

NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY



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The NFSS Bulletin

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Volume 5, September/October	September 1st	October 1st
Volume 6, November/December	November 1st	December 1st

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1st Quarter Board Meeting Minutes

-- Meeting began on the NFSS's OFFICER list via internet January 17, 2002 ending February 10, 2002

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

No minutes were presented.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Mark Phelps report 1/1/02 to 2/3/02

Income	\$4,754.47
Expenses	399.92
Total income	\$4,354.55

CASH checking (new)	\$2,000.00
checking (old)	1,429.62
savings	12,949.77
advances	<u>648.32</u>
	\$17,027.71

A motion to accept the treasurer's report was submitted by Ginny Allen and seconded by Vince Huntington.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

No Secretary's report available.

MEMBERSHIP:

Martie Lauster's report 1/1/02 to 2/03/02

574 members 71 dual members **Total membership is 645.**

LIAISON OFFICERS REPORT:

Ginny Allen's report 1/01/02 to 2/03/02 In Jan. 2002 affiliation packets were sent to all 2000 and 2001 affiliated clubs.

27 clubs have affiliated to date.

BAND SECRETARY:

Carol Heesen:

On December 27th, 2001 we shipped 46 band orders. This in 1/3 the number shipped on December 27, 2000.

A total of 321 band orders were processed in 2001.

There was initially a shortage on the 2002 bands for 2002 but we have now received all bands ordered for 2002. We should have the aluminum bands we need for the year but will likely need to place another order for the open plastic bands. (sales are going very slow on these to date.) The billing is sent directly to the treasurer so I am not sure if Bobbie/Mark has paid this bill yet.

OLD BUSINESS: (Motions left over from 2001)

Motion 1-2001. Inclusion of Internet membership. Could memberships be adjusted whereby some members who wish to could receive their bulletins via the Internet? No motions for endorsement. Is now awaiting input from NFSS Webmaster, Harry Bryant. 5-yes 8-no 1-abstain **not passed**

Motion 2-2001. The elimination of bulk mailing of bulletins? IE.: Marty Lauster moved we reverse the way membership dues are listed. List them at \$30.00, and offer the option to save \$5.00, to utilize bulk mailing. We should also describe limits of bulk mailing, etc. Carol Heesen seconded.
12-yes 2-no **passed**

Motion made by Carol Heesen on 3-2001. Allow NFSS list monitor (John Wilson) freedom to invite foreign finch experts to join and contribute to the NFSS yahoo groups.com Elist. Mr. Wilson will use his discretion. Seconded by Kerri McCoy. 10-yes 3-no 1-abstain **passed**

NEW BUSINESS:

Information: In the presidents attempt to reach an in-person quorum for the 3rd qtr 2002 board meeting (which could be held at the AFA convention in Tampa) the following officers said they intend to attend: Sally Huntington, Vince Huntington, Ginny Allen, Ron Castner possibly Kerri McCoy & Armondo Lee.

Motion 1-2002. Vince Huntington proposed, in support of region-six members asking for such, that the voting records (how each member voted) for each motion or item be routinely listed in bulletin and web site. Was not seconded as of this writing.
no vote

Motion 2-2002. Kerri McCoy proposed we create a Region-8 Canadian, recognize them as a region and elect a regional VP.. Seconded by Carol Heesen.
12-yes 2-no **passed**

Motion 3-2002. Ginny Allen proposed, That NFSS allow an expenditure of \$90.00 to create and digitalize an NFSS logo. Seconded by Kerri McCoy.
14-yes **passed**

Motion 4-2002. Annetic Howard proposed, to increase Finch Shop funds to \$1,000.00 per year instead of the previously approved \$500.00. Kerri McCoy seconded.
11-yes 3-no **passed**

Motion 5-2002. Martha Wigmore proposed that the \$400.00 in NFSS budget set aside for travel for the NFSS President to the annual AFA convention (this year in Tampa) to be diverted for use for the NFSS speakers fees and travel to the

AFA convention. On Feb 3rd the president volunteered her \$400 be used to compensate both speakers at the AFA. All inputs considered, the final decision of these AFA speaker/travel related funds to be made by the president. No vote.

Motion 6-2002. Kerri McCoy proposed Kerri and Finchsave committee are asking for the approval of the application of Kathy MacKay and Grant Rishman for NFSS endorsement of their cooperative breeding program of the Pekin Robin. Ginny Allen seconded. 10-yes 3-no 1-abstain **passed**

D. President's decisions this year. (Things the president acted on which are of general interest to all). Note: These items were discussed in various formal and informal ways, they are not items which need to be voted on in order to be put into motion, but will be called president's decisions.

One. Because they are so active in day-to-day NFSS structure, Steve Poe and John Wilson were invited to participate in the officer's list in a non-voting capacity.

Two. For clarity, John Wilson will be listed on the officers page in each NFSS bulletin, as the NFSS List Site-master. (Harry Bryant is the NFSS Webmaster)

Three. A silent auction will be used as the primary fundraiser at the 2002 NCBS in Santa Clara, Ca.

Fourteen board members who voted in the first quarter meeting;

Armando Lee	Mark Phelps	VinceHuntington
Harry Bryant	Ginny Allen	
Julio Mateo		
Kerri McCoy	Carol Heesen	
Martha Wigmore	Ron Castner	
Martie Lauster	Darla Dandre	
James Felix	Harold McBrayer	

Annette Howard and Anna Sinclair did not vote.

