

**Journal of the**

# National Finch & Softbill Society

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## COVER PHOTO

### Fawn-cheeked Zebra Finch

*Taeniopygia guttata castanotis*

NFSS wants to thank Jim Heffernan of Emerald Isle Aviantries for sharing this photo of the two Fawn-cheeked Zebra finches shown on the cover. This is a mother and son, both bred by Jim. These birds have only been in the United States a few years and are still considered quite rare.

## NFSS IS PROUD TO BE AFFILIATED WITH

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



"When all else fails, read the instructions." I'm sure some of you are familiar with this, the first sentence in the manual for the Hovabator incubators. It's the print version of a comment Steve Payne repeated countless times as the finch-breeding community first began communicating online. Steve would reply, "Read a book." It wasn't just that he was impatient with the same questions from many beginning breeders, it was his way of directing those new breeders to a broader, more useful understanding of a complex subject, something he understood wouldn't happen if he attempted to answer question after question.

When we seek short simple answers we risk missing the opportunity to develop a broader understanding. We need to move from asking one successful breeder, "How should I cage, feed, and house this particular species?" to asking it of many successful breeders. It's generally not possible to do this in person, but by reading we can have our questions answered many different ways, each reflecting a specific breeder's aviary conditions and experiences with a species. Knowing what points are common to different but successful programs is the bedrock of creating your own success. Understanding the "what" and "why" of differences in successful programs is the sharp tool that allows you to adapt to your specific conditions. Details make a difference and the only way we can effectively communicate large numbers of details is by using the written word.



I like videos and pictures. I know that pictures transmit a kind of detailed information that words don't. Written descriptions of the Gouldian Finch can never have the impact of a good picture and even the finest pictures lack the impact of seeing a healthy, live Gouldian. No 45-minute video on the care and feeding of Gouldians comes close to delivering the amount of information in even a small book on the topic. There is a comparison that I think speaks to this difference. A one-hour television news program has approximately the same amount of content as a single column in the typical newspaper page. If asked to name one book I'd likely suggest Dr. A. F. Anderson Brown's *THE INCUBATION BOOK*. Let us hear about your favorite or most useful book on Finches. Let me know what books you would suggest that the beginning breeders read and I'll publish the responses here. It's not that you can't succeed without reading. It is certainly a less likely outcome.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

We have a new Editor! Gerta Noble has volunteered to serve as NFSS Journal Editor. She has previous publishing experience as editor of numerous books and publications, including the Society of Parrot Breeders and Exhibitors Journal. Editing the NFSS Journal is a big job that is made much easier on the editor and more valuable to our members when we share our experiences, writing them down and submitting them for publication.

Included in this issue is a Special Election Ballot for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President. Please take time to submit your ballot.

The 2012 National Cage Bird Show this year is in St. Louis, Missouri, Thursday November 15 thru Saturday November 17, 2012 at the Millennium Hotel in St. Louis. I hope to see you there.

John Wilson  
President NFSS

# NATIONAL FINCH & SOFTBILL SOCIETY

## SPECIAL ELECTION BALLOT

### NFSS Membership Number

This must be included or the ballot will not be counted

Dual members will have one (1) vote for each member  
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<b>2<sup>ND</sup> VICE PRESIDENT</b>
--------------------------------------

Barbara Jaquez

Write-in Candidate \_\_\_\_\_

### MAIL BALLOTS TO

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## TREATING SMALL BIRDS FOR ILLNESS AND SHOCK

*by Ron Castaner*

Former NFSS President  
AFA South Florida Regional Director  
E-mail: [finches@bellsouth.net](mailto:finches@bellsouth.net)

**K**nowing how to act swiftly may save the life of your bird. A bird that is sick or in shock is a difficult problem. In the wild, sick birds masquerade symptoms of their illness so as not to be ostracized by the remainder of the flock. This is instinctive behavior developed through many generations because single or isolated birds without the support of the flock have a much higher mortality rate. Therefore, even in captivity this behavior holds over.

When a bird owner eventually realizes there might be a problem the illness may have already progressed to the point where it is quite serious. Consequently, it becomes necessary to accurately diagnose the illness and to act quickly to mitigate the seriousness of the problem. If the situation is not addressed quickly, one might find themselves facing a life or death dilemma. Swift and knowledgeable action may save the life of a sick bird.

It is possible and perhaps probable that all bird-keepers will have sick birds at one time or another. We should be prepared with the necessities, both in terms of knowledge and equipment. A basic reference book on "avian first aid" can be very useful. There are several good ones on the market. Do some research about your particular birds and ask fellow enthusiasts for their advice if you suspect a problem. We should always support one another and exchange information in these situations to save our beautiful friends.

### **NOTICEABLE CHARACTERISTICS**

Generally, there are two noticeable and frequently exhibited characteristics which may indicate a bird is sick or in shock. The first symptom is a fluffed-up appearance: the feathers are not tight to the body. By "fluffing up," they increase the insulating properties of their feathers and reduce heat loss from their body. You may notice the head tucked into the back. The eyes may appear

smaller but the pupils will appear dilated (wide open). This gives the look of a vacant gaze. The breathing may also be very shallow (the bird runs out of breath quickly).

A sick bird will lose stamina and energy quickly and the first rule of thumb is to keep the bird warm. A reduced body temperature will inhibit the chance of survival and anything that can be done to stabilize or increase body temperature will be of great benefit.

Sick birds will also demonstrate a lack of interest in food. No food, no fuel and this exacerbates the decrease in the body temperature. Remember that birds have a high metabolic rate and if they are not eating, they are not producing the energy necessary to keep warm. By keeping the bird in a warm environment you are helping it to conserve energy. That energy can be used for other more pressing needs, such as healing or surviving until an avian veterinarian can be located.

### **BE PREPARED!**

Bird-keepers should have an infirmary cage available at all times. You should situate it in a quiet location. It should be of the proper temperature with a suitable amount of humidity. It should be dimly lit. Some people have used fish aquariums with towels placed on the bottom for comfort and to help retain the heat. Many others have taken breeding cages and covered them with towels to maintain the proper temperature. Of course, there are commercially made brooders, which are constructed specifically for this purpose. They contain a heating element and thermostat, so the temperature can be precisely adjusted. Many are insulated to maintain a steady temperature. These brooders work exceptionally well as infirmaries and are ideal for smaller birds.

When in use, maintain the temperature of the infirmary cage at 82°-89° Fahrenheit. If possible, check with your avian veterinarian as to the most optimal temperature conditions for your particular type of bird. Heating devices for the enclosure can vary. It is possible to use an incandescent light bulb (preferably colored to minimize the brightness). You might consider placing a heating pad on the bottom of the cage (it's a good idea to cover it with a cloth hand-towel).

