature they feed on berries, fruit and insects. In captivity they should have a variety of fruit, livefood and other soft foods with balanced and relatively high protein. Do not overfeed mealworms, as they are high in fat content. Certainly 6 to 8 per bird per day is plenty! They are willing to taste just about anything and many will eat dry dog, cat or monkey food that has been soaked and drained, particularly if it has been soaked in nectar or fruit juice. Many softbill experts, including Dr. Lindsay Clack, director of the Pittsburgh Aviary, feel that ALL softbilled birds should be offered some form of nectar. Following his advice, we mix a cup of ground dry dog food with a cup of water, to which we add 2/3 cup of sugar and 1/3 cup of soy protein isolate or similar high protein supplement. A powdered vitamin-mineral supplement should be added and this can be frozen in ice cube trays and a cube defrosted for each pair each day. In a mixed collection of seed eaters Pekin Robins will swallow whole seeds, but they should never be fed on seed alone. Some individuals will eat more fruit if it is finely diced. Most will eat "eggfood" readily. (A mixture of hard-boiled eggs, soy protein powder and vitamins.) Most love ant eggs, bits of figs and of peas, greens, flies, grasshoppers, crickets, spiders, earwigs, smooth caterpillars, all ad lib.

They should be given berries as they come in season, including wild berries. Oranges and soaked raisins are also favorites.

In the wild nests are often located very low, close to the ground, in thick bushes. A pair is most likely to breed successfully in a planted aviary, although many have been raised in roony cages. Including a clump of bamboo can encourage breeding activity as they use this in the wild. For many years it was believed that they would only breed in the presence of running water. Whether this has a basis in fact is still debatable but having free access to bathing water is certainly important to the pairs. Running water sounds can easily be simulated by placing an aquarium (or even a bucket of water with a bubbling filter) in the vicinity of the pair. Peace and quiet are essential and they will tolerate very little out of their ordinary routine and almost no nest inspection. In captivity, they will accept a canary basket or other larger basket for a foundation. They will build a deep cup shaped nest of coconut fiber, reeds, straw, hay, roots, dried leaves, stems, bark, moss and fine twigs. Nests should be placed in seclusion, well-bidden from view. Clutches are usually three or four eggs, bluish-white with red or brown markings, mostly on the big end (also described as light greenish-blue with reddish brown spots and streaks). Incubation is shared and is 13 to 14 days. Some softbill keepers now believe that mealworms should NOT be offered when young chicks are in the nest. It is possible that the mealworms contain too much indigestible fiber and/or fat and should be replaced in the diet for young chicks with softer bodied live food. Ant pupae, white worms, waxworms, eggfood, dry dog and cat food and whole wheat bread soaked in a high-protein nectar are suggested as substitutes. Chicks fledge at about 11 to 12 days. Chicks are quite large when they fledge, sometimes as much as 30 % heavier than their parents! Their "flying practice" will cause them to lose this reserve of fat gradually until the time when they are independent and it is altogether gone. At fledging, they still retain a lot of down, and they often come out before they are completely feathered, as many softbills do. Their plumage is mostly gray and blackish, except for yellow edgings on their wing feathers, and they have pinkish-red beaks. They will moult into their first full-colored plumage at about 10 to 12 weeks. Mature birds usually moult without problems, in autumn.

Softbills are not as easy to manage as seedeaters because they require fresh soft food and fresh water, usually once daily, if hot and humid, twice. Food and water dishes must be washed daily. A dish for bathing is essential because their food is sticky and can quickly ruin plumage unless they can bathe. Most softbills must have some form of livefood too. You cannot just fill hoppers with seed and bottles with water. However, they repay this extra care with their beauty, songs, lively personalities and their intelligence. They quickly learn to recognize their keepers and come to them. They don't destroy vegetation, and are a lovely addition to a planted aviary.

One additional note: from "Hawaii's Birds" by The Hawaii Audubon Society. The Pekin Robin is: "abundant on Hawaii, Maui and Oahu, from 1900"

feet up to the tree limit. Out of breeding season generally lives in flocks of up to a dozen birds. Shy though extremely inquisitive, it announces its arrival to an observer in the woods by soundly scolding him with a continuous chatter, taking care to keep well hidden in the brush. In breeding season flocks disband and nest is built low in bush or small trees. The first bird heard singing on the beginning portion of most mountain trails. Introduced in 1911 from Asia." I think this is about the time the European Starling was introduced into Central Park to control the mosquitoes. Wouldn't it be a different world here today if Pekin Robins had been chosen instead?

