

THE NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY

JANUARY
FEBRUARY
1990



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HAPPY VALENTINES' DAY !

Be a Sweetheart !

You will notice, throughout this issue, the words "Be A Sweetheart" occur several times. I want you to think long and hard about them ! Think about how you could be a sweetheart to your local, regional and national clubs. It doesn't matter if you're a novice or an "old-timer" you have a unique blend of talent, time, energy and resources that could benefit somebody or some organization. Make a commitment to give some of yourself to others in the "bird fancy." Use your imagination and your skills to make things better for others who share your love of birds. Let me introduce you to a phrase that is a favorite of mine. "When there is a problem, if you're not part of the solution, then you are part of the problem." Look for things that you think need to be done then look for a way you could help to do them. It could be as simple as helping with the refreshments for a meeting or as complex as chairing a standards committee. If there's a will, there's a way. The FINCH FAMILY is strong and growing, due to folks like you....THANKS !

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(813) 774-2062

STEPHEN HOPPIN
3836 Midden Acres C
No.Ft.Meyers, FL 33903
(813) 997-2237

LAURA BEWLEY
10500 E. 121st St.
Bixby, OK 74008
(918) 369-2580

DR. A. E. DECOTEAU *
P. O. BOX 369
Groton, MA 01450
(503) 878 4391
Panel Chairman

RAY JOHNSON *
175 Stoneridge Way
Fayetteville, GA 30214
(404) 461-8675

BRIAN BINNS
97 Bent Lanes
Davyhulme, Urnston
Manchester, England
M31 2WZ

DAREN DECOTEAU *
P. O. Box 369
Groton, MA 01450
(603) 878 4391

CLAYTON JONES
P. O. Box 266
Soquel, CA 95073
(408) 475-3151

HAROLD BOWLES *
3402 Williams St.
Marietta, GA 30062
(404) 973-1790

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Bakersfield, CA 93306
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Anderson, IN 46012
(317) 642-0795

BRENDA GEESEY
125 N. Jackson St.
York, PA 17403
(717) 854-2604

JOSEPH KRABER
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(714) 996-5538

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BRIAN MANDERICH
4743 E. Hedgas Ave.
Fresno, CA 93703
(209) 255-6508

CLARENCE CULNELL *
Rt. 3, Box 61-7
Springtown, TX 76082
(817) 523-5568

KENNETH GUNBY *
8031 Highway 54
Sharpsburg, GA 30277
(404) 251-2877

JUANITA MC LAIN
2122 Lassar Drive
Asheboro, NC 27203
(919) 692 9352
c/o Jeff Taylor

GERALD D'AGATA *
4497 Beachwood Lake
Naples, FL 33962
(813) 774-2062

JON HOFFMAN *
839 Franklin St. #2
Louisville, KY 40206
(502) 584 6046

CONRAD WEINERT *
R. R. 3, Box 392
Warsaw, IN 46580
(219) 269-2873

RITA O'DELL 1737 Ela Avenue Canon City, CO 81212 (719) 275-1787	MARTY VON RAESFELD 1135 Chapman St. San Jose, CA 95126 (408) 985 2712	MARTHA WIGNORE 5010 Mezal Circla CoLo.Springs, CO 80916 (719) 574-1594
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NOTE: * indicates a judge who is also certified in another society.

For further information on the NFS Panel of Judges, contact Dr. A. E. Decoteau at the above address.

WASHINGTON

Northeast Exotic Bird Society: Nancy White (206) 525 0941

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee Bird Society, Ltd.: Susan Feldstein (414) 968 4514

Wisconsin Cage Bird Society: Edward Zuidema (715) 359 4655

INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATES

Australian Finch Society: England, Martin Mogg.

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

New Zealand Finch Breeders: New Zealand, Valerie Hughes

Zebra Finch Society, England: Chris Blackwell, Durham, England

ALL DELEGATES PLEASE NOTE:

Many of our affiliated clubs have recently held elections of officers and delegates for the upcoming year. Please keep ae informed about your club delegate's name, phone number, your show date and the judge you have selected. Please encourage your club to reaffiliate with the National Finch and Softbill Society. Thanks and best wishes for 1990. The Editor.

