

Journal of the

National Finch & Softbill Society

Volume 23, No. 6 November/December,





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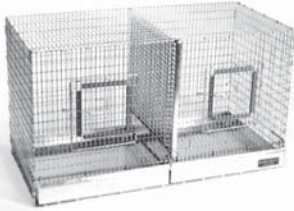
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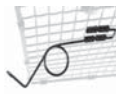
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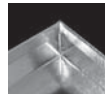
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NFSS Mission Statement

The National Finch & Softbill Society is dedicated to the introduction of the enjoyment of keeping and breeding Finches and Softbills to all interested parties, enhance the knowledge of our members in keeping and care of these birds, encourage breeding programs, and cooperate with organizations for the preservation of aviculture in this country.

**On the
Cover**

This issue's cover is of a Lady Ross Turaco (Musophaga rossae) taken by Joey Nichols.

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NFSS President's Message

November/December 2006

These are the times that bring out the bird show activists of our NFSS. Gathering all member's knowledge and support behind them, our bird exhibitors break off into their own world and plod off within their state and regional shows to see which well appointed bird places high on the top-bench at show after show, and slowly begin to be noticed. Favorites cause a stir as everyone 'talks-birds'. Photos fly around in e-mails. Numerous participating NFSS judges, owners, and many keen observers wonder. . . "how good IS this bird, or that bird? Will its confirmation, its color, its condition and deportment hold up?"

Shows continue across country. Speculation increases, excitement builds, certain birds are guarded closely. "Can it beat the canaries? The colorful parrots?"

The NFSS YAHOO list buzzes – "Who all is going to the Nationals?" "It's in Chicago this year, Schaumburg actually, hosted by the Greater Chicago Cage Bird Club, famous for Cage Bird Support.

As it has been for the past 58 years, on the weekend before Thanksgiving, the volunteers of the National Cage Bird Show (NCBS) open their doors to all of the outstanding birds from all of the shows and even those who had been held-back secretly. The NCBS invites – "Come owners, represent your clubs, come birds, represent your species"

Breeders go off to the NCBS site to place their certain pride and joy in a spotless cage to be not only looked over and admired, but to actually be *judged* against hundreds of other birds. Like the famous Westminster Dog Show, the NCBS brings the best of the best birds to one giant convention center room to compete in 18 divisions against their individual species and breeds. The blue ribbon winners of these divisions win the coveted Higgins award, and are placed into secreted competition with one another for the 'best in show', the Scannel Trophy. The judges all gather to convince one another why their choice for their Higgins should be called out as the *very best of the very best.*

Voting results are held in secret overnight.

Through the long following day, aviculturists attend meetings and education seminars. They attend the auctions, buy and sell birds and future promises of birds, and, they speculate on which Higgins winner will take home the Scannell Award for its proud owner.*

Everyone plays dress-up at the presentation dinner. It is prom night for the bird show people, truly *Americana at its best* and one can become quite taken by the presentation, the fine dinner, wines, beverages and deserts followed by the exciting photography sessions as each Higgins Award is received and, the *final* secret revealed, the best in show, the best of the year, the Scannell Winner is announced.

This year's NFSS Higgins Division award went to Lisa Murphy and her Pearl Headed Silverbill. Congratulations Lisa. The Scannell itself was awarded to Albert and Hazel Silva from California, for their Melanin Colorbred canary.

* the Scannell Award is sponsored each year by "The Higgins Group". and presented by the president of The Higgins Group, Ignacio Perea, Sr.

Sally Huntington



President National Finch and Softbill Society

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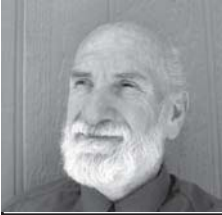
Diamond Sparrows - Blue Capped Waxbills

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Finches in Aviculture

Stimulating Finches to Breed

by Robert Black

For anyone who keeps finches, sooner or later the desire to breed them will become very important. Any pair of finches will breed under the right conditions and environment if they are adequately nourished, but many times finding and supplying those necessary factors is a big task. A lot of reading and research often fails to locate the most basic information, such as the type of nest they build and the color of their eggs.

The two easiest species to breed are the Society Finches and the Zebra Finches, yet their requirements are quite different. A pair of Society Finches should be kept to themselves in a cage or aviary, with no other Society Finches in the same enclosure. With adequate nutrition and a nesting receptacle, a true pair will build a nest and will begin to breed almost immediately. If you put more than one pair in an enclosure, they are very likely to spend all of their time socializing, and will not even lay an egg. Society Finches are definitely not colony breeders.

The Zebra Finches, by contrast, will do best when several pairs are together in a large flight cage or aviary. In the wild, these finch-

es nest in groups, usually with many pairs and nests in the same tree. All of the socializing, bickering, territorial squabbling, and nest defending are necessary preludes to successfully breeding this species. It is rare for one pair in a cage to breed successfully, though it does happen occasionally. One pair does not have the necessary stimulation provided by other birds of their own species, however, and they are likely to build a new nest on top of their partly incubated eggs, toss the babies out of the nest, or stop feeding them before they fledge. For best results with Zebra Finches, always keep at least five pairs of them together.

When we go on to attempt breeding the more exotic species, however, the requirements for their successful breeding get more and more different and difficult to satisfy. If you can meet these requirements, you will have a very good chance of breeding even the most unusual species. Your first task will be to read all you can find on the species you are trying to breed. Breeding reports by aviculturists are very important, of course, but don't neglect the field guides to the birds of the area your finches come from. These

often have very valuable information and descriptions of the species in the wild that will be a key to breeding them successfully in captivity.

The most important factor in breeding any finch is to keep the pair adequately nourished. Several of these fact sheets deal with specific deficiencies that are likely to occur. The most common of these are the deficiencies of complete protein, vitamin A, vitamin D3, and iodine. For more complete coverage of all nutrients known or suspected to be needed by cage birds, please refer to my 1981 book, *Nutrition of Finches and Other Cage Birds* or its revised and expanded version, published in 1999 as *Avian Nutrition*.

The increasing warmth and extended daylight hours of spring are sufficient to convince many varieties of finches that it is time to breed. Canaries were the first finches bred in captivity extensively in the European countries, and many breeders still expect that all birds will begin to breed in the spring, as the canaries do. Though this may be true for many species, the breeders forget that many of our finches come from the areas south of the equator where the seasons are reversed from those of Europe and North America. For these birds, spring comes in September and October, and even after a hundred years of domesticated breeding, they still

start the year's breeding cycle when spring comes to their native land. You must expect this of Java Rice Birds, the Australian grassfinches, and most of the African species, such as waxbills, Cutthroat Finches, and Green Singing Finches, among others. For finches in outside quarters, this means auxiliary heat for our Northern Hemisphere's fall cold spells. Though most finches acclimated to outdoor conditions can take a sub-freezing night with no harm, they cannot keep eggs or hatchlings warm enough on such a cold night, and they will be lost. Expecting these finches to conform to our seasons in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Russia is a sure recipe for failure. You must encourage these birds to breed at the time and place of their own choosing.

Many of our finches also come from dry areas where insects, seeds, and other foods are in short supply until the rainy season arrives. Consequently, it is rain that stimulates many exotic finches to breed, with its promise of abundant food for the young. If the rains come early, the breeding season begins early; if they arrive late, breeding begins late. On the rare occasions when rain does not come at all, breeding is for the most part postponed until the next rainy season arrives. Thus, if you are keeping birds from dry areas indoors, or in our own areas of very dry climate, it may pay to give them a good bath

with a spray bottle or hose once or twice a day to simulate the rainy season, and thereby to stimulate the finches into breeding.

Some finches that build vulnerable open nests as canaries do may be turned on by a thick bush that offers a hidden and secure nesting site. Supplying such a site, even with the bush in a shallow flower pot in a flight cage, is often the best way to get these species to breed. The Black-crested Finches and Crimson Pileated Finches fall into this category, as do the goldfinches, bullfinches, and siskins. For the builders of tiny, cup-shaped nests, the wire canary nests may be acceptable. For the Green Singing Finches, Gray Singing Finches and similar species, I've found a common tea strainer to be just the right size for a nesting receptacle. When it is hidden in a clump of greenery, even artificial greenery in the corner of a flight cage, this will often bring success in breeding these species.

The very existence of a nesting hole or cavity is sufficient to stimulate some finches into breeding. For these hole nesters, always supply a choice of nestboxes and nesting receptacles in different places. Sometimes merely moving the nestboxes to different locations is enough to stimulate the finches into breeding attempts. The woven, wicker-type, covered nests are often acceptable to many species of

hole nesters, and they are particularly good for the species that normally nest in the wild in the reeds and rushes of swampy areas.

Always remember that many of our common finches are grassland birds, and in nature they always build their nests in clumps of grasses. Many of the waxbills fall into this category. In order to mimic the grassy conditions of their dry, African homeland, you need to offer them clumps of grasses for nesting. The finches will hide their covered nests under the drooping grass in the clump, and they will feel completely at home. Suitable clumps of native grass are available in all areas of the world, and you can also use some of the ornamental grasses found in containers in nurseries. In indoor areas, grasses will not thrive and are likely to die, since they are full sun plants. However, for your finches, clumps of dead grass will be just as effective as nesting sites. If you can't manage to supply clumps of grass in any form, use one of the covered wicker nests as a substitute. Many finches that are grass nesters will accept these readily.

Some of the waxbills always nest in a thornbush in the semi-desert areas of Africa where they are found. If you can provide a thorny native or exotic, ornamental bush, you will have a much better chance of getting these birds to breed. Such plants as

hawthorn, barberry, and crown of thorns may be acceptable to them. Without a thornbush or a suitable substitute, these birds may have no stimulation to breed.

Breeding birds of the mannikin group in the genus *Lonchura* is often very difficult. Even with Society Finches, however, breeders have found that a trio often works better for breeding than a true pair, particularly since so many mannikins are very difficult to sex. Of course, one of the birds of the trio must be a male, and at least one must be a hen. Breeders as far back as the 1800's have reported excellent breeding results in breeding Bronze-winged Mannikins, for example, when they are kept in trios. If you encounter nothing but failure in breeding from pairs of any of the mannikins, try a trio — it may work.

Some few species absolutely must have a dirt or grass floor to their cage or aviary, since they dig out a cup-shaped depression in the dirt and grass for their nest, lining it carefully with fine grasses or feathers. The lark finches of Africa fall into this category. Without a soft place for them to scoop out their nesting site, you will have no chance of successfully breeding them.

If you have done some serious research in your chosen finch species, know what they like, and are supplying their nesting needs,

but still are having no success in breeding them, first check your feeding program. If your diet is not high enough in complete protein, especially, the finches will never attempt to breed. They instinctively recognize that the diet does not contain enough protein for raising young to maturity. Merely increasing the protein content of the diet is often enough to stimulate the birds to breed.

The presence of insects is important in stimulating many species to breed. In the wild, the African finches rely on the mound termites to supply the protein and other nutrients that their nestlings need for complete development. We cannot supply these in captive breeding, but some substitutes are acceptable to these birds, particularly if those substitutes are white. Some pairs will accept whiteworms, maggots, grubs, or even newly molted mealworms. Without some insect food that the parent birds will accept for feeding to their nestlings, they are likely to toss them out of the nest as soon as they hatch.

Simply making a change around the birds in their environment often creates just enough stress to stimulate the finches into making a breeding attempt. How many times have you heard of a newly purchased pair of finches beginning to breed immediately after moving them into their new quarters? Certainly, often just

leaving the birds undisturbed in a set location until they feel totally secure will cause them to begin breeding attempts. If this doesn't work, however, don't be afraid to upset the apple cart. Changing or moving their nesting receptacles may help. Also, changing mates is frequently a way to stimulate breeding. If this does not work either, try a complete change of cage or aviary — different size, different location, different nesting sites, etc.

Importation and exportation restrictions are becoming more prevalent throughout the world, and finches have very short lives, even under the best of conditions. When you consider that a Society Finch matures in three months and may live for five years, the lifetime may sound short. However, also consider that a human being matures in 20 years as a round figure. If our productive lives extended in the same ratio as that of a Society Finch, we would live to be 400 years old! Still, it is vital that we establish good, solid breeding strains of all of the finches in aviculture, or they may not be available at all for future aviculturists. For a detailed coverage of breeding strains and their importance, please see my detailed information booklet, *Establishing a Breeding Strain in Aviculture*.

Once you can get fertile eggs from any species, 90% of your battle has been won. You can always get foster parents to raise your first generation of any species, and these birds raised under your own conditions will be much more likely to breed successfully on their own. Society Finches are the best foster parents for any species whose hatchlings are bare-skinned and in the traditional family Estrilididae (the Estrilidid Finches), and Zebra Finches can usually be enticed to raise any of the other species whose young hatch as fuzzy babies.