GABS 2003 judges selection are: Patrick Vance
Sally Huntington
Clarence Culwell

Respectfully submitted
Vince Huntington
Acting secretary

National Finch and Softbill Society
Honor Roll of Recipients of the
Exhibitor of Excellence Award
through year 2001 show season

Cecil Gunby	1987	
Hal Koontz	1987	
Brenda Geesey	1988	
Marty von Raesfeld	1988	
Steve Hoppin	1989	
Brian Mandarich	1989	
Gene and June Miller	1989	
Kris Kroner	1990	
Richard Lujan	1990	
Tom Rood	1990	
Marvin Yoder	1990	
John Dapas	1991	
Mary and Steve Payne	1991	1991
Pat and Mary Krichten	1992	
Alvin and Dixie Lea	1992	
Patrick Vance	1992	
Dennis Burhans	1994	
Frank and Sandy Hudson	1995	
Dale and Eileen Laird	1995	
Rick Szlachta	1995	
Chris Voronovich	1995	
Jerri Wiesenfeld	1996	
Sally Huntington	1997	
Harold and Margie McBrayer	1997	
Richard Pizzuro	1998	
Darla Dandre	2000	
Felipe Bonilla	2001	

*National Finch and Softbill Society***Honor Roll Champion Birds***from 1984 to 2001***1991**

Normal Java Rice Bird 82 pts
(NFS-K-245-'90) Kris Kroner

Dilute Society Finch 56 pts
(NFS-E-87-'89) Tom Rood

Normal Zebra Finch 52 pts
(NFS-C-30-'87) Tom Rood

1994

Fawn Diamond Sparrow 61 pts
(NFS-D-87-'92) Gene/June Miller

1995

Yellow-rumped Diamond Sparrow 67 pts
(NFS-E-112-'94) Gene/June Miller

Normal Shaftail 52 pts
(NFS-C-1552-'93) Ellen Buchanan

1996

European Starling 52 pts
(SPBE-BRA15-'93) Jacky Civitarese

Persa Touraco 57 pts
(DJL37-'93) Dale & Eileen Laird

Normal Java Rice Bird 57 pts
(K-493-'94) Dale & Eileen Laird

Cinnamon Java Rice Bird 56 pts
(K-58-93) Patrick Vance

1997

Orange Headed Gouldian 52 pts
(NFS D-8162-'96) Carolyn Belisle

1999

Senegal Firefinch 69 pts
(NFS B- 458-96) Stephen Hoppin

NEW EDITOR!

Effective upon publication of this notice, Martie Lauster has agreed to take over as editor. Her contact information can be found in the Board of Officers listings on pages 30 and 31 of this issue.

It has been my privilege to serve both the officers and members of the NFSS as editor for three years. Everyone has been wonderful to work with, and I hold this organization in the highest regard.

I would like to urge the many members to support Martie as well as you have me, by continuing to submit your informative and educational writings for publication. Thank you all for your support.

Steve Poe

ANNOUNCEMENT

I am happy to announce that our NFSS judge for the Finch and Softbill Division at the National Cage Bird Show in California this November is Cecil Gunby from Sharpsburg, Georgia. Congratulations, Cecil! What FUN we will all have, and we'll learn more than a thing or two from this experienced aviculturist and very fine NFSS panel judge.

Judging for this year's show will be on Friday, November 15, 2002 and the show hall will also be open to the public on Saturday, November 16. The show will be held at the Santa Clara (California) Convention Center, hosted by the National Cage Bird Show, Inc. and the Santa Clara Valley Canary & Exotic Bird Club. You can find complete information by visiting the internet at www.ncbs.org and clicking on "Future Shows."

See you there!
Martha Wigmore
NFSS 4th Vice President

CLASSIFIED ADS

Advertising (display ads), Inside cover \$300/yr or \$70/issue. Full Page \$200/yr or \$50/issue. 1/2 page \$120/yr or \$30/issue. 1/4 page \$80/yr or \$20/issue. Web site advertising \$100/yr, \$50/yr for Inside cover advertisers. Classified ads are \$.25 per word for NFSS members and \$.30 per word for non-NFSS members. Classifieds are also posted to the web site at no additional charge.

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VITAMIN D FOR FINCHES & SOFTBILLS

BY

Robert G. Black

A great deal of misinformation is passed around concerning the subject of vitamin D in our own nutrition and in the nutrition of the finches and softbilled birds that we keep in our cages and aviaries. This article is meant to clear up some of the confusion that surrounds the knowledge of this vitamin, its sources, and its functions in the avian body.

After protein deficiency and vitamin A deficiency, a lack of sufficient vitamin D in the diet of cage birds is probably the third most common deficiency noted in their feeding. The classical symptom of a deficiency of this vitamin in human nutrition has been rickets, a disease that causes the bones to fail to harden and grow properly. Instead the bones become curved and incapable of supporting the weight of the body. Rickets in the past has been a scourge of the northern European countries and the deep mountain valleys of areas like Switzerland where the winter sunlight does not penetrate, since direct sunlight allows the body to synthesize this vitamin.

There are two primary forms of vitamin D in nature. The first has been classified as vitamin D₂, with the technical name of ergocalciferol. This form of vitamin D is easily used by dogs, humans and most mammals, but it cannot be used by birds. Vitamin D₂ occurs mainly in plant sources in nature. Thus, any bird diet that is composed solely of plant products, such as seeds, greens, fruits, vegetables, etc., will not contain any vitamin D that is useful for the birds. When a provitamin compound called ergosterol is irradiated with short wavelength ultraviolet light, it changes in form to become ergocalciferol, vitamin D₂, and this is the form that is added to milk to increase its vitamin D content. Any bird that is maintained on a diet that contains only vitamin D₂ will soon suffer from the symptoms of vitamin D deficiency.

