

The National Finch and Softbill Society



MARCH

APRIL

1987



GWNOREEN

MARCH/APRIL

1987

Volume 4 Number 2

Officers

President	. . . .	(203) 528-1458	. . .	William G. Parlee
1st Vice President	. . . .	(617) 649-6103	. . .	Dr. A. E. Decoteau
2nd Vice President	. . . .	(717) 854-2604	. . .	Brenda Geesey
Treasurer	. . . .	(203) 346-5875	. . .	Russell Armitage Jr.
Corres. Secretary	(617) 899-8523	. . .	Roger O'Connell
Record. Secretary	(203) 649-8220	. . .	Chris Voronovitch

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Liaison Officer	(413) 734-7053	. . .	Pamela E. S. Liddy
Editor	(203) 528-1458	. . .	William G. Parlee
Education Officer	. . . .	(813) 774-2062	. . .	Jerry D'Agata
Band Secretary	. . . .	(203) 346-5875	. . .	Russell Armitage Jr.
Promotion Officer	. . . .	(813) 774-2062	. . .	Kelly S. Dahill
Points Chairman	. . . .	(203) 528-1458	. . .	Tony M. Patterson

REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS

Region One (Northeast)	(718) 230-3406	. . .	William Hodges
Region Two (Southeast)	() -	. . .	Karl Kline
Region Three (Mid-Central)	(812) 333-5638	. . .	Jon Hoffman
Region Four (Mid-West)	(402) 339-8772	. . .	Paul Williams
Region Five (Mountain)	(303) 574-1594	. . .	Martha Wigmore
Region Six (Pacific Coast)	(805) 872-1063	. . .	Hal M. Koontz

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Again we have George Noreen of Oregon to thank for a brilliant new cover. George's artistic talent has come through to encompass our new name. Represented are an Aracari (small toucan) and the ever popular Zebra Finch. Thank you George for a job well done.

PLEASE NOTE NEW HOME OFFICE ADDRESS:
 NFS, P.O. BOX 18607, EAST HARTFORD, CT 06118.

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES: C/O RUSS ARMITAGE JR. 345 BOSTON ROAD,
 MIDDLETOWN, CT 06457.

BAND ORDERS: BAND SECRETARY, ROGER O'CONNELL, 451 MOODY ST.,
 Box 114, Waltham, MA. 02154.

MARCH/APRIL TABLE OF CONTENTS

Officer and telephone listings	2
President's message	2
NFS Membership application	5
Leg Band Order form	6
Leg Banding Instructions	7
New NFS Members	8
March Board Minutes	10
NFS Notes and Classifieds	17
Hal Koontz on "Foster raising Australian Finches"	18
Club Affiliation Application	22
Judge's Panel Listings	23
NFS Affiliated Clubs	24
NFS Show Dates	24
A Breath of Fresh Air in the Birdroom, Mike Harding	30
Show Results and Points	35
The Rufus-backed Mannikin, Stuart Borlase	36
Getting Ready for Show, Charlie Anchor	40
Membership Services	41
What's a Dove Club, John Pire	42
Cats, Birds and Love, Helen Holmes	45
National Shows Update	47
Importance of a Bird Census, Bill Parlee	48
Voluntary Bird Census	49

NOTICE TO ALL CLUB DELEGATES

On Page 24 of this issue are 1987 listings of the NFS Affiliated Clubs and their show information. Under the club name is your name, the club's delegate to NFS. Below that is your telephone number, so that prospective new members for your club and interested exhibitors for your show can call and get needed information. The the show date, Panel Judge and location of your show are also listed.

Look at your club's listing. Is it complete? As you can see many are not. As delegate it is your job to write to the editor and fill in the blanks for him.

Having complete information for your club listing, is the best way to interest people in your club. Many Exhibitors are willing to travel to a show, but generally only to clubs where full information is given so that the exhibitor can make early plans to attend.

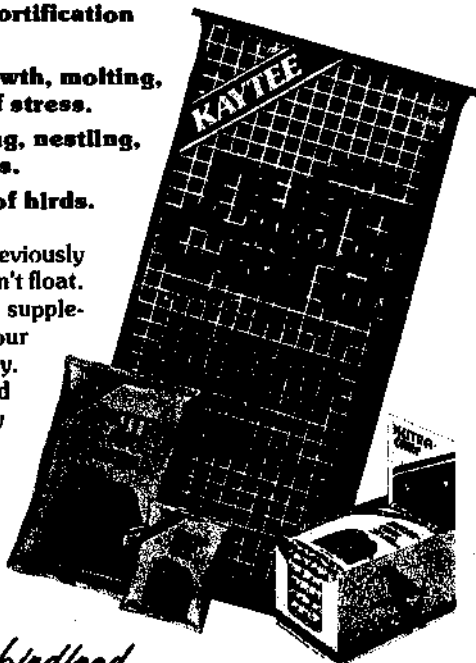
Help your club and NFS by giving us your complete listing now! !



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The National Finch Society

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

OFFICE USE ONLY

selector# _____ member# _____

adm _____

dues paid _____ ann. _____

Check type of membership desired:

Single 15.00, Dual 20.00, Junior \$7.50, Juniors age please _____
Junior memberships are for juniors under the age of 16.

Please list other name to be included on dual membership:

Please answer a few questions for us:

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

How many species have you kept? _____

How many species have you bred? _____

How many shows have you exhibited in? _____

Do you keep softbills? _____

Do you wish to become an active member?

(Work on committees, etc.) _____

Please list an occupation or special talent that may be helpful to the National Finch Society. (Printer, artist, lawyer etc.) _____

Would you be interested in apprenticing for the NFS Judges' Panel? _____

Club affiliation _____

Briefly describe your interest in joining the National Finch Society and what you hope to get out of your membership. (This will help us plan our educational programs.)

Please mail your application and dues to the address shown below. Your membership card will be sent to you as soon as your application is processed.

**Membership Services c/o Russ Armitage
345 Boston Road, Middletown, CT 06457**



The National Finch Society

1987 CLOSED ALUMINUM LEG BANDS

THE STANDARD NFS LEG BANDS FOR MEMBERS ONLY

Bands are available in standard NFS color of the year only

Size	For	Cost
A	Sealler Waxbills & Owl Finches	MAY BE ORDERED IN LOTS OF 10 BANDS AT \$1.25 PER LOT
B	Cordon Bleu, Firefinch, & Lavender Finch	
C	Zebra Finch Gouldians, Stars, Heck's Grass Finch, Cutthroats, Parrot Finches, etc.	
D	Chesnut Breasted, Yellow Rumped, & Pectoralis	
E	Society Finches, Muns, Firetails, & Diamonds	
G	Larger Waxbills & Canaries	
J	Yorkshires, Norwich, Pekin Robins, etc.	
K	Java Rice Birds, Indian Shama, etc.	
L	Quail, Doves, & Other Softbills	

NFS bands may be ordered in lots of 10 bands, consecutively numbered at \$1.25 per each lot. \$1.00 shipping and handling should be included with each order, whether 10 or 100 bands are being ordered. Bands will be shipped within 30 days of receipt of your order, although most orders will be shipped the same week as received. There is no color choice. The standard NFS color of the year will be used. Each band will have stamped: "NFS", the band size code, year and number. All numbers will be recorded by the NFS band secretary for permanent record.

Please make your check or money order payable to NFS and send your order to:

NFS BAND SECRETARY
 Roger O'Connell
 451 Moody Street, Box 114
 Waltham, Mass. 02154

Please send me the following bands. (Multiples of 10 only.)

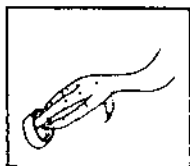
A () B () C () D () E () G () J () K () L ()

Total number of 10 units () x \$1.25 per unit + \$1.00 shipping = (\$)

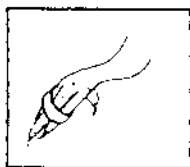
ORDER YOUR 1987 NATIONAL FINCH SOCIETY BANDS TODAY !!!

NAME _____ MEMBERSHIP NO. _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

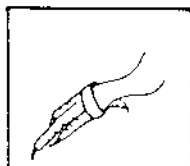
Leg banding Procedure courtesy of the NATIONAL FINCH SOCIETY



The most important thing to remember when you begin to band a finch is to do it over a counter or table in case the chick makes a sudden move, it will not fall to the floor.



The age of the bird to be banded varies with the species. Generally it will be between five and six days old. You can tell by looking at the ankle joint (the joint where the toes come together) and the size of the band.



The band is generally placed on the right leg of the bird. Banding just before the nighty roost will help prevent picking of the band by the parents. By the next morning the birds will have forgotten about the band.



Have the band ready with a toothpick (or other blunt instrument) and a lubricant. Hold the chick firmly but in a way not to cut off the air supply or to hurt the bird.



Put a little bit of lubricant on the bird's foot and slide the band over the front three toes and finally over the ankle joint. The back toe will probably have to be pried out from under the band with a toothpick. The band is now in the proper location between the ankle and elbow joints.