=====

NFS NEWS AND NOTES

=====

We are still looking and hoping for artist's ideas for the next Official NFS t-shirt. Our 1987 version, the Gouldian, is now sold out, as is the July 1984 bulletin. These two items are now NFS Collector's items ! If you have a preference for a species you'd like to see on the next T-shirt send your suggestions, accompanied by a sketch, to the editor. Other artwork, such as original sketches, cartoons, etc. is also welcome.

Remember that any member who signs up ten new members in a year will receive their next year's membership free. When other finch folks come to your house, if they're not already members, be sure they have an NFS application when they leave.

The Diamond Sparrow Lithograph by Eric Peake is going to be available for distribution to those members who have purchased the lowest numbers beginning in mid-February. Reserve your signed, numbered copy now and guarantee your right to purchase the same number in next year's version.

Although we're all busy during this breeding season, it is a less hectic time than some other seasons. A good time to order those show cage plans from The Finchshop and get to work on next year's show cages.

Band sales are going VERY well. As of 2/1/90 Denise reports she has sold 5600 of the 8500 size "D" bands that were in the original order. She will restock soon. Please try to estimate your needs in advance to eliminate frequent re-orders. Also note on the order form that postal insurance is now available for your band orders at a very small cost. For some reason reports of losses in shipment have increased and NFS cannot afford to continue to replace those losses. Please add the insurance fee to your order. If you choose NOT to do this, NFS WILL NOT be responsible for replacing bands lost in shipping. (Replacing shipping losses cost NFS over \$60 in 1989!)

Remember, the extended deadline for the election of officers is February 28th. If you haven't sent your ballot, DO IT TODAY !

=====

WANT TO BE A SWEETHEART IN A BIG, BIG WAY ?

=====

THIS MAY ONLY BE A WILD DREAM FROM THE EDITORS' MIND.....

but, wouldn't it be just lovely if a Sweetheart (or a group of co-operating Sweethearts) would donate a laser printer to the National Finch and Softbill Society ? At this time the treasury can't afford to buy one but we certainly would like to have one. Do you have any ideas ?

=====

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THE NFS STORE---"FINCHSHOP"

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To purchase, fill out the form, check the items wanted, total the amount and send a check made out to NFS in the exact amount to:

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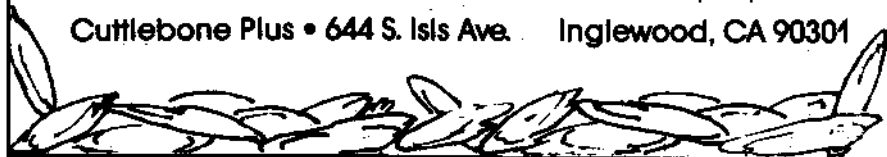
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A SUMMARY OF THE 1989 SHOW SEASON

by Dr. Al Decoteau

=====

The National Finch and Softbill Societys' affiliated clubs conducted 58 shows in the 1989 season. 31 different species of finches or softbills were placed best in division. Shafttails won the greatest number of shows with 12. Gouldians were second with 6 and Zebras third with 4 winners. Societies and Parsons were each best three times. Yellow-faced Stars and Black Cheeked Waxbills each won twice. Only three softbills placed as best bird in division. Finches not seen before as "top bird" included a Chaffinch, a Crimson Seedcracker, a Painted Finch, a Peter's Twinspot and a Black and White Crested Finch. Softbills at the top for the first time were a Common Starling and a Fairy Blue bird.