For birds, only the form of this vitamin called cholecalcif-

erol or vitamin D₃ is biologically available. Vitamin D₃ is found only in animal products such as eggs, milk, insects, and liver. Since this is the only form that birds can use, a diet of seeds, fruits, and vegetables must also contain a food from an animal source that is rich in vitamin D₃ to provide enough of this vitamin for the birds' health and reproduction. Any birds that are exposed to direct sunlight for at least an hour a day will be able to synthesize their own vitamin D on the skin, as will be explained in more detail later.

There are a variety of symptoms of vitamin D deficiency in cage birds, most of them related to calcium. In addition to the soft bones of rickets, in birds thin-shelled and soft-shelled eggs will be a prominent symptom. Clutches that are smaller than normal will also be a symptom of too little vitamin D in the diet. Vitamin D₃ is crucial to the absorption of calcium in the digestive tract, and any problem with the absorption of calcium in the intestines may be caused by vitamin D deficiency. Also, when a hen lays eggs that lack sufficient vitamin D in their contents, the eggs will fail to hatch.

At one point in my early breeding efforts, after reading of the beneficial effect of vitamin D for eggshell formation and calcium use in the avian body, I began supplementing my birds' diets with additional powdered vitamin D₃ each day. I was totally unprepared for the result. In a birdroom with about 80 pairs of finches, the next clutches laid increased in size by about 50%. In other words, the birds that had laid four eggs began laying six, those laying five eggs began laying seven or eight, and those already laying seven eggs began laying 10 eggs per clutch. The additional vitamin D in the diet had made the hens' absorption and utilization of calcium so much easier that the clutch size had increased dramatically.

A pair of Diamond Doves I had purchased at around the same time also showed the rapid effectiveness of adequate nutrition and vitamin D₃ supplementation. I could tell by the feather condition that these new doves had been poorly nourished. As soon as they settled down, and before they began eating the egg mix and cage bird crumbles that I supplied, they went to nest and the hen laid her clutch of two eggs. Both were soft-shelled, indicating a very serious deficiency of vitamin D₃ in their diet. From the day I

received them, this pair of doves had cleaned up a quarter to a half teaspoon of crushed eggshells each day, a huge amount of calcium for two birds this small, yet the hen had been able to absorb none of it. In order to get these doves to begin eating the good nutritional items that were in front of them and would prevent these problems, I removed all seed from the pair until I observed both of them eating both the crumbles and the egg mix. A week later, the hen laid again, and this time both of her eggs were perfectly formed.

In any case of poor utilization of calcium in the diet, always suspect a serious deficiency of vitamin D₃ first. Keep in mind that any diet that is exclusively plant products, with no vitamin supplement that contains vitamin D₃ added, will be totally lacking in this vitamin. The result in hens will be thin-shelled or soft-shelled eggs. In babies, the bones will not harden, but will remain soft and pliable, unable to support the weight of the bird.

Vitamin D₃ is a fat soluble substance in the avian diet. If there is very little in the way of fats and oils in the diet, the absorption of this vitamin will be very poor. When fat absorption is poor, the amount of vitamin D absorbed will also be poor. Also, Vitamin D is absorbed only in the presence of bile, and absorption occurs in the duodenum, the first section of the small intestine in birds.

Vitamin D is stored by the avian body only in limited amounts, and this storage occurs primarily in the liver. Fortunately, vitamin D is very stable. Vitamin E, acting as a natural antioxidant, protects vitamin D in the body and keeps it from being destroyed by such compounds as peroxides. Acids, alkalis, heat, light, storage, and freezing normally do not destroy vitamin D, and it is one of the most stable of the vital nutrients that we call vitamins.

For birds that are maintained in direct sunlight, the short wavelength ultraviolet light in the sunlight aids in the formation of vitamin D₃ on the skin. The exposed skin of the legs, feet, around the eyes, and in other areas on some birds, exude an oily compound called technically 7-dehydrocholesterol. When the ultraviolet rays strike this substance, they produce a chemical change that transforms it into cholecalciferol, vitamin D₃. The vitamin is then reabsorbed into the skin over a period of time to supply the birds' vita-

min D requirement. These ultraviolet rays cannot penetrate window glass, though they will go through quartz glass and most clear plastics. For birds maintained indoors, window glass effectively prevents any vitamin D₃ formation from this synthesis on the skin.

Many types of artificial lights also emit ultraviolet rays, but few of them have the intensity necessary for the synthesis of vitamin D₃ on the skin. The presence of short wave-length ultraviolet rays alone is not enough; the intensity of the rays is also crucial. Natural sunlight, of course, has the intensity necessary. A sunlamp also has the intensity, and exposing the birds for less than an hour each day will allow the synthesis on the skin of enough vitamin D₃ to keep the birds in perfect health. However, the full spectrum lights do not emit the intensity necessary for the formation of vitamin D₃ on the skin. Even the commercial black lights, which emit a very high percentage of light in the ultraviolet range of the spectrum, do not have the intensity required for vitamin D₃ synthesis.

Many breeders for over a hundred years have recommended the use of cod liver oil for the health of canaries and other cage birds, even though they did not then know that this oil was an excellent source of both vitamin A and vitamin D in cage bird diets. We now know that the livers of sea fish abound in both of these vitamins, and cod liver oil in particular has been available almost since commercial fishing began. If this oil can be provided in a readily consumable form, it is an excellent and easily available vitamin D source. However, it becomes rancid very rapidly on exposure to air. If you can mix it with something that the birds will consume completely within about 15 minutes, the danger of rancidity is minimal. Remember that rancidity in oils of this type is cumulative, and the longer the oil sits exposed to the air, the worse it gets. Rancid fats are a disaster in any diet, as they will destroy vitamin E on contact.