Cover all three sides of the cage to retain the heat in the enclosure. Place a humidity and temperature gauge inside the cage. If using a heat lamp, it should be placed either in the middle of the cage or towards the bottom. Be certain that the bulb in the heat lamp is not Teflon-coated as the chemical within that Teflon coating can easily kill birds. Be certain the birds cannot come into direct contact with the heating bulb. Use common sense and a bit of ingenuity and you can create a "bird hospital" for a very reasonable cost.

#### **MAINTAINING PROPER HUMIDITY**

Dry heat can dehydrate a bird, so keep the humidity about 75-80 percent. The best way to do this is to keep a small saucer of water in the cage. If you need to increase the humidity, place a larger dish or container with water in one corner. Cover the top of the dish with a piece of window screen and secure the edges with a string, rubber band, or duct tape. We don't want the bird to fall into the water and drown. There is frequently a tray, which holds water in a special compartment in the commercial models.

Secure a perch just a few inches from the bottom of the cage so it is easier for the bird to step up to perch. Place another perch in the middle of the cage and situate it a bit higher. It is a good idea for the perch to be in line with the heating element so the bird is able to move to and from the heat, making the perch long enough within the enclosure so this might be accomplished. If the bird is not perching, it might be a good idea to place a soft, folded towel on the bottom of the cage. This will make the bird more comfortable, keep the cage warmer, and give the small feet something to grip on.

It's very important to put small shallow dishes of seed and fresh water on the infirmary cage floor. Shallow dishes make accessibility easier, especially if the birds are not perching. Do not offer any fruit, vegetable, and grits to the bird. Often times it is beneficial to have the mate of the sick bird accompany it into the "infirmary".

If there isn't a mate, place a society or companion bird with it for company. There may be some solace and comfort in having a buddy. Do not examine the bird at this point.

Several other important points: Do not handle the bird for any extended period of time when it is in a stage of shock. Most importantly, do not force-feed or give oral medications at this point as they could possibly choke and kill the bird.

#### **CHANCES FOR SURVIVAL**

Obviously, the sooner you can get the bird to the vet's office the better the chances for survival. If this is not possible, at least call a veterinarian for advice. Most likely, they will suggest that you bring the sick bird to the clinic but most or all will offer their best suggestions in an emergency situation. If the bird doesn't show any signs of improvement after 8 to 12 hours you should try by all means possible to secure an appointment for the sick bird.

If the injury is not totally traumatic, and if it is simply a case of shock caused by whatever reason, you often see an improvement in 8 to 12 hours. If the bird begins to eat, starts to perch and loses that fluffed-up look, you are well on your way to recovery. At that point a closer examination may be in order to see what caused the symptoms in the first place.

In conclusion, if the bird seems injured or in shock, the first thing to do is to isolate it and keep it warm and quiet. If there are obvious signs of trauma, take it to your veterinarian as quickly as possible. If the illness is a mystery, it is always a good idea to try and discover what caused it. Your veterinarian will wish to do a physical exam and perform a few tests. These may include a blood panel.

Remember that it is crucial to act quickly and to address the problem, the sooner you act the better the chances for survival. Preventive medicine is often the best medicine and it certainly is of the great benefit to be prepared for the time when an emergency does occur.



#### **CITES I List**

##### **RED SISKIN, *Carduelis cucullata***

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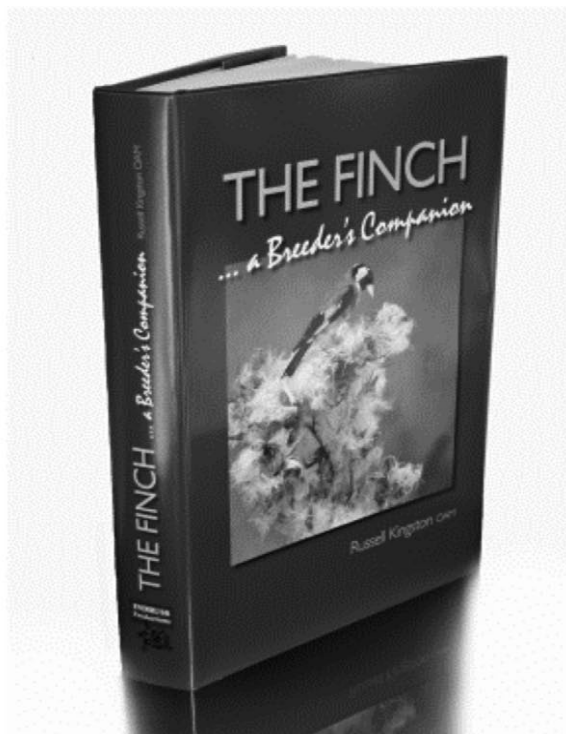
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## The Lowe's Aviary

*by John Paul Kilmer*

John Paul Kilmer has been hooked on birds since he got his first pair of zebra finches in a college dorm room. Over the years he has kept a variety of finches and softbills, including Gouldians, parrot finches, owl finches, honeycreepers, tanagers, and several African starling species. He currently works as a traveling occupational therapist which helps keep his bird hobby under control. He welcomes correspondence with others regarding bird husbandry. E-mail: [cellofellow\\_8@hotmail.com](mailto:cellofellow_8@hotmail.com)



**M**y career involves traveling across the United States for short-term health-care assignments lasting several months at a time. I have worked in Idaho, Texas, California, and Washington. Since I can't give up my bird habit altogether, I always travel with a few finches, softbills, or canaries, and I try to set them up for breeding while I'm on a work assignment. Throw a bird show or two in the mix (you know the routine—money burning a hole in the pocket, travel cage just yearning to be filled with finches), and a few flying friends can become many in no time. All this has necessitated my personal

development of the Lowe's Aviary (see picture on previous page). The name is dubbed because all the parts are readily available at Lowe's hardware stores. The aviary is cost-effective, easily cleaned and moved, and when not in use, can be collapsed into simple, stackable flat boards for easy storage. Most bird enthusiasts don't travel for work, but we all know what it's like to suddenly triple our aviary populations by the end of the breeding season. Help! Where do I house all the extra birds? Lowe's Aviary to the rescue!

I have always maintained that captive birds are the happiest with lots of room to fly. The bigger the cage, the better—particularly for young birds developing flight muscles and body mass. Additionally, horizontal flight room is invaluable. Most cages available on the market create vertical space (great for climbing birds such as budgies) but offer poor dimensions for horizontal flyers such as finches and canaries. The Lowe's Aviary allows bird fanciers to set up large, roomy flights anywhere in a home or shop for temporary or permanent use. As a rule, I do not recommend the Lowe's Aviary for out-of-doors. It would be too easy for birds to escape and the design is not meant to withstand heavy weather or predators.