Top exhibitors this year, in terms of number of best in division wins, are Marvin and Tina Yoder from Maryland, (recently arrived there from N. Carolina) and Patrick Vance from Michigan. They each had four best in division wins. Kris Kroner of Pennsylvania, Earl Courts of Missouri and Marty von Raesfeld of California each had three best in division wins. Exhibitors with two "bests" were; Cecil Gunby, Dale Laird, Gene Miller, Chris Voronovitch and Andrea Whiting. All of these people are to be congratulated for their consistency. Congratulations also to these exhibitors who each had a best in division win:

Russ Armitage, Jr.	Darrin Hall
Laura Bewley	Steve Hoppin
Jeff Brissette	Cathy Knight
Denise Cabral	Evon Kruse
Brad & Deb Clark	Jan Marcott
James Comunale	Rita O'Dell
Clarence Culwell	John Salo
Andy Davson	Dale Shillers
Gary Easterlie	Georgina Skelton
Herschel Frey	Richard Szlachta
Brenda Geesey	Elbert and Susan Traylor
Sam Grebbe	Cathy and David Weigle
Ken Gunby	Jeri Wiesenfeld
Kathy Hemmway	Martha Wigmore

38 different people shared the limelight in receiving best in division. Only seven were not NFS members. We hope those seven picked up a membership application when they picked up their trophies !

=====

SUMMARY (CONT'D)

Finch and softbill species not named in previous paragraphs who won best in division awards are:

Aurora	Paradise Whydah
Blue-billed Manikin	Red Eared Waxbill
Gold-breasted Waxbill	Star Finch
Green Avadavat	Strawberry
Green Singer	St. Helena
Half-masked Weaver	White Java
Maggie Mannikin (pair)	White Hooded Nun
Orange Cheeked Waxbill	Superb Starling

21 members have accumulated championship points for their NFS closed banded birds who finished "in the points" on the top bench. Full details on their standings will follow, as will detailed show reports, in subsequent issues. For now we can say that Kris Kroner has 25 points on one of her Maggie Mannikin pairs and 2 points on two others. Tom Rood has 8 birds with points, including one with 14 points. Gene Miller has one bird with 11 points and a total of 10 birds with some points. These are the current leaders. Remember, to join this elite group you must have NFS closed bands on your birds ! Band those 1990 chicks !

It has been intriguing and informative to me to compile these records and I hope you find them interesting and beneficial. It is quite satisfying to see the names of new exhibitors joining the well-known "old-timers" in the lists. New bird species appear each year on the top bench which proves that NFS members are meeting the challenge of keeping and raising the more difficult and rare species. This we must continue to do as one of our contributions to aviculture. Best wishes for the 1990 season.

=====

NIFTY TIP: from A. C. (Tony) Frick, Ladysmith, British Columbia.

"As a youth I had some dozen pairs of Rollers and Goldfinches. All were in all-metal cages. I had a great idea....use seaside beach sand for the birds. They flourished on it..were never better. But the salt in the sand and the metal cages...'muff said"

=====

SEND YOUR "NIFTY TIP" TO THE EDITOR....SHARE YOURS TOO.

=====

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NFS 1990 AFFILIATION AGREEMENT

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THE ONLY REQUIREMENTS THAT YOUR CLUB WILL HAVE TO MEET ARE TO PAY THE APPROPRIATE AFFILIATION FEE AND SELECT A DELEGATE TO REPRESENT YOUR CLUB IN DEALING WITH NFS. THE DELEGATE MUST BE A MEMBER OF NFS.

LEVEL ONE AFFILIATION

THIS IS DESIGNED FOR CLUBS THAT DO NOT HAVE SHOWS. THE FEE IS \$25. YOUR BENEFITS INCLUDE ALL THE EDUCATION AND PUBLICATION MATERIALS OF THE SOCIETY. ALSO, IN AUGUST OF YOUR AFFILIATION YEAR, YOU WILL RECEIVE A BEAUTIFUL PLAQUE FOR YOUR CLUB. THIS PLAQUE CAN BE A SERVICE OR BREEDER AWARD FOR ONE OF YOUR MEMBERS. (NEED NOT BE AN NFS MEMBER.) THE PLAQUE ALONE IS WORTH THE AFFILIATION FEE. REQUESTS FOR THE TYPE PLAQUE AND ITS' WORDING MUST BE FORWARDED TO NFS NO LATER THAN JUNE 1ST .