For many years, I have chosen to mix a powdered form of vitamin D₃ with the egg mix that I feed to all of my birds daily. This powder is safe from rancidity, yet gives the birds the vitamin D they need in a form that they eat readily and will clean up each day. Powdered vitamin D₃ is also added to all of the vitamin mineral supplements designed for avian feeding that are marketed in powdered form, and a teaspoon of any of the powdered supplements added to

one mashed, hard-boiled egg, or any other soft food that the birds will eat readily, will give them all of the vitamin D₃ they need for good health.

The commercial poultry starters, game bird starters, cage bird crumbles and pellets, and monkey pellets all will contain adequate amounts of vitamin D₃ for the birds' health. If you plan to try any type of dog or cat food for your birds, be sure to check the label carefully, however. Dogs and cats can use vitamin D₂ in their metabolism quite effectively, and many dog and cat foods do not contain vitamin D₃. Never forget that for birds the only metabolically active form of vitamin D is the type called vitamin D₃, which is technically called cholecalciferol. Many vitamin labels now carry only the technical name, so you need to understand that cholecalciferol is vitamin D₃.

If your birds have one good source of vitamin D, that is enough. Do not mix vitamin D₃ with everything the birds eat, or you run the danger of an overdose. Vitamin D is the easiest vitamin to supply in greater amounts than the birds need, and just because a little is vital and good does not mean that a lot is better. A lot is not better, and it can be an excessive amount. An excess of vitamin D is technically called hypervitaminosis D. Too much vitamin D in the diet will cause a leaching of the calcium from the bones, and abnormal calcium deposits in the soft tissues of the body. In birds, this can take the form of kidney damage caused by the calcification of the kidney tubules.

Keep all of this information in mind as you feed your birds, and you should be able to supply them with enough vitamin D for their health, with no danger of providing too much.

END

White-rumped Shamas

By Grant Rishman and Cathy MacKay
(www.geocities.com/rainforestaviaries)

The White-rumped Shama Thrush is one of the most recognizable softbills kept in our aviaries today. The glossy jet-black head, back, wings and upper tail of the male is contrasted by the rich chestnut brown of his lower breast and belly. The rump and underside of the tail and a very clean, bright white. By comparison, the hen is very subdued in colour being grey and pale brown. Their body size is about the same as a Pekin Robin and the tail is of equal length.

A physical description of these beautiful birds really cannot do them justice. It is their aristocratic nature, and confidence in their keeper, that makes them one of the most sought after of softbills. To compliment the "package" is what one breeder describes as "truly the best song birds I have ever owned". The male Shama is in a class of his own. He has a very varied repertoire that includes wonderful rich melodic combinations of his own, complimented by the songs of any birds within his earshot. One word of warning though, it is best to keep Shamas away from sheep, turkeys or squeaky gates, as these less pleasant noises will also be incorporated into their song. A male Shama we had in England even imitated the sound of a police car siren!!

In the wild the Shama is a bird of the forest, where they are usually seen and not heard. They are widespread throughout India, China and south-east Asia where they are found in evergreen and moist deciduous forests. These are highly prized as songbirds in Asia and the winner of a song contest in Singapore (where the bird is their National bird) has been recorded as being sold for up to \$5000, about \$2700 US\$\$.

Shamas are highly insectivorous but are fairly easy to keep once they have adjusted to a domestic diet. We feed our Shamas soaked Zupreem monkey biscuits, softbill pellets, and universal food. Some individuals will take a little fruit, but others ignore it. They enjoy all kinds of insects from mealworms, waxworms, and crickets to spi-

ders, locusts and even small lizards. All food is sprinkled with a multivitamin.

Shamas do best in a planted aviary, where the song of the male will give away his presence as he relaxes in the foliage. The male Shama is used to being the alpha bird in his aviary. If housed with less aggressive species he will enjoy his dominance and peace will reign. However, if he is housed with more aggressive species a male Shama will often be killed trying to exert his dominance. We have found they mix well with non-aggressive birds. Birds with a lot of black in their plumage, like Fairy Bluebirds and Dhyal Thrushes, are not good cohabitants in a Shama's domain, their black feathers are perceived as a threat by the Shama. Shamas quickly gain confidence in their keepers and, even a wild caught Shama, will soon be taking insects directly from the hand.

They are cavity nesters in the wild but use various nest sites in captivity. They seem to prefer a half-open box, which they will fill to just below the opening and then build a shallow cup out of coconut fiber and fine roots. The nest should be sited in a quiet part of the aviary between 5 and 8 feet off the ground. The female does most (if not all) of the incubating of up to five eggs. The male will help to feed the chicks in the nest and will often feed the fledged chicks by himself as the female may start a second clutch. The young are fed on vast quantities of insects. Once they are independent they **MUST** be removed from the breeding aviary as the parents will not tolerate their presence.

The ESTRILDIAN

The ESTRILDIAN is produced for the purpose of relating the most up to date information on all species belonging to the family Estrildidae both in the wild and in captivity. Within its 124 species are all of the *Waxbills, Parrot Finches, Mannikins and Australian finches*. The aviculturist and the scientist have much to offer each other and the ESTRILDIAN brings together like-minded enthusiasts from around the world. The magazine is sent to 13 different countries ranging from Australia to Puerto Rico and has many leading Zoo's, Aviculturists and Researchers as both members and contributors. With well over 100 members in the USA, we have now been able to reduce our overseas subscription rates.