It is best to check on the chick after a few days to make sure the band has not slipped off. Before banding, make sure the band is right side up so that it can be easily read.

NATIONAL FINCH SOCIETY

NEW MEMBERS - Welcome !!!

0478	BLACK, ROBERT G. (Correction)	BRYSON CITY,	NC	28713
0571	DINATTEO, JAMES	FOREST LAKE,	NN	55025
0572	GORDON, LUCINDA L.	STE. GENEVIEVE,	NO	63670
0102*	PLATT, JO	AURORA,	CO	80010
0104*	FOABES, SAN	NENPORT,	PA	17074
0106*	PETEAISON, BERNICE	HONOLULU,	HI	96822
0108*	BIRD, SANDRA A.	OCALA,	FL	32670
0111*	NELSON, ALBERT	BRISTOL,	PA	19007
0112*	NELSON, JANICE	BAISTOL,	PA	19007
0113*	VAN NAGONER, JOYCE	FLINT,	MI	48507
0115*	TRACE, WILLIAM H.	DOUGLASVILLE,	PA	19518
0116*	TAACE, DEBA A.	DOUGLASVILLE,	PA	19518
0117*	TAACE, CHRISTOPHER	DOUGLASVILLE,	PA	19518
0120*	FLECK, MARGERY J.	OKLAHOMA CITY,	OK	73147
0121*	NAGEL, JULIA K.	KENNER,	LA	70062
0123*	ROCHESTER CAGE BIRD CLUB	ROCHESTER,	NY	14609
0124*	MID AMERICA CAGEBIRD SOCIETY	DES MOINES,	IA	50310
0127*	COLORADO CAGE BIRD ASSOC.	COLORADO SPRINGS,	CO	80916
0128*	MIDDLE TENN CAGE BIRD CLUB	NASHVILLE,	TN	37215
0129*	PAEMON, ROSEMARIE	DAEDEL HILL,	PA	19026
0130*	GILMAN, BARRY M.	CANEL,	NY	10512
0138*	BINNS, BRIAN	MANCHESTER, ENGLAND	GB	N31 2NZ
0140*	LOZOYA, J. FRANK III	SPRING VALLEY,	CA	92077
0146*	SNATSEK, PEARL	VISTA,	CA	92084
0148*	WHITE, NILBIA E.	TEMPE,	AZ	85282
0149*	FLINT, HILDA	BEDS, ENGLAND	GB	LU4 9EJ
0150*	FLINT, NICK	BEDS, ENGLAND	GB	LU4 9EJ
0152*	GRON, HARAY SMITH	ENCINITAS,	CA	92024
0153*	FITZGERALD, PATTIE	PALM BAY,	FL	32905
0155*	JORGENSEN, DAVE	LANDENBEG,	PA	19350
0160*	GUSOSKI, ELLEN	HAMPSTEAD,	NH	03841
0166*	KELLEY, MATTHEW	COLORADO SPRINGS,	CO	80907
0167*	HAUPT, AL	CLARKSVILLE,	TN	37040
0168*	SOLGE, JOSEPH F. JR.	WILMINGTON,	DE	19805
0169*	SUNDAY, ROBERT G.	WINDSOR,	CT	06095

* = Reassigned membership numbers

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SHOWCAGES BUILT TO SOCIETY STANDARDS

NFS Showcage Kits

	No. 1	No. 2	No. 3
Kit No. 1 unassembled	12.50	13.75	25.00
No. 2 partially assembled	15.00	16.25	27.00
No. 3 assembled (unpainted)	21.00	22.00	32.00
No. 4 assembled (painted)	36.00	37.00	47.00

OTHER SOCIETY SHOWCAGES AVAILABLE

We can only paint Showcages when our backlog of work allows us to.

NFS BOARD MEETING MINUTES, MARCH 15, 1987

The March 15th Board meeting was held in the home of Nancy Reed in Windsor, Connecticut. The meeting was called to order at 5:35pm. The roll call showed Pamela Liddy, Nancy Reed, Roger O'Connell, Al Decoteau, Brenda Geesey, Russ Armitage, Chris Voronovitch, Tony Patterson, Bill Parlee and several guests in attendance.

The Secretary's and Treasurer's reports were accepted as read.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A.F.A. REPORT: This report was given by Brenda Geesey, our new AFA delegate. NFS is an "A" organization and is entitled to two delegates. The other NFS delegate to AFA is Bill Parlee.

Brenda gave an in-depth report on the summer meeting at Los Angeles. She stated that AFA will be undergoing a home office restructuring and reorganization. It is hoped that the results will better serve the affiliated clubs and members. Joe McLaughlin has offered to serve as Executive Director or managing director to oversee this operation.

Brenda also spoke on the new AFA slide programs that will be available and the Jean Delecour symposium that was held in conjunction with the meeting.

Bill Parlee briefly spoke about the AFA summer convention in Seattle. He thought that no NFS member would want to miss this event. He said that the Seattle area is a good one if you wish to plan a vacation around the convention. The Seattle site will be the location of the summer Board Meeting of NFS. Further information is available in this issue of the Bulletin.

AFFILIATED CLUBS REPORT. Pamela Liddy reported that presently we had received twenty four renewals. The Board suggested we send out reminders to the other thirteen clubs due, if they have not renewed by March 31, 1987. Pam also announced six new clubs affillating this year. Our new Affiliates are: The Mid-Tennessee Cage Bird Club, The Mid-Michigan Bird Club, The Peninsula Cage Bird Society, The Rochester Bird Club, The Colorado Cage Bird Association, and the Mid-America Cage Bird Society.

Pam pointed out that if all renewal come in, we will have 43 Affiliated clubs and 4 international Affiliates. She also stated that we had had requests for regional show status for all regions for the 1987 show season.

BYLAWS REPORT. President Parlee read the proposed By-law amendments and

changes to the Board. These changes were previously discussed to facilitate the operation of the Society and to effect necessary changes to carry through previous votes by the Board. They were published in the Jan/Feb issue of the Bulletin.

ELECTIONS COMMITTEE. Pam Liddy stated that a ballot for acceptance of the bylaw changes and election of Brenda Geesey to fill the position of second Vice President was included in the Jan/Feb issue of the Bulletin. She said she would call for an "Emergency" meeting as defined in the Bylaws to count the ballots, as our next Board meeting is not until August.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE. The Education Committee is pleased to see that so many clubs availed themselves of NFS programs this year. Bill Parlee stated that a third program should be available for next fall.

PUBLISHING COMMITTEE. Bill Parlee announced that the Bulletin is still running a few weeks late, but was improving.

The rest of the discussion evolved around the handbook. The Board discussed the content of the publication. The following will be the content of the Handbook: Listings of officers, members, and affiliates, State of the Society Report, complete approved species Standards, listing of Panel Judges, Points Schedule with complete member points listings, best original articles from NFS Bulletins, NFS forums, "Finchsave" and other topics of interest, and advertising. A complete Judges Handbook will also be contained within the handbook.

The Board also approved funds for a full color cover and a set a five dollar cover price for the Annual Handbook. All Judges will receive a copy of the Handbook at no charge as they already pay a separate fee that includes a handbook.

REPORT ON "FINCHSAVE". Bill Parlee gave a progress report on the Breeding Specialist program; "Finchsave". He stated that formulation of the Committee had been completed. The Committee persons are Hal Koontz, Jerry Jennings, Norm Kopecky, Val Clear and himself. Hal has asked Bill to send out the first round of questions to all the committeemen. This process will continue until all committeemen have resolved all the formulation problems of the program. Bill stated that the goal of the committee was to have a finalized program to be presented at the AFA convention in Seattle this August.

Bill again suggested that any member who has suggestions for the program should contact Hal Koontz the Committee Chairman at 2604 Auburn Court, Bakersfield, CA 93306.

JUDGES PANEL REPORT. Al Decoteau gave a detailed report on the present status of all involved in the Apprentice program.

Al also read a letter from a Judge that had been removed from the Panel, requesting reinstatement. Once again there was a long discussion on this subject. The general consensus on the matter was to, because of the fine qualifications of the judge involved, and because the infractions originally causing removal were only procedural, that said judge be voted upon for reinstatement for the 1988 show season.

Al also read a letter of complaint from a participant in the Panhandle Avicultural Society Show. This is the first official complaint received by the Board regarding the judging of any NFS show. The letter pointed out several complaints regarding the judging of the show. The Board considers complaints against Panel judgments very seriously and asked Al to complete a full investigation into the subject.

Another alleged transgression by a judge was discussed by the Board. The Board reaffirmed that all complaints against NFS judges must be submitted in writing before any disposition can be made by the Board. Bill Parlee stated that he asked the complainant in this matter to send a written complaint to the Board last November but that has not as yet been done.

Al asked the Board to reaffirm the duties of a Panel Judge. Reaffirmed were that a judge must competently represent the Society, must send in timely show reports, apprentice reports, pay his judges listing fees in a timely manner, and attend at least one judges clinic each year.