A six-panel aviary measuring roughly 72" long by 38" wide by 81" tall can be put together in the matter of an afternoon and costs roughly \$230 for supplies. Not bad when you consider the cost of flights of comparable size. So, what are you waiting for? Let's build it!

I'll begin with a description of the floor and work from the ground up. I like interlocking mats to create a soft, even, yet portable surface (the aviary can be moved by dragging the flooring beneath it). The mats can be placed on any type of surface, including carpet, and create a protective barrier between the aviary substrate and floor. I use 2'x2' Soft Linking Mats (item #295099) for the job. I needed two sets for my aviary with plenty of overlap on all sides, creating an area over 8'x4' on which to rest the aviary itself. A plastic drop cloth is used (be sure to get 2 mil or greater in thickness) on top of this for a moisture barrier (item #228558 is 9'x12' and is more than sufficient for the job). I staple the plastic edges up approximately 2" on the inside walls of the aviary to create an area to pour corncob substrate for the aviary floor.

The walls and door of the aviary are made from six 36"-wide T-bar wood screen doors, available for less than \$20 apiece (item #095343. Yes, there are still a few bargains in America). While some may choose to simply keep the screen on the doors as aviary walls, I find it is too easy for birds to get the sharp tips of their claws caught in the fine mesh. Moreover, it is very hard to thoroughly clean droppings off the screen. I use each screen door as a framework, but remove the screen and staple  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch hardware plastic cloth, purchased in a 36"-wide roll (item #157763) to the back of each door.

Plastic mesh is less expensive and easier to work with than wire mesh. It is also easy to cut holes in the mesh to accommodate perches, water bottles, or nest box openings. One drawback of using  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch plastic mesh is that the barring is a little heavy, making bird viewing slightly difficult, but I have found that although it initially disturbed me, I have gotten used to it, and now can look past the mesh without it affecting my enjoyment of the birds.

Should you not wish to make all sides of the aviary see-through, I suggest stapling a light outdoor carpeting material to the T-bar wood screen door frames to form walls. Outdoor carpeting is inexpensive, easily cleaned/ replaced, and birds can cling to the carpet and enjoy picking at it with their beaks. A drawback of outdoor carpeting is that it is difficult to attach perches to the walls in a sturdy manner.

For each long side of the aviary, I attach two T-bar screen doors side-by-side using 2" mending braces and screws. It's best to place mending braces on several locations on both sides of the side-by-side T-bar screen doors to ensure they will hold together securely. The T-bar door not used as an entrance door (the closed end of the aviary) is attached to the long sides with corner braces (get at least  $\frac{3}{4}$ " and  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " long is even more ideal). The other end of the aviary acts as the entrance door, and this T-bar screen door can be held in place with standard hinges (at least  $1\frac{1}{2}$ "x $1\frac{1}{4}$ "). Before placing the hinges on the door, be sure you rest the base on a piece of cardboard so the door will be slightly lifted when the hinges are mounted, and thus will swing easily instead of scraping the floor when it opens. To hold the door closed, I use a 2" window bolt or other similar hardware item.

As every breeder knows, large aviary doors spell hazardous escape routes! To cheaply solve this problem, I purchase a 36"-wide roll of screen door material, weight the bottom, and hang it just inside the door of the aviary. When I open the aviary door, I can reach around the free-hanging screen to fill food and water dishes, but the screen acts as a barrier against escapes. I can even leave the aviary door wide open while walking to and from the sink to clean food and water dishes with little concern of escapes.

A number of options exist for covering the top of the aviary. You can purchase a seventh T-bar screen door and simply attach it to the top of the aviary with mending braces. This is probably the simplest and most time-effective method. However, as I desire to let as much light as possible through the aviary ceiling, I use a roll of  $\frac{1}{2}$ " galvanized hardware cloth wire (item #92202) stapled to the top of the aviary.

For supplemental full-spectrum fluorescent lighting over the aviary, I lay two 1"x2" boards crossways over the top (slightly overhanging the sides) and place full spectrum hoods over the supporting boards so the weight of the lights will not cause the aviary ceiling to sag.

A few words on accessories: I've found zip ties to be extremely helpful for securing a variety of items within the Lowe's Aviary: perches, drinking bottles, nest boxes, cuttlebone, etc. Zip ties are sturdy, yet easily cut with scissors when you no longer need them. You can pick up a pack of varying zip tie lengths in the electrical section at Lowe's.

Additionally, an easy way to keep food containers up off the ground is to place them on portable white wire shelving units, available in the kitchen/ storage area at Lowe's. If you wish to add live potted plants to your aviary, I've found a good way to keep the pots up off the floor is to use the T-bar portion of each wood door frame as a support system to rest wood slats positioned diagonally across the corner of the aviary. This creates an appropriate support platform for potted plants. A small hole cut in the plastic mesh next to the pot acts as an entrance for the narrow spout of a watering can. Thus, you do not have to enter the aviary to water your plants.

## The Lowe's Flight Cage



For those who may not have room for an entire aviary, I've found that a flight cage built from two T-bar screen doors lying on their sides can be easily constructed. The advantage to a flight cage is that it takes up less room while still allowing an excellent horizontal flight path for the birds—nearly seven feet of flight room. You will need plenty of table or counter space to accommodate a flight cage.

Alternatively, I suspect it would be fairly easy to build a wood frame out of 2"x4" lumber that would hold several flight cages in a stacked unit format. For the flight cage floor, I use the same Soft Linking Mats and plastic liner that are used for the aviary floor.

The two side-lying screen doors are held upright, and 18" apart, by stapling lightweight poplar wood slats (.25"x1.5"x24", item #9366) at approximately 2-foot intervals along the top of the cage, as well as the base of each end of the flight cage. Since the flight cage is very long, it's important to be able to reach into the cage from either end

for cleaning and to catch birds. I use a simple screen door system using pre-fabricated 18" adjustable window screens (item #5361).

These screens extend up to 37" and are hung at each end of the flight cage by fishing line. The fishing line is fine enough to fit through the screen mesh, yet holds the door in place securely. The screen extends to the bottom of the flight cage and is held in place by the wood slat at the base. Each door is easily lifted up and out on its fishing-line "hinges" to access the inside of the flight cage (see photograph on previous page). The top of the flight cage is covered with wire or plastic mesh.

My birds love the extra room the flight cage and aviary provides. The parrot finches were extremely skittish in small cages but have settled right down in the larger space and no longer bounce about frantically when I come near. It's become a joy to watch their natural behavior.



## Did you know . . .

The Bali Mynah (*Leucopsar rothschildi*), also known as the Rothschild's Mynah, is one of the rarest birds in the world. This magnificent white bird has black-tipped wings and tail, and sports a droopy crest. Most noticeable is the bare blue patch around its eyes. It is believed its numbers have dwindled to about 30 remaining in the wild.