12 months subscription is £15 Sterling; USA \$30 personal check accepted

ESTRILDID FORUM

10, Gable Terrace, Wheatley Hill, County Durham, DH6 3JT
ENGLAND

The Joy of Superb Starlings

By John Paul Kilmer

"Superb Starling (*Spreo superbus*) (*Lamprotornis superbus*) taken at El Paso Birdpark by Martin Kramer"



I first fell in love with Superb Starlings (*Lamprotornis superbus*) as a boy in the African mission field. An unabashed birder practically before I could walk, I thrived on my foreign upbringing, keeping detailed lists of birds and animals I saw. Superbs gained my admiration immediately because...well, simply

put, they are superb! There's no other way to describe this handsome starling with a bronzy-black crown, iridescent nape throat and back, and orange belly, white chest band, and white underparts. They have, what I like to call, a "fierce yellow eye."

In my book, Superbs are only rivaled in the starling world by a handful of others, including the Golden Breasted Starling. Where I lived in the east African country of Kenya, Superbs were as common as robins are in the United States, hopping joyously about our metal house and singing endless metallic notes from the acacias during the heat of the day.

During the breeding season when a full moon rose, male Superbs could be heard singing ecstatically throughout the whole night. I imagined them plump and secure in their thornbush fortresses, throwing hearts to the inky sky while the females slept protectively-

over the eggs. I still recall a journal entry I wrote about these magnificent birds a number of years ago. We had just received our first refreshing rain after the dry season:

"As I walked back to the house...the whole world seemed to be rejoicing. The damp scent of soil was heavy on the air. Leaves shed the last drops from the recent downpour....starlings in the acacias shrieked with joy, ruffling and preening their well watered feathers into place. And I could hear the earth drinking."

Years after Africa, imagine my delight at discovering a trio of Superbs for sale at an Oregon bird mart. Walking over to the cage to say hello to my old childhood friends, I immediately knew I just had to buy them! What follows are a few thoughts on my personal experiences in keeping and breeding this wonderful species.

I was told the trio consisted of a male and two females. Immediately when I got home, I placed the 18 cm birds in a temporary box-type flight cage, measuring 4 feet tall, 2 ½ feet deep, and 3 ½ feet wide. They settled right in, feeding eagerly on a diet of diced mango and papaya, mealworms, soaked Zupreem monkey pellets. Bevo, and Zupreem cockatiel fruit blend.

Several weeks after purchase, the birds started showing breeding behavior, ripping paper strips from the bottom of the cage and carrying them around in their beaks, joyfully singing. I removed one female from the cage and placed a small 8" square nest box towards the top of the cage. I also placed fresh Ficus leaves on the cage floor. These were immediately investigated, seized, and carried about excitedly. The starlings, however, would not enter the nest box, though they would sit on the perch and peer curiously into the hole. After a week of investigation with no real nesting intentions, I removed the nest box and cut part of the front out to form a half open fronted box. It was immediately accepted. I then supplied the pair with a great deal of dry grass for nesting material. The "bonding phase" appeared to take several weeks, with the male and female both singing to each other, carrying leaves and pieces of grass back and forth, and slowly working on the nest. I also added shredded paper and paper towel for nesting material, and all was accepted. After several weeks, the nest was completed, with a slight dome of grass over the actual nest cup in the box. Superbs in the

wild will often build deep in a dense thornbush.

The branches surrounding their nest serves to hold the loose grasses together. In Kenya I saw many such nests with domed tops and side entrance holes, not unlike that of a sloppy weaver bird. I was ecstatic when 3 dark blue eggs appeared. I have since read that the actual clutch size is four, but my birds have only produced clutches of 2-3 eggs.

During incubation, the female rarely left the nest. The male sang frequently and would occasionally bring her food. However, she generally left the nest for short intervals to feed herself. I noticed very little incubation by the male. After 13 days, three healthy chicks emerged, peeping to be fed! I offered mealworms, soaked monkey pellets, and hard boiled egg. Unfortunately, my first mistake was to offer as many mealworms as the parents would feed the chicks. All went well for approximately a week. Then all the chicks mysteriously died. In researching the problem, I realized that the adults were feeding the chicks almost entirely on mealworms. Such young digestive systems cannot tolerate large amounts of tough chiton, and the chicks almost certainly died of bowel impaction. Within days the parents were hard at work repairing the nest.

Two eggs hatched from the second brood and this time I was careful to monitor mealworm intake. I only offered 12-15 mealworms a day. These were eagerly snatched up by the parents and most were fed directly to the babies. During the nestling period, I noticed that the male occasionally fed the babies, but the female probably fed about twice as often, if not more. Both the male and female often gave voice to warbling notes while feeding the chicks. Approximately 20 days out, the chicks fledged, and mysteriously died the next day. This happened with the successive brood as well. I later learned that I had provided too small of a nest box. The chicks were fledging early, and unable to fly about, the huddled on the bottom, refusing to adequately beg food from their parents given their new surroundings.

During this past summer, I built several large flights in my barn and released my starlings into them. They immediately set about cheerfully building a nest in a huge 15" half open fronted nest box with high sides. I perfected my chick rearing food to the following:

Daily hard boiled egg, finely mashed and mixed with 4-5 soaked monkey pellets. Over the top I occasionally sprinkled Bevo Insectivorous mix, and daily offer 15 or so mealworms. I have also found wax worms to be an invaluable food source for young starlings. The soft bodies of the wax worms are easily digested, and chicks appear to put on weight more quickly with added wax worms. The combination of a larger flight, larger nest box, and adequate nestling food did the trick. I am now the proud owner of two non-related adult pairs of breeding starlings, and six juveniles, all hatched and raised during this past summer and fall.

All the juveniles sport brown eyes, and these will apparently not turn yellow until the birds are a year old. Although they appear to be the same color scheme of the parents, they have not yet molted into their stunning adult plumage. I find it exciting that breeding softbills does not always require huge amounts of live food, as the last brood of chicks has been fed fewer mealworms and almost exclusively on the egg and monkey pellet mixture.