The Board also reaffirmed the Societies position on hybridization of Finches. The NFS strongly discourages the Hybridization of finches other than the traditional Siskin/Goldfinch crosses which produce mules, for the purpose of song. Panel Judges should point this position out to participants of shows whenever appropriate. The Board discussed possible interference by local show officials on this subject. It was stated that when a club hires a NFS Panel Judge it can not ask for that judge to act contrary to NFS Policy.

LEG BAND REPORT. Roger O'Connell, leg band Secretary reported that the program was functioning well. He stated that he has already had to reorder two different sizes. Last year the total number of bands sold for the entire year was 5,600. Already this year the Society has sold 7,430 leg bands.

Roger also requests that members sending in orders for leg bands should be sure to send the requested postage and handling costs as indicated on the order form. This will save NFS the postage and time in writing back to collect these fees.

Because of how fast bands are selling, Roger requests you anticipate your needs and request bands early enough to allow time for shipping. We keep only about one hundred bands of the less popular sizes in stock. If we are out of stock on the size band you need, waiting time can be as much as

one month, whereas the normal shipping time is 10 days to 2 weeks.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT. Russ Arsitage reported that as of March 12, 1987 we 417 paid members, 38 affiliated clubs and 4 international exchanges. Russ also stated that we are starting to reuse old vacant numbers, so that our membership numbers will not reflect an untrue actual membership.

The vacant numbers within the first 100 charter members will not be reused.

PROMOTIONS AND PRODUCTS. The Promotion and Products committee has selected the Lady Gouldian for our 1987 T-shirt design. The five color shirts will be available for the AFA convention in Seattle. The committee also reminds us that we still have a few of the 1986 Zebra shirts left. They are only available in small and medium, as the large and extra large sizes have been sold out.

RESEARCH AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE. Al Decoteau reported the following Standards committees: (1) Java Rics Bird, members are; Cecil Gunby, Dan Dutz, and Jon Hoffman. (2) Diamond Sparrow, members are Brenda Geesey, Kelly Dahill, and Jerry D'Agata. (3) Shafttail, members are Brenda Geesey, Cecil Gunby, and Harold Harnish. Any members wishing to participate in these committees please contact Al Decoteau or someone on the committee of interest.

SHOWS REPORT. We have received requests from all Regions for Regional Show status this year. Region 1, New Hampshire Avicultural Society. Region 2, Georgia Cage Bird Club. Region 3, Central Ohio Cage Bird. Region 4, Oklahoma Cage Bird Club. Region 5, Colorado Cage Bird. Region 6, Golden Gate Avian Society.

The Great American Bird Show will be held in Atlanta, Georgia on October 2-4, 1987. GABS is being sponsored this year by Nature's Window, a Georgia based custom aviary builder. The show is being held at the Holiday Inn Crown Plaza. The Board selected Panel Judge William Parlee to Judge the Finch and Softbill Division of the show.

The National Cage Bird Show will be the site of the NFS National show. This year's show is being hosted by the Central Ohio Cage Bird Club and is being held at the Fairgrounds in Columbus. The Board selected George Warren of England to be the Panel Judge for this event.

It is suggested that those interested in going to this show make arrangements early as the show is not in a hotel. The Fairgrounds is located close to several hotels. We will publish more information as it becomes available to us.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The Board voted to accept the bylaws as proposed and will await the vote of the membership.

The Board voted to charge a \$5 fee for the yearly Handbook.

The Board reinstated a judge previously dropped from the panel as of January 1, 1988.

NEW BUSINESS

The Board approved the requests for Regional Show Status as listed in the shows report.

The Board approved an April 1, 1987 deadline for receipt of Judges fees.

The Board approved by a 6 to 5 vote to have a modest \$5 participation fee for the "FINCHSAVE" program. Also passed unanimously were the fund drive, the ad campaign and to provide funds from the NFS treasury.

1987 additions to the Dove and Softbill classifications were passed.

The Board voted to take an even stronger position against hybridization.

The Board voted to print the annual treasurer's report in the Bulletin.

The Board voted to accept a three year phase-in for specific show cage colors. They are Black for exterior of all cages. Powder Blue or White for interior colors.

The Board chose to endorse Bob Williams of Delaware to be our official show cage manufacturer. He will have to build cages to specifications and will purchase and ad in the bulletin and Handbook for each year he is endorsed.

The Board voted to increase the Regional Vice Presidents budget from \$50 to \$100 per year as needed. All receipts, as now, will have to be forwarded to the treasurer for reimbursement.

The Board considered offering first class delivery of the Bulletin for an additional fee. The matter was tabled until we can see how the computer can handle this problem.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.e. Minutes are transcribed from notes and recordings. Respectfully submitted, Chris Voronovitch, Secretary.

AN INTERIM BOARD MEETING WAS HELD ON APRIL 21, 1987 for the purpose of counting ballots. Six members were present, both items were approved.

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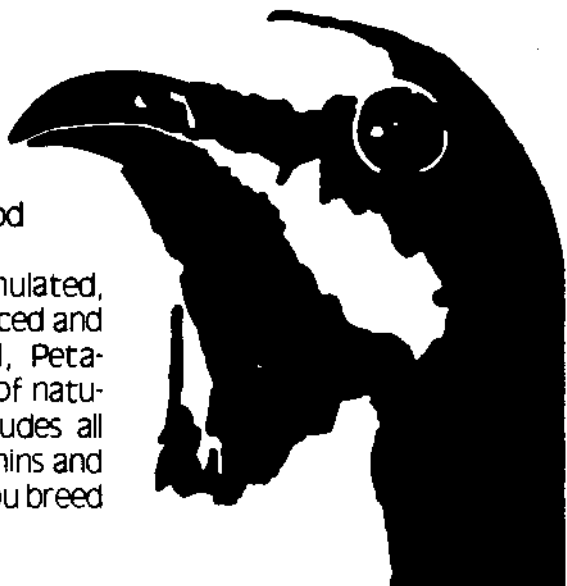
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NFS Notes. . . .

The NFS May/June issue will include these among other items of interest.

1987 NFS Finch and Softbill Show Classifications.

Yellow-beaks and other Unusual Zebras, C.H. Rogers.

Bluebirds are coming back, John J Doria.

Hal Koontz's Column.

"FINCHSAVE" Breeding program update.

Finch Judging and What the Computers Tell Us, Bill Parlee

News updates on the "NATIONAL" and The Great American.

The NFS 1987 Handbook and T-Shirt will make their debut at the AFA Summer Convention in Seattle this August.

The May/June issue of NFS will be at your doorstep just four weeks following the receipt of the March/April issue.

. . . NFS CLASSIFIEDS. . .

LADY GOULDIANS - Normals, White-breasted, split/white. Red, Black, Yellow-headed. Connie Doyle, Hayward, CA (415) 581-9486.

SOFTBILL ENTHUSIASTS - NFS needs you. Please write on the care and/or breeding of Softbilled birds. Send to Editor, PO Box 18607, E. Hartford, CT 06118-0607.

A-1 AVIARY - All kinds of finches at reasonable price. Call (305) 352-1593. (12/87)

FINCH - experiences may be related to others by writing an article for the NFS Bulletin. Send to Editor, PO Box 18607, E. Hartford, CT 06118-0607.

ODD FINCHES - Members may list extra hens/ cocks or birds needed to complete a pair in the July/August issue. **ABSOLUTELY FREE.** Deadline is June 15, 1987. Write and give the species and sex needed or extra, your name, state, and telephone number only. Take advantage of this free offer. NFS reserves the right to refuse ads that do not fit this free classification. Regular ads are at a cost of 15 cents per word per issue.

Foster Raising Australian Finches by Hal N. Koontz

Breeders have for many years used foster parents to increase production in their harder to raise species. If an exotic species of finch lays a clutch of eggs and it is fostered, the exotic pair will likely lay a new clutch of eggs in two or three weeks. This may increase fertile egg production by three times since it often takes a pair eight or nine weeks to raise a clutch of babies and recycle. In addition, most Society Finches and Zebra Finches are better parents than many of the more exotic species. This makes it possible to raise the full clutch of babies while you may have only raised one or two babies had the parents hatched and raised the clutch themselves.

While foster parents are useful, I see danger in using them exclusively. I think it is possible that the foster-raised young whose ancestors were also foster-raised generation after generation may not be as good a parent or have all of the normal traits of the species. I think it is a better practice to let the parents raise their own young from time to time. I am afraid that continuous fostering will harm the species.

I have also noticed that many Societies do not feed as much food as the natural parents. This can lead to smaller babies which generation after generation will produce inferior quality.

I foster about 40% of my babies and about 60% of my babies are parent reared. This would probably be somewhat higher if I had more space for more foster parents and more time to take care of them. My suggestion to the breeder of a new species is to foster raise the first few clutches of eggs until you have raised 10 to 15 babies and then to let the natural parents raise their own babies. Often, if you give the natural parents try after try at raising their own young, one of them will die and you will have gotten no production at all. By raising 10 babies by fostering, you will still have birds to work with even if one or both of the parents die.