The National Finch and Softbill Society and it's FINCHSAVE program has many dedicated softbill keepers who are willing and eager to share knowledge with novices. Please join with NPS members in keeping and encouraging others to keep and raise this lovely little softbill.

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Note: This article was first published in BIRDS OF DISTINCTION, Volume 3, Number 4, 4th quarter, 1990 and is reprinted here with the permission of that fine publication. The Editor.

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# 43rd National Cage-Bird Exhibition

NOVEMBER 14, 15, 16, 1991

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The Kellogg Company will sponsor the Division and Best-in Show Awards with the beautiful Kellogg Trophies and the Scannell Memorial.

The Mid-West Cage-Bird Club will host this year's event.

The annual membership meeting will be held on Saturday afternoon followed by the Awards Presentation Banquet at 8:00 p.m.

Members of the Board of Directors for the National Exhibition will all be on hand to assist with the check-in on Thursday evening and with the check-out following the banquet on Saturday night.

Judges selected for the show are:

Borders .....	Bert Reid (Scotland)
Type Canaries .....	Clarence King (TX)
Glossers .....	Harry Marmot (England)
Hartz .....	Margie McGee (CA)
Old Variety Canaries .....	Giovanni Bertocello (Italy)
American Singers .....	Joyce Yuhas (NJ)
Lychochrome .....	Roberto Font (FL)
Melanin .....	Robert Van Dorp (Belgium)
Parrots .....	Conrad Meinert (IN)
Finches/Softbills .....	Earl Courts (MO)
Lovebirds .....	Roland DuBuc (CA)
Budgerigars .....	Lan Adams (IL)
Cockatiels .....	Linda Rubin (CA)

Call the Hyatt for room reservations. Doubles are \$89.00 per night.

Information on Commercial Exhibits can be obtained from Ray Johnson by calling 404-461-8675 or Myron Makarewicz at 313-687-3082.



## AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

In regard to the National Cage Bird

Entry times have been changed! Entries will  
ONLY be accepted from:

1 p.m. till 10 p.m. Thursday the 14th and  
6 a.m. till 7 a.m. Friday the 15th and

Judging will begin at 8 a.m. Friday morning!



GUIDE TO ORDERING 1991 NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY CLOSED LEG BANDS

Thanks to the work done by the Band Size Committee we are able to offer an expanded list of suggested sizes for more species of finches and softbills. We're hoping to get more updates from societies overseas in 1991. We also welcome members suggestions for the list.

SIZE TO FIT LEGS OF:

- 
- A Small Waxbills, Ovis, Strawberry, Orange-cheeks, Red-ears, Gold-breasted, Quail Finch.
- 
- B Cordon Bleu, Black-cheeked Waxbills, Fire, Cuban Melodious, Olive, Lavenders, Rufous-backed Mannikin and others.
- 
- C Blue Caps, Green Singers, Silverbills, Stars, Shafttails, Cherry, Red-headed Parrot, Painted, Heck's, Pileated, Gray Singers, Pytilias, Bronze-wing and Black and White Mannikin.
- 
- D Zebras, Gouldians, Pictorellas, Yellow-rumps, Chestnut-breasted, Blue-faced Parrot, Pintail Nonparnil, most other Parrot finches, most smaller Mannikins and most Twin Spots.
- 
- E Society, Spice, Siskins, Golden Song Sparrows, Diamond Sparrows, Nuns, Peter's Twin Spots and Black Crested Finches.
- 
- G Nagpia Mannikins, and other large Mannikins, European Goldfinch and small Tanagers.
- 
- J Pekin Robin, Silver-eared Mesias and other small softbills.
- 
- K Java Rica, Shama Thrush, Saffron and Red-crested Cardinal.
- 
- L Diamond Doves, other small doves, Quail and other softbills.
-

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1991

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B	_____	J	_____
C	_____	K	_____
D	_____	L	_____
E	_____		

See expanded list of sizes recommended for particular species on previous page.