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**[www.savethegouldian.org](http://www.savethegouldian.org)**



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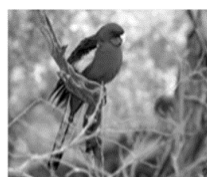
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**NOTE:** If you are an Affiliated Club and need to revise your information, please contact the NFSS Affiliations Director, Jody Lewis, or the editor.

**ALABAMA**

**Central Alabama Aviculture Society, Montgomery**

President: Ted Sexton, 1967 Ragan Chapel Road, Ohatchee, AL, 36271.  
 256-892-3072; [tedsexton@bellsouth.net](mailto:tedsexton@bellsouth.net). **Meetings:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday, 2-4 pm.,  
 Montgomery Zoo, Montgomery Educational Dept., Montgomery, AL.  
<http://www.caasociety.com>

**CALIFORNIA**

**Avicultural Society of America**

Steve Duncan, PO Box 3161, San Dimas, CA 91773. Founded in 1927, this is the oldest aviculture society in the United States.  
<http://www.asabirds.org/home.html>

**Central California Cage Bird Club, Modesto**

Janna Place, 209-862-3792. **Meetings:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, Mancini Hall Modesto,  
 718 Tuolumne Blvd., Stanislaus, CA 95351. <http://www.mycccbc.org>

**CALIFORNIA [continued]****Finch Society of San Diego**

Sally Huntington, 5634 Carnegie St., San Diego, CA 92122. 858-452-9423;  
*sdfinchsociety@gmail.com*. **Meetings:** 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday, 2-4 P.M., Poway Elks Club,  
 13219 Poway Road, Poway, CA 92064; 1/22, 2/26, 3/25, 4/22, 5/27, 6/24, 7/22,  
 8/26, 9/23, 8/28, 10/28, 12/2. <http://www.finchsocietyofsandiego.com>

**Santa Clara Bird Club**

Cecile Aguilera, PO Box 3466, Santa Clara, CA 95055; 408-716-7776;  
*showinfo@santaclarabirdclub.org*. **Meetings:** Sunday, noon.  
<http://www.santaclarabirdclub.org>

**West Coast Zebra & Society Finch Show, Sacramento**

Richard Renshaw, 247 Grandridge Ct., Ventura, CA 93003; 805-644-4156;  
*rrenshaw@yahoo.com*. No club meetings, show committee meeting in July.

**FLORIDA****Colorbred Canary Club of Miami**

Nora Trincado, PO Box 441261, Miami, FL 33144-1261; 305-720-4798;  
*threefox21@aol.com*; Armondo Lee, 2825 SW 36 Terrace Cape, FL;  
 239-462-2998. *ALEE21@comcast.net*,  
<http://www.colorbredcanaryclubofmiami.com>

**Suncoast Canary & Finch Club, Port Charlotte**

Alexander Villarreal, 1419 Collinswood Blvd., Port Charlotte, FL. **Meetings:** 7 p.m.,  
 Wednesdays. *vetagator@yahoo.com*.

**Treasure Coast Exotic Bird Club, Stuart**

Tim McCormick, 1425 SE Appomattox Terr., Port Salerno, FL. **Meetings:** 1 p.m.,  
 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday, Port Salerno Civic Center, 4950 Anchor Ave, Stuart, FL.  
<http://www.tcexoticbirdclub.com>

**Tri-State Avian Society, Tallahassee**

Barry Laster, 10508 Lake Lamonía Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312. 850-364-4666;  
*barryL7523@comcast.net*. **Quarterly Meetings:** Gentle Shepherd Metropolitan  
 Comm. Church, 4738 Thomasville Road, Tallahassee, FL.  
<http://www.tristateaviansociety.org>

**ILLINOIS****Greater Chicago Cage Bird Club, Chicago**

Robert Wild, 305 Grosvenor Ct., Bolingbrook, IL 60440; 630-980-4416.  
*wild@comcast.net*. Contact: *secretary@gccbc.org*. **Meetings:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday, **except**  
 Nov. and Dec., at Yorkfield Civic Center, 15W354 Lexington St., Elmhurst, IL,  
 60126. <http://www.gccbc.org>

**ILLINOIS [continued]****Heart of Illinois Bird Club, Peoria Metro Area (Pekin)**

Jody Lewis, 309-645-7773, [balu716@yahoo.com](mailto:balu716@yahoo.com). **Meetings:** 2 p.m., 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday (unless holiday), Avanti's Dome, 3401 Griffin Ave., Pekin, IL 61554.  
<http://www.hoibirdclub.org>

**National Institute of Red Orange Canaries (NIROC), Westchester**

President: Joaquin Torres. 312-259-2779, [jtorres@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jtorres@sbcglobal.net). Joel Wojotowicz, 708-352-9319, [cwojto8877@aol.com](mailto:cwojto8877@aol.com). **Meetings:** 7 p.m., 4<sup>th</sup> Friday, Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1101 Manchester Ave. Westchester, IL 60154. No meetings August or November. <http://www.niroc.org>

**Finch & Softbill Breeders & Exhibitors Club, Chicago**

President: Bob Peers, 525 W. 61<sup>st</sup> St., Apt D, Westmont, IL 60559; 630-740-7389. [r.peers@comcast.net](mailto:r.peers@comcast.net). NFSS Delegate: Gail Benson, 44 N. Clyde Ave., Palatine, IL 60067-0912, [gailsgouldians@comcast.net](mailto:gailsgouldians@comcast.net). **Meetings:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday.

**Illini Bird Fanciers, Springfield**

Contact: Karen Williams, 217-391-4648. **Meetings:** Little Flower Quonset Building, 800 Stevenson Dr., Springfield, IL <http://www.illinibirdfanciers.com>

**IOWA****Mid America Cage Bird Society, Des Moines**

President: John Thielking, 8209 Twana Dr., Urbandale, IA 50322-1522; 239-851-8132. [Thielking@Iowalink.com](mailto:Thielking@Iowalink.com) **Meetings:** 2-5 p.m., 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday, Swartz Room, Des Moines Botanical Center, 909 Robert D Ray Dr, Polk, IA 50316. **Exceptions:** fairs are held in March, May, and August; no meetings November, December. Holiday party, 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of December. Check calendar for dates and times. <http://www.gkcas.org> <http://www.MACBS.org>

**KENTUCKY****Bluegrass Bird Breeders, Shepherdsville**

Josh Perkins, 2631 Zoneton Road, Shepherdsville, KY 40165; 270-234-4176, [perkinstiels@yahoo.com](mailto:perkinstiels@yahoo.com). NFSS Delegate: Christine Orowitz, 1776 Walter Boone Road, Rineyville, KY 40162. [chrisbirdsnthings@gmail.com](mailto:chrisbirdsnthings@gmail.com).