I do my foster raising primarily under Society finches in breeding cages. Societies tend to interfere with each other when kept in colonies. They will all sleep in the same nest and you will get many clutches of eggs laid in the same nest which does not work well at all. Instead, keep one pair to a cage. My cages are 18 inches wide, 16 inches deep and 16 inches high. If I were building my cages now, I would make them wider, either 24 or 36 inches. Since my cages are small, most everything is on the outside of the cage, i.e., the nest box, the water, the feeder and the tray. The only time I have to open the door of the cage is to feed greens, feed

nestling food and to catch birds. I use newspaper on the floor of the tray which slides in and out.

A negative aspect of foster raising is the increased work caused by having to care for the Society Finches in small cages (more waterers to fill, greens to feed, nestling food to give and cage papers to change) rather than let the natural parents in aviaries raise the babies (much less work), by not having to monitor the status of all birds closely (to be aware of eggs and their stage of development and the status of the foster parents in their cycle) and by having to do the fostering.

I use both Society Finches and Zebra Finches as foster parents. The Zebras are more highly strung than Societies and there is therefore some danger in the Zebras refusing to feed the babies. A good feeding pair does an excellent job in raising babies. On the whole I believe that a greater percentage of Society Finches make good parents but those Zebras who are good parents feed better than most Society Finches. I put "Australian finches" in the title of this article because I am told that Society Finches do not do a good job of foster-raising other types of finches. For example, I have heard that Silverbills are recommended as a better foster parent than the Society finches for African waxbills.

Sexing Society finches is not easy to do by plumage. I sex my Society finches by behavior. I put 6 to 10 birds together in a small cage for a week and watch them. As I see a bird sing, I remove him from the cage and make a notation that he is a male. After a week of removing males, I have what I think are hens left. I then put a known female into the cage of supposed hens. If there is a male in the cage, he will immediately court the new bird. (The new bird does not even have to be a female for this to work.) I then pair up the male with a supposed hen. If I do not get eggs in 4 to 6 weeks, I conclude that I have 2 males. Usually I will get fertile eggs in 2 to 4 weeks after the birds are set up.

My preference is to use a pair for foster raising. My next preference is to use two males and one hen. My least preferred combination is two hens. I base my preference on the percentage of each combination which turn out to be good foster parents. I find pairs more likely to be good foster parents than any of the other combinations.

I try to test my Societies before I let them raise exotic finches. I let them raise their own babies or foster raise another pair's Society babies. This allows me to see what kind of parents they are. I have rarely had trouble with Societies refusing to raise exotic birds because they did not resemble Society babies. Generally there is no problem.

Two things are important in foster parents: they must be good sitters so the eggs hatch and they must be good feeders so the babies are raised properly. Societies are not easily frightened and the good sitters stay on the eggs when you open the box up. After hatching, look to see if the

crops of the babies are bulging with food. The more food in the crop, the bigger and better the baby will be and the better the parent is.

Before you can foster eggs, the foster parents must be sitting on and incubating eggs. Do not put good eggs under a pair of foster parents which are not sitting tight. The eggs will go cold and the embryo will die before the foster parents begin to sit in earnest.

It is ideal if the eggs hatch two weeks after the foster parents start sitting on eggs. I prefer to foster eggs three to five days before they hatch since this gives the foster parents less time to ruin them. Obviously my foster parents must have already been sitting on eggs for over a week for the fostered eggs to hatch two weeks after the foster parents first began sitting. There is one week of flexibility on either side of the two week period. I sometimes rush my foster parents and have the eggs hatch earlier than two weeks from the date they started sitting. To have the eggs hatch where the foster parents have been sitting less than one week risks that the foster parents will not feed the babies, on the long end, I sometimes have the eggs hatch as late as three weeks after the foster parents started sitting. To go beyond three weeks risks that the foster parents will give up and abandon the clutch. My advice is to make the foster parent's cycle as normally as possible.

When I foster exotic eggs, I take away the whole Society clutch of eggs. I have had some problems with mixed clutches, i.e., some Society babies and some exotic babies in the same clutch. Some Society pairs feed the Society babies and let the exotic babies die. This has happened often enough for me to no longer take a chance doing this.

There are good foster parents and there are bad foster parents. Some pairs refuse to correctly incubate eggs. They either abandon the eggs too early or stay off of the eggs too long. Other pairs are bad feeders. They either refuse to feed at all or only feed a little amount of food. The babies die of malnutrition or starvation. A few pairs toss chicks out of the nest, although this is fairly rare. My experience is that 25% of the pairs are really good, 25% of the pairs really bad and 50% of the pairs are so-so. I generally give my Societies two or three chances to raise babies. If they failed with exotic finches on the first try, I will give them society eggs the second try. If this is successful, many go on to be good foster parents of exotic babies.

As soon as the babies are weaned, I remove them and put them with their own species. This is to minimize imprinting. Klaus Immelman did studies on imprinting and found that while the babies are imprinted on their foster parents, the imprinting could be reversed if the babies were exposed to their own species prior to the 6th or 7th week of age. After a critical date (around 45 days in Zebra finches), the imprinting was irreversible. He only tested Zebra and Society finches. The critical date varies from species to species. Having brothers and sisters helps

avoid or minimize imprinting.

I have not had any trouble getting birds which were imprinted on Society Finches to breed with their own kind. You cannot obviously have Society Finches in the breeding aviary with the exotic pair since the imprinted exotic bird would refuse to breed with his mate in favor of the Society Finch. But if there are no Societies available, the imprinted exotic bird will breed with its own kind. While it would prefer to breed with a Society, it will breed with its own kind as a second choice. Imprinting is part of the reason I feel that exotic birds should be allowed to raise their own young at least part of the time. We do not want to develop a strain of finches which cannot raise their own young of which are all imprinted on Society finches.

I consider fostering an important part of my breeding program. I would not raise as many birds as I do without it. It could be particularly helpful to you in getting new species established in your aviaries. It will also help increase production in those birds you are most interested in. I have seen no problems in getting foster raised birds to breed., But I caution you, for the good of the species, to periodically let the exotic parents raise their own babies.

EDITOR'S NOTE: If you have questions about fostering or about Australian finches in general, write Hal at 2604 Auburn Court, Bakersfield, CA 93306.

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NFS AFFILIATED CLUBS 1987

CALIFORNIA

The Fresno Canary and Finch Society.
Delegate: Graham Southerland
Call:
Show:
Panel Judge:
Place:

Capitol City Bird Society
Delegate: Helen Caudle
Call: (916) 933-1619
Show: Oct. 16-17-18, 1987
Panel Judge: Conrad Meinert
Place:

Golden Gate Avian Society
Delegate: Mary Payne
Call:
Show: Nov. 12-13, 1987
Panel Judge: William Parlee
Place:
Reg. 6 Regional Meeting

The Aviary Assoc. of Kern Cty.
Delegate: Hal M. Koontz
Call: (805) 872-1063
Show:
Panel Judge:
Place:

North Cty. Aviculturalists
Delegate: Victor Swatsek
Call:
No show this year.

Santa Clara Valley Canary and Exotic Bird Club
Delegate: Marty Von Raesfeld
Call:
Show: November 27, 1987
Panel Judge: Charles Anchor

San Diego Bird Show Club
Delegate: Wayne Schulenberg
Call:
Show: Nov. 14-15-16, 1987
Panel Judge: Ray Johnson
Place: Del Mar Fairgrounds

COLORADO

Colorado Cage Bird Club
Delegate: Martha Nigore
Call: (303) 574-1594
Show: October 10, 1987
Panel Judge: Hal Koontz
Place: Colo Spgs. Auditorium.
Reg. 5 Regional Meeting

Rocky Mt. Society for Aviculture
Delegate: Mary Kay Buchtel
Call: (303) 422-6529
Show: October 31, 1987
Panel Judge: Conrad Meinert

CONNECTICUT

The Conn. Assoc. for Aviculture
Delegate: Chris Voronovitch
Call: (203) 649-8220
Show: October 24, 1987
Panel Judge: Jerry D'Agata
Place: Vet. Mem. Bldg. E. Hartford.

New England Finch Fanciers
Delegate: Russell Armitage
Call: (203) 346-5875
Show: September 26, 1987
Panel Judge: TBA
Place: TBA

FLORIDA

Str. Miami Avicultural Society
Delegate: Hector Ugalde
Call:

Gold Coast Exotic Cage Bird Club

Delegate: Karl Kline

Call:

Show: October 31, 1987

Panel Judge: Juanita McLain

Place:

Suncoast Avian Society

Delegate: Juanita McLain

Call: (813) 726-8326

Show: Oct. 17-18, 1987

Panel Judge: Juanita McLain

Place: St. Pete Hilton Towers

Sunshine State Cage Bird Society

Delegate: Ann Hurst

Call:

Show: October 10, 1987

Panel Judge: A.E. Decoteau

Place:

The Panhandle Avicultural Society

Delegate: Charles Richardson

Call:

Show:

Panel Judge:

Place:

Miami Parrot Club, Inc.