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A LITHOGRAPH by ERIC PEAKE for NFS

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"In my art work, I have been able to add or subtract areas of development in the avian subjects I choose. Being an artist who loves birds, and having been fortunate to paint the things I love has been a rewarding achievement in itself.

Most of my years as an artist, I have been connected with the parrot family. But from time to time, I paint other birds, Raptors, Cage Birds, etc. When I painted the beautiful "Diamond Firetails" I tried to portray the beauty of this lovely bird, also to show its' character for bird lovers.

It has been my pleasure to have the "Firetails" issued by the National Finch and Softbill Society as a Limited Edition print. Please support the Society by purchasing a print. I will continue to paint one subject a year, if it proves successful."

Eric Peake (UK)

=====

CONSERVATION NEWS ALERT !

=====

One of Australia's rarest and most beautiful birds, the Gouldian Finch, is now at the centre of a mineral exploration controversy in the Northern Territory. What is possibly it's most important breeding ground, an area of less than ten square kilometers, is literally in the middle of an exploration lease held by the Shell exploration company, Billiton. Current work has already damaged at least 10% of the breeding area.

The Gouldian Finch has already suffered an alarming decline in numbers in recent years. This is due to a variety of causes including habitat destruction and disease. The World Wildlife Fund estimates there may be only 1000 birds remaining in the wild, in the top end of the Northern Territory, the region considered the stronghold of the species.

Of these, 500 are estimated to breed at Yinberrie Hills, the area which is now proposed for a gold mine. This area has been the subject of extensive research by scientists who consider it's preservation to be particularly important for the continuation of this species.

Gouldian Finches require a critical combination of habitat features. Wildlife researcher Dr. John Wojnarski claims that if mining forces the birds from this colony area they might not be able to find a suitable alternative.

The NT Government has decided, however, that mineral exploration is more important than conservation. The Conservation Minister, Mr. Daryl Manzie, has dismissed the threat to the breeding area as "nonsense". Billiton, on the other hand, appears to have been unaware of the significance of the area due to negligence or poor communication on behalf of the Conservation and Mining Ministers. The company has now entered into negotiations with the government who has announced that superficial changes in the mining programme may occur. However, these will offer no real protection to the breeding area.

As the best way of protecting the birds, the NT Environment Centre has called for the area, about 20 kms north of Katherine, to be included in the nearby Katherine George (Nitmiluk) National Park. The Yinberrie Hills have extremely high conservation value. Not only are they breeding habitat for the Gouldian Finches, but they also contain about 50 individuals of another endangered bird species, the Hooded Parrot, as well as newly identified species of grass and one of the highest diversities of Eucalyptus species in Northern Australia.

PLEASE HELP protect the Gouldian Finch and this whole area from mining. WRITE LETTERS TO: THE SNELL COMPANY OF AUSTRALIA LTD., GPO BOX 972K, NELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, 3001. ALSO TO: MINISTER OF CONSERVATION, NON. G. MANZIE, CHAN BUILDING, MITCHELL, ST. DARNIN, AUSTRALIA, 0800.

This article has had a long route getting to the NFS Bulletin. I want to thank Jack Etzler of Georgia who gave it to me. It was printed in Western Finch News, April 1989, in Aviary Bird & Wildlife Magazine, July 1989 and in The Grassfinch, August 1989. I hope that the situation has improved for the indigenous Gouldians by now. Isn't it appalling to think that only 1000 are estimated to exist in this prime breeding area? I hope that many, many NFS members will write those letters! Please show this article to your friends who keep hookbills and ask that they write to help preserve habitat for the Hooded Parrot too! Sounds like both species need all the help they can get! Thanks.

The Editor.

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The National Finch and Softbill Society

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Reg.# _____ Dues _____

Ann.Date _____

Check type of membership desired:

Single 15.00, Dual 20.00, Junior 7.50 (-16yrs), Canada add \$5.