For the other finch families, canaries may be excellent foster parents. As an experiment, I once successfully fostered and raised a nest of House Sparrows, *Passer domesticus*, under a dependable canary hen. The canaries are even in a different family from House Sparrows, and this confirms that you shouldn't be afraid to experiment. I once used the Cutthroat Finches as foster parents for the Red-headed Finches very successfully. Trial and experimentation are the only road to success, and I wish you much success with your finches. We need a lot more finch breeders in aviculture!

NFSS life member Robert G. Black lives in Keno, Oregon, and breeds finches, doves, budgies, button quail, pheasants, pigeons, and ducks. Bob has written seven books on finches and cockatiels, their care, feeding, and breeding, and is working on several more books on the subject of aviculture. You can reach him by e-mail at robertgblack@aol.com.

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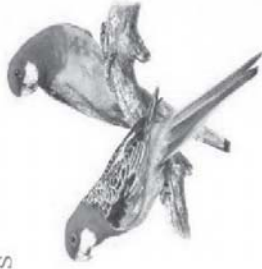
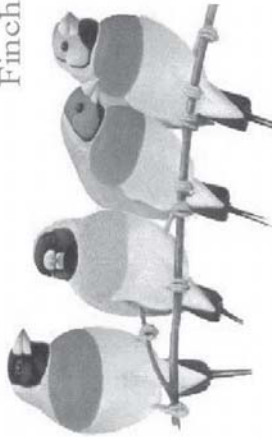
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The Black-Cheeked Waxbill: Underrated Gem of Africa

By Jack David



The black-cheeked waxbill is a vivacious charmer hailing from Africa. This is a finch that I had dreamed of owning since I was about 13 or 14, after I got my first copy of Bates' and Busenbark's Finches and Softbilled Birds. Their comments on the comparative rarity of BCW's, however, discouraged me, and I thought that I would never own or even see these little beauties. That all changed May of 2005, when I happened upon an older lady at a Baltimore bird show who happened to have a pair. She was having to cut back on her flock due to health problems, which while painful for her, proved a windfall for me. (I also picked up a pair of Paradise Whydahs from her that still grace my birdroom).

BCW's originate from the dry grasslands of Africa in such countries as Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and the vicinity of Lake Victoria (credit Christa Koepff, The New Finch Handbook). They get their name, obviously from the rich black color of their cheeks. The rest of the head and back are a charcoal gray, and a slightly lighter gray covers the wings. The wings are covered with fine black striations. The rump is a dark crimson, the tail black. The chest is a light charcoal gray blending into a smoky yet rich vermilion. Beak and legs are black. The female is very similar, though sometimes a slightly lessened richness of the red belly can be noticed. On mine, the red also is slightly more expansive on the male.

Being an apartment dweller, most of my breeding pairs of finches are in cages 36"x24"x24", while other finches I'm not in the midst of seriously trying to

breed are free-flight in the room. I've covered the floor with plastic strips 24" wide, basically the same plastic rug covers with tiny "cleats" on the bottom for traction, which are used in front door foyers to catch mud and grime from dirty boots and shoes. I keep my BCW's in a cage 36"x24"x36" by the lone window. I keep a small cloth over the back 6" of cage ceiling and sides for privacy, and the upper back right corner I've placed several pieces of artificial foliage for nesting purposes.



Feeding BCW's is relatively simple. A quality finch mix makes a good start. I use the finch mix from Wingz Custom Mixes. I've found that my BCW's have a preference for small millets, so I usually do a 50-50 mix of regular finch mix and Wingz sprout mix, which is a combo of Japanese red millet and white millet. They love spray millet, and I try to offer it to them regularly. They enjoy sprouted seed and dark greens, and are one of the few finches that enjoy fruit. I usually offer them diced mango, papaya, pear, berries, and just about any other non-citrus fruit. They will partake of eggfood, and are fond of mini-mealworms. Fruit flies are greatly enjoyed. I've found that the easiest way to feed fruit flies (I use only flightless ones) is to shake a couple dozen over a deep dish of diced fruit. The combo of fruit and the deep dish keeps the flies busy and in one spot. The birds will just snap them up. I usually leave the fruit out for only 3-4 hours at most to minimize spoiling. A diet such as this will keep your BCW's healthy and happy.

Breeding BCW's can be quite a challenge, but can be equally rewarding. I know some who feel that they can only be bred in outdoor aviaries, or in indoor planted aviaries. While I don't doubt that this can help a great deal, especially when it comes to wild insects and hiding places, I and many others don't have that luxury. I managed to be successful with the aforementioned cage, diet, and a lot of patience. BCW's weave a round nest with an entrance

tunnel about 3-6 inches long and with a slight to pronounced downcurve. My birds prefer coconut fiber as the material of choice, and will use small feathers to line the interior. They often build what appears to be one of those “cock’s nests” and my male will often hang out there. The speed with which they construct their nest is incredible. A nest can be completed from scratch within 3 days. It is also very durable, requiring some effort to remove and disassemble. I placed the artificial foliage in such a way as to form a little retreat for them to build a nest. Having something for the birds to use as a platform from which to build seems to be helpful. I had used a flat dish for seed hanging on the side of the cage, and they used this as a base from which they built their nest. In their present cage I also placed some small branches through the corner of the cage to give additional spots to secure their nest, creating a kind of “bush” with the branches and artificial foliage, much as they would in the wild. Like many waxbills, they can be a little spastic, so I would definitely keep them by themselves in a cage for breeding purposes, though if breeding is not your goal they will fit in well in a community setting.

One aspect of breeding BCW’s that can be downright frustrating, especially for us nosy types, is that it is virtually impossible to monitor them while they’re breeding secondary to the long entrance tunnel on the nest. You can garner clues that they’re on the right track by observing that the female (if you can tell the difference!) is spending most of her time in the nest. Since they are not the easiest finch to breed, I prefer to give them their privacy and let nature take its course. Once I determined that the female was likely on eggs, I increased their allowance of sprout, eggfood, and mini-mealworms as you would for any breeding pair of finches. Oddly enough, I hadn’t given mine fruit flies for about two months, yet that didn’t prevent them from finally succeeding. The young are extremely quiet; indeed, I had no clue I had actually succeeded until I realized there were four birds in the cage instead of two!!! The chicks are all but carbon copies of the parent. In fact the main difference I noted was that the chicks’ tails were stubbier. Coloring was similar, only very slightly muted compared to their parents. The chicks weaned within 2 weeks. In fact I never observed them begging from their parents, though this may be simply that they are on the shy side.

All in all I can say that these gems are tops in my book. Lovely looks, a wonderful personality, and easy to keep but a challenge to breed, they are a marvelous choice for any lover of finches.
(End)



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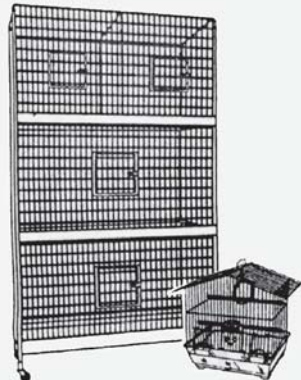
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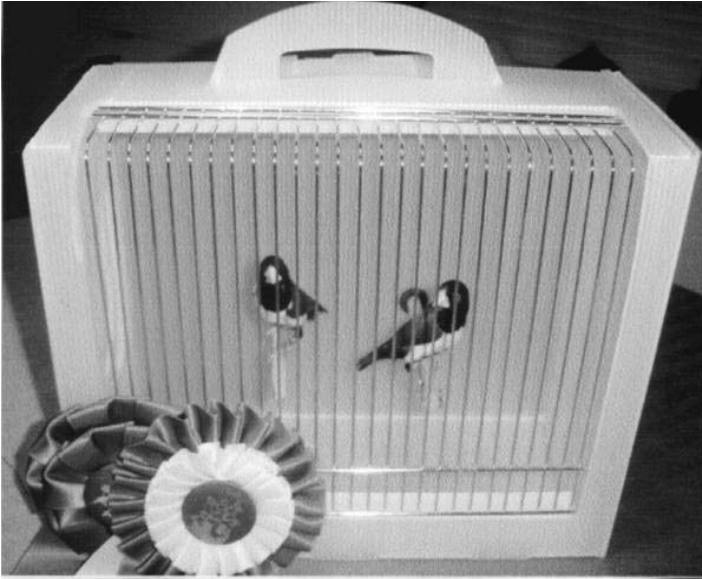
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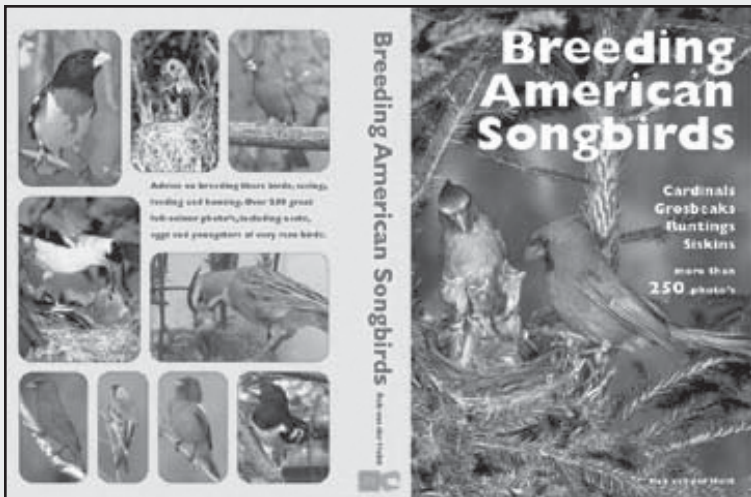
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CFW Zebra Mutations - Sharpening the Focus

by Christine ACY Kumar (All Rights Reserved)

I'd like to address much of what was (and was not) stated in 'Another View on CFW Zebras' by Charlie Anchor, issues I've heard or read over the past few years in regards to Zebra Finch standards and selective breeding, with particular focus on the Chestnut Flanked White (CFW) mutations. Aside from the brevity in which opinions were expressed, a gift I've never mastered, I am otherwise in very little agreement with the content of the abovesaid article. Newbie (<30 years of breeding experience) Zebra aviculturists such as myself are faced with the nearly insurmountable task of improving upon years of minimal color selection in American-bred R CFWs (the original and most widespread CFW mutation found in the US), working with a separate and distinct CFW allele (the Continental) or importing R CFWs with better (though still not ideal) color from the UK. These are the current choices and the hard facts set before us. I suppose a final possibility is to continue on with the American R CFW as it is, but for many, this is not a viable option.

LACK OF COMMITMENT TO AN IDEAL?: I absolutely could not disagree more that those working with Continental CFWs have a 'lack of commitment to an ideal'. In fact, if you live in the US and want to work with Continentals, first you must look long and hard to find stock. Few breed and keep them, though the number is growing. After you purchase Continentals, you will be met by all the husbandry challenges I described in my November/December 2005 "Crème de la Creaminos" and referenced in my March/April 2006 "Monumental Continentals" Journal articles. Breeding albinistic mutations such as the Continental require nest checking vigilance combined with luck, special husbandry techniques, backup fosters and/or proficient hand feeding skills if you plan on getting many chicks on the perch. While R CFWs are also sometimes persecuted due to their white plumage, typically they are fed very well as nestlings since their skin pigmentation is quite similar (though not identical) to that of Normal Grays (NGs). Sometimes, a fledged and weaned Continental is sufficient cause for celebration.

CONTINENTALS DO NOT CONFORM: Assuming your Continentals survive all the pitfalls of their first few weeks of life, you will soon realize that they probably do NOT conform to the current NFSS Zebra Finch standard. While you may have gorgeous birds, ultimately Continentals will more than likely not perform nearly as well on the show bench as you'd wish. Their back color will be creamy not white, and most, if not all, will not have that rounded 'half apple' belly line that is called for in the NFSS standard. Continentals usually possess the characteristic longer and more tubular Continental body style that betrays their European origins since most Continentals originate from mainland Europe and as such, have Dutch, Belgium or German conformation styles. Conformation (head and body shape, perching stance etc.) is determined by a complicated set of variables. These variables, in turn, are controlled by innumerable genes, referred to as QTLs, Qualitative Trait Loci. Working with QTLs requires patience over many generations. One does not just morph the progeny of German or Dutch type birds into that of more acceptable NFSS confor-

mation in a generation or two, or at least this has not worked in my birdroom. Given all these considerations alone, I can honestly say that Continental breeders are most assuredly not suffering from any 'lack of commitment to an ideal'. Our ideal just happens to be a bit different, that's all.