Delegate: Marco Arida

Call:

Show: November 13, 1987

Panel Judge: Marco Arida

Place: Biltmore, Coral Gables

GEORGIA**The Georgia Cage Bird Society**

Delegate: Cecil Gunby

Call:

Show: October 2-4, 1987

Panel Judge: William Parlee

Place: Holiday Inn Crown Plaza,
Reg. 2 Regional Meeting**THE GREAT AMERICAN BIRD SHOW**

Delegate: Ray Johnson

Call: (404) 461-8675

Date: October 2-4, 1987

Panel Judge: William Parlee

Place: Atlanta Int. Airport
Holiday Crown Plaza Hotel,
Atlanta, Georgia**ILLINOIS****Gtr. Chicago Cage Bird Club**

Delegate: Charles Anchor

Call: (312) 543-3757

Show: Nov. 6-8, 1987

Panel Judge: Conrad Meinert

Place: Holiday Inn, Itasca

INDIANA**Indiana Bird Fanciers**

Delegate: Val Clear

Call: (317) 642-0795

Show: October 10, 1987

Panel Judge: Charles Anchor

Place: Ft. Wayne, IN.

IOWA**Mid-America Cage Bird Society**

Delegate: Flo Horrell

Call:

Show:

Panel Judge:

Place:

LOUISIANA**Gulf South Bird Club Inc.**

Delegate: Evon Kruse

Call: (504) 469-2435

Show: October 17, 1987

Panel Judge: Daren Decoteau

Place: Clarion Hotel, N.Orl.

MARYLAND

The Baltimore Bird Fanciers
 Delegate: Brenda Geesey
 Call:
 Show: October 17, 1987
 Panel Judge:
 Place:

The Maryland Cage Bird Assoc.
 Delegate: Dallas Johnson
 Call:
 Show: September 26, 1987
 Panel Judge: A.E.Decoteau
 Place:

MASSACHUSETTS

The Boston Cockatiel Society
 Delegate:
 Call:
 Show: December 5, 1987
 Panel Judge: William Parlee
 Place:

The Boston Society for Aviculture
 Delegate: Roger O'Connell
 Call:
 No show this year.

The Massachusetts Cage Bird Assoc.
 Delegate: Shirley Eaton
 Call: (401) 333-5594
 Show: October 17, 1987
 Panel Judge: Charles Anchor
 Place: So.Kingston, MA.

The Western New England
 Cage Bird Society
 Delegate: Bob Clark
 Call:
 Show: November 28, 1987
 Panel Judge: A.E.Decoteau
 Place:

MICHIGAN

The Mid-Michigan Bird Club
 Delegate: Mary Rue
 Call: (517) 394-1047
 Show: November 7, 1987
 Judge: Jon Hoffman
 Place: McGerdy Pk. Carona

The Mid-West Canary and
 Cage Bird Society
 Delegate: Mary Kaszyca
 Call: (313) 285-5168
 Show: November 14, 1987
 Panel Judge: Charles Anchor

MINNESOTA

The Minnesota Cage Bird Society
 Delegate: Micheal Bronson
 Call:
 Show:
 Panel Judge:
 Place:

MISSOURI

The Kansas City Avicultural Society
 Delegate: Earl Courts
 Call:
 Show:
 Panel Judge:
 Place:

The Missouri Cage Bird Club
 Delegate: Tom Rood
 Call:
 Show:
 Judge: Ed Hohnttt
 Place: Day's Inn, Eureka

NEBRASKA

The Gtr. Omaha Cage Bird Club
 Delegate: Wayne Eichelberger
 Call:
 Show:
 Panel Judge:
 Place:

NEW HAMPSHIRE

The Birds of a Feather
 Delegate: Larry Brandt
 Call:
 Show: September 19, 1987
 Panel Judge: A.E. Decoteau
 Place:

The New Hampshire Avicultural Society
 Delegate: Michael T. Putnam
 Call:
 Show: October 10, 1987
 Panel Judge: Ray Johnson
 Places:
 Reg. 1 Regional Meeting

NEW YORK

The Astoria Bird Club
 Delegate: Alex Grivas
 Call:
 Show:
 Panel Judge:
 Place:

The Rochester Cage Bird Club
 Delegate: Jeanne Murphy
 Call:
 No show this year.

NORTH CAROLINA

The Charlotte Metrolina Cage
 Bird Society
 Delegate: Patricia Gibson
 Call: (704) 588-1616
 Show: September 12, 1987
 Panel Judge: Charles Anchor
 Place:

OHIO

Central Ohio Bird Fanciers
 Delegate:
 Call:
 Show: November 20-22, 1987
 Panel Judge: George Warren
 Place: Fair Grounds Columbus

The National Finch and Softbill
 National Show held with the NCBS.
 Show: November 20-22, 1987
 Panel Judge: George Warren
 Place: Fair Grounds Columbus
 NFS Annual Meeting.

OKLAHOMA

The Bird Fanciers of Oklahoma
 Delegate: Gene Miller
 Call:
 Show: October 24, 1987
 Panel Judge:
 Place:

The Oklahoma Cage Bird Society
 Delegate: Laura Bewley
 Call:
 Show: October 25, 1986
 Panel Judge: William Parlee
 Place:
 Region 5 Regional Meeting

PENNSYLVANIA

The Central Pennsylvania
 Cage Bird Society
 Delegate: Granda Geesey
 Call:
 Show: November 14, 1987
 Panel Judge: George Warren
 Place:

TENNESSEE

The Middle Tennessee Cage
 Bird Club
 Delegate: Eva Duffy
 Call:
 Show:
 Panel Judge: Ray Johnson
 Place:

VIRGINIA

The Panninsula Cage Bird Society
 Delegate:
 Call:
 Show:
 Panel Judge:
 Place:

WISCONSIN

The Milwaukee Bird Society
 Delegate:
 Call:
 Show:
 Panel Judge:
 Place:

The Wisconsin Cage Bird Club
 Delegate: Mary Zuidema
 Call:
 Show:
 Panel Judge:
 Place:

INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATES**ENGLAND**

The Australian Finch Society
 Delegate: Martin Hogg
 U.S.A.

The International Dove Society
 Delegate: John Pire
NEW ZEALAND

The New Zealand Finch Breeders
 Delegate: Valerie Hughes
ENGLAND

The Zebra Finch Society
 Delegate: J.A.W. Prior

Yes, count me as a member of the

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A Breath of Fresh Air in the Birdroom by Mike Harding

In the wild they have the choice of habitat and environment and would not choose to live where conditions weren't favorable. However, when birds are kept in captivity they have little choice about their environment.

Whatever our reason for keeping birds, whether for the sheer pleasure of seeing them or trying to breed that elusive champion, we have a duty to insure that our birds are kept in the best possible environment.

In order to achieve this, we give our birds the best quality foods, together with vitamin supplements, in order to provide a balanced diet. We make certain that clean drinking water is always available.

We house our birds in the best accommodations that we can afford, and make sure to provide adequate lighting and heating. In fact, we try to create as natural an environment as possible in the expectation that our birds will thrive and breed well and, perhaps, produce for us a winner on the show bench.

However, there is one area where we can do much more, and that is the quality of the air we subject our birds to when confined to the birdroom. Although the air may appear to be clean, even if you use some form of dust extractor, it can still feel stale or heavy. Just cleaning the air will not make it fresh and healthy.

For years people have gone to the seaside to convalesce believing that it was the ozone which helped them recover. Scientists now believe that this is not the case. It was much more likely to be the abundance of charged air particles called "ions" that are responsible for a general feeling of well-being.

These ions can be produced by a small electrical device called an ionizer which can be easily fitted in our birdrooms. Whether our birds are permanently housed indoors or just come inside to roost at night, an air ionizer can keep the air clean, healthy and invigorating.

To understand how an ionizer can achieve this we must understand what ions are. Air, like all matter, is made up of molecules. The center of each molecule is called the nucleus, which consists of a number of positively charged protons. Each nucleus is orbited by a number of negatively charged electrons.

The vast majority of these molecules are said to be "neutral;" that is to say, the charge carried by the electrons and proton are equal and opposite and therefore cancel each other out. However, if there is a deficit of electrons then the molecule carries a higher positive charge and becomes a positive ion.

Conversely, if there's a surplus of electrons then the molecule carries a higher negative charge and becomes a negative ion. It is those negative ions that are essential in creating the right environment for our birds.

Negative ions are formed naturally in the air mainly by the sun's radiation, the breaking up of water droplets and from the soil. Pollution in the air actually destroys negative ions. It's not surprising to find that on the top of mountains, away from pollution, you could expect a count of up to 10,000 negative ions per cubic centimeter (cc) of air. On hill tops, near waterfalls or by the seashore, the count would probably be about 2,000 negative ions per cc. Normally, healthy fresh air would contain about 1,000 negative ions per cc. This is the level we should try to maintain in our birdrooms.

Unfortunately, measurements taken around our polluted cities and towns, and also in buildings, especially where dust is a problem, such as an aviary, could well be as low as 20-200 negative ions per cc. Counts lower than these have been recorded in extreme conditions.