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Please list other name to be included in a dual membership:

Please answer a few questions for us:

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

How many species have you kept? _____

How many species have you successfully bred? _____

Do you exhibit in bird shows? _____

Do you keep softbilled birds? _____

Please list an occupation or special talent that may be helpful to the NFS (printer, artist, lawyer, etc.) _____

Are you interested in participating in the NFS Judges Panel? _____

Please indicate below the items you are most interested in.

Nutrition _____ breeding _____ management _____ exhibition _____ bulletin _____

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=====
NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY
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=====

ALABAMA

Central Alabama Avicultural Society; Danny Hall, (205) 491 8603

CALIFORNIA

Aviary Association of Kern County; Hal Koontz, (805) 872 1063

Capitol City Bird Society; Helen Caudle, (916) 933 1619

Central California Cage Bird Club; Marty Von Raesfeld, (408) 985 2712

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

Fresno Canary and Finch Society; Richard Lujan, (408) 984 1453

Golden Gate Avian Society; Dawn Senna, (415) 449 8719

San Diego Bird Show, Inc.; Janice Pritchard, (619) 443 6684

Santa Clara Valley Canary and Exotic Bird Club; Marty Von Raesfeld, (408) 985 2712

COLORADO

Colorado Cage Bird Association; Martha Wigmore, (303) 574 1594

Rocky Mountain Society of Aviculture; Donald Locke, Jr. (303) 289 5721

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut Association for Aviculture; Christine Voronovitch, (203) 649 8220

New England Finch Fanciers; Russell Armitage, Jr., (203) 346 5875
Show: Nov. 18, 1990 E. Hartford, CT Panel Judge: Bill Parlee

FLORIDA

Aviary & Cage Bird Society of South Florida; Len Brover, (305) 931 3468

Exotic Bird Club of Florida, Inc.; Teddy Richens, (407) 783 3205

Gold Coast Exotic Bird Club; Cynthia Patton, (407) 439 6582

Greater Brandon Avian Society, Inc.; Andrea Whiting, (813) 888 5935

Jacksonville Avicultural Society; Bobby Nipper, (904) 372 0299

Jacksonville Cage Bird Assn.; Jerri Weisenfeld (904) 731 7173.

Suncoast Avian Society; Joe Ventimiglia, (813) 392 9391

Sunshine State Cage Bird Society; Dennis Lewis, (407) 695 7484

GEORGIA

Georgia Cage Bird Society; Cecil Gunby, (404) 254 1261

ILLINOIS

Greater Chicago Cage Bird Club; Charles Anchor, (708) 543 3757
Show: Nov. 3, 1990 Panel Judge: Daren Decoteau

National Institute Red-Orange Canaries; Catherine Wiegale, (219) 922 1146

INDIANA

Indiana Bird Fanciers; Dr.Val Clear, (317) 642 0795
Show: Oct. 13, 1990 Panel Judge: Dr. Val Clear

IDWA

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

KANSAS

Kansas Avicultural Society;

LOUISIANA

Capitol Area Avicultural Society; Tim Schexnayre, (504) 562 3579

Gulf South Bird Club; Evon Kruse, (504) 469 2435

Show: Oct. 21, 1990 New Orleans, LA Panel Judge: Bill Parlee

MARYLAND

Baltimore Bird Fanciers; Brenda Geesey, (717) 854 2604

Maryland Cage Bird Association; Theresa Brown, (301) 386 3907

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston Cockatiel Society; Elizabeth Vaughan, (508) 663 7874

Show: Sept. 21, 1990 Framingham, MA Panel Judge: Bill Parlee

Boston Society for Aviculture; Kathy Wilcox, (508) 339 7684

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

Western New England Cage Bird Society; Bob Clark,

MICHIGAN

Mid-Michigan Bird Club; Mary Rue, (517) 394 1047

Mid-West Cage Bird Club; Jean Wiley, (313) 326 2424

Show: Nov. 10, 1990 Wayne, MI Panel Judge: Dr. Val Clear

Motor City Bird Breeders; (Non-affiliated club)