**MARYLAND****Maryland All Canary Club, Baltimore**

Richard Drought, 4513 Salem Bottom Road, Westminster, MA 21157-7939; 410-875-9417. [rmdrought@yahoo.com](mailto:rmdrought@yahoo.com). NFSS Delegate: Jonathan Smith, 1849 Westwind Way, VA 22102-1611. **Meetings:** Quarterly, 2 p.m. (check website), 8112 Bon Air Road, Baltimore, MD 21234. Check website. <http://www.mdallcanary.org>



**MARYLAND [continued]****Baltimore Bird Fanciers, Baltimore**

Christine Roberts, 11 Prettyboy Garth, Parkton, MD 21120' 410-343-1807, [compteacher@yahoo.com](mailto:compteacher@yahoo.com). NFSS Delegate: Ray Reter, 10310-L Malcolm Cir., Cockeysville, MD 21030; [info@baltimorebirdfanciers.org](mailto:info@baltimorebirdfanciers.org). **Meetings:** 2 p.m., 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, Towson Library, 320 York Road, Baltimore, MD 21204-5179. <http://www.baltimorebirdfanciers.org>

**MICHIGAN****Society of Canary & Finch Breeders of Michigan, Livonia**

Jim Heffernan, 780 Fairwood St., Inkster, MI; 48141, 313-247-5900. [tielnmore@aol.com](mailto:tielnmore@aol.com). **Meetings:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday. Location varies, please call. <http://www.scfbmichigan.com>

**MISSOURI****Gateway Parrot Club, Kirkwood**

Christine A. Kinkade, 2412 Angela Dr., High Ridge, MO 63049; 636-343-8097, [President@GatewayParrotClub.org](mailto:President@GatewayParrotClub.org). **Meetings:** 2 p.m., 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, Kirkwood Community Center, 111 S. Geyer Road, St. Louis, MO 63122. **Exceptions:** no meetings June 10, Sept 19, Dec. 9 (second Sunday), and August. <http://www.gatewayparrotclub.org>

**Greater Kansas City Avicultural Society, Grandview**

Clay Behrman, 3523 NE 49th St., Kansas City, MO 64119; 816-217-7263, [birdman79@live.com](mailto:birdman79@live.com). NFSS Delegate: Anthony Day, 1608 S Crane, Independence, MO 64055; 816-252-1120. [dayforthebirds@aol.com](mailto:dayforthebirds@aol.com). **Meetings:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday, Coronation of Our Lady Church, 13000 Bennington, Grandview, MO 64030. <http://www.gkcas.org>

**NEW HAMPSHIRE****Birds of a Feather Avicultural Society, Manchester**

Ray Schwartz, 19 Olde Common Dr., Atkinson, NH 03811; 603-362-6106; [President@BOAF.com](mailto:President@BOAF.com). Contact: [member.support@BOAF.com](mailto:member.support@BOAF.com), **Meetings:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday. <http://www.boaf.com>

**NEW YORK****Kings County Canary Club, Brooklyn**

Kathleen Guise Schaefer, 5 Frank Ct., Brooklyn, NY 11229; 718-332-3413, [kanarykate@aol.com](mailto:kanarykate@aol.com), **Meetings:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, 5 Frank Ct., Brooklyn, NY 11229.

**New York Finch & Type Canary Club, New York**

Stan Kulak, 17 Pembroke Loop, Staten Island, NY 10309; 718-967-6899, **Meetings:** 1-4 p.m., 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday, except July and August. [barstand@verizon.net](mailto:barstand@verizon.net).

**OREGON****Columbia Canary Club, Portland**

Linda K Brown, 3258 Oakcrest Dr. NW, Salem, OR 97304; 503-266-7606,  
*jeeperspeepers55@aol.com*. **Meetings:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday, Milwaukie Grange Hall, 12015  
 SE 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Milwaukie, OR. <http://www.columbiacanaryclub.com>

**PUERTO RICO****Asociacion de Criadores de Finces Inc.**

Juan Alicea, 12203 Urb Serenna, Los Prados, Apt. L-302, Caguas, PR 00727;  
 787-479-7405. *juanalicea@yahoo.com*. **Meetings:** 7 p.m., Tuesday, Las Catalina's  
 Mall, Food Court Area. [http://www.facebook.com/pages/Asociacion-de-  
 Criadores-de-Finches/170742106273049](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Asociacion-de-Criadores-de-Finches/170742106273049)

**Puerto Rico Finch Club, Guraba**

Jorge Mojica, Urb Lomas del Sol, 175 Calle Acuario, Gurabo, PR 00778-8930;  
 787-550-3163, *puchosbirds@yahoo.com*. NFSS Delegate: Alejandro Santana,  
 Villa Carolina c/82 bldg 108-29, Carolina, PR00985. 787-309-0964.  
*alexdeskjet\_2012@hotmail.com*. **Meetings:** Wednesday, Caguas in Plaza Centro  
 Mall Caguas, Caguas, Puerto Rico. <http://www.przfc.com>

**RHODE ISLAND****Northeast Bird Group, Scituate**

Donna Rosciti, PO Box 50, North Scituate, RI 02857; 401-641-0994,  
*donna@rosciti.com*, <http://www.northeastbirdgroup.com>

**TENNESSEE****Heart of Tennessee Aviculture Society, Murfreesboro**

Lisa Murphy, 918 Georgia Ave, Etowah, TN 37331. 423-263-0483;  
*wlmurphy@usit.net*. **Meetings:** 6 p.m., every 4<sup>th</sup> Friday, 1954 S. Church St.,  
 Murfreesboro, TN. 37130. <http://www.heartoftnavculturesociety.com>

**TEXAS****Texas Bird Breeders & Fanciers Association, Arlington**

Clarence Culwell, 4211 Kelly Elliott Road, Arlington, TX 76016-4607;  
 817-220-5568. *coculwell@verizon.net*. <http://www.texasbirdbreeders.org>

**Fort Worth Bird Club, Fort Worth** **Meetings:** 2 p.m., 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday, Fort Worth  
 Botanical Garden Center, 3220 University Dr. (north of Interstate-30 in Fort  
 Worth). <http://www.fwbc.org>

**VIRGINIA****Peninsula Caged Bird Society, Newport News**

Deb Wilson, 709 Paul St., Newport News, VA 23605; *dwilson789@aol.com*.  
 NFSS Delegate: Peggy Duvall, 212 E 39th St., Norfolk, VA 23504; 757-623-  
 4786, *finchbreeder@earthlink.net*. **Meetings:** 2:30-5 p.m., 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, Columbian  
 Center, 12742 Nettles Dr., Newport News, VA 23606. <http://www.vapcbs.com>