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STREET \_\_\_\_\_

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**THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE NATIONAL PINCH AND SOFTHILL SOCIETY.**

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## A FEW TIDBITS FOR THE BULLETIN

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by Jodie Davis

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Setting up my outdoor aviary for my Yellow-bellied Warblers, I looked around for some roll wire to fashion a tomato-cage like contraption to fill with hay for nesting sites. I'd read about the idea somewhere. Suddenly my eyes fixed themselves on my tack trunk. Caesar's haynet! In all of five minutes I had the haynet full of hay (fresh, clean) and had hung it in the aviary. Soon after releasing the birds they were all over it. It has only been two weeks so we'll see if they actually build nests in it. I also filled several bags that onions come in with nesting grass and put them on nails in the aviary. Looks like the birds have made a slight hollow in the center. When I cleaned out the cage the birds were in indoors, I found an egg, so - I have my fingers crossed for chicks this summer! Hay nets cost about \$6 or \$7 at tack shops. Or by mail order for \$3.95 each (red, blue or green) from Chicks. P. O. Drawer 59, Harrington, DE 19952. 1-800-444 2441.

Speaking of the Yellow-bellies: I had a terrible time getting them to eat live food until this spring. But I was determined since I believe that live food is essential to get them to raise chicks. They turned up their noses at "tiny wigglers" and fruit flies.

When the roses leafed out this spring the inevitable armies of aphids struck, but this time I wasn't trying to figure out how to combat them, but how to propagate them! You see, one day I flicked a hunch into a tuna can and put them in the cage. After ten minutes or so the birds were sitting on branches above the can peering at the busy bugs. In a few more minutes they were all feasting. After a few days more of this they hopped right on the can as soon as I was (so they thought) out of sight. For the first time ever I wished my roses had more aphids on them. You'll find no aphids on my roses! In fact, I thought of calling "the plant man" who appears on a radio talk show every Sunday morning to ask him how to breed aphids, but I thought that might not be a very popular subject with other gardeners.

Soon the aphid supply dwindled. So I put some "tiny wigglers" (mnsca larvae) in the same can I had put the aphids in and placed them in the same spot in the cage. I didn't expect the birds to eat them since they never had before. But the next morning the larvae were gone! I replenished the container and stood back. Sure enough, the birds ate them up! The moral of the story is: don't give up your birds might not recognize foods as food at first. Be creative, give some thought to the problem, and you may just finally be rewarded with success.

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Hi Jodie, when you have time, how about an update on the haynet nest site. Sounds like a winner to me.

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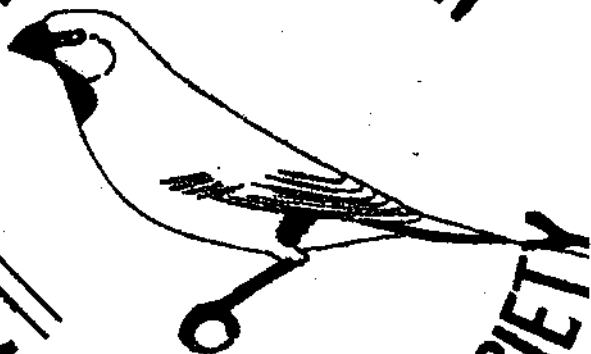
The Editor.



#1.