Show: Oct. 27 & 28, 1990 Detroit, MI Panel Judge: Bill Parlee

MINNESOTA

The Minnesota Cage Bird Society; Cathy Overland,

MISSOURI

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

Missouri Cage Bird Association; Eileen Lambert, (314) 962 8186

NEW JERSEY

South Jersey Bird Club; Kristine Kroner, (215) 628 4143

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Birds of a Feather; Ken Black, (508) 462 3822

Show: Sept. 15, 1990 Auburn, N.H. Panel Judge: Daren Decoteau

New Hampshire Avicultural Society; Ken Akey, (603) 880 9804

Show: Oct. 13, 1990 Nashua, N.H. Panel Judge: Daren Decoteau

NEW YORK

Astoria Bird Club; Douglas Olsen, (212) 865 5841

Rochester Cage Bird Club; Jeanne Murphy, (714) 232 5477

NORTH CAROLINA

Charlotte Metrolina Cage Bird Society; Pat Gibson, (704) 588 1616

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Golden Crescent Cage Bird Club; Joan Gangle, (216) 666 9773

OKLAHOMA

Bird Fanciers of Oklahoma; Gene Miller, (405) 382 7066

Oklahoma Cage Bird Society; Laura Bevley, (918) 369 2580

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Central Pennsylvania Cage Bird Society; Jerry McCawley, (717) 288 0529
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of cage birds. For info: Paul Crow, (215) 775 2081

Chester County Bird Breeders; Joe Kessler, (215) 326 5109

Delaware Valley Bird Club; Kris Kroner, (215) 628 4143
Show: Nov. 10, 1990 Panel Judge: Dr. Al Decoteau

Greater Pittsburgh Cage Bird Society; Dr. Lindsay Clack, (412) 323 7235

Philadelphia Avicultural Society; Rick Sziachta, (215) 638 2097

TENNESSEE

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

TEXAS

Avicultural Council of Texas; Kevin Burch (713) 485 8424

Bay Area Bird Club; Paul Hensley, (713) 331 3383

Capitol City Cage Bird Club; Sarah Goodrich, (512) 258 5048

Fort Worth Bird Club; Clarence Culwell, (817) 523 5568
Show: Oct. 6, 1990 Panel Judge: Dr. Al Decoteau

Texas Bird Breeders and Fanciers Association; Sarah Goodrich,
(512) 258 5048

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=====

...AND THE BAND GOES ON

by Rick Szlachta

=====

The New Year means new bands, new colors, new numbers.....NEW LETTERS ? With my 1990 band order to start a new decade I got NSF BANDS ? On my National Finch and Softbill Society "C" bands were the letters NSF !

I was preparing to log them into my book as I do each year, according to size and number, but I decided to call another breeder to check if hers had the NSF lettering. Kris Kroner confirmed that, indeed, her size "C"s and size "L"s also had the letters transposed.

We contacted the NFS band Secretary, Denise Capazzi, and she assured us that it was a manufacturer's error. (Had we worried for a while...I thought maybe we'd been infiltrated by an alien NSF Society !) Denise contacted A. C. Hughes, the British firm who makes our bands, and they will send a supply of the properly lettered bands as soon as possible. In the meantime, Denise is sending notes of explanation to everyone who has ordered size "C" and "L". If you have the improperly lettered ones, you should continue to use them until the manufacturer re-supplies NFS. The bands will be valid in every NFS affiliated show and other event and the corrected ones should be ready for distribution by the time you read this article.

All of this news was a great relief to me ! Not only was I concerned about the infiltration but I thought about what a dilemma we could have on the show bench this fall ! Nice to know that it is not a problem !

However, in my opinion, a problem does exist with the limited number of species (41) named on the list of band sizes (9). I know of breeders that don't band at all due to the fact that the species that they are raising are not mentioned on the list or are listed under band numbers that they feel are inappropriate. In my personal experience, I have raised close to 100 Bluefaced Parrot Finches, (*Erythrura trichroa*), in both Normal and Lutino color varieties. I have banded all of them with the size "D" band as opposed to the "C" which is suggested. I find that I cannot get the "D" on after the 10th day and I feel that the "C" is dangerously small. Perhaps there is a European model leg that will daintily carry a "C" but I feel that it is time, for the sake of the finches and the finch breeders, to take a hard look at the sizes that are suggested by our European manufacturers and perhaps change the size requirements for other species, as we have done for the Zebra and Gouldian.