**WASHINGTON****Cascade Canary Breeders Association, Issagna**

Brian Johansson 208 155th PL SE, Mill Creek, WA 98012; 425-743-5025,  
*coleenandersen@gmail.com*. **Meetings:** 1 p.m., 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, 145 NE Gilmon Blvd.,  
 Issagna, WA 95027. **Exception:** no meetings on holidays.  
<http://www.cascadecanary.com>

**WISCONSIN****Central Wisconsin Cage & Wild Bird Connection**

**Meetings:** Monthly, usually held at members homes. Contact: Marlene Minor,  
*mminor@tds.net*, 715-884-2659.

**REGIONAL/NATIONAL AFFILIATES****American Dove Association, Frederick, Maryland**

President: James Kell, <http://www.doveline.com>

**Avicultural Society of America**

Steve Duncan, PO Box 3161, San Dimas, CA 91773. Founded in 1927, this is the  
 oldest aviculture society in the United States.  
<http://www.asabirds.org/home.html>

**National Institute of Red Orange Canaries (NIROC), Westchester**

President: Joaquin Torres. 312-259-2779, *jtorres@sbcglobal.net*. Joel  
 Wojotowicz, 708-352-9319, *cwojto8877@aol.com*. **Meetings:** 7 p.m., 4<sup>th</sup> Friday,  
 Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1101 Manchester Ave. Westchester, IL  
 60154. No meetings August and November. <http://www.niroc.org>

**West Coast Zebra & Society Finch Show, Sacramento**

Richard Renshaw, 247 Grandridge Ct., Ventura, CA 93003; 805-644-4156,  
*rrenshaw@yahoo.com*. No club meetings. One show committee meeting in July.  
<http://www.efinch.com/show>

**INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATES****CANADA****Durham Aviculture Society of Ontario**

PO Box 4, Pickering, ON L1V 2R2. **Meetings:** 7:30 p.m., 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday. (no  
 meetings July or August), Rotary Park Pavilion, South Side of Lake, 151 Driveway  
 West, Ajax, ON. (If the entrance is dark, it is across from house #150.)

**Canadian Finch & Softbill Society, Ontario**

Vince Moase, 1078 Roundelay Ct., Oshawa, ON L1J 7R7 Canada; 905-723-1978,  
*vmoase@rogers.com*

**CANADA [continued]****Essex-Kent Cage Bird Society**

Windsor, Ontario, Canada, 519-948-6398, [julianne@mnsi.net](mailto:julianne@mnsi.net),  
<http://www.essexkentcbs.com>.

**UNITED KINGDOM****Foreign Bird League, Tividale, Oldbury, West Midlands**

Bryan Reed, 4, St Andrews Drive, Tividale, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 1PR.  
 Phone: 01384 258154. <http://www.foreignbirdleague.com>

**2012 NFSS AFFILIATED CLUB EVENTS**

**AFFILIATIONS AWARDS DIRECTOR: JODY LEWIS**  
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[affiliationsdirector@nfss.org](mailto:affiliationsdirector@nfss.org)

If you are an NFSS Affiliated Club and need to revise your information, please contact Jody Lewis, NFSS Affiliations Awards Director.

**JULY 18, 2012****Greater Kansas City Avicultural Society • Grandview, MO**

Mo-Kan Cage Bird Club Summer Bird Fair: 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Executive Center, 910 W. Battlefield, Springfield, MO. \$4, Under 6, free. Contact Ramona, 620-856- 5108 or Brian 417-619-2216. <http://www.gkcas.org>

**JULY 28, 2012****West Coast Zebra & Society Finch Show • Sacramento, CA**

Annual West Coast Zebra & Society Finch Show: La Quinta Inn Downtown Sacramento, 200 Jibboom St., Sacramento, CA; <http://www.efinch.com/show>

**JULY 31, 2012****Greater Kansas City Avicultural Society • Independence, MO**

Annual Bird Fair: 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Sermon Center, Independence, MO, \$5. Contact: Leisa, 816-806-7313. <http://www.gkcas.org>

**AUGUST 21, 2012****Greater Kansas City Avicultural Society • Kansas City, MO**

GKCAS Summer Bird Fair: 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Hilton Garden, 19677 E. Jackson Dr., Independence, MO. <http://www.gkcas.org>

**AUGUST 22, 2012****Mid America Cage Bird Society • Des Moines, IA**

Feather Fair: 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Des Moines Botanical Center, 909 Robert D Ray Drive, Des Moines, IA. Contact Lisa 515-276-3805. <http://www.MACBS.org>

**AUGUST 25-26, 2012****Gateway Parrot Club • Kirkwood, MO**

All American Hookbill Fair and Seminar: 10 a.m., Machinist Hall Dist. 9 Bldg., 12365 St. Charles Rock Road, Bridgeton, MO 63044. Speakers: Michael Dalton - Beyond. Polly Wants a Cracker. Show Information: Christine Kinkade. 636-343-8097. [boardmember2@gatewayparrotclub.org](mailto:boardmember2@gatewayparrotclub.org)  
<http://www.gatewayparrotclub.org>

**AUGUST 28, 2012****Mid America Cage Bird Society • Des Moines, IA**

Bird Fair: Des Moines Botanical Center, Des Moines, IA; <http://www.MACBS.org>

**SEPTEMBER 1-2, 2012****Bluegrass Bird Breeders • Shepherdsville, KY**

Annual Show: Pritchard Community Center, 404 S. Mulberry St., Elizabethtown, KY 41065. For show information, contact: Josh Perkins, 504-741-6767. [perkinstiels@yahoo.com](mailto:perkinstiels@yahoo.com)

**LABOR DAY WEEKEND****Central Alabama Aviculture Society • Montgomery, AL**

The organization's claim to fame is the bird fair and shows produced each year on Labor Day weekend. <http://www.caasociety.com>

**SEPTEMBER 8, 2012****Heart of Tennessee Aviculture Society • Murfreesboro, TN**

Fall Show and Fair: Middle Tennessee State University, 1720 Greenland Dr., Murfreesboro, TN 37130, Judge: TBA. Show Contact: Wilma Crawford, 615-396-8440. [tnmla2@comcast.net](mailto:tnmla2@comcast.net), <http://www.heartoftnaviculturesociety.com>

**SEPTEMBER 15, 2012****Birds of a Feather Avicultural Society • Manchester**

Annual Fall Show and Mart: All Dogs Gym and Inn, 505 Sheffield Road, Hillsborough, NH; 603-669-4644. <http://www.boaf.com/birdShow.htm>

**SEPTEMBER 15-16, 2012****Durham Avicultural Society of Ontario**

33rd Annual Exotic Bird Show: Ajax Community Centre, Ajax, ON, Canada. Visit website for more information. <http://www.birdclub.ca>