The reason for this is that negative ions are destroyed naturally by pollution, dust, pollen, lack of sunlight, metal or synthetic surfaces and even walls and ceilings.

Weather conditions can also effect the negative ion count. Hours or even days before the onset of a thunderstorm, the air becomes very oppressive. Under these conditions tests have shown the negative ions count to be extremely low. Immediately after the storm the air feels fresh and invigorating and the negative ion count is very high. Unfortunately it doesn't last long.

The balance can easily be restored and maintained in our birdrooms by installing an ionizer. These small electrical devices can give a constant supply of negative ions twenty-four hours a day, producing billions of negative ions every second.

Scientists have known about the effects of negative ions since the eighteenth century, but it is only the past three decades that some startling discoveries have been made. The health benefits of negative ions are now becoming quite well known. What is less publicized is the fact that animals and birds particularly can respond very favorably in two distinct ways to a steady supply of this fresh air ingredient.

The first way is by reducing the harmful airborne feather and excretal dust,

airborne bacteria virus particles and fungal spores which are too small and light to see the millions of particles caught in a shaft of sunlight shining through the birdroom window.

The way in which an ionizer controls this pollution is quite easy to understand. These particles attract the negative ions very quickly and fore into clusters which are then too heavy to remain airborne, and either fall to the floor under the influence of gravity, or are attracted to the walls and ceilings where they lose their charge and remain, thereby leaving the air clean and enriched with health giving negative ions. These harmless deposits are then easily removed by vacuuming.

The evidence for all the claims made by ionizer manufacturers is quite impressive. One demonstration that's used to show how these small particles are removed from the air uses two large glass chambers. An ionizer is fitted inside one of them and then they are both filled with thick smoke produced from smoke pellets. Within a few minutes of switching on the ionizer this chamber becomes completely clear.

While it's true that pollution destroys nngative ions, it is also true that negative ions destroy pollution. Not only are the pollutants precipitated out of the air, but many airborne bacteria are actually killed on contact with negative ions. In a typical test the bacteria count fell from 4,670 per cubic foot to only 357 per cubic foot in only one hour of ionization.

Dr. Kruger (1969) also found that negative ions inhibit fungal growth. In 1972 he found that an astonishingly small quantity of negative ions could kill bacteria and take them quickly out of the air.

One disease of particular importance is Newcastle disease. This virus can spread very rapidly through the air causing complete devastation to bird colonies. Valuable research has been carried out on this disease at the State Veterinary Medical Institute, Helsinki (Estola 1979) and the Department of Virology, University of Helsinki (Hovi 1978).

An extract from the summary of the published results claiies, "This airborne transmission of Newcastle Disease Virus was completely prevented by increasing the ion concentration in the test room by a constant negative corona discharge above the wire-gauze roof."

"These and other results suggest that artificial air ionization may protect animals from certain airborne infections by interfering with microbial aerosol formations and/or by facilitating their decay."

There must be many fanciers who are unable to enjoy their hobby to the fullst because of the effect that aviary dust has on them even after a short period in the birdroom. So imagine the effect on our birds who are much more sensitive to pollution than we are, and who spend many hours

Inside the birdroom each day, sometimes their entire lives.

The second way in which an ionizer can be of benefit to our birds and ourselves is a little more complicated to understand without going into lengthy technical details. Worldwide research into negative ionization has found that when a certain level of negative ions is reached in the air, the body functions of animals and even plants seem to respond favorably.

The extra benefits should not be thought of as abnormal, but simply what can be achieved if the air is brought to a more natural balance. The level at which negative ions become biologically effective for humans is 1,000 per cc, according to work carried out by Dr. Hawkins at Surrey University.

The research on birds is even more impressive. Experiments depriving laying hens of air ions resulted in "disturbance of protein metabolism and reduced weight gain" (Sviridov 1979).

An experiment by B. Shiskl (1976) on fertile hens found an increase in hatchability. His figures were 88.5 percent with increased ionization and 83.2 percent with the control group.

More than 5,000 scientific papers have been published in many languages from all over the world concluding that negative ions can only do good. Because they are completely natural, it's not possible to suffer an overdose or harm in any way. For those of you who would like to know more about this fascinating subject, read **THE ION EFFECT**, by Fred Soyka, Bantam Books.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The NFS neither accepts or rejects the effect ionizers can have on your aviaries. This article first appeared in *Cage and Aviary Birds*.



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. . NFS 1986 SHOW RESULTS . .

RAP-UP

NOVEMBER 8, 1986
GOLDEN GATE AVIAN SOCIETY

Panel Judge: Brian Mandarich - Exhibitors ? - Entries 237

<u>Award</u>	<u>Exhibitor</u>	<u>NFS#</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Species</u>
Best	Hal Koontz	207	14	CF Zebra
2nd	Scott Akin			Shafttail
3rd	Hal Koontz	207	12	Blk Hd Gouldian
4th	Mary Payne	380	11	Senegal Fire
5th	Marty VonRaesfeld	465	10	B&W Mannikin
6th	Helen Caudle	241	9	Breen Binger
7th	John Boswell	497	8	Combassou
8th	Helen Caudle	241	7	Aurora
9th	Hazel Espindula	468	6	Cinn Pied Society
10th	Marty VonRaesfeld	465	5	Cutthroat

REVISED POINTS STANDINGS FOR 1986

1986 CHAMPIONS

NAME	POINTS
Hal Koontz	82
Cecil Gunby	74
Brian Mandarich	67
Brenda Geesey	60
Steve Hoppin	60
Ann Hurst	48
Gene Miller	43
Robert Hemenway	41
Tom Rood	40

1986 EXCELLENCE LEADERS

NAME	POINTS
Steve Hoppin	100
Cecil Gunby	91
Hal Koontz	82
Robert Hemenway	73
Brian Mandarich	67
Brenda Geesey	60
Russ Armitage	55
Kenneth Akey	51
Gene Miller	51

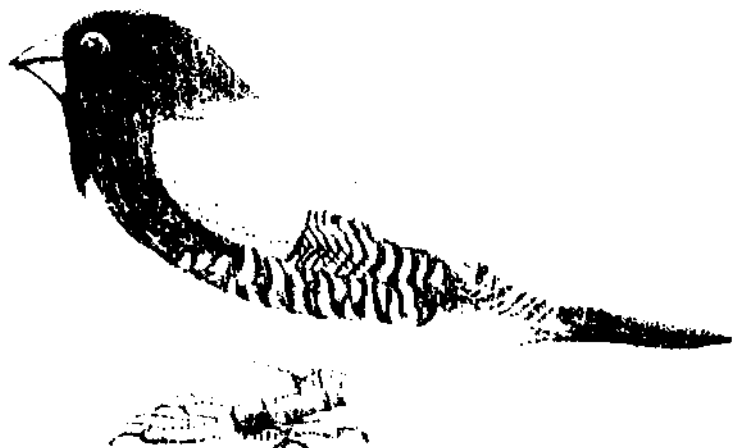
The Rufus-backed Mannikin

by Stuart Borlase

The Rufus-backed Mannikin belongs to the family Estrildidae. It comes from areas of East Africa. It is about 87mm or three and one half inches in length. These very appealing little Mannikins are almost impossible to sexually differentiate. The head, upper breast and tail is jet black, and while the lower breast and belly is white the back and wings are a rich chestnut brown color. The bill is grey, and the iris of the eye is reddish brown.

A very distinctive feature of the rufus-back is the attractive white, scallop shaped marking in it's back flanks, in addition to the spotted and barred markings on the wing primaries and secondaries. The black rump and upper tail coverts also sport white transverse lines, albeit very fine ones.

Immature birds are, by comparison, quite dull, with little black eyes and bills, and a dirty grey/brown head; the back and wings are very slightly darker and the underparts a creamy buff color. The beginnings of adult colorations start to show through four weeks or so after leaving the nest, and take some month before full coloration is achieved.



Behavioral Characteristics

As with other members of the Mannikin family, the 'song and dance routine' performed both in courtship and assertiveness display, characterizes these birds, clearly differentiating the sexes.

It's display, accompanied by a 'rasping, whistling call', consists of fluffed plumage, head angled nearly forty five degrees from normal, bill open and facing the other, and tongue wagging from side to side.

The cock bird also has a soft whistling trill, usually of around one and one-half to 2 seconds in duration, but by far the most constant sounds of it's vocabulary consist of short, piercing calls, made just about incessantly, particularly when the birds are active.

Towards the end of nest construction, the cock bird often calls to the hen while one the nest in soft, rapid almost urgent tones of solicitation.

Because of the visual similarities between the sexes, and the males' only occasional displays, (especially when under the stress of a small cage with a human face a short distance away), when buying from a dealer it is better to purchase a small number, rather than a 'pair'. This increases your chances of obtaining a true pair, i.e. a male and female, but the economics of this system - especially in New Zealand, are questionable, particularly with prices ranging from \$250 to \$350 per pair!

Buying from an established breeder is often the best means of obtaining birds, no matter what the species, as a full history can be given, and with birds that are difficult to sex, the breeder should be able to assist in providing stock that are proven sexes.