Hopefully, we can expand the lists to cover more of the species bred by NFS members and, hopefully, members will participate in helping to decide which band sizes are best suited to the birds they are raising. I think we all realize that a band that is too large is very dangerous because it is apt

AND THE BAND GOES ON (CONT'D)

to get caught on things and hang the bird. We also know that a band that is too small can cut off the circulation and cause the leg to wither and die. To provide the kind of identification that we need with the kind of safety that we hope for we need to carefully use proper sizes.

I hope that all NFS members will use closed, traceable NFS bands on all the chicks that they raise. I also hope that they will write to the band secretary with their notes on which sizes they feel are appropriate for the species that they are raising.

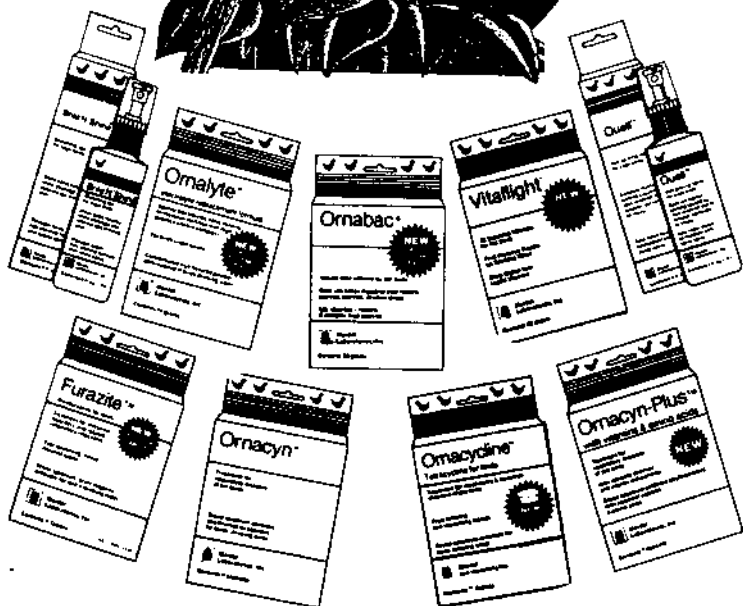
I wish everyone such success in the New Year. Take pride in your flock, keep good records and **BAND, BAND, BAND, AS THE BAND GOES ON.**

=====
Editor's note: This is not the first time we have heard that the "suggested" sizes are not working very well in some species. Please do let Denise know your feelings on this subject and the board will discuss the changes you feel are necessary. Rick, I also note your remark about "logging into your book" and I'm hoping for an expanded article about your record keeping system.
=====

THE LARGEST SHOWS OF 1989

Fresno Canary & Finch Society, Madiera, CA	Joe Krader	239 birds
National Cage Bird Show, New Orleans, LA	Charles Anchor	228 birds
Santa Clara Valley B. C., Sunnyvale, CA	Clayton Jones	142 birds
New England Finch Fanciers, Hartford, CT	Cecil Gunby	136 birds
Capitol City Bird Society, Sacramento, CA	Dr. Al Decoteau	135 birds
Kaytee Great American B. S., St. Louis, MO	Clarence Culwell	134 birds
Suncoast Avian Society, Tampa, FL	Cecil Gunby	130 birds
Sunshine State C. B. Society, Orlando, FL	Daren Decoteau	126 birds
Golden Gate Avian Society, Livermore, CA	Laura Bewley	115 birds
Georgia Cage Bird Society, Atlanta, GA	Dr. Al Decoteau	111 birds
South Jersey Bird Club, Bristol, PA	Daren Decoteau	110 birds
Gold Coast Exotic B. C., Ft. Lauderdale, FL	Cecil Gunby	108 birds