DEFINING AN IDEAL - CONFORMATION: Exactly how an ideal is defined is at the very heart of the discussion over CFW Zebra Standards. To begin with, an IDEAL (show standard) is something that is derived by people, not by nature. For example, conformation is a relative thing. What is considered to be excellent conformation in Holland will not fly in the UK, nor would the Australian, New Zealand nor NFSS type Zebras. Or vice versus. Take a perfectly conformed NFSS Zebra and place it on an Australian or Dutch show bench, and the results would be discouraging indeed. But to look at a Dutch, UK, Australian or New Zealand bird and think that it is lacking in conformation would be terribly misguided. These are all highly selected Zebras. (See Figure 1.)

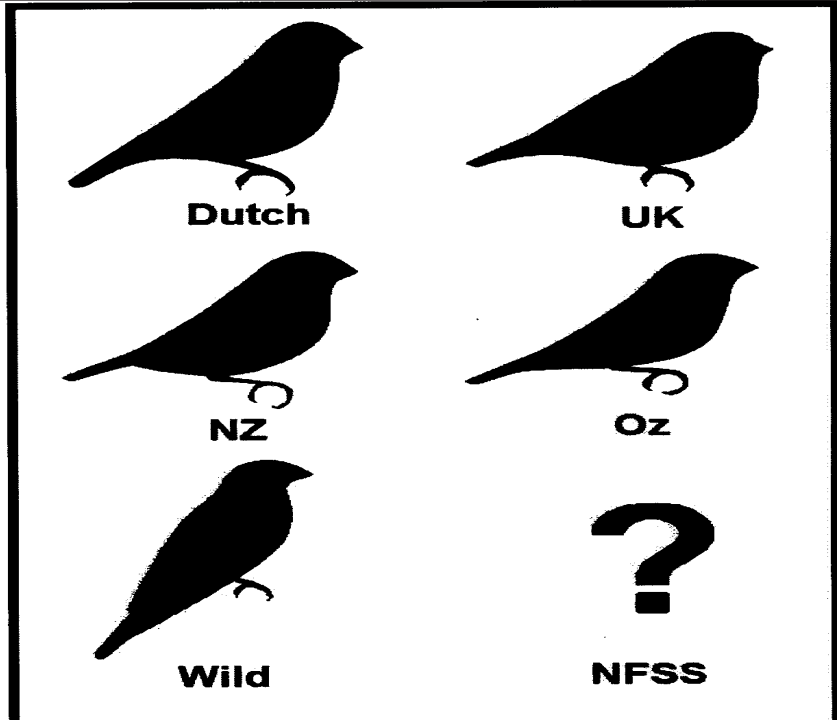


Figure 1: What's an Ideal? Type Silhouettes of Zebras from Around the World. As shown, the body shape (type) of the ideal Zebra can vary significantly from standard to standard, yet ALL are highly selected birds. The wild type Zebra (shown for comparison) is just one of many that may have been represented here. Not all wild Zebra will have this exact body type as there is great variety amongst them. The NFSS Zebra type is represented as a question mark because to my knowledge, ours is the only major organization which does not provide drawings of our idealized Zebra

DEFINING AN IDEAL – COLOR: The same relativism can be seen in regards to color ideal variation, and there are examples where CFW standards deviate significantly from that used by the NFSS. The Australians have three CFW standards, two are for R CFW (discussed in detail in the section below), and one is for R CFW-Fawn plus back color modifiers (aka Creamback). Much of mainland Europe, which has access to both CFW alleles, enforces a CFW color standard that calls for Zebras with warm rich creamy, not white, backs. They also have another color standard which reflects the CFW-Fawn phenotype (brown markings with creamy fawn back and white belly). All of these CFWs are stunning, regardless of which phenotype you may personally prefer. (Links to CFW examples are listed at the end of this article.)

Therefore, ideals are relative, and it is up to us to define our own ideal. Ideals (standards) should not be carved in stone, but rather should have some flexibility to allow for modifications. There should also be flexibility to welcome a new mutation into the fold.

THE MARKED WHITE, THE CFW AND AUSTRALIA: The history of the R CFW might also help to shed some light on the situation. Originally, CFW was only one mutation. Birds were usually (though not always) darkly marked, and they tended towards a white back though some showed off-white color. There seems to have been two basic phenotypes even within the initial captive R CFW population – a darkly marked bird (which in Australia is known as the Marked White) and the more lightly marked bird (which in Australia is called CFW). This marking dichotomy is reflected in the Australian standards; they essentially have two R CFW standards for the exact same CFW mutation – the only difference in color is due to selection criteria. Both color standards call for a white backed Zebra and both penalize for off-white back color (See Table 1). The Australian CFW standard actually calls for a bird with washed out markings compared to the Marked White. However, even Australian CFWs (their light diluted variety where breeders intentionally select for pastel markings) are more boldly marked than most US R CFWs.

Australia does not have access to the Continental CFW as this mutation arose in Europe. Oz is experiencing a total import/export ban on all avicultural specimens, even those which are obviously bred in captivity. I have been assured by my friends Down Under, however, that had the Continental either arose in Oz or if importations were possible, the Australians would write a standard for the Continental, show it and be happy for it. Australians work with several mutations which are unavailable elsewhere. Some may possibly be the same as other mutations but since complementation studies cannot be performed, nobody knows for sure. Unique Oz mutations include Alumina, Australian Reds, Carabel, Black Fronted, Grizzle and Charcoal, as well as the George which has not yet hit the mainstream, just to name a few. Australians are probably the most forward thinking and adaptable about showing new mutations. They seem to greet each new color morph with open arms, like a long lost mate returning home after an extended walkabout. There is a lot that NFSS members could learn from the Australians, if only we tried.

ZEBRA STANDARD POINTS DISTRIBUTION: Another lesson that could be learned from the Dutch and Australians is the equal or near equal emphasis on conformation AND color in their Zebra standards. While no two standards are identical, the main standards found around the world roughly break down as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Points Distribution of Zebra Standards From Around the World

Trait	NFSS		UK [§]		New Zealand		Australian		Dutch*	
	Raw	%	Raw	%	Raw	%	Raw	%	Raw	%
Type/Conformation	50	50%	NA	NA	42	45%	40	40%	37	40%
Condition	20	20%	NA	NA	18	19%	15	15%	-	-
Markings	20	20%	NA	NA	23	25%	25	25%	33	35%
Color	-	-	NA	NA	-	-	15	15%	18	20%
Size	-	-	NA	NA	-	-	5	5%	-	-
Department/Staging	10	10%	NA	NA	10	11	-	-	4	5%
Total Points	100	100%	NA	NA	93	100%	100	100%	92 (93)	100%

*The Dutch Standard is variable depending upon which mutation is being exhibited and the sex of the bird. I have chosen here to use the male CFW cockbird point schedule. It's possible to achieve one extra point if a bird is exceptional in a particular characteristic. Much of continental Europe follows the lead of the Dutch.

[§]Up to 100 points can be awarded, but scores never exceed 93.

[§]UK judging is based upon a direct comparison system. There are no allocated points per se.

TOO MUCH EMPHASIS ON CONFORMATION?: Perhaps part of the problem with anemic R CFWs markings within the purview of NFSS jurisdiction originates with the excessive emphasis placed on conformation while color contributes significantly less to total possible points. Our standard calls for 50% of maximal points to be awarded for conformation, while only 20% of total available points are awarded for both color and markings combined. As seen in Table 2, New Zealand allows 25% of points for color and markings, Australia allows 40%, while the Dutch award a whopping total of 55% of all possible points for color and markings. The Dutch have some of the most beautifully colored Zebras in the world, regardless of the mutation. NZ and Oz R CFWs are perhaps the most striking R CFWs worldwide, with tail bars approaching nearly as dark as those of the Continental's. If American R CFW breeders had been focusing on color, is it not logical to assume that our R CFWs would be at least as colorful as those which originate in the UK? Yet they are not. And again, myself and others feel that the long standing NFSS Official Zebra Finch Standard points allocation may have contributed. As pointed out by Roy Beckham, it may really be a case of the flip side of the coin. Perhaps the standard isn't at fault per se, but rather it does NOTHING to encourage breeding colorful Zebras. Stick or carrot, either way you'd like to look at it, placing more emphasis on color can only help improve marking color, particularly with CFW mutations.

CONFORMATION FIRST, COLOR LAST: Given the present NFSS point system, what bench savvy breeder would ignore conformation and concentrate on color? Simply put, conformation must come first and color second, or stated more accurately: conformation first, color last. Is the current point system the

best system the NFSS can devise? Is it one that fairly represents the overall skills of a breeder and the best and most well-rounded Zebra in the show? When a highly conformed (type) but still washed out R CFW Zebra with little tail barring can win top awards, I have to ask myself, "What's going on here?" If we are to have balanced Zebras of true beauty, doesn't that necessarily mean that our R CFWs should also be colorful, not blanched?

If conformation is the 'be all' and the 'end all' of showing, then my personal suggestion is to only allow White Zebras on the bench. This way, we can just assign 70 points for conformation and forget about color entirely. While such a tongue-in-cheek proposal may seem laughable at first, in a way, it is precisely where the R CFW is heading.

American R CFW breeders have had ~50 years to work on conformation. Isn't it about time that color and markings got equal billing? Conformation and color are NOT mutually exclusive. It's not that a breeder can ONLY select for conformation or ONLY select for color. Rather, breeders should be selecting for BOTH conformation AND color simultaneously to breed quality Zebras.

AMBIGUITY OF CFW MARKING COLOR DEFINITION: Part of what might also have contributed to the degradation of R CFW depth of markings is how the CFW standard was written:

- The head, neck, back, wings, throat and underparts should be AS WHITE AS POSSIBLE.
- The cheek patch should be AS DARK ORANGE AS POSSIBLE.
- The tear marking, throat and upper chest striping, breast bar and tail bars should be AS NEAR BLACK AS POSSIBLE.
- The flanking should be rich reddish brown with white spots (This didn't receive the qualifier "as possible" though flanks are also diluted in American-bred R CFWs).

If we are to discuss ideals, then what exactly is the ideal for "as black as possible". Is that not a moving target? Just how possible and how black is "as black as possible"? For R CFWs in my flock, it's not very possible for them to be very black, particularly when it comes to tail barring which remains about the color of dirty dishwater, a scenario that occurs with nearly all R CFWs regardless of how intense other markings may be. In other words, the bar is set too low and too subjective for CFW marking intensity. If the ideal R CFW should be a white bird with Zebra markings at the same intensity of the NG, then aren't R CFWs which lack vivid markings and/or have nonexistent tail bars falling far wide of the ideal, notwithstanding how white their backs may be? Do we just pick and chose which part of an ideal we prefer (white back) and ignore that which is more difficult to achieve (vivid markings)? I truly must ask here which breeders are lacking a commitment to an ideal?

So is it possible that the language of the CFW standard further contributed to R CFW marking dilution? Table 1 compares CFW color standards for the NFSS, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia and Holland (which is essentially the model for much of mainland Europe and is written with the Continental not the R CFW in mind). How did other aviculturists choose to define color in their CFW standards? The NFSS and UK standards use very similarly worded standards (not surprising since the NFSS standard was modeled on the UK ZFS standard), for example tail barring is to be 'as black as possible'. The NZ standard recognizes the difficult nature of achieving intense CFW tail barring and actually specifies light gray tail bars, a mark which the best breeders have easily exceeded. Conversely, the Dutch standard stipulates BLACK markings, though it concedes that phaeomelanin (orange) markings should be 'as orange brown as possible'. Unwavering, the Australian standard makes zero concessions for CFW marking color. Though it must have been very onerous, each body color is specified using the Pantone color chart and is given a corresponding code.

Could the wording of the NFSS R CFW standard contributed to the severe R CFW marking dilution? Honestly, it's hard to say. But again the color standard does not encourage colorful CFWs any more than the points distribution does. It's worth noting that even in the UK and NZ, where ambiguous wording is nearly identical to that of the NFSS color standard, some breeders have been able to maintain vividly colored markings. Quality New Zealand R CFW Zebras' tail bars rival those of Australian Marked Whites, despite the qualifiers in the color portion of their R CFW standard. So what does that say historically about R CFW color selection here in the US? It was clearly conceded in "Another View on CFW Zebras" that in the 1960s, American R CFWs were "pure white with vivid markings". Therefore, I must ask, "What happened?"

Furthermore, I find it ironic that although the NFSS CFW standard clearly states that pale markings are a show fault, nevertheless, pale markings are the norm today. A combination of a more accurately defined color standard coupled with more weight on color and markings may help to force (or encourage) NFSS Zebra breeders to incorporate more stringent color selection into their Zebras, particularly their CFW lines.