Of interest is one of my starling pair's eagerness to continually breed. I have nailed plastic to the walls of my outdoor flights and supplied several simple ceramic heaters inside the cages this winter. Still, the temperature stays only just above freezing at times, and outdoors, snow blankets the ground. Despite this, one starling pair continues to lay eggs and rear young, who don't seem to be the slightest bit affected by the cold! Finally last week I was forced to remove the nest box to give the female a rest!

I will concede with several other authors who have noted juvenile Superbs assisting parents in caring for nestlings. This has occurred in my case as well. Starlings have the bad reputation of being aggressive. However, aside from a few mild spats, I have seen wonderful harmonized relationships among my flock. Young ones learn valuable parenting skills looking after the smaller chicks. I have noted no hostility on the part of either of the parents towards their chicks after the older brood is weaned. Indeed, in Kenya I often recall seeing colony-type nesting behaviors.

This delightful bird is certainly a keeper in my estimation! Superbs are extremely easy to feed and house, and make engaging, beautiful

pets. My next venture is to hand rear one of the chicks. I can only imagine the joys of a hand-tamed Superb Starling!

I do have starlings for sale. I'm also interested in trades for Amethyst Starlings. Golden Breasted Starlings, Red-Legged Honeycreepers. Gouldian finches, or other softbills. Anyone with information on breeding White-Tailed Jays, or Honeycreepers, I'd love to hear from you! My e-mail: kilmjoh@qwest.net. Phone number: (509) 443-2505.

Enjoy those softbills!

Changing your address?

Allow NFSS to be the first to greet you at your new home!

Be sure to notify:

Club Delegates also notify:

NFSS Membership Director
 Martie Lauster
 4581 Lincoln Rd.
 Macedon, NY 14502

NFSS Liaison Officer
 Ginny Allen
 307 Brookwood Court
 Opelika, AL 36801

Name: _____
 New Address: _____
 City: _____ St: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____ Membership # _____

March 2- 2002 Affiliated Clubs

Regional Clubs

Foothills/Eastern Atlantic Bird Club

(VA,DC,MD,WV,PA,OH,NC,NY,NJ)

Valerie Schuster vschuster@comcast.net 703-481-9725

Club email: Modcrators-FoothillsEasternAtlanticBC@yahoo.com

Club website: <http://www.babyfeathers.com/fcabc/missstate.htm>

Southeast Bird Fanciers

AL, ARK,GA,FL,LA,MS,NC,SC,TN

Ginny Allen gndallen@earthlink.net 334-749-7168

Club website: <http://members.tripod.com/sbf/SFBF.htm>

Alabama

Central Alabama Avicultural Society

Margie Lanier margieclanier@yahoo.com 334-567-4073

Club email: Reaves36271@aol.com

Show: August 31 Judge: Paul Williams

Sept. 1 Judge: Dale Laird

Location: Governor's House Hotel

Montgomery, AL

Contact: Charles Reaves 256-892-2204

Reaves36271@aol.com

CALIFORNIA

Central California Cage Bird Club

John Astorino 209-823-0200

club email Rgomes@BigValley.net

Show: October 26

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut Canary and Finch Club

Felix FelixFelix128@aol.com 860-951-9438

Show: Sept. 28 judge: non-panel

Location: Hartford, CT

Contact: 860-953-1362

FLORIDA

Aviary and Cage Bird Society

Carrice Efstathion carrice3@aol.com 954-432-3349

Club website: www.feathers.org

Show: December 14-15 judges: TBA

Location: War Memorial Auditorium Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33304

Florida State Fair Exotic Bird Show

Dale Laird dalel2@prodigy.com 407-657-7989

Show: Feb. 17---judge: Dale Laird

Judge: Teri McAuliffe

Location: Florida State Fair Grounds Tampa, FL

SunCoast Avian Society

Joseph Ventimiglia 727-392-9391

club email: ACS651@aol.com

Club website: www.suncoastaviansociety.org

Show: August 3 judge: TBA

Location: The Coliseum St. Petersburg, FL

Contact: 727-892-5202

HAWAII

Honolulu Canary & Finch Club

Kathy Perreira : ALA1884@aol.com 808-839-2269

ILLINOIS

Illini Bird Fanciers

Patricia A. Montgomery ibf-birdsongs@insightbb.com 217-787-0840

Show: June 1 judge: Conrad Meinert

Location: 4-H Building Shelbyville, IL 62565

National Institute of Red Orange Canaries and

Other Cage Birds

Stephan Hopman Birdhop@aol.com 815-469-8455

Show: Nov. 30 judge: Martha Wigmore

Location: Holiday Inn Elk Grove Village, IL 60009

IOWA

Mid America Cage Bird Society

Rhoda Shirley 515-243-1511

Club email: rlgibson@netnet.net

Club website: <http://www.geocities.com/Hearland/Flats/3777/machs.html>

Show: Oct. 5 judge: Martha Wigmore

Location: Des Moines Botanical Center Des Moines, IA 50316

MARYLAND

Baltimore Bird Fanciers

Barbara Shannon 410-356-5850

Club email: raymondrcr@aol.com

Club website: www.geocities.com/Hearland/3575/bbf.html

EVENT: May 18 Bird Mart

Tall Cedars of Lebanon Hall, Parkville, MD

Show: Oct. 19 judge: TBA

Location: Tall Cedars of Lebanon Hall Parkville, MD

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Birds of a Feather Avicultural Society