Rufes-backs that have paired to sit together, which is a fairly reliable guide, but only by consistency of observation can one be sure, as cocks will sit with cocks and hens with hens! It takes time when attempting to select true, paired birds.

They are generally, very peaceful birds although Rufes-backs can exhibit a little scrappiness around the feed table at times, but conflicts are rare in my experience.

Nesting

Both parents share in the nest building and incubation duties, and the 3 to 6 small white eggs are laid in a somewhat untidily constructed nest, made from grasses and threaded Hessian sacking, usually fairly high up in a shrub or bush.

The nest bowl is quite shallow compared with that of other small finches, e.g. Fires, and can cause problems with young chicks being dragged out of the nest, particularly when the adults have cause to rapidly vacate.

Incubation last for around 13 days and the young remain in the nest for a further period of around 18 days. They are fed for almost another 2 weeks or so before being completely weaned.

As with the young of most other finches, the fledging Rufus-backs return to the nest each night to roost, and I have found that chicks are often back by four in the afternoon! (no late night T.V. for these ones!!)

Leaving the fully weaned young in the same flight with re-nesting parents causes no problems, in my experience at least, and they will continue to use their nest as a roost site for some time, the adults having moved elsewhere.

Husbandry/Management

Feeding: A seed mixture of basic panicum millet and canary seed is fed, in addition to daily supplements of soaked seed.

Twice a week the seed is soaked in an Avi-drops solution, and before being fed, is very thoroughly rinsed under a high pressure fan of water (effected by putting one's finger across the mouth of the faucet).

There are normally twice as many birds in the soaked seed container, than in the dry.

Cuttiefish and a clean, unsoiled supply of crushed oyster shell and/or fine river sand (suitably sterilized), must always be available to the birds, as this is essential to their continued well being.

Both seed and water container are removed each morning and fresh container installed. The soiled ones are thoroughly washed in hot water and detergent, and rinsed several times to remove all traces of unwanted residues.

Green food is supplied each morning, (when possible), with quantities of seeding grasses, including millet, canary, and chickweed, all provided in their own season.

Live food is fed during the 'breeding season' in the form of gentles and mealworms; the Rufous-back, being particularly partial to the latter. I am looking forward to trying new types of live food that have recently been made available commercially, as a varied diet can only be beneficial in terms of health and potential breeding success.

Nesting Facilities

Although my flights are fully planted, I use supplies of Manuks to supplement breeding sites. Cut in lengths of up to 1800mm or more, the 'trunk' end is shoved into a hole in the ground, and one or more of the higher branches fixed to a roof support, i.e. a rafter or similar, so as to provide additional stability.

Dried, and green grass, in addition to shredded sacking is provided for nesting materials. The sacking, i.e. 20 kg Potsto sacks, is cut into squares of around 100 to 150mm and pulled into individual threads. All the birds love it. Feathers are also supplied in copious quantities, particularly white ones, and they are snapped up very quickly by almost all birds, except for the Rufous-backs, who very rarely make use of them to line the nest bowl.

When using feathers, particularly when derived from poultry or waterfowl, take adequate precautions to ensure their cleanliness. I have found that placing them in an old pillowcase or similar, and soaking them for sometime in a boiling water and disinfectant solution (Savlon), provides the protection desired from possible disease.

By placing the wet bag in the washing machine and spin drying it before hanging it out, the drying process is considerably shortened. You will end up with soft, fluffy, sweet smelling feathers - a must for any bird with nest building in mind.

Conclusion

With an increase in numbers of these delightful Mannikins in New Zealand over the last two years, we can look forward to an exciting future, as these and many other species become, hopefully more readily available for all to enjoy.

Getting Birds Ready for Show

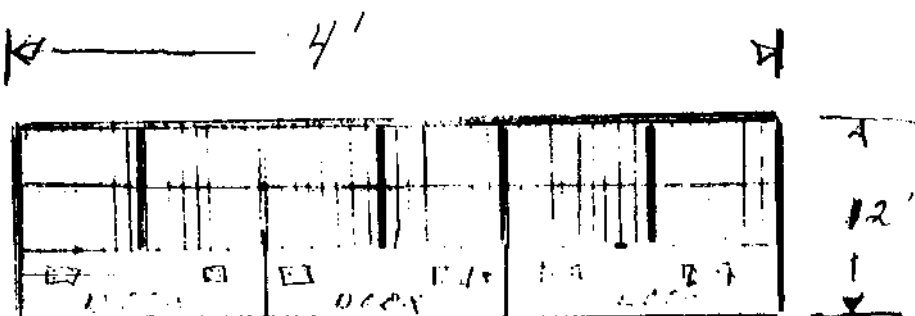
by Charlie Anchor

All judges agree that show birds must be in perfect condition and must perch (according to the species) for a period long enough to allow the judge to examine the bird.

The most common mistakes that an exhibitor makes is in presentation. This basically means that the exhibitor has not taken the time to condition his bird before the show. The bird stays at the bottom of the box and will not perch. The bird will not stay still long enough for the judge to examine the finer points of the bird. You often hear a judge make these comments to a gallery watching the judging.

Here are some suggestions that may help. I use two sets of training cages as in the diagram below. The training cages are like show boxes. Each set is four feet long and twelve inches high. Each set has six compartments.

I place one bird in each compartment about six weeks ahead of show time. Each compartment has two perches up high. On the bottom is a food and water dish. I use newspaper on the bottom. Each bird is fed, watered, and cleaned each day.



What is a Dove Club ?

by John Pire

Editor's Note: The International Dove Society is an International Affiliate of the National Finch and Softbill Society. John Pire is their Vice-President. John has been a strong influence in the formation of the Dove club and in creating interest in the keeping of Doves in America and abroad.

The idea or theme behind this article is to introduce and to peak your curiosity into the "Dove Fancy" through a Dove club.

In today's world of aviculture there are numerous bird clubs. Look at the bird club listings in the back of the major bird magazines. You will find local birds clubs, national bird clubs and international bird clubs.

There are clubs for every kind of bird you can think of. Some clubs are all-bird clubs, devoted to numerous species of birds. Some are specialty clubs, devoted to a particular bird species.

"The International Dove Society" is one such club. We are a specialty club, devoted to promoting doves. We are also an all bird club, devoted to promoting all species of doves and wild exotic pigeons. I.D.S. is a very active and rapidly growing dove club devoted exclusively to the breeding, exhibiting and preservation of the various species of Doves and Wild Exotic Pigeons.

This club was formed in 1984 by a group of dove fanciers from the Houston, Texas metropolitan area. The name "Doves of Texas" was chosen. Soon after, we began setting up an exotic doves display at area bird shows. We also entered our doves into competition. Many people at these shows were amazed at all the different types of doves. The only draw back was in our name. The first question that was asked was; Are these doves native to Texas? It didn't take our club officers very long to figure out that something was needed to help define our club name. "A National Dove Club" was added to our existing club name. Even with the added words, it was still apparent that the people were still being confused.

With the continued interest and growth of the club, both nationally and internationally, a new and less restrictive name was needed for the club. The officers and Board of Directors discussed and approved a name change for the betterment of the club. They chose "International Dove Society"

as the new name. They also secured nonprofit incorporation status and copyright status for the name and club logo.

I.D.S. publishes a very informative monthly newsletter. The newsletter will keep you abreast of the latest in aviary construction for doves, nesting requirements of the different species of doves, nutritional information and the latest developments regarding cage bred doves and their color mutations. There is an ad section in each issue of the newsletter for members, to assist him in selling or purchasing doves. A Breeders Directory is published yearly for the benefit of its members. The club also exchanges newsletters with many other dove, pigeon and bird clubs throughout the country, Canada and overseas.

A short message about the "Dove Fancy"; the different species of dove range in size from the Diamond Dove (smallest) to the Victorian Crowned Pigeon (largest). Next time you are at a local zoo check to see what types of doves and exotic pigeons they have in their collection.

Most of the doves are a somber color, but if you ever see the various species of Fruit Pigeons you will be amazed at their colors. Look at our own Mourning Doves, in the sunlight you will see just how beautiful it's colors really are. The Band-Tailed Pigeon, native to the U.S., is perhaps the most colorful of our native U.S. doves and wild pigeons.

Have you ever seen a pair of Masked (Cape) Doves building their nest? It is amazing to watch the male Masked Dove hover like a hummingbird, before landing lightly on his mate's back to hand her the piece of nesting material. Have you ever seen the excellent care the parent doves show to their newly hatched young? The way in which the young doves chase their parents when they are hungry, reminds me of my own children pestering me for money to go to the store.