**SEPTEMBER 22, 2012****Essex-Kent Cage Bird Society 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Show**

Fogolar Furlan-Dante Costa Hall, 1800 EC Row, N Service Road, Windsor, ON, Canada. Judge: Clarence Culwell. Contact: Dave Sylvester, 519-727-3766. [d.sylvester@gmail.com](mailto:d.sylvester@gmail.com)

**SEPTEMBER 23, 2012****Central California Cage Bird Club • Modesto, CA**

Annual Show: 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Judges listed on website, <http://www.mycccbc.org>

**SEPTEMBER 23, 2012****Finch Society of San Diego • San Diego, CA**

Annual bird event • club anniversary • famous bird raffle lunch and social hour.  
Members only. <http://www.finchsocietyofsandiego.com>

**SEPTEMBER 23, 2012****New York Finch & Type Canary Club • New York**

Annual Show: St. Jude Church, 1677 Canarsie Road, Brooklyn NY. Entries: 8-10 a.m.; Judging, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Judge: TBA

**OCTOBER 12, 2012****Suncoast Canary & Finch Club • Port Charlotte, FL**

2<sup>nd</sup> Suncoast Canary & Finch Club Annual Show: Charlotte Harbor Event Center, 75 Taylor St., Punta Gordo, FL 33950. Contact: 941-661-1115.

[http://community-](http://community-2.webtv.net/suncoastcanaryclub2010/SUNCOASTCANARYCLUB/)

[2.webtv.net/suncoastcanaryclub2010/SUNCOASTCANARYCLUB/](http://community-2.webtv.net/suncoastcanaryclub2010/SUNCOASTCANARYCLUB/)

**OCTOBER 13, 2012****Kings County Canary Club, Brooklyn**

Annual Show: St. Jude's Hall, 1696 Canarsie Road, Brooklyn, NY 11236.

**OCTOBER 20, 2012****Society of Canary & Finch Breeders of Michigan • Livonia, MI**

Annual Show: 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Livonia Elks Lodge #2246 31117 Plymouth Road, Livonia, MI 48150. <http://societyofcanaryandfinchbreedersofmichigan.com>

**OCTOBER 20, 2012****Baltimore Bird Fanciers • Baltimore, MD**

Baltimore Bird Fanciers Annual Show and Mart: Tall Cedars Hall, 250 Putty Hill Ave., Baltimore, MD 21234. Show contact: Christine Roberts. 410-343-1807.

[compteacher@yahoo.com](mailto:compteacher@yahoo.com), <http://www.baltimorebirdfanciers.org>

**OCTOBER 20-21, 2012****Cascade Canary Breeders Association • Issagna, WA**

44th Annual Canary and Finch Show: Evergreen State Fairgrounds, 14405 179th Ave. SE, Monroe, WA. Show Contact: Brian Johannson, 604-465-8047,

[brian.johannson@canadapost.ca](mailto:brian.johannson@canadapost.ca)

**NOVEMBER 3, 2012****Greater Chicago Cage Bird Club • Chicago, IL**

Greater Chicago Cage Bird Club Show (Region 3 Regional Show): Weitendorf Ag. Center, 17840 Laraway Road, Joliet, IL 60433. <http://www.gccbc.org>

**NOVEMBER 3, 2012****Texas Bird Breeders & Fanciers Association • Arlington, TX**

Annual Show: 9 a.m., Mayborn Convention Center, Temple, TX. Open to public,  
9 a.m.: Judging starts, 10 a.m. Show Contact: Clarence Culwell, 817-220-5568.  
<http://www.texasbirdbreeders.org>

**NOVEMBER 3-4, 2012****Columbia Canary Club • Portland, WA**

**November 3-4, 2012:** 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Show and Sale: Red Lion Hotel (Vancouver  
Inn at the Quay), 100 Columbia St., Vancouver, WA 98660. Show Contact: Faye  
Silverstein, 503-788-3753. [diazf47@msn.com](mailto:diazf47@msn.com).  
<http://www.columbiacanaryclub.com>

**NOVEMBER 9-10, 2012****Asociacion De Criadores de Finces Inc. • Puerto Rico**

Winter Show: Ball Room Center, Alturas De Villas Del Rey Francia St., Caguas,  
P.R. Hwy. 52, Exit #21. Judge: Ken Gunby. Only the following finch species  
allowed for competition: Zebra, Society, Lady Gouldian, Cutthroat, Cordon Bleu,  
Green Singer, and Brazilian-crested Cardinal. FREE Entrance.  
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Asociacion-de-Criadores-de-Finches/170742106273049>

**DECEMBER 2, 2012****Finch Society of San Diego County • San Diego, CA**

Holiday Bird Mart and Craft Fair. Contact club for information.  
<http://www.finchsocietyofsandiego.com>



## ANTIBIOTICS FOR FINCHES

*by Ron Castaner*

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**T**here are several things to remember. Antibiotics should never be used as a periodic regularly. Frequent, unnecessary use of an antibiotic in a bird tends to seek out strains of bacteria which are resistant to a drug, rendering it useless in a real disease outbreak. Critically ill birds may need fluid therapy and tube feeding, which is the best way to administer the drugs. For best results they need to be given several times a day in the mouth or tube. In treating certain highly resistant bacteria and in the critically ill bird injectable drugs are used for fast-acting results. Other considerations are made in the choice of an antibiotic. Certain drugs can have side effects on the liver or kidneys. The metabolic rate of a bird is much higher than mammals; this usually means drugs administered are rapidly eliminated from the body. Therefore, this requires frequent dosages to provide maximum therapeutic success. Treatment should always be at a continuous high level for seven days. As far as I am concerned, the practice of three-days-on and two-days-off has no beneficial effect. Antibiotics and other drugs can be life-saving in emergency situations but are only part of the solution. Eliminating the problem is more important. To control diseases by introducing good management practice is the best way. Ninety per cent of the problem is from contaminated water, food, and dirty cages.

### **BACTERIA**

Bacterial disease is the most common problem in aviculture. A great number of bacteria reside in the intestinal tracts of healthy birds. These healthy birds have frequent opportunities to ingest the bacteria through normal handling, feeding dishes, air, and water. Most of the bacteria cause disease in birds when certain factors are present; for instance, environmental stress, poor sanitation, inadequate nutrition, and bad air circulation.

The bird with lowered resistance allows the bacteria to enter the blood stream, after gaining a hold in the gastrointestinal tract; the bacteria can cause respiratory disease, hepatitis, or septicemia



(blood-borne, body-wide infection). To choose the best drug, a culture and antibiotic sensitivity test is run. Samples are taken from the nose, mouth, vent, fresh droppings, or autopsy tissue.