Ray Schwartz PRISMSDAD@aol.com 603-362-6106

Club website: www.BOAF.com

EVENTS: March 24 BOAF Spring Bird Mart

*Center of NH Holiday Inn Manchester, NH**Also: May 11 The New England Avian Symposium**Center of NH Holiday Inn*

Contact: Rena Fox 603-635-1324 AFOX1@erols.com

Show: Oct. 26 judge: Dr. Al Decoteau

Location: Center of NH Holiday Inn Manchester, NH

NEW YORK

Astoria Bird Club

Dan Griffin dgriff1@ix.netcom.com 718-994-1614

Show: Nov. 2 judge: TBA

Location: St. Jude's School Brooklyn, NY

New York Finch & Type Canary Club

Stan Kulakbarstand@aaahawk.com 718-967-6899

Club website: www.newyorkfinch.com

Show: Oct. 19 judge: TBA

Location: St. Jude's Church Brooklyn, NY

NORTH CAROLINA

Raleigh-Durham Caged Bird Society

April Blazich aprilb@belisouth.net 919-851-8079

Club website: www.rdcbs.org

OREGON

Finch Connection

Paula Hansen Phhansen@earthlink.net 503-581-8208

Club website: http://home.earthlink.net/~phhansen

Show: TBA

PENNSYLVANIA

Greater Pittsburgh Cage Bird Society, Inc.

Margie Jonnet mjonnet@katz.pitt.edu 412-795-1904

Club email: babegonia@libcom.com

Show: Nov. 2 judge: TBA

Location: Palace Inn Monroeville, PA

Puerto Rico**Asociacion De Criadores De Finches delEste**

Jose Diaz Joserafaele@hotmail.com 787-747-7947

Club email: Criadores-Finches-Este@hotmail.com

Show: July 13-14 Nacional de Verano A.C.F.E. judge: Armando Lee

Location: Universidad del Turabo Caguas, Puerto Rico

Show: November 1,2,3 Nacional de Invierno A.C.F.E. judge: Armando Lee

Location: Universidad del Turabo Caguas, Puerto Rico

TENNESSEE

Middle Tennessee Cage Bird Club

Lisa Mellies yui02@belisouth.net

615-789-0002

Club email: tnma2@comcast.net

Show: Oct. 5 judge: Annette Howard

Location: Tennessee State Fairgrounds Nashville, TN 37203

Southeast Tennessee Aviculture Society

Janet Burrell JBIG2292@aol.com 423-472-1306

Event: March 9/10 Spring Fair 9:00-5:00

Niota Elementary School Niota, TN 37826

Show: October 26 judge: TBA

Location: Niota Elementary School Niota, TN 37826

Texas

Alamo Exhibition Bird Club, Inc.

Nathan Durbin birds@compuvision.net 830-609-2799

Club website: www.acbc.org

Event: April 20

Live Oak Civic Center Live Oak, TX

Sept. 28

Live Oak Civic Center Live Oak, TX

Canary and Finch

Harold McBrayer UJ.MSPATZ@hotmail.com 281-338-2814

Club email: UJ.MSPATZ@hotmail.com

Show: Oct. 26 judge: Paul Williams

Location: League City Civic Center League City, TX

Fort Worth Bird Club

Clarence Culwell culwell5@flash.net 817-220-5568

Club website: www.fwbc.org

Show: Sept. 28 judge: Cecil Gunby

Location: Grapevine Convention Center Grapevine, TX

VIRGINIA

Peninsula Caged Bird Society

Marian "Bca" Rogers 757-484-6001

Club email: dickivy@two-rivers.com

Club website: www.frecycflow.com/members9/clubpage/index.html

WISCONSIN

W.I.N.G.S

Darla Dandre dbirdranch@aol.com 630-671-1143

Show: September 14 judge: Dr. Al Decoteau

September 15 judge: Conrad Meinert

Location: Villager Lodge FondDulac, WI

Event: April 6 Spring Bird and Craft Fair

10:00-4:00 Expo Grounds Manitowoc, WI

Contact: Donna Schulz Snoball@dotnet.com 920-894-7828

NFSS FinchSave Application

Mail this completed form to: FinchSave Manager, Daniel Almaguer,
P.O. Box 533015, Orlando, FL 32853-3015, Phone: (407) 894-3808,
Fax: (407) 894-6400, e-mail: DRAFinch@aol.com

Interested in joining FinchSave? Please fill out the below preliminary information and send to the FinchSave Manager, Mr. Daniel Almaguer. Upon receipt of this form, you will receive a complete information package outlining all aspects of the FinchSave Program.

Name: _____ NFSS# _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____
 State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____ Fax: _____
 Email: _____

The National Finch and Softbill Society Membership Application

Mail application and check or money order payable to NFSS: Eileen Laird,
Membership Secretary, P.O. Box 2459, Goldenrod, FL 32733-2459

Annual dues are \$25 for single memberships, \$30 for dual, and \$17.50 for junior (under 16). U.S. & Puerto Rico 1st Class mailing add \$5.00, Canadian add \$5.00, Foreign add \$10.00 (Please send US funds). Canadian and foreign subscriptions mailed 1st Class.

Name: _____ NFSS# _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____
 State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____ Email: _____
 New Member? _____ Renew NFSS# _____
 Second name if dual membership _____

**2002
NFSS Awards
Order Form**

**Please use a separate form
for each individual show!**

Mail with payment to:
Darla Dandre, P.O. Box 1231, Lisle, Illinois 60532
(630) 671-1143 (moving in March, # may change)
or e-mail a copy to: Dbirdranch@aol.com

This information must reach the Awards Manager as soon as possible but no later than two months BEFORE show date. Awards are sent Priority Mail to the designated person.