ADDITIONAL STANDARD ISSUES:

Other notable Zebra Finch standard issues that I'm not going to discuss in detail include:

- 1) Elimination or extension of the length provision so that larger birds may be shown,
- 2) Precise definition of the back angle and again,
- 3) A silhouette or accurate scale drawing of the expected NFSS body type/conformation so that breeders can reasonably assess whether their Zebras are approaching the ideal.

Outside of the standard, what are other possible contributing factors for inferior R CFW marking quality?

ZEBRAS – YESTERDAY’S GARBAGE, TODAY’S TREASURES: Prior to the implementation of the CITES convention in the early 1990s, like fanciful creatures straight from Fantasia, the list of birds that US aviculturists could once select from is nearly mythical. A five minute browse through Bates and Busenbark will leave nearly every aviculturist pie-eyed and salivating. For a latecomer to finches and softbills, the variety that was once available is overwhelmingly mind boggling. Is it possible that in the quest to keep the more exotic of the exotics, the trusty Zebra was primarily overlooked? Could part of the reason that the R CFW is so faded have occurred simply because Zebras were looked down upon by so many aviculturists as being substandard beginner birds, not worth the effort to waste valuable resources upon no less focus on selection?

To some, Zebras are not much more desirable than beeping flying rats. This attitude can easily still be found today. I avowed to NEVER keep Zebras. That is until I saw photos of Marked Whites! Zebras are noisy, aggressive and without knowing much about their color genetics, I just didn't think I'd be interested in bothering with them. After only having been exposed to pet shop quality birds, who could blame me? Unlike exhibition quality Zebras, the average pet quality Zebbie is probably small, snaky, pinched and flat headed with a long thrush like beak. More than likely it's pied, and usually not a good example of variegation either. Such a bird may have poor visual appeal. While Zebras do in fact make excellent starter finches, there is plenty to interest even the expert aviculturist when it comes to exhibition quality Zebras and their newer color morphs and combinations. With availability limitations for many of the previously more common exotic species of yesterday or only the deepest pockets that can afford the more spectacular exotic specimens of today combined with the explosion in new Zebra color mutations currently available and the affordable price tag of most zebbies (even those of top quality), interest in the once lowly Zebra Finch is piquing. For me, Zebra color genetics was the hook. Only later did I fell in love with their outrageously boisterous personalities.

DIFFERENT GOALS: Only the Zebra and Society standards specifically encourage the selection of birds which are significantly different from the wild type conformation. With nearly all finch species (canaries excepted), we are pleased to get any progeny on the perch. We may be less particular about a pinched head or poor bottom line. With Zebras, Societies and now even with Gouldians, there is much more pressure to select larger birds that fit a man-made ideal, typically the standard, though not always. Quite frankly, we are pushing the plasticity of the Zebra genome to it's extremes. Most of these birds do not necessarily reflect what one could ever hope to see in the wild. Societies are technically a subspecies of *Lonchura striata* and considered to be completely domesticated. A similar argument for domestication could also be made for Zebras (and even Gouldians). I doubt that a 25–35 gram exhibition quality Zebra would make the night in the Australian outback. Is it possi-

ble that in the quest for extreme conformation in Zebras, color selection was primarily overlooked? And that this lack of emphasis on color selection is most poignantly exemplified by the R CFW?

TENDENCY TOWARDS DILUTION?: There may be something about the R CFW mutation that, if left to its own devices, seems to tend toward increasing marking dilution, but CFW is not unique in this regard. Black Cheeked, if not selected rigorously for intense black color, can also lead to chestnut (rather than ebony) flanks and gray, patchy, half moon, faded or otherwise less than desirable cheek markings. Now imagine if the Black Cheek cockbird color standard read:

“The cheek patch should be AS BLACK AS POSSIBLE.
Other color and markings are normal, but with the NEAR AS POSSIBLE absence of reddish brown in the flanking, which is replaced by AS MUCH BLACK AS POSSIBLE”.

Ludicrous, isn't it? But don't laugh. The R CFW standard makes about as much sense, and if we were to start extending concessions to Black Cheek Zebras because it can be quite challenging to breed Zebras will fully round and/or totally black cheek patches (a hen issue) and fully converted chestnut flanking (a cockbird problem), pretty soon blotchy flanked, eclipsed, half moon shaped and diluted Black Cheeks may very well become the norm on NFSS show benches.

It is quite probable that there exists a subset of Zebra mutations where the breeder simply **MUST** place equal weight on color and conformation during selection in order to prevent entropy from taking over their birds' markings. These are mutations where excellent color doesn't just come along free for the ride. The R CFW may be the most extreme example. I regularly cull birds with diluted markings, regardless of conformation (which sometimes really pinches my heart). Otherwise I use poorly marked personal favorites for fosters (Zebras can be excellent Gouldian fosters), or I simply do not breed them. I personally feel that color cannot and should not be sacrificed on the altar of conformation.

NUMBERS GAME: The lack of quality progeny actually being produced may be one of the concerns facing American R CFW breeders. One can barely expect to have one pair of CFWs and see positive results. Without a concerted commitment to the CFW mutations by keeping multiple pairs, along with split birds for backcrossing, it may be nearly impossible to breed well marked birds.

SPECIALIZATION: Furthermore, learning to specialize in only a few color morphs is perhaps one of the hardest issues facing Zebra enthusiasts today. There are so many outstanding colors available, and it's really hard to pick just one or two. However, some mutations don't 'mix' well (Black Cheek & Penguin, Black Cheek & Florida Fancy, Black Cheek & Isabel, Black Cheek & Orange Breast) whereas other combinations are quite stunning. A Black

Faced, Orange Breasted, Black Breasted, Fawn and double factored Florida Fancy Zebra is possibly the ultimate in combination breeding. This combo can take years to create, but it results in a totally orange and white bird which I jokingly refer to as the Orange Dreamsicle, after the cream and orange popsicles of my youth. Breeding these Zebras can be a huge commitment in time and cage space. And there are many other combos which are equally breathtaking and challenging to breed! It's extremely easy to become distracted. So while one can keep every Zebra mutation under the sun, odds are that it will be difficult to breed quality birds if resources are spread too thin. While breeders may dabble in other colors, it's best to focus on just a few mutations and breed excellent examples of those. Speaking for myself, I've kept nearly every mutation, and it's taken me a few years to decide primarily upon Continental CFWs and Penguins, with a lesser interest in Orange Breasts. Perhaps one of the hardest decisions I've had to make was to let most of my Black Cheeked Zebras go – a process that is still ongoing.

CFW MULTIPLE ALLELIC SERIES: From what was stated and also from reading between the lines in "Another View on CFW Zebras", I simply must offer a few comments about Zebra mutational genetics. First off, the CFW gene comprises a multiple allelic series (MAS). This means that the CFW gene doesn't have just one flavor like most other color mutations, but rather has three known alleles (flavors): Lightback, C CFW and R CFW, listed here in decreasing order of color intensity of adult plumage.

As a side note, the Zebra Ino mutation, which originated in Italy, is also speculated to be a member of the CFW MAS. Complementation results are not in yet. When Inos finally make it to the US, I will probably be arguing for their color standard as well. Inos look like washed out R CFWs with one major difference – mature Inos maintain their pink/red albinistic eyes. An Ino is not an R CFW anymore than a Continental is an R CFW or a LB is an R CFW. Each one of these mutations is genetically unique even if they all affect the same exact gene.

CONTINENTALS ARE NOT R CFWs: Complementation studies performed overseas and here in the US between LB, R CFW and C CFW has demonstrated over and over again that while each one of these mutations occurs in the same gene, they are NOT the same identical mutation. Lightback is universally considered to be different and unique from R CFW, which is not terribly surprising since the phenotype is sufficiently distinct to prevent confusion. Unfortunately, Continental has not been extended this same courtesy, and its unique identity has been met with resistance from many American Zebra breeders. If you do not breed both CFW mutations or if you do not understand their unique genetic nature, it may be a bit difficult to truly comprehend what those who work with these mutations daily have come to know. Alas, some aviculturists still feel that Continentals are just rogue and poorly selected R CFWs. This couldn't be further from reality. Nobody argues that Lightback is really just R CFW, but some still refuse to concede that Continentals are genetically unique and are similar to but separate from R CFWs. If you'd like to prove to yourself that these two CFWs are in fact unique entities, seek out

both mutations and start breeding them to one another. Hen progeny will always be either R CFW or C CFW (the genotype of their father), and male progeny will always be R CFW/C CFWs splits with intermediate phenotypes. Once you've performed the complementation tests yourself, inevitably you'll reach the identical conclusion that hundreds of aviculturists have before you: Continentals are not R CFWs! Please see Table 3 for a quick comparison of phenotypic color differences.

CONTINENTALS ARE NOT R CFW-FAWNS: Also as discussed in my previous article, but I feel compelled to reiterate it here: **CONTINENTAL CFW ? CFW-FAWN CROSSOVER MUTATION!** This was the original belief of US aviculturists, however it simply is not true. Old wives' tales die hard, and this one has more lives combined than B rate horror film characters Freddy Krueger and Jason Voorhees! To confuse these two color morphs is to confuse an apple with an orange. Again, Continentals are a separate, distinct and unique allele of the CFW gene. Continentals are not just a crossover mutation with the other Zebra sex-linked locus, Fawn. While their phenotypes may be superficially similar at first glance, they are not identical. If a breeder understands how the Fawn mutation actually works biochemically at the pigment level, it becomes instantly obvious that Continentals cannot possibly be R CFW-Fawns. Fawn is produced by the incomplete oxidation of eumelanin (black) pigments. As such, black markings are exchanged for various shades of brown. If Continentals truly had Fawn in their makeup, then their eumelanin-based black markings should be changed to brown. However, anyone can clearly see that Continentals have jet black markings that many times equal the intensity of NGs.

In fact, whereas one can make a R CFW-Fawn, a Continental-Fawn can also be bred. The Continental-Fawn is no more a Continental than an R CFW-Fawn is an R CFW. Nor is a C CFW-Fawn equivalent to an R CFW-Fawn. Each is distinct at the genetic level and in ideal specimens, they should be sufficiently distinct from each other as well. There is an issue of overlapping phenotypes in poor quality specimens. For example, an R CFW with extreme fawn back modifiers can look almost identical to an R CFW-Fawn. But since the NFSS does not even have an R CFW-Fawn color standard, this is not an issue. And while the same R CFW with strong back modifiers may look like a Continental with creamy or fawnish back color, it's markings will probably not be black, particularly the tail. So there ARE ways to distinguish them from one another. Or at least categorize them for showing purposes.

Again, I really must repeat myself - Continentals are NOT R CFW-Fawns. Get out your garlic, silver bullets and wooden stakes, because it's long overdue for this Night of the Living Dead urban legend to finally die its proper death! R.I.P. Please see Table 3 for a quick comparison of phenotypic color differences.

CREAMS ARE NOT CONTINENTALS: Moreso, the Cream phenotype is also not a carbon copy of the Continental's. Creams are a double mutational combination phenotype, created by either combining Fawn with Dominant Silver (aka Pastel) or by combining Fawn with Recessive Silver. Creams look VERY

DIFFERENT from Continentals, and any breeder worth her salt would be able to tell the difference without much hesitation. Creams also have very diluted cheek patches and markings. Please see Table 3 for a quick comparison of phenotypic color differences.

Table 3: Simplified Color Overview of CFW Mutations & Similar Phenotypes

Color	R CFW	C CFW	R CFW-Fawn	C CFW-Fawn	Cream* (Silver & Fawn)
Back	White to Off White	Fawn Wash To Dark Cream	Fawn Wash To Dark Cream	Dark Cream	Dark Cream To Silvery Cream
Eumelanin Markings	Black to Light Gray	Black	Taupe to Faint Brown	Dark Brown	Dark Brown to Light Brown
Phaeo Markings	Orange to Nonexistent	Orange to Nonexistent	Peach to Nonexistent	Peach to Nonexistent	Peach to White [§]
Belly	White	White	White	White	Creamy
Eye	Dark	Red (chicks) Plum (adults)	Dark to Plum	Red (chicks) Plum (adults)	Dark to Plum

* Dominant Silver plus Fawn or Recessive Silver plus Fawn

[§] DS Fawn/CFW or DS Fawn/LB results in whiter cheeks and sometimes have the misnomer of 'White Cheeked'.

WHICH CFW?: Moreover, in 2006 it is inadequate to refer to any one of the CFW MAS mutations as just "CFW" as though there exists only one CFW. To many, this implies that the true nature of the Continental mutation is NOT being recognized and is being lumped in with R CFW. Again, no one would do that with Lightback, so it should not happen with Continentals either. We have two distinct CFW mutations, and we should specify WHICH mutation we are referring to and use currently accepted names.