To avoid these problems in the first place, the best thing to do is keep the birds area clean, supply them with vitamins and mineral supplements, clean water, and clean air. Another thing so important: do not bring in more than one or two new birds at a time, and quarantine new birds at least 30 days. It does not matter from whom you buy or trade with, for the best interest of your birds keep them separate from the new ones for at least 30 days. Keep the bottom of the cage clean and do not keep too many birds in one cage. Give them fresh vegetables and fruit. If they are not used to eating these, put in a few Societies and they will show them how to eat it. Introduce the fresh fruit and vegetables when the birds are young so they will have a better chance to fight any disease and will respond to treatment quicker. A strong and healthy bird will bounce back faster if and when they get sick.

Now, with all that said and done, let me continue with problems I have personally dealt with and treated in finches. Not always successfully, but I am proud to say I have had a few miracles.

**Diarrhea** . . . Furaxone, Kaolin, and Pectin: one drop in the mouth twice a day for five days. Cases with excessive fluid loss will require fluids, such as electrolytes, Gatorade, or fluids by injections. Lactobacillus, acidophilus, or plain yogurt will help in restoring a natural balance of bacteria. The antibiotic can also kill beneficial bacteria normally found in the gut, so you have to put some back into their system for a better chance of recovery.

**Giardia** . . . Protozoan parasite causing large, widespread losses; chronic illness and nestling mortality; chunky diarrhea and gradual weight loss. Antibiotics do not generally help. Treatment with Baytril is fairly effective. The best way to administer Baytril is by mixing it with your hand-feeding formula and using a crop needle every 12 hours for five days.

**Aspergillosis** . . . This is a fungal disease and, to me, is the most deadly to finches. A dusty, damp environment, or exposure to moldy food or old nesting material may increase the bird's chances of catching this disease.

Fruits, vegetables, and uneaten eggs left in the cage for one or two days should be immediately removed. You can actually see the mold growing. You may be familiar with moldy bread and cheese and that is exactly what the birds are exposed to and are ingesting. Remove any uneaten food the **same day**; do not wait until the next day just to keep from wasting food. This could be a deadly practice. **Nystatin, Amphotericin B, Ketoconazole** may help. Lapse can occur, so do not overcrowd the birds.

Giving good nutrition and a clean environment is the most important tool to fighting this killer. Aspergillosis will affect the lungs and air sacs. Also, birds with long-term problems of the lower respiratory tract may have aspergillosis. An autopsy of an infected bird found areas of green mold clearly apparent. The bottom line is, ***All aviaries should be kept clean of any and all damp organic matter!!!!***

**Mortality is very high, so please, every bird you get, treat it with Ivermectin Propylene Glycol.** This is **not** the Ivermectin you find in the farm store with the picture of a cow on the front of the bottle. This requires a special dilution. If given to a bird full strength, or even an improperly diluted amount, it could cause death; also used on feet and legs. For people that use other methods, such as olive oil, Vaseline, butter, and many others I have heard of, every veterinarian book I have read states that Ivermectin is the best and it is not that expensive, so please use it. This is a double application treatment. After the first application, repeat in 12 days because the first time you are killing the mites but not the eggs. The second application kills the mites that hatch from the eggs. Do this twice a year and you will not have a problem.

Canaries also have to be done about every six months. Here in Florida, you might have to do it every four months like I do. Every bird that comes into your aviary should be treated with Ivermectin. I cannot stress that enough.

**Conjunctivitis** . . . This is the most common eye problem in finches and other birds. It begins with swelling and closure of the eyelids. The conjunctiva may become swollen and protrude from under the eyelids. Pus may collect at the corner of the eye. If the pus is not cleansed away, the eyelids will stick together. The bird may constantly rub the eye and face area on the perches. This problem is mostly caused by irritation, wind, dust, eye worms, tumor, or foreign matter. Also, infection from other parts of the body, such as the respiratory tract or the sinuses.

I have used an ophthalmological suspension made by Rugby that contains Neomycin and Polymyxin B Sulfate, and Desamethasone for swelling. I have also used Terramycin or Erythromycin. Make sure anything you use in the eye is *ophthalmic-base* for the eye. I give them one drop in the eye twice a day for seven days. I also add Doxycycline in the water for seven days for any infection. In addition, I have used Tylan Injections, you can also use decongestant eye drops. They may not work as well but you can try. If the infection is not too bad it may work. Please take care of it quickly as there is no time to waste. The eye area is very sensitive and the bird could develop other serious problems.

**Stargazing** . . . Bird constantly throws head back, sleeps with head between its legs, and beak-touching the perch. The bird will go around in a circle if you try to catch it, always looking at the ceiling, turning its head around in a circle and looking up. This could be caused by an ear infection or neurological problem. If you find any one or all of these symptoms, or a combination of any, please try Vitamin B-12 Complex and Nystatin. One drop in the mouth for five days and six drops in eight ounces of water for 30 days.

A person brought me several Gouldians with several of the above-mentioned symptoms and I was able to cure them with the Vitamin B-12. Let me know how well it works for you, or if you have questions contact the board members and they know how to get in touch with me. I would really like to hear from you as I keep notes of what other folks have found or tried. I have spent many years reading and studying this problem and would like to share with others and maybe learn something new.

Another very important reason to give Vitamin B-12 Complex to your birds is that it is responsible for growth of the nervous system. If a bird does not get enough B-12 Complex the complications are weakness, slight paralysis of toes and legs. It could hang on the perch rather than sitting on it. In more advanced cases, refusal of food, diarrhea, and obvious disturbance of the neck, and the head is put way back. This is called **Stargazing** or the **Flamingo Effect**. Vitamins are needed in very small amounts but are essential for normal development, growth, and maintenance of good health. During periods of added stress, such as molting, reproduction, illness, and antibiotic therapy, the requirements are even higher.

As stated before, birds have a rapid metabolism and this coupled with their selective eating habits make vitamin supplementation essential. If the bird is vitamin deficient you will see improvement in a week or two.

**Respiratory Infections** . . . I have successfully used Baytril (enrofloxacin). It is available in three strengths and is also injectable. It works well for respiratory infections, gram-negative and gram-positive bacteria. It works very fast, within two hours after dosing, and maintained 8-12 hours. I use one tablet of 5.6 mg to 1 cc of water, mixed well; administer two drops in mouth twice a day for five days. If you do not know the problem or cause, you might try for four or five days. If you do not see any improvement in seven days, discontinue and consult someone with more experience or see your vet. All medicines mentioned or used have been recommended by a veterinarian or medical doctor, and were used without any harmful effects. In closing, If I can be of help, please feel free to contact me, I'll do my best to help. We can only learn from one another and it can only be of help to our little feathered friends.

**RON CASTANER**

Former NFSS President  
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## Did you know . . .

- the finch is the one of the smallest birds on earth but belongs to the largest bird family
- the finch is a passerine bird with an average lifespan of four to seven years
- there are 140+ true finch species across all continents, except Australia and Antarctica