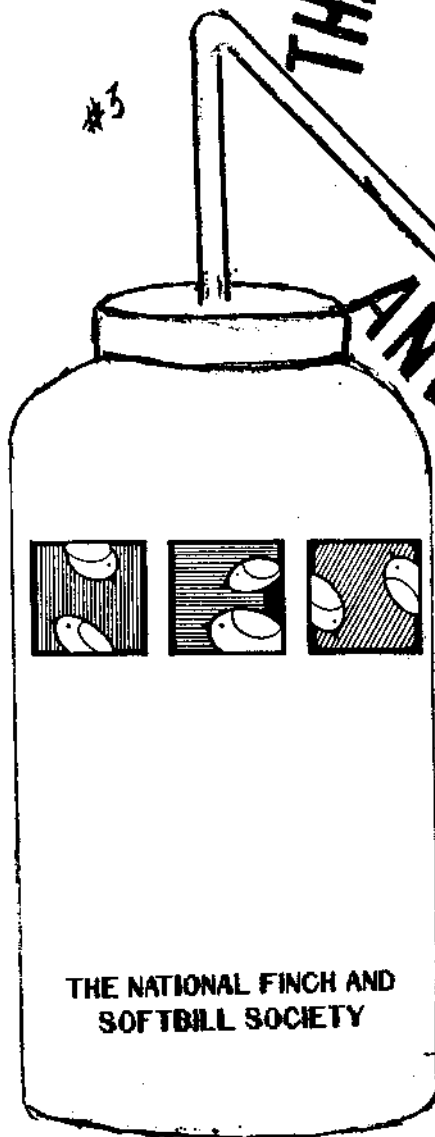
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#2. This is the design that is approximately 10" wide on the new T-shirts. The Shafttail is white, outlined in black, red beak and legs and the lettering is blue. Sharp! The shirts are 100% cotton. Sizes M, L, XL a few XXL. \$15.00.

#3. Handy water bottle. Makes it easy to refill those show cage water cups. Keeps water from home fresh while you travel. Holds 18 oz. NFS logo on both sides. Clear plastic. \$6.00

THE NATIONAL FINCH AND  
SOFTBILL SOCIETY

AND...Bruce, the cut and paste master, got them all on one page! Hooray! The Editor.

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**NFS OVERSEAS PROJECT**  
**NATIONAL CAGE BIRD SHOW, DETROIT 1991**

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**by Tom Rood**

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A recent phone call to the President, Brenda Geesey, informed me that I have exactly five days to get this awards list into her hands to insure publication before this year's National Cage Bird Show. In an effort to let you know what classes and/or sections will be covered with special overseas awards, I offer the following list. At this point I cannot determine whether each "award" will be in the form of a small plaque, trophy, medal, overseas rosette, or diploma as I am still expecting a couple of promised pledges from overseas. I can tell you that each and every award listed will be quite unique to the type of awards we give in the U. S. and I hope you like them should you be one of the lucky winners. Therefore, I offer the following list as of mid-September, 1991. Should any other awards arrive not listed below, I will be sure to have them in the show hall at the National. You may notice that Zebras, Societies and Australians are very well covered with specials. Since many of the "specialty clubs" overseas are strictly Zebra, Society (Bengalese), or Australian clubs, they responded to our project with nice awards. Good luck and I certainly hope you can take some of these awards home with you.

SECTION 1 -- ALL SOFTBILLED BIRDS

Best Softbill  
2nd Best Softbill

SECTION 2 -- ZEBRA FINCHES

Best Zebra Finch  
Best Novice Zebra Finch  
Best Unflighted Zebra Finch  
2nd Best Unflighted Zebra Finch  
3rd Best Unflighted Zebra Finch  
Best Grey                      Best White  
Best CFW                        Best Pawn  
Best Pied                        Best A.O.V.  
Best Neo

SECTION 3 -- AUSTRALIAN FINCHES

Best Australian Finch  
2nd Best Australian Finch  
Best Old Australian Finch  
Best Unflighted Australian Finch  
2nd Best Unflighted Australian Finch  
3rd Best Unflighted Australian Finch

SECTION 4 -- INDO-PACIFIC FINCHES

Best Indo-Pacific Finch  
Best Unflighted Indo-Pacific Finch

SECTION 5 -- SOCIETY FINCHES

Best Society Finch  
Best Unflighted Society Finch  
2nd Best Unflighted Society Finch  
3rd Best Unflighted Society Finch  
Possibly some color class awards.