SCAPEGOATS: Continentals did not undermine the quality of nor are they responsible for the degenerate marking intensity in R CFWs. Continentals have only been in the US for just over ten years now, yet R CFW markings have been suffering from anemia for much longer, decades in fact! While it may seem easier to point our collective finger at Continentals and accuse them of being the guilty party, to do so would be unfair and untrue. It would also be to ignore the real reason for R CFW marking dilution – which is that essentially zero emphasis is placed on color selection. In the Netherlands, where both CFW mutations are bred and kept (though only the Continental can be shown competitively), R CFWs are still white backed and some have decent tail barring with intense markings elsewhere. From the Netherlands, a country where Continentals are the preferred CFW phenotype and reign supreme, we can see that marking intensity on R CFWs has been better maintained and preserved than here in America, where the R CFW is the preferred and shown CFW mutation. Therefore, with proper breeding and selection techniques, both CFW mutations can be kept and bred side-by-side while maintaining marking intensity and distinct phenotypic characteristics.

Wrongfully blaming the Continental does not change the poor marking status of nearly all American-bred R CFWs.

ICONOCLASTS: Lightback & Continental are both allelic to R CFW. Nobody would ever argue that Lightback Zebras should have white backs. Yet some would argue that Continentals **MUST** have white backs to be proper CFWs. White backed CFWs have been dogma for decades, and it stands to reason from this mindset that creamy backed Continentals are therefore substandard or otherwise inadequate. A close examination of the downy portion of Continental contour feathers will reveal how hopelessly flawed this logic really is and how the white back argument goes against the grain of the inherent nature of Continental coloring. While Continental barbs are pretty much white, the down is in fact pigmented. Possibly with years of selection, one could rid this downy portion of its color (probably with a concomitant loss in marking intensity), but I'd have to ask why? Are we trying to make the Lightback into a white bird? Of course not! So why do that to the Continental? Aside from human bias, is there really anything inherently superior about a white bird? I have zero qualms that my Continentals have a fawn-washed back. In fact, I personally find their warm glow to be part of the allure of the Continental mutation, along with their jet black tail bars and red eyes (though the eyes do darken in adult birds). However, I suspect back color is the primary bone of contention with some breeders who feel, regardless of the capabilities of the Continental mutation, that CFWs must have a white back in order to be top quality birds. Ironically, these same breeders are perfectly willing to overlook washed out markings and nonexistent tail bars in favor of the white back CFW paragon. And C CFW breeders are being told we lack a commitment to an ideal? Being newer to Zebras, I have no such preconceptions and simply want to breed beautiful birds with vivid markings.

CONTINENTAL STANDARD: What harm is actually caused by adding a Continental color standard? It would not affect the current R CFW standard, which would still specify a white back. When every other color (except Eumo and CFW-Fawn) has its own color standard, I'm unsure why the Continental has been singled out as unworthy. We even have a standard for Agates, yet as far as I know, **NOBODY** even has this mutation currently in the US. If we can have supercilious standards for mutations no one is currently breeding, doesn't it make sense to have a color standard for a mutation which has devoted breeders? Continental breeders are well aware of what their color standard ideals are, and they are **NOT** for a white back!

WORLD WIDE WEB: I would be remiss if I didn't address the topic of internet-based communication. I can only urge those who are not online, to **GET** online. With the convenience of the internet at our disposal, we don't have to be insular and can discuss Zebra standards as well as breeding and selection techniques with other enthusiasts from around the globe. In a huge country such as the US or Canada, it is sometimes difficult to actually meet other fanciers. Via internet based chat groups such as Garrie Landry's Yahoo Zebra Finch discussion group (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/zebrafinch/>), I have had the thrill and pleasure to learn and discuss Zebra standards and breeding

techniques with top exhibitors and enthusiastic breeders from nearly every corner of the world. Equally helpful has been the NZC forum, (<http://www.zebrafinchforum.com/index.php>). Many members have equal or more experience to those elite individuals singled out in "Another View on CFW Zebras". In fact, a handful of these select few NFSS members mentioned in the 'Thirty Something Club' are regular internet group participants. Many of the overseas Zebra Finch participants were instrumental in starting Zebra clubs in their nations and/or responsible for writing & reviewing Zebra standards and/or judge Zebras. I might add that many foreign Zebra enthusiasts breed drop dead gorgeous CFWs – of either or both flavors. I for one feel these breeders have plenty of excellent expertise, a fresh perspective as well as ample 'reliable information' to offer.

BREEDING TIPS FROM ONLINE EXPERTS (CFW COLOR SELECTION):

Lest readers think that they can purchase Continentals and breed them with wanton abandon, BEWARE! While Continentals are currently much more vividly marked than R CFWs here in the US, without proper attention to their markings, tail bars, cheek patches and breast bars can follow the same sorry course as that of the R CFW. While specific advice, strategies and philosophies may vary, readers should realize from the below advisements that breeding CFWs, regardless of which allele is favored, is a lifetime commitment. Readers should also recognize the underlying theme of COLOR SELECTION.

Australia: Both Continental and R CFW breeders would be very wise indeed to take the advice of Ellis Thornley of Brisbane, Australia. Ellis has bred Zebras for over 61 years and was never a novice exhibitor because he won top honors at his very first show (competing against over 450 entries)! A Zebra judge since the 1970s, Ellis was and remains a key player in writing and fine tuning the Australian Zebra standards. A long time breeder of Marked Whites (the darkly marked version of the R CFW), Ellis has repeatedly emphasized to me that **RIGOROUS COLOR SELECTION IS THE ONLY WAY TO MAINTAIN CFW MARKING INTENSITY**. In order to have an effective CFW breeding program, Ellis suggests that six pairs plus a few splits for outcrossing are sufficient. Huge numbers of birds are not required. His general formula has been to breed Marked Whites to each other for two generations and then outcross his Marked Whites to Normal Grays or splits. For Marked Whites, color selection is KEY! Stringent selection must be applied after each cross, only keeping those birds with the very best markings as per the standard. In this fashion, Ellis has selected and maintained striking Marked Whites and shown them competitively for nearly fifty years! He also says that the Marked White (R CFW) is the single hardest Zebra mutation to maintain from a color perspective, and that if you want to breed quality birds, then you really have your work cut out for you. Again, Ellis feels that without rigorous color selection, CFW markings will become dull and faded, ultimately losing their visual punch and appeal. Since I began with Zebras over five years ago, Ellis has been one of my favorite and most helpful online mentors. He is always more than willing to take the time to share all that he's learned over his long avicultural career to inquisitive latecomer newbies such as myself. I am

so grateful to have access to someone of Ellis' expertise, an opportunity that would never have arisen without the World Wide Wide.

New Zealand: Peter Russell of New Zealand has been keeping finches for 44 years and showing for just a year less. Peter has also been a judge for 34 years and the Secretary Treasurer for the NZ Zebra Society for equally as long, a position he still holds. Peter was involved in writing his society's Zebra standards. Certainly no newbie to birds, Peter is the hands-on Aviary Manager for the Esplanade Aviary which is owned by the Palmerston North City Council and has the pleasure to work with unimaginably exotic species such as Tui, Kiwi and Kea. He is also actively involved in the New Zealand Blue Duck recovery program.

For over 30 years, Peter has kept and bred R Chestnut Flanked Whites, the only CFW mutation currently available in New Zealand. He likes to keep about sixteen pairs of CFWs for his breeding program, though he personally feels that a serious CFW breeder need only maintain ten pairs of CFWs for optimal results. He has sold or given many CFWs out during his tenure as a Zebra enthusiast, but for some reason, most breeders end up with faded birds in only a matter of a few years. He assumes they are not applying rigorous selection to their CFWs or are breeding them to their own faded birds rather than outcrossing the darkly marked CFWs to NGs. There are only two other breeders in New Zealand that he is aware of who consistently produce vividly marked CFWs. Peter sometimes wonders if the more darkly marked CFW is not in fact a separate mutation from the light birds.

Peter recommends culling all birds which do not have good color. Hens can be a bit harder to assess. In this case, evaluate tear marks and tail bars, and keep only those hens which are darkest. In an Orwellian twist of fate, Peter feels his CFWs could be light years ahead, if only he didn't almost lose all back in 1984. He had to rebuild his flock from only four CFW founder birds. While he normally breeds CFW x CFW, every three years, he puts a CFW cockbird back to a gray hen. This is to maintain marking intensity. Peter also points out that one cannot just select on marking depth of color alone. The first birds he started with, while they had other dark markings, sadly suffered from severe tail barring dilution. But one must be careful because as the tail markings get darker, you may also discover that the back is picking up color as well. However, as tail bars can be darkened over time with rigorous selection, he believes you will pick up some back color (creamy backed) which is not currently preferred as per the NZ CFW standard. Some of Peter's R CFW chicks have dirty colored backs as fledglings even. Over the years, he has seen his birds' tail bars increase significantly in intensity. Peter's commitment to the CFW is obviously a lifelong endeavor.

The Netherlands: Huub Janssen is the winner of perhaps the world's most prestigious and coveted competitive Zebra Finch award, Champion Bird at the Dutch Nationals in Veenendaal, 1999. A typical year at Veenendaal may see over 2000 Zebra entrants!! Huub also won best collection (four birds exhibited as one entry) and second best collection at the 2002 Dutch Nationals, com-

pletely shutting out the competition. These accolades have earned Huub a nearly godlike status amongst knowing Zebra breeders, but he hasn't let their adulation go to his head. I was immediately struck by how genuine and helpful a person Huub really is. He is a member of several online discussion groups, and we developed a nearly instant rapport.

Beginning as a young boy at the age of six, Zebras have been Huub's lifeblood and nearly the sole focus of his avicultural career. He first showed birds in 1982, and won with his Continentals in local shows. While Huub has shown Continentals, he very well may be the world's BEST breeder of the Penguin (Witborst or White Breasted) Zebra mutation. Huub is not a Judge, rather he prefers to focus on breeding, with his efforts spent on selecting winning birds. Huub also likes experimental breeding projects. His current pet project is the Seifert, which is really a Zebra dark factor that combines well with mutations in the CFW multiple allelic series including Lightback. This factor is not currently available in the US. Huub is involved in several online international Zebra forums and is a member of the Dutch (NZC) technical committee.

Huub has bred Maskers (R CFWs and Continentals) on and off since he began with Zebras. Huub keeps a Continental breeding population of approximately ten pairs, most of which have the Seifert factor as well. How many pairs he keeps in his breeding program depends upon the quality of the birds and his show plans for that year. If they are of excellent quality, he feels 10 pairs are sufficient. However if your Continentals are not of top marking quality (basically all American CFWs), or if Huub plans on entering Continentals at Veenendaal, then he suggests increasing their population up to 15 – 20 pairs and then breed and select amongst the best of these birds. Huub also works closely with several other Continental breeders, sharing stock and evaluating each other's birds. This gives all members of his breeding cooperative a competitive edge at Veenendaal. Huub recommends a similar breeding cooperative for all who seriously want to breed quality birds, regardless of color mutation. For a cutthroat show such as the Dutch Nationals which has over 3x the Zebra entrants than even the World COM show, it is necessary to keep many pairs of any single mutation in order to compete aggressively.

Again, color selection is KEY. Right now, Huub prefers CFWs with the darkest backs (for his experimental breeding projects) and markings, whether R CFW or Continental. For show, the creamy warm back is preferred, and he swaps these birds with other members in his breeding cooperative since at the moment, he is not showing CFWs.

As for CFW breeding hints, Huub says the birds which show best in the Netherlands are R CFW/C CFWs that also contain the Seifert dark factor (which is not available yet in the US). To breed the best quality Continentals, Huub warns against using NGs because he feels they negatively affect the head and body color making them appear too cool in tone. Rather, he suggests pairing a male Continental to a warm Fawn hen to improve markings

while at the same time maintaining a rich warm hue on the back. Huub emphasizes that the CFW back color should be warm cream as per the Dutch standard, not white. There is a lot of emphasis on dark cheek and flank markings in cockbirds and poorly marked specimens will not show well. Of course, all eumelanin markings must be black, including tail bars. Being that the Dutch show Continentals, black tail bars are not usually an issue.