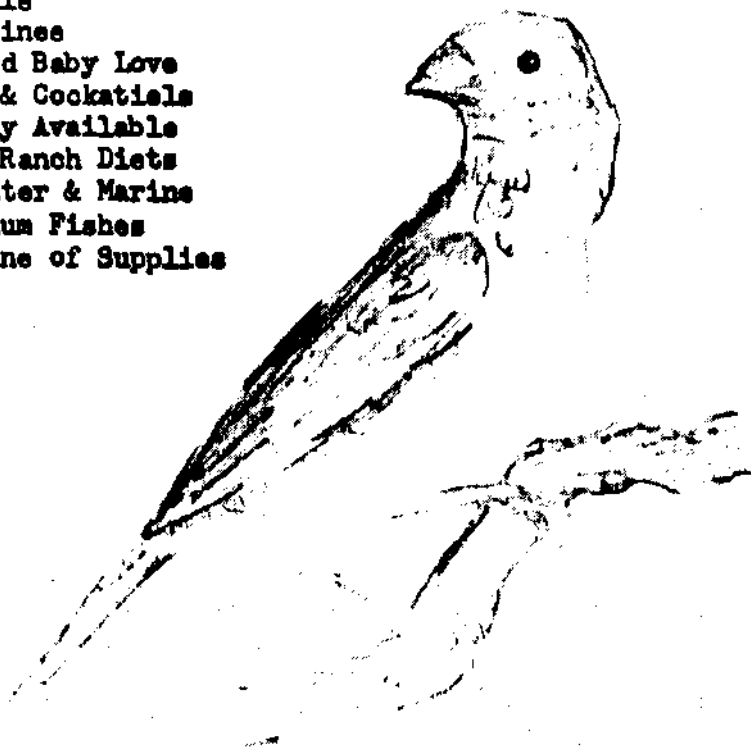
Many people have had pair of doves in their mixed aviaries, but soon tire of them. This could be due to the fact that this pair of doves never raised any young. Could this pair be a true pair? Doves can even fool the best of the dove experts, two females can act just like a true male and female. If you foster eggs to these birds, they will usually hatch and raise the young just as a true pair would. Some species of doves and exotic pigeons are sexually dimorphic. The ones that are not pose the challenge to the fancier.

I some times find that keeping doves is easier than other birds. There are no special requirements. Even if you only have a single white ringneck dove as a pet the I.D.S. will help you find out how exciting and beneficial it can be to keep and raise doves and exotic pigeons. If you are interested you may contact: The International Dove Society, c/o Secretary of Membership, Department NFS, 2507 3rd Avenue North, Texas City, Texas 77590.

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Cats, Birds, and Love

by Helen Holmes

I have great respect for each animal I take into my home. All have their place and all are equally important. None are physically changed for my convenience. The problem is to get all the animals to agree with my idea. Their rationale isn't always the same as mine.

In the next few paragraphs I plan to explain how it has been possible for me to keep both the birds and the cats living in harmony. It can be done and it's lots of fun. Since we have only three rooms, we had to come up with an answer FAST! First, let me introduce my family. We have four cats, two Guinea Pigs and the finches. All the cats have been neutered. None have been de-clawed by me. The Guinea pigs are caged for their safety. We wanted to protect the birds from the cats, but not do anything cruel to the cats.

Besides giving attention to the caging arrangement, I want to give you an idea what a cat goes through while being de-clawed. First the cat is given anesthesia and the fur is clipped from around the feet. A tourniquet is placed around the leg and the nails are rinsed with alcohol. A large clipper is used to cut the nail at the first joint. This involves the foot pad at times. The nails are clipped and the foot is tightly bandaged to stop the bleeding. If the bandage is too tight the cat could get gangrene and the foot would have to be amputated.

When the cat wakes up, usually the next day, he/she is in great pain. The cat feels rejected and depressed. This is extremely psychologically damaging to a cat. Many never recover from this traumatic experience.

Cats use their claws for many functions. However, after the de-clawing operation they lose these functions. Even if you keep the cat in the house, when they jump down from a chair or table, they have pain in their paw pads. The nails are there to cushion the paw pad. If the nails should begin to grow back, the paw feels like a knife was thrust into it. I have seen a de-clawed cat fall when trying to climb the screen door. It's a sad thing to see.

What is the alternative if you have cats and birds? You could try what I did. First, I realized that the cat's nails really wasn't the problem. A cat catches prey with his teeth, not his claws. I couldn't have all the teeth removed from my four cats. I had to make the cages safe for the birds to live in.

I have owned cockatiels, love birds and finches. If I had a parrot I would worry more about my cats than I would the parrot. My cockatiels could handle themselves too. If you aren't the type to build your own cages don't worry, One of my flights is a Pexus Hundryx FO-88. There is on way anything can get in that type of cage unless you leave the door open. The other flights I have, we made. They are converted cockatiel cages made with hardware cloth. The holes are too small to let anything in these cages either. The frame is wood and I have a sliding bottom shelf for easy cleaning. The birds love the cages and know they are completely safe.

When I placed the cages on the tables, I made sure they took up most of the space. This way there would be so room for the cats to sit on the table near the cages.

My bird area is a section of one of my rooms. There is a window and a fan for them in the summer. The fan blows near but away from the cages. It can also pull the air out if I want it to. I have two lights above the cages. These are the Vita-lites. A couple of months ago a friend gave me a portable wooden room divider. It's about six feet high, and it stretches the width of the room.

There are ways to keep different kinds of animals together, happily and safely. I sincerely hope you will give my ideas a try before you feel you have to do something drastic to one of your animals. Animal husbandry means love and care, not just record keeping and care.

It's better to have a cat spayed or neutered than to let it stay whole. This is not harmful in any way. You really can't keep a cat very long if you don't alter it. If you don't believe me, try it. Soon you'll be calling the Veterinarian.

I'll be happy to answer any questions you may have. I would also be nice to hear from people that have been successful in doing this.

EDITOR'S NOTE: If you have questions or wish to reach Helen Holmes you may do so by writing her at: Helen Holmes, PO Box 833, Melrose, MA 02176-0003.

1987 NATIONAL BIRDS SHOWS

OCTOBER 2-4, 1987, ATLANTA, GEORGIA - THE GREAT AMERICAN BIRD SHOW.

The GREAT AMERICAN BIRD SHOW will continue the tradition of it's wonderfully successful show held last year in Chicago. Last year Kaytee Products served the avicultural community well by acting as the catalyst and sponsor for this public orientated show. This year the Show management has been taken over by a Board of Directors, and is sponsored by Nature's Window. The show will be held at the Holiday Inn Crown Plaza, conveniently located at the Atlanta International Airport. The show will continue as a public event, and will feature of course, the cash award exhibition as well as public seminars and demonstrations. There will be a large and active commercial area and space allotted for Specialty club meetings and tables.

National Specialty clubs participating, include the Africen Lovebird Society, the American Budgerigar Society, the American Cockatiel Society, the National Cockatiel Society, the National Finch and Softbill Society, The National Bloster Association, and the Society of Parrot Breeders and Exhibitors. Other Division sponsors will be announced shortly.

A large and exciting raffle has been planned by the GABS host club, the Georgia Caga Bird Society. Ray Johnson and Harold Bowles are Show Managers. For catalog or booth spaces contact Ray Johnson, 175 Stoneridge Way, Fayetteville, GA 30214, Site infor: Harold Bowles, 3402 Williams St., Marietta, GA 30062, for Specialty Club participation contact: William Parlee, PO Box 18607, E. Hartford, CT 06118-0607.

NOVEMBER 20-22, 1987, COLUMBUS, OHIO - THE NATIONAL CAGE BIRD SHOW.

This year the NATIONAL CAGE BIRD SHOW travels to Columbus, Ohio and is hosted by the Central Ohio Bird Fanciers. The NCBS is the host to the National Finch and Softbill Society Annual Meeting and Exhibition.

This years judge for the Annual show is George Warren of Portsmouth, England. George is a well respected NFS Panel judge in this country as well as abroad. His sense of humor and judging critics are sure to make his judging informative as well as enjoyable.

As you know last year in St. Louis, Tom Rood of Shelbyville, IL took home the honors with a pair of Fawn Zebra Finches. This years National Show is expected to be even larger. We are looking for 300 finchas and Softbills for the countries keenest competition. Plan on showing and joining in on the fun. Don't forget to attend the NFS National Meeting.

For Show membership (to win a Kellogg award you must be a member) contact Margie Magee, 25 West Janas Road, Thousand Oaks, CA 91860. For show information contact: David S. Guinn, RR #1 Box 238A, Yorktown, IN 47396.

A Voluntary Bird Census

by Bill Perlee

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

Letters from members wishing to buy babies or odd birds to complete pairs at the NFS offices, are a constant occurrence. Very often we can not help because the information is not available. Thus the purpose of the census. NFS has had a census for two years now, but the response has not been good. Only a few members showed the interest to fill it out.

This will be our last attempt for some time in gathering this information. Please take the time to rip out the page or Xerox it, fill it out, and mail it in.

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

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

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

Your address will never be given out by NFS. We only use telephone numbers to connect members, so be sure when filling out the census to clearly print out your area code and number.

Your cooperation with this census makes it work. Sit down right now, or as soon as you can and fill it out. Check off yes if you sometimes have babies for sale. Many finches are getting harder and harder to obtain. When giving out information we will try to locate the members closest to you for convenience in shipping.



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