**SECTION 6 -- PINCBES OP EUROPE**

Best European Pinch  
 2nd Best European Pinch

**SECTION 7 -- PINCBES OP AFRICA**

Best African Pinch  
 2nd Best African Pinch

**SECTION 8 -- PINCBES OP THE AMERICAS**

Best Pinch of the Americas  
 2nd Best Pinch of the Americas

**SECTION 9 -- FINCH AND SOFTBILL PAIRS**

Best Pair  
 Best Unflighted Pair  
 Best Zebra Pair  
 Best Society Pair

**SECTION 10 -- DOVES AND QUAIL**

Best Dove or Quail  
 2nd Best Dove or Quail  
 Best Diamond Dove  
 Best Ringneck Dove

Another "special attraction" at this National Show will be a repeat of the spectacularly successful fund-raising auction. We'll hold this auction in the annual general meeting and Marvin Yoder will again be our auctioneer. This year, thanks to Tom Rood's ingenuity, we'll have 5 or 6 ONE-OP-A-KIND, COLLECTORS ITEMS. Tom is keeping the exact descriptions as his secret but I know that we'll have at least two watches and at least one engraved crystal item. All are designed and made for The National Finch and Softbill Society and are not available anywhere else!. Our purpose is raise enough money to provide a permanent fund for two trophies to be presented each year at the National Cage Bird Show. One will be for the best unflighted bird shown each year and the other for the best bred and banded by exhibitor bird each year.

We are very grateful to KAYTEE for the years in which they sponsored the trophy for the best unflighted bird and we appreciate their support. We will continue to work closely with them and we know that NPS members will support the KAYTEE Great American Bird Show which is now an annual event.

However, now and into the future, NPS will need to supply its own funding for this trophy and for the other, equally important, trophy for the best BBE bird. We hope that you will all take a good look at the splendid selection of "goodies" that Tom has collected and that you'll bid lively on them, remembering that the profit will go to this trophy fund.

Don't forget that Tom has donated a pretty plaque with figurines to be presented to the best Novice bird this year!

Last but not least...another possible feature of the National this year. THE SECOND ANNUAL NPS HOSPITALITY ROOM. Why do I say "possible"? Because we will need some help with this...I make great potato salad, for instance, BUT I'm planning on driving and I know you don't want potato salad that has had a two day car ride! Can you help? Can you bring some chips or snacks or something? Or better yet, would you coordinate this project? If so, please, give me a call and let me know how you could help! Our first hospitality room was great last year and I hope you can help us to make it a tradition!

The Editor.

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## ON FEEDING MUSCA LARVAE:

by Jack Kook

=====

Fancy names aside, musca larvae are nothing more than maggots, so let's get that out of the way before we proceed. Euphemisms such as "wigglers" cannot conceal that these bundles of protein are anything other than the larval stage of common houseflies. They are truly a wonder food for finches, despite the annoyance of having a few flies around the birdroom, but this can be effectively controlled by judiciously rationing no more than what your birds will consume in a short timespan.

I can attest to the fact that since I have been using the maggots I have had higher fertility among my finches and I have also had breeding success with some finches that heretofore had not produced a fertile egg, let alone raise a clutch of chicks. I have an eight year old pair of Gold-breasted Waxbills who are presently raising their second clutch of chicks and I am convinced that the addition of maggots to their varied diet has been the turning point in their success. My finches also get small mealworms and waxworms as live food, in addition to eggfood, sprouted seeds, fruits, vegetables and a high quality seed mix. I raise numerous species of finches including Parrot Finches, Owls, Shafttails, Twinspots, Blue-cap Cordon Bleus, Lavenders, Stars, Auroras, and Black-crested. In their shallow serving dishes of live food, the maggots are always the first consumed. If I have a few flies in my birdroom because of spillage or overfeeding on my part, so be it, since I find it a worthwhile tradeoff.

As to control, I use flypaper hung around the birdroom in several places. Before you scream about the danger of loose birds coming in contact with flypaper, let me tell you that I have been there and I now use a different method than just hanging strips. I always have scrap cage wire and I have used it to make "frames" of approximately the length of a piece of flypaper uncurled. These frames are about 3" in diameter and I attach a top and bottom piece as well, so birds cannot possibly come directly in contact with the gooey stuff and yet flies have easy access to their doom. A friend of mine in Baltimore has another method of control - she released two pairs of Pekin Robins in her birdroom and they do an admirable job of pest control!

The maggots that I use are raised in Oregon by Skipio's<sup>TM</sup> Aviary Supplements, a company run by a very pleasant man named Skip who has been very helpful and understanding. They are shipped in sewn-shut sheeting bags so that they are not scattered (ala Johnny Appleseed) from coast-to-coast and I store them in these bags. I open the bags on arrival and add a little cornmeal to the shavings they are packed in to increase the desired dryness. They keep satisfactorily, refrigerated, for in excess of a week but mine are usually gone before that time. While you may blanch at the price of about \$30 a pound,

remember that they are solid meat and there is no waste. That price, incidentally, includes next-day-air shipping.