CHOICES AND PHILOSOPHIES: For those of us who are newer to the hobby and prefer the CFW mutations, we are faced with a bit of a dilemma: breed 'typey' R CFWs that may win at shows despite their lack of colorful markings, OR breed Continentals and enjoy them in the privacy of our own bird rooms until their conformation and color can be adapted to the NFSS standard. Assuming you see the need. In my opinion, there is simply no reason to bleach the Continental's back color. For my Continentals, I ignore this portion of the color standard completely. Actually, I use the Dutch CFW standard as my Continental ideal. Another much more realistic approach is to write a color standard for the Continental reflecting the creamy back color. Of course as pointed out earlier, there is the option of importing R CFWs from the UK, birds which have been selected overseas for both color and conformation. Some NFSS members are doing just that now – having jettisoned their Continental and/or American-bred R CFW breeding stock. Honestly, in several years of breeding R CFWs to quality stock (much of my original show quality Zebra stock was obtained from Bob Vargo, Carl Agrell, Jamie Jackson and Roy Beckham lines), and seeing marginal at best improvement in R CFW color, importation is probably the only realistic and pragmatic way to 'fix' the R CFW in my lifetime. This of course assumes that future generations of R CFW breeders will be selecting for color AND conformation in order to preserve or even improve upon what was already achieved overseas.

CONCLUSION: My original 'well-intentioned' article on Monumental Continentals was primarily written with the express intention of exposing the NFSS membership to this unfamiliar but exciting Zebra mutation. I have certainly achieved my initial goal as well as opened up a dialog regarding R CFW, C CFW and overall Zebra Finch standards as well as CFW breeding and selection techniques. I do not expect that everyone would want to enthusiastically embrace the Continental, but therein lies the beauty of the spectrum of available Zebra Finch color mutations. If you can inure yourself to the Zebra's inane meeping and incessant egocentric bugling; if you can deal with their aggressive nature, frustrating personality quirks and outright annoying behavior; and if watching them flit about all day like feathered perpetual motion machines doesn't exhaust you, well then there's definitely a Zebra Finch in a color or color combination just for you. Zebras are addicting if nothing else – but of course they are a whole lot more! As I always like to say: "THERE'S ROOM ENOUGH IN THIS HOBBY FOR EVERYONE!" This should extend to breeders of legitimate though new color mutations such as the Continental as well as the classic established colors. To paraphrase Roy Beckham, "Breed what you like. The Judge only sees your birds one day of the year." It took me years to realize that this is indeed sage advice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: I'd be remiss if I twice neglected to mention the list of individuals who helped me with my original "Monumental Continentals" NFSS article. Unfortunately, their names were accidentally dropped by me during editing. Most of their names still apply to this article and a few new names have been added. I am indebted to the following people for their help, opinions and/or advice. Their names, listed here in alphabetical order, by no means implies that they also hold the same opinions as previously published or expressed here in this article: Charlie Anchor – USA (for his opposing viewpoints that forced me to ask more questions and publish this article), Carlo Bakker - Netherlands, Roy Beckham - USA, Adam Fleming - Scotland, Huub Janssen – Netherlands, Garrie Landry - USA, Terry Martin - Australia, Frank Sundgaard Neilson - Denmark, Dave Pauls - Canada, Raspberry - USA, Richard Renshaw - USA, Peter Russell – New Zealand, Ellis Thornley - Australia, Dennis Webster – UK and Hans van de Weerdhof - Netherlands.

ADDITIONAL READING: I urge all interested parties to contact Garrie Landry or Raspberry for a copy of "Making Way for the New Kid on the Block" as published in the 2005 ZFS Bulletin. This article goes into quite some depth about the pros and cons of a Continental. Other articles published recently on Continentals and/or CFWs include:

- Monumental Continentals by C. Kumar, 3/4/06 NFSS Journal.
- Crème de la Creaminos by C. Kumar, 11/12/06 NFSS Journal.
- Another View on CFW Zebras by Charlie Anchor, 5/6/05 NFSS Journal.

Although she has kept birds for over 35 years, Christine ACY Kumar has only bred Estrildid finches for just over 5 years. Her passion lies with mutational & combination breeding/selection, and she works extensively with Zebra, Bengalese & Gouldian Finches, as well as other Australian Grassfinches & Blue Capped Cordon Bleus. Trained in plant breeding and plant molecular biology and then switching her focus to molecular medicine & cancer biology, Christine has taught several courses at the college level for years including her favorite, Genetics. Christine is the owner or moderator of several online yahoogroups including: Finch_Friends, Goulds_Rule, LinkoftheDay, Societyfinch and her favorite, Zebrafinch. She also participates actively on the NFSS chat room and invites you to join in on the discussions soon! Christine can be contacted at: birdsnherbs@yahoo.com. You may visit her website: <http://mysite.verizon.net/vze8aart>.

SOME ONLINE RESOURCES:

- <http://www.efinch.com/species/cfwzeb.htm> (General information)
- <http://zebrafinke.info/colours/?language=nl&mutation=4> (More general information)
- <http://www.zebrafinch.com/NewZebra/chestnutflankwhite.html> (Many different CFWs)
- <http://members.optusnet.com.au/elist/markedwhite1min.gif> (Marked White - Australian)
- http://www.schau-zebrafinken.de/frame_bildergalerie.html - click on Masken Grau (C CFWs)
- <http://www.cable4u.nl/~rens-r9/vogelinformatie/tropen/zebravinken/ccfw.jpg> (C CFW male)
- <http://www.zebravinken.be/Masker%20grijze%20pop.jpg> (C CFW hen)
- <http://www.zebravinken.be/Masker%20bruine%20man.jpg> (C CFW-Fawn male)
- <http://www.zebravinken.be/Masker%20bruine%20pop.jpg> (C CFW-Fawn hen)
- <http://www.papukaijayhdistys.fi/kuvat/seeprapeippo2.jpg> (R CFW)
- <http://ca.geocities.com/ricardogaskin/Pictures.html> (R CFW - Scroll)
- <http://www.zebrafinches.ca/dave/PICTURES.html> (R CFW - Scroll)

Table 1: Comparison of World CFW Color Standards - Male

	NFSS USA ^a	United Kingdom ^{b*}	New Zealand ^c	Australia ^{d§} Marked White		Netherlands ^e
	C CFW R CFW	C CFW R CFW	R CFW	R CFW	CFW	C CFW R CFW
Available CFWs	C CFW R CFW	C CFW R CFW	R CFW	R CFW		C CFW R CFW
CFW Show Standard	R CFW	R CFW	R CFW	R CFW		C CFW
# of CFW Standards	1	1	1	2		1
Tear Marks	Black as possible	Match breast bar	Black as possible	Black	Light gray – 6c	Black
Beak Marks	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Black as possible	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Black
Face/Lores	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Not Mentioned	White	White	White
Tail Barring	Black as possible	Match breast bar	Pale gray	Black	Light gray – 6c	Black
Throat Striping	Black as possible	Black as possible	Black as Possible	Black	Light gray – 6c	Black
Breast Bar	Black as possible	Black as possible	Black as possible	Black	Light gray – 6c	Black
Cheek Patches	Dark orange as possible	Orange	Near orange as possible	Orange Brown – 1525c	Pale orange – 149c	Orange brown – as deep as possible
Flanking	Rich reddish brown w/ white spots	Reddish brown with even white spots	Reddish brown with clear white spots	Reddish brown with white spots – 1675c	Pinkish fawn with white spots – 472c	Orange brown – as dark as possible with regular round white dots
Head/Neck	White as possible	White as possible	White as possible	White	White	Cream
Back/Wings	White as possible	White as possible	White as possible	White	White	Cream
Rump	Not mentioned	Not Mentioned	Not Mentioned	White	White	White – black sides
Throat	White as possible	White	White	White	White	Silver white
Breast/ Belly	White as possible	White as Possible/White	White/Pure White	White	White	White
Lower Tail Coverts	White as possible	White	White	White	White	White
Tail	Not mentioned	Not Mentioned	Not Mentioned	2 shades lighter than coverts	2 shades lighter than coverts	Dark cream
Beak	Coral red	Not Mentioned	Red	Red – 185c	Red – 185c	Coral red
Legs/Feet	Pale coral red	Not Mentioned	Pink	Orange – 172c	Orange – 172c	Orange red
Eyes	Not mentioned	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Not mentioned
Show Faults Cockbird:	Pale markings, bleeding cheek patches	Too pale markings	Pale markings, cream or fawn colored back,	Dilute markings, body not white, incomplete throat stripes, sooty head	Too dark or dilute markings, creamy body, under parts creamy, fawn tail	Pale cheeks and flanks, sooty heads indistinct or incomplete throat stripes

[§] Numbers refer to Pantone® color chart codes.

^a As published in the NFSS Judges Handbook and Official Standards, 2nd edition.

^b <http://www.zebrafinchsociety.co.uk/chestnutflanked.htm>

^c Peter Russell, New Zealand Zebra Finch Society, New Zealand.

^d Ellis Thornley, South East Queensland Zebra Finch Society, Australia.

^e <http://www.vogelliefhebbers.com/standaard.htm> translated by Christine ACY Kumar with help by Carlo Bakker.

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13013 311th Avenue SE, Sultan, WA 98294
white.douglas@lincoln.navy.mil

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REGIONAL CLUBS

SOUTHEAST BIRD FANCIERS [SOUTHEAST U.S.]

DELEGATE Ginny Allen, (334) 749-7168; gndallen@earthlink.net

MEETINGS 1st Sat - June, Sept.; 2nd Sat - Dec, Atlanta Farm Mkt

WEBSITE <http://members.tripod.com/sebfg/sebf.htm>

ALABAMA

CENTRAL ALABAMA AVICULTURAL SOCIETY

DELEGATE Margie Lanier, (334) 567-4073; margielanier@yahoo.com

MEETINGS 2nd Sunday of month: 2:30 p.m.

Montgomery Zoo Education Building: Montgomery, AL

WEBSITE www.caasociety.com

CANADA

CAGE BIRD SOCIETY OF HAMILTON [HAMILTON, ONTARIO, CANADA]

DELEGATE Peter Webb, email: gouldians@msn.com

MEETINGS 4th Sunday/month (except July-August): 970 Paramount Dr,
 Valley Park Community Ctr), Stoney Creek, Ontario

SHOW DATES November 4-5, 2006

JUDGE Charles Anchor

LOCATION Valley Park Community Center; 970 Paramount Dr, Stoney Creek,
 Ontario, Canada

SHOW MANAGER Joe Sousa 905-643-1476

DURHAM AVICULTURAL SOCIETY [ONTARIO, CANADA]

DELEGATE Alfred Mion, email: julianne@mnsi.net

MEETINGS 2nd Tuesday of month: Rotary Park Pavilion, Ajax, Ontario

CLUB WEBSITE www.birdclub.ca

ESSEX-KENT CAGE BIRD SOCIETY [WINDSOR, ONTARIO]

DELEGATE Julianne & Alfred Mion, (519) 948-6398; julianne@mnsi.net

MEETINGS Monthly: alternating members' homes

CLUB WEBSITE www.essexkentcbs.com

NFSS Affiliated Clubs/Events

CALIFORNIA

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA CAGE BIRD CLUB [Modesto]

DELEGATE Naomi Cisper, (209) 957-3117

WEBSITE <http://www.ccasbirds.org/>

FINCH SOCIETY OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY [San Diego]

DELEGATE Mary Hibner, (858) 549-3705; mary37@yahoo.com

CLUB WEBSITE <http://www.sandiegofinchsociety.com>

WEST COAST ZEBRA & SOCIETY FINCH CLUB

DELEGATE Raspberry, (503)-233-4274; Raspberry@europa.com

CLUB E-MAIL Raspberry@europa.com

FLORIDA

EXOTIC BIRD CLUB OF FLORIDA [Palm Bay]

DELEGATE Timothy McCormick, email: donglo57@bellsouth.net,

MEETINGS 2nd Sunday of month: 1275 Culver Road, Palm Bay

CLUB WEBSITE <http://exoticbirdclubofflorida.homestead.com/index.html>

SUNCOAST AVIAN SOCIETY [Clearwater]

DELEGATE Mari Howard, (727) 726-6864; whoward7@tampabay.rr.com

MEETINGS 1st Sunday/month: Leisure World Mobile Home Pk,
Clearwater, FL

CLUB E-MAIL whoward7@tampabay.rr.com;

CLUB WEBSITE www.suncoastaviansociety.org

TREASURE COAST EXOTIC BIRD CLUB [Stuart]

DELEGATE Timothy McCormick - email: donglo57@bellsouth.net

TRI-STATE AVIAN SOCIETY [Tallahassee]

MEETINGS 2nd Saturday of the month at 2 PM, Tallahassee Progressive
Center, 1720 S. GadsdenSt., Tallahassee FL

CLUB E-MAIL info@tristateaviansociety.org

CLUB WEBSITE www.tristateaviansociety.org

ILLINOIS

GREATER CHICAGO CAGE BIRD CLUB [Elmhurst]

DELEGATE Barbara Branston, (708) 562-6787, secretary@gccbc.org

MEETINGS 3rd Friday of month: no meeting in November.
American Legion Hall: Butterfield Road, Elmhurst.