PLAQUES All plaques are \$25.00 each. They are walnut finish with the engraved NFSS logo on brass over black plate on the left and the club information on brass over black plate on the right. All are 6"x8".

*Please circle how you wish your plaques to read: Best in *DIVISION* or *SHOW**
If you do not make a selection, plaques will be engraved "Best in Division"

Club Name to be Engraved: _____
 _____ 1st Place Plaque _____ 2nd Place Plaque _____ 3rd Place Plaque
 _____ Best Finch in Show _____ Best Softbill in Show
 _____ Service Award / Breeder Award (please provide engraving information)

Sub Total _____ Plaques @ \$25.00 per Plaque = \$ _____

ROSETTES The basic set of rosettes for finches and softbills consists of eleven rosettes with the NFSS logo on the button. This includes 1st thru 10th place and Best Unflighted. Unflighted birds are those banded with current year (2002) bands.

_____ Basic Rosette Package (1-10 + Best Unflighted) \$45.00
 _____ Unflighted ribbon add-on (2nd & 3rd Place) \$10.00
 _____ Novice Ribbon \$7.00

Rosette and Ribbon Sub Total = \$ _____

Affiliation Fee (if you haven't already issued a separate check)=\$ 25.00

Total Amount of Check PAYABLE TO NFSS:

SHIP AWARDS TO: Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ E-mail _____

SHOW INFORMATION: Date: _____ Judge: _____
 Location: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____
 NFSS Club Delegate: _____
 Phone _____ E-mail _____
 Show Manager: _____
 Phone: _____ E-mail _____

Can this information be published in the NFSS Bulletin? YES NO

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Email: dbirdranch@aol.com

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402-592-5488

Email: RoITide@ix.netcom.com

2001 AFFILIATION AGREEMENT



The basic affiliation fee is \$25.00. Make check payable to NFSS.

Mail to: Ginny Allen, Liaison Officer
307 Brookwood Court
Opelika, AL 36801
Email: gndallen@earthlink.net
Phone/Fax: (334) 749-7168

Club Name: _____

Club Delegate: _____

NFSS #: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Address: _____

*Phone: _____ *Email: _____

*NFSS may use this information in the NFSS Bulletin and on the web site.

Delegate's Signature: _____

Club Officer: _____

Address: _____

*Phone: _____ *Email: _____

Club Email Contact (Important): _____

Club Web Site _____

Show/Event Date: _____ Panel Judge: _____

Show Location: _____

Send NFSS Bulletin to: _____

Please list other fairs or events hosted by your club for listing in the Bulletin. Please include dates, locations, and a contact member with phone number and/or email address: _____

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

Size A: Gold-breasted Waxbill, Orange-checked Waxbill, Owl Finch (Bicheno), Quail Finch, Red-cared Waxbill, Strawberry Finch, and other small waxbills.

Size B: Black-checked Waxbill, Cordon Bleu, Cuban Melodious Finch, Fire Finch, Olive Finch, Rufous-backed Mannikin.

Size C: B&W Mannikin, Blue-capped Waxbill, Bronze-winged Mannikin, Cherry Finch, Green Singing Finch, Grey Singing Finch, Heck's Shaftail, Lavender Finch, Painted Finch, Pileated Finch, Pytilias, Red-headed Parrot Finch, Shaftail Finch, Silverbills, Star Finch.

Size D: Blue-faced Parrot Finch, Chestnut-breasted Finch, Lady Gouldian Finch, most smaller mannikins, most other parrot finches, Pictorella Finch, Pintailed Nonpareil, most twinspots, Yellow-rumped Finch, Zebra Finch.

Size E: Black-crested Finch, Diamond Sparrow, European Greenfinch, Golden Song Sparrow, Nuns, Peter's Twinspot, Siskins, Society Finch (Bengalce), Spice Finch.

Size G: Magpie Mannikin, most larger mannikins, small tanagers.

Size J: European Goldfinch, Pekin Robin, Silver-eared Mesias, most small softbills.

Size K: Java Rice Birds, Red-crested Cardinal, Saffron Finch, Shama Thrush.

Size L: Diamond Dove, other small doves, Quail, softbills.

Size M: Leaf Birds, Pagoda Mynah, large sunbirds.

Size R: Green/Purple Starlings, Superb 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 included with each order

The National Finch and Softbill Society

Band Order Form

Mail form and payment payable to NFSS:
 Carol Heesen
 NFSS Band Secretary
 P.O. Box 752
 Riverbank, CA 95367

NFSS offers, to members only, closed traceable aluminum bands, available only in the NFSS color of the year. The bands are engraved with the initials NFS, size code, year and number. There is no choice of numbers. All orders are recorded for permanent reference. Bands are ordered in strings of ten, all the same size. New members may order before receiving their membership number.

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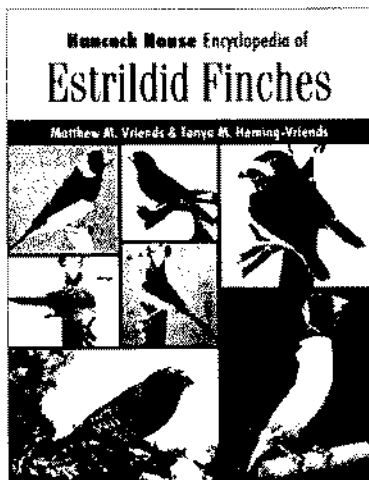
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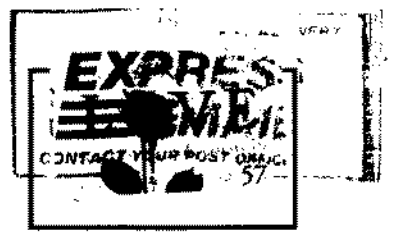
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