I strongly urge all of you finch breeders who have not had the breeding success that you strive for to give these little creatures a try. So you have a recalcitrant fly now and then - not a big deal when you consider the advantages and it certainly beats trying to find termite mounds and then listening to your house go "bang" in the night!

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NEEDED: White Eyes (Zosterops) and Sweet (Dufresne's) Waxbills for FINCHSAVE breeding program. Jodie Davis, 7721 James Madison Hwy., Gainesville, VA 22065, (703) 754 9643.

WANTED: Grey Singing Finches for breeding program. Young preferred. D. Cabral, (508) 586 3293.

WANTED: Blue-grey Tanager, (Thraupis episcopus). I need a hen and want another pair. Must be surgically sexed or proven. Brenda Geesey, (717) 854 2604.

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2. NFS has a program named "FINCHSAVE". The goal is to establish and maintain all finch and softbill species in American aviculture. All members are encouraged to enhance the propagation of finches and softbills.
3. NFS maintains an annual census that can connect you with other breeders for the purpose of exchanging information or breeding stock.
4. NFS offers, to members, closed, traceable, leg bands.
5. NFS has an affiliation program. Your club can affiliate and receive plaques and rosettes as show awards. Non-show clubs can affiliate and receive service awards for members. Speakers are available, with slide programs that feature finches and softbills.
6. Each year NFS holds a National show. All members are encouraged to attend and participate. An International Patronage Exchange brings awards from foreign countries.
7. NFS has a Judges Panel, composed of individuals who have completed the apprenticeship program. All judge by the NFS Standard of Judging, are approved by the Board of Directors and are available to local clubs.
8. NFS has established exhibition standards for; Cordon Bleu Waxbills, Gouldians, Green Singing Finches, Java Rice Birds, Shafttails, Society Finches and Zebra Finch Standards. Lavenders, Star Finches, Fire Finchs, Diamond Sparrows and Pekin Robin Standards are now "in the works".
9. NFS sponsors a "Championship Exhibitor" award program and a "Championship Bird" program. Both reward high achievements on the show bench.
11. "Finchshop", the sales division, offers various items for sale to members. The profits are used to support the Society's other programs.

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# THE NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY

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Species of finches and softbills you are interested in: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the topics that are most interesting to you in the Bulletin:

\_\_\_ nutrition \_\_\_ breeding \_\_\_ management \_\_\_ exhibition

\_\_\_ conservation \_\_\_ classified ads \_\_\_ NFS news & notes

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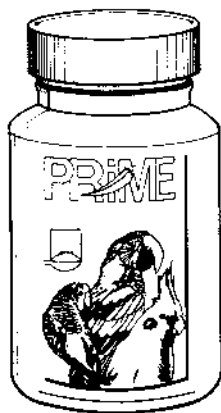
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Important B Complex vitamins, for example, are found in seed hulls. Unfortunately, the hulls usually end up on the bottom of the cage... along with the B Complex vitamins. A lack of B vitamins may result in nervous and digestive disorders, curly toe paralysis and weakness.

Some seed mixes, on the other hand, are just vitamin poor. They lack quality and proper seed variety. And even the very best can lose their potency during storage. AVITRON helps make up for this by helping to prevent problems such as impaired vision, poor muscle development, unhealthy skin, soft eggshells, rickets and excessive bleeding due to vitamin shortages.

## **Avimin®** Supplies Six Essential Minerals in Water Soluble Form.

That makes AVIMIN more effective and convenient than most other mineral supplements such as cuttlebone, blocks and powders because the bird gets a balanced variety of minerals every time it drinks.

AVIMIN helps promote strong bones, sturdy eggshells, healthy skin, balanced body fluid and muscle tone. And aids in reducing the possibility of anemia, rickets, goiters and slipped tendons due to mineral deficiency.

**So fill your bird's cup with water, AVITRON and AVIMIN. And let it drink to good health.**



## **Lambert Kay®**

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