CLUB WEBSITE www.gccbc.org

SHOW DATE NATIONAL CAGE BIRD SOCIETY SHOW

November 16-18, 2006

EVENT LOCATION Renaissance Schaumburg Hotel & Convention Ctr, Thoreau Drive,
Schaumburg, IL 60173

NFSS Affiliated Clubs/Events

IOWA

MID-AMERICA CAGE BIRD SOCIETY [Des Moines]

DELEGATE John Thielking, (515) 278-9159; thielking@iowalink.com
MEETINGS 4th Sun: Des Moines Botanical Ctr, 909 Robert D Ray Dr.
CLUB WEBSITE www.macbs.org

KANSAS

GREATER KANSAS CITY AVICULTURAL SOCIETY (Kansas City, MO)

DELEGATE John Thielking, (515) 278-9159; thielking@iowalink.com
Club Meeting 2nd Sunday of month, Coronation of Our Lady Church,
 Grandview, MO
Club Website: http://www.gkcas.org

LOUISIANA

CAJUN CANARY & FINCH CLUB [New Orleans]

DELEGATE Meade Phelps, 504-615-4638 neworleansmeade@cox.net
MEETINGS 2nd Monday of the month 7:30pm St. Augustine's Episcopal
 Church Metairie, La. 70002
SHOW DATE Cajun Canary & Finch Big Bird Show & Bird Mart:
 December 9-10, 2006
JUDGE Cecil Gunby
SHOW LOCATION VFW Hsll, 3314 Richland Ave, Metairie, LA. 70002
INFORMATION Meade Phelps, 504-615-4638 neworleansmeade@cox.net

MARYLAND

BALTIMORE BIRD FANCIERS, INC. [Baltimore]

DELEGATE Robert Mehl, (210) 581-7955; Robertmehl@verizon.net
MEETINGS Towson Public Library
CLUB E-MAIL baltimorebirdfanciers@verizon.net
CLUB WEBSITE http://www.baltimorebirdfancier.org

MASSACHUSETTS

MASSACHUSETTS CAGE BIRD ASSOCIATION (Foxboro)

DELEGATE Regina McCarthy - rmcc29@comcast.net
MEETINGS every other month at the South Foxboro Community Center,
 Foxboro, MA. See website for more information.
CLUB E-MAIL rmcc29@comcast.net
CLUB WEBSITE www.masscagebird.org

MICHIGAN

GREAT LAKES ZEBRA & SOCIETY FINCH CLUB [Livonia]

DELEGATE Jim Heffernan, 780 Fairwood St, Inkster, MI, (313) 247-5900

MINNESOTA**CANARY CLUB OF MINNESOTA [Des Moines]**

DELEGATE Jeanne Murphy, (651) 459-5787, email:
pinataminatures@yahoo.com
canaryclub.su.com

CLUB WEBSITE

SHOW DATE Annual Canary and Finch Show - October 7, 2006

MISSOURI**GREATER KANSAS CITY AVICULTURAL SOCIETY (Kansas City)**

DELEGATE Anthony Day (816) 731-1464; terryshelia@abcglobal.net

CLUB WEBSITE www.gkcas.org

NEW HAMPSHIRE**BIRDS OF A FEATHER AVICULTURAL SOCIETY [Manchester]**

DELEGATE Ray Schwartz, 603-362-6106 or Prismsdad@aol.com

MEETINGS 2nd Monday of the month in Villa Crest Retirement Center

CLUB EMAIL editor@boaf.com

CLUB WEBSITE www.boaf.com

SHOW DATE Fall Show & Bird Mart: October 28, 2006

JUDGE Christine Voronovitch

SHOW LOCATION Wayfarer Convention Center, 121 South River Rd, Bedford, NH 03110

INFORMATION Ray Schwartz, 603-362-6106 or Prismsdad@aol.com

NEW YORK**ASTORIA BIRD CLUB (Brooklyn)**

DELEGATE Dan Griffin (917) 741-3124; email: dgriffi1@yahoo.com

SHOW/EVENT Bird Show - November 14, 2006

JUDGE TBA

LOCATION 9401 Seaview Avenue, Brooklyn, NY

CONTACT Dan Griffin (917) 741-3124; email: dgriffi1@yahoo.com

EMPIRE FINCH & CANARY CLUB [West Hempstead]

DELEGATE John Lund, (516) 564-4692; irmanperez@aol.com

MEETINGS 1st Thursday of month: 8:00 p.m., Averill Blvd Park, Elmont

SHOW/EVENT November 11, 2006; St. Mark's United Methodist Church, 200 Hempstead Ave, Rockville Center, NY 11570

NEW YORK FINCH & TYPE CANARY CLUB [New York]

DELEGATE Stan Kulak, (718) 967-6899; barstand@aaahawk.com

MEETINGS 2nd Sunday of month, except July & August

CLUB WEBSITE www.newyorkfinch.com

NORTH CAROLINA**RALEIGH-DURHAM CAGE BIRD SOCIETY [Raleigh]**

DELEGATE April Blazich, (919) 851-8079; aprilb@bellsouth.net

MEETINGS 3rd Sun/ month: Glen Eden Pilot Pk, Glen Eden Dr., Raleigh, NC

CLUB WEBSITE www.rdcbs.org

OREGON**EASTSIDE FINCH CONNECTION [Portland]**

DELEGATE KJ & Linda Brown, (503) 266-7606, JeepersPeepers55@aol.com
SHOW/EVENT Finch Show - November 11-12, 2006
JUDGE Julie Duimstra
LOCATION National Guard Armory, 500 NE Division St, Gresham, OR
CONTACT Linda Brown, 503-266-7606, JeepersPeepers55@aol.com

PUERTO RICO**ASOCIACION DE CRIADORES DE FINCHES DEL ESTE [Cagues]**

MEETINGS First Sunday of month
DELEGATE Victor Cordero, (787) 893-7723; denise805@hotmail.com

TENNESSEE**MIDDLE TENNESSEE CAGE BIRD CLUB [Nashville]**

DELEGATE Ninez Giles, 615-297-2281, nineze@juno.com
MEETINGS 3rd Sunday of month: 1:00 p.m., Donelson Senior Center, Donelson
CLUB WEBSITE www.middletennesseecagebirdclub.com

SOUTHEAST TENNESSEE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY

DELEGATE Susan Murphy - email: suern0909@bellsouth.net
SHOW/EVENT NFSS Region 2 Bird Show - Sept. 23-24, 2006
JUDGE Cecil Gunby & Annette Howard
LOCATION George R. Stuart School, 20th Street NW @ Keith Street, Cleveland, TN
CONTACT Lisa Murphy (423) 263-0483; wlmurphy@usit.net

TEXAS**ALAMO EXHIBITION BIRD CLUB INC. [New Braunfels]**

DELEGATE Tom Neeley, (210) 645-9125; president@aebc.org
MEETINGS 4th Sunday of month, 3:00 p.m.: Becker CPA Center
 8033 Pinebrook, San Antonio
CLUB WEBSITE www.aebc.org

FORT WORTH BIRD CLUB (Fort Worth)

DELEGATE Clarence Culwell - email: coculwell@myfam.com
CLUB E-MAIL janiceeandroy03@vearthlink.net
CLUB WEBSITE www.fwbs.org

TEXAS BIRD BREEDERS (Temple)

DELEGATE Clarence Culwell - email: coculwell@myfam.com
CLUB WEBSITE www.texasbirdbreeders.org
SHOW/EVENT Bird Show - November 4, 2006
JUDGE Paul Williams
LOCATION Mayborn Convention Center, Temple, TX
CONTACT Barbara Irwin (817) 572-6262

VIRGINIA

PENINSULA CAGED BIRD SOCIETY [Hampton]

DELEGATE Julie Mitchell, 757-898-8397, email: alna@cox.net

MEETINGS 3rd Sunday each month @ 2 pm, Thomas Nelson Community College, Moore Hall

CLUB WEBSITE www.birdclubsva.org

SHOWS/EVENTS Bird Marts - more info: www.birdclubsva.org
Annual Bird Clubs of Virginia Convention -
For more info: www.birdclubsva.org

WASHINGTON

CASCADE CANARY BREEDERS ASSOCIATION [Seattle]

DELEGATE Janel C. Johnson, (425) 226-8899; katbird57@aol.com

MEETINGS 3rd Sunday of month, 1:00 p.m.
Keppler's Feed: 16442 S.E. Renton-Issaquah Road, Renton

CLUB WEBSITE www.cascadecanarybreeders.org

SHOW/EVENT Nov. 25, 2006, Evergreen State Fairgrounds, Monroe, WA

WISCONSIN

CENTRAL WISCONSIN CAGE & WILD BIRD CONNECTION [Pittsville]

DELEGATE Darla Dandre, 708-699-5325, Dbirdranch@yahoo.com

MEETINGS 1st Saturday of month: alternating members' homes

CLUB WEBSITE <http://www.cwwcbc.us/bc> and
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/centralwisbirds/>



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NFSS AFFILIATION AGREEMENT

Please fill out this form in its entirety.

Club Name: _____
Club City: _____ State _____
Club Meeting Dates and Location: _____

Club Delegate to NFSS: _____
Address: _____
*Phone: _____ *Email: _____

Delegate's Signature: _____
Club Officer: _____

Address: _____
*Phone: _____ *Email: _____

Club Email: _____ Club website address: _____
Please indicate to whom we should mail the Journal.

Name: _____
Address: _____

Please list your club events to be posted in the NFSS Journal.
Event: _____

Date: _____ Location: _____
Contact: _____ Email: _____

(Please list additional info & events on another piece of paper)

SHOW INFORMATION

*Date: _____ Judge: _____

*Location & address: _____

*City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

*Show Manager: _____

*Phone: _____ *Email: _____

*Other Divisions: _____

REGIONAL SHOW APPLICATION

Is your club interested in hosting your area NFSS regional show this year?

YES ___ NO ___ Has your club ever hosted a regional show?

YES ___ NO ___ If YES, what year(s) _____ Date of your 2006 show _____

Why would you like to host an NFSS Regional show? _____

(*NFSS may use this information in the NFSS Journal and on its website.)

Affiliation Fee is 30.00 - Please make check payable to NFSS and mail to:

**NFSS AFFILIATIONS
C/O Douglas White
13013 311th Ave SE
Sultan, WA 98294**

Effective January 1, 2007, the price of bands will be increasing due to increased handling and merchandise costs. The new prices will be \$1.85 for a string of 10 plastic bands, and \$3.85 per string of 10 aluminum closed bands.

Split Plastic Band Colors: Light Green, Dk Green, White, Dark Pink, Red, Purple, Yellow, Orange, Light Blue, Dark Blue

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INDICATE QUANTITY AND COLOR BELOW THE SIZE**

XF	XCS	XCL	XB	X3	SUBTOTAL

New members may order before receiving their membership number. Orders are processed bi-weekly. Need bands fast? We have Pay Pal. Order on-line <http://NFSS.org>

Closed traceable aluminum bands are for NFSS MEMBERS ONLY. Aluminum bands are engraved with initials NFS, Size Code, Year and Number. There is no choice of number. All aluminum bands are recorded for permanent reference.

**ALUMINUM BANDS - \$3.25 Per String -10 Bands
INDICATE QUANTITY BELOW THE SIZE**

A	B	C	D	E	G	J	K	L	M	R	SUBTOTAL

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\$ 61.00 - \$100.00 = \$ 8.00

SUBTOTALS:

HANDLING:

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*INSURANCE

TOTAL:

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NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

E-MAIL or PHONE #: _____

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO NFSS E-Mail: pphanen@earthlink.net

MAIL TO: Paula Hansen, 2234 Juneau Court S., Salem, OR 97302

The National Finch & Softbill Society Guide to Ordering NFSS Closed Leg Bands

- Size A: Gold-breasted Waxbill, Orange-cheeked Waxbill, Owl (Bicheno) Finch, Quail Finch, Red-eared Waxbill, Strawberry Finch, and other small waxbills.
- Size B: Black-cheeked Waxbill, Cordon Bleu, Cuban Melodious Finch, Fire Finch, Olive Finch, Rufous-backed Mannikin, Timor Zebra, Peales Parrot Finch.
- Size C: B&W Mannikin, Violet Eared & Blue-capped Waxbills, Purple Grenadier, Bronze-winged Mannikin, Cherry Finch, Green Singing Finch, Grey Singing Finch, Heck's Shafttail, Lavender Finch, Painted Finch, Pileated Finch, Pytilias, Red-headed & Forbes (Blue-breasted) Parrot Finches, Shafttail Finch, Silverbills, Star Finch, Red Siskin, Society (Bengalese) Finch.
- Size D: Blue-faced Parrot Finch, Lady Gouldian Finch, Chestnut-breasted & most smaller mannikins, most other Parrot finches, Pictorella Finch, Pintailed Nonpareil, most Twinspots, Yellow-rumped Finch, Standard Zebra Finch.
- Size E: Black-crested Finch, Diamond sparrow, European Greenfinch, Golden Song Sparrow, Nuns, Peter's Twinspot, Siskins, Spice Finch, European Goldfinch, European Zebra.
- Size G: Magpie Mannikin, Siberian Goldfinch, most larger mannikins, small tanagers.
- Size J: Pekin Robin, Silver-eared Mesias, most small softbills.
- Size K: Java Rice Birds, Red-crested Cardinal, Saffron Finch, Shama Thrush
- Size L: Diamond Dove, Mousebirds, other small doves, quail, softbills.
- Size M: Leaf Birds, Pagoda Mynah, large Sunbirds, Superb Starlings.
- Size R: Green/Purple Starlings.
- Size S: Indian Hill Mynah, Java Mynah, Ring-necked Dove, Toucanettes, White-tailed Jay.
- Size T: Small Hornbills, Plush-capped Jay, small Toucans, small Touracos.

Banding instructions are included with each order.

Guide to Ordering Open Plastic Leg Bands

- Size XF: Cordon Bleu, Fire, Orange-Cheeked, Red-Eared, Lavender, Blue Capped Waxbills, Owl, Cherry, Green & Grey Singers, Painted, Hecks & Masked Grassfinch, Gouldian, Most Parrot Finches, Zebra, Bengalese (Society), Stars.
- Size XCS: Nuns, Cutthroats, Diamond Firetails (Diamond Sparrows), most Twinspots, Siskins, (Canaries - Gloster, Fife, Miniature & Fancy).
- Size XCL: Red Faced Pytilia, Pekin Robin, (Canaries - Roller, Borders, Lizard, Norwich, Yorkshire, Red Factor).
- Size XB: Indian Shama, Diamond Dove, Chinese Painted (Button) Quail, Budgies, Grass Parakeets.
- Size X3: Lovebirds, Rosellas, Many Softbills.

CLASSIFIED ADS

CLASSIFIED RATES: \$4.00/Issue (Up to four lines of text). Free Classifieds to NFSS Finch/Softbill Save Program Members. Contact: Gail Benson, 144 N Clyde Avenue, Palatine, Illinois 60067, Phone: (847) 963-1926, Email: gailsgouldians@comcast.net

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FOR SALE: Star Finches (yellow faced, normals and peds), Shafttails (normals and fawns), Diamond Firetails, Lady Gouldians, show Societies (chocolate, fawns and whites) all NFSS banded. Taking orders for Spring hatch. Will ship. E-mail: studioone@cox-internet.com Darrin Hill, Species captain, Star and Shafttail finch, Finch & Softbill Save, NFSS.

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FOR SALE: Baby Black-cheeked Zebra's - \$15.00 & reg. \$10. small time breeder, may have to put order in! WI area # 608-212-8933 Peggy

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NFSS FINCH/SOFTBILL SAVE Information/Application Request

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Country: _____

Phone #: _____ E-Mail: _____

Mail Request to:

Mr. Daniel Gonzales, P.O. Box 3238, Hialeah, FL 33013



Membership Application

Name: _____

Dual Membership 2nd Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Country: _____

Phone #: _____ E-mail: _____

New Member? _____ Renewal (List NFSS #) _____

How did you hear about us? _____

Membership Dues *(Select One)*

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3 Years:	\$85 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$99 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$99 <input type="checkbox"/>	
5 Years:	\$140 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$165 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$165 <input type="checkbox"/>	
Life:	\$1500 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$1740 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$1740 <input type="checkbox"/>	

Mail Application & Check Payable to NFSS:

NFSS - Ms. Brenda Josselet
145 Canyon Creek Court
Weatherford, Texas 76087
Phone: (817) 594-9402

Email: nfssmembership@sbcglobal.net

Tom Marley's Place by Paula Hansen

Tom Marley started with birds at 10 years old raising pigeons. At that time met a lady who had pure white pigeons, Tom explains, "Have you ever seen them? They are gorgeous looking birds." This person keep her birds in a coop in her yard. Tom wanted some of his own and use to catch wild pigeons up in the hay loft of the family barn. (Boy, I've written this earlier. Does this sound familiar?) Later at age 21 to 28 Tom switched to finches living in the San Gabriel Valley not far from Los Angelus. There mentored under a gentleman by the name of Don Rice mostly Australian finches. At age 28 to 29 moved to Salem, Oregon where he gradually increased his interest to aviaries, and flights. Of coarse coops for his doves and pigeons.

I personally met Tom Marley back in 1991 at a club meeting. Tom lived in my neighborhood a few years back and we would stop in and visit each others birds. Tom always had a flair for making his outside aviaries look fantastic and blended them nicely in the family yard and landscaping. A basic square Koi pond near by generating bugs for the finches with a fountain trickling sound to relax to. We held a few club aviary tours though his yard for club members to be inspired. Never a disappointed visit here. Then Tom relocated and moved to a new home further south of Salem which had a bigger piece of property.

Things happen for a reason and this move was good! Tom expanded again from past experiences building aviaries. Increasing on the size of his flights and aviaries. Tom estimates over 200 birds total. (I think not!) There's more than that! When you first approach Tom's yard you have to pass his beautiful home and very large koi pond. Yes, he expanded the pond too! Above the



pond is a gentle cascading waterfall which splashes down a 12' slope, with river rock surrounded by tastefully planted shrubs and flowers leading into a 12' long by 8' wide by 3' deep pond. Also nicely landscaped with river rock, plants and loaded with Koi. After tearing myself away from this restful spot, you will see a few structures above on the top of the hill above the waterfall. Oh yes, did I mention the pond has a fall and no longer a trickle?

First we approached a pair of timid Lady Ross Touracos. I've been to the Dallas Zoo and his place beats their breeding area! I've been close to Zoo exhibit sized birds before and was quite impressed with Tom's set-up(s). Next to the Touracos in a separate flight is a pair of tame Major Mitchells Cockatoos. Once you leave these birds you approach separate quarters for a pair of tame and beautiful Eclectus Parrots.



Moving along another separate enclosed dedicated indoor well planted aviary of Red Headed Parrot finches. I estimated seeing at least 12 pair.

From there we proceed on to the next separate structure attached to the last one, which consists of 36 individual flights measuring 3' wide by 10' long and 8' high on the the left. In the back of these 36 flights is a enclosed 4' wide X 8' high walkway it's a enclosed hall to service each of these flights. These flights contain pairs of Roselleas, Cloncurrays, and Barnard parrots. In front of the 36 flights but separated is a huge open aviary measuring approximately 20' wide

by 40' long by 16' high. The walk though aviary is larger than any Zoo exhibit I've ever seen! Well planted and stocked with trees, shrubs, flowering vines.



UGH! Gorgeous! Within this huge central aviary are Cape Doves, Seagreen and Blue Faced Parrot Finches, Lady Gouldians, Owl finches, Stars, Green Singers, Pintail Nonpareil, Blue Cap Waxbills, Diamond Sparrows, Canary and Pekin Robins and all breeding!

The space continues! To the right of this huge central aviary are 2 separate aviaries connected to this space but separate. Within those two aviaries I spotted Tambourine, Zebra and Green Wing Doves, Roul Roul Partridge (Oh their so cool looking), Turquosines and Scarlet Chested Grasskeets, and Button Quail.

Before leaving Tom, he took me to a coop of West-of-England Rollers another separate structure he recently built. Tom's has passion for birds and it is obvious. Each area that contains birds is well cared for, birds appear happy and so does Tom for that matter. There was plenty to see in the 2 hours I spent touring. Tom is selective of which birds he will purchase and under what type of husbandry the birds were kept prior. Keeping birds under sterile type conditions or regulated warm temperatures he feels is not healthy. Birds need space and exercise and varied temps throughout the year. I hope you enjoyed reading and viewing these photos as much as I've enjoyed my visit here!

Paula Hansen resides in great NW, Salem, Oregon. She has successfully breed many species of finches since her first club meeting in 1991. Paula also chairs the AFA Red Siskin Project since 2002. Paula is our NFSS Band Secretary and Board Member. She can be reached at pphanzen@earthlink.net

November 8th, 2006

Chief, Division of Migratory Bird Management
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
4401 North Fairfax Drive
Stop 4107, Arlington Va., 22203
Attn Please: Mr. John Trapp

Ref: D.O.I. USF&W Fed. Register 8-24-06 50 CFR part ten, RIN
1018-AB72, General provisions of the Revised List of
Migratory birds, (MTBA) in particular:
The *Eurasian Siskin* (*Carduelis spinus*);
The *Common Chaffinch* (*Fringilla coelebs*)

Dear Mr. Trapp

As third term president of the National Finch & Softbill Society (NFSS) I feel obligated to offer my studied comments on the proposal (above) to list birds (a) and (b) within the MBTA.

These species are NOT native to the United States nor do they migrate to or through U.S. territories. I could find no reported sightings of either of these birds in the U.S. We at NFSS are aware that some non-native species were accidentally released in Puerto Rico some years ago when an import or quarantine station had a major release accident. There are no reports the Siskin and Chaffinch were among those escapees, and are breeding, hence, possibly 'becoming' native species to U.S. Territories.

As it is, these birds are bred by very few U.S. hobbyists and others interested in captive breeding. For instance, current available information reveals that in 2003 NFSS annual census reported only two out of eight-hundred NFSS members registered working with the *Common Chaffinch* and the same two members registered working with the *Eurasian Siskin*. In 2005 the NFSS "Finch and Softbill Save Program" (designed to assist breeders and hobbyists in managing and exchanging bloodlines for purity) did not list any breeders working with or researching the Chaffinch or Siskin. In fact, only one *European* finch was registered as being worked with, and that was the *European Goldfinch* (*Carduelis carduelis*). A recent search of the literature, internet, ornithologist and Audobon listings did not indicate a single qualified sighting of either subject finches. All sightings we found were declared "not accepted, natural occurrence questionable." Another phrase "acci-

dental" (in Maine and Massachusetts) appears to accept that these birds do accidentally venture into Northern U.S. during migration, but do not settle. In view of this data, listing these birds under the act, and following through with the requirements of the act, appears to have no real lasting value.

Very Respectfully

Sally C. Huntington

Life member *American Federation of Aviculture*

Participating member of *Model Aviculture Program*

Member – *Zoological Association of America*

Life member and past president – *Finch Society of San Diego County*

Contributing author – *Hand Rearing Wild and Domestic Birds* (Chapter

- *Hand Rearing Foreign Finches*. Rebecca Duerr DVM/MPVM U.C.>

David School of Veterinary Medicine & Blackwell Publishing CO. In press for Spring 2007.

Cc: American Federation of Aviculture

Zoological Association of America publication editor

San Diego Zoo and Wild Animal Park

NFSS Journal Editor

Finch Society of San Diego County

AFA REQUESTS COMMENTS

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has recently published a request for public comments regarding a proposal to list 152 species of birds under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). The American Federation of Aviculture has issued a Position Statement opposing the listing of two species of finch, the Eurasian Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*) and the Common Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*). The Position Statement is based on the following biological and scientific data:

- These species are not native to the United States.
- These species are not migratory within the United States.
- These species are commonly kept and bred in captivity.
- Sightings of these species within the United States are considered rare and accidental.
- Listing of these species under the MBTA would constitute financial hardship to bird breeders, exhibitors at bird shows and commercial avian businesses.

AFA would like all organizations, aviculturists, avian business entities and bird show exhibitors that work with these species to please contact the U.S. Fish & Wildlife and express their comments. Their contact information is as follows:

By Fax at (703) 358-2272; or By e-mail to mbtabirdlist@fws.gov

In addition, hard copies should be mailed to:

Chief - Division of Migratory Bird Management
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
4401 North Fairfax Drive, Mail Stop 4107
Arlington, VA 22203.

Attention: Mr. John Trapp
Re: Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Federal Register August 24, 2006
50 CFR Part 10; RIN 1018-AB72
General Provisions; Revised List of Migratory Birds
Eurasian Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*)
Common Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)

AFA asks that anyone submitting comments also send a signed copy of their correspondence to AFA's Legislative Vice President at:

Sandee L. Molenda
Post Office Box 2547, Santa Cruz, CA 95063-2547
831-689-9534 (FAX)

AFA will be submitting these comments, along with scientific and biological data in report format to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Please note that time is of the essence in this matter as AFA requested and received a brief 15-day extension of time in which to respond.

If anyone has any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact the AFA Legislative Vice President, Sandee L. Molenda, at 831-688-5560, 831-689-9534 (FAX) or e-mail at sandee@parrotletranch.com



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