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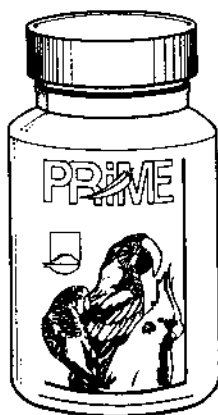
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* = Reassigned membership numbers

=====
 All articles, anecdotes, artwork,
 ads and other additions to the
 bulletin should be sent to:

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P.S. Also all complaints, comments,
 compliments, colloquies, critiques
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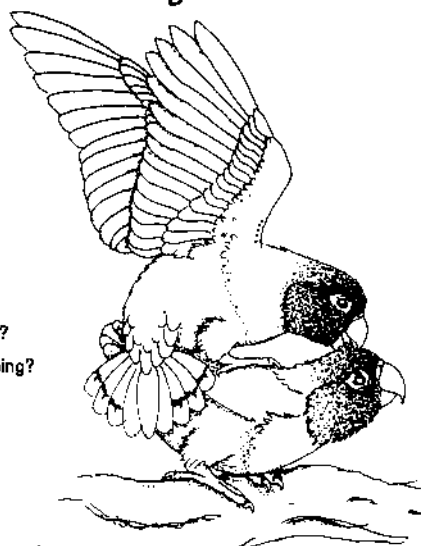
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NFS INDEX OF ARTICLES

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 your mailing label now and...BE A SWEETHEART...if it needs correction, notify
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AFA in brief

January 1990

Winter Meeting

The winter meeting will be held February 16-19, 1990 (Presidents' Day weekend) in Jacksonville, Florida (Hospitality Inn, 901 N. Main St., Jacksonville, FL 32202). Call (800) 321-0052 for room reservations; in Florida call (800) 821-2073. Room rates are \$40 single or double (\$46 triple or quad occupancy) per night plus tax. The Board of Directors will meet Friday, the House of Delegates will meet Friday evening and Sunday morning.

Two days of educational programs will include *Finches and Small Softbilled Birds* by Ann Hurst of Orlando, Florida; *General Avian Management and Practices* by Richard Porter of Memphis, Tennessee; *Conures and Macaws* by William Maynard of Elkton, Florida; *Toucans and Toucanets and Cranes and Waterfowl* by Jerry Jennings of Woodland Hills, California; *Successful Breeding of Hornbills, Toucans and Kookaburras at Jacksonville Zoo* by Forrest Penny of Jacksonville, Florida; and *Updates on Infectious Diseases and Disease Prevention—What the Aviculturist Can Do* by Cindy Bishop of Starkville, Mississippi. In addition, an exhibit hall will be open to the public Saturday and Sunday. On display and for sale will be a wide variety of birds, cages, avian books and other bird-related accessories. Other area attractions include the Jacksonville Zoo, the Museum of Science and History, the Riverwalk and shopping in Jacksonville Landing.

Cockatoo Information

The Feb/Mar 1990 *Watchbird* will be a special cockatoo issue. Feature articles by Joseph Forshaw and Stan Sidel will be among the highlights of this issue, as well as an update on beak and feather disease by Dr. Branson Ritchie. This special issue will be a valuable reference from the time it's published. Clubs and members interested in cockatoos may want to order additional copies from the AFA business office.

Buffon's Macaw

Ara ambigua, commonly known as the Great Green or Buffon's Macaw, is listed on CITES Appendix I, although not included in the *ICBP World Checklist of Threatened Birds* (1989) nor listed in the Red Data Book of the IUCN/ICBP. Recent data indicates an annual decline in wild populations, due primarily to habitat destruction and illegal trade. Over the last 20 years, several hundred of these birds have been legally imported into the United States, numerous others have entered either through smuggling or by erroneous identification as Military Macaws (*Ara militaris*). Captive breeding has occurred on numerous occasions. AFA's Conservation Committee is launching an aggressive campaign to encourage captive propagation of this species. This includes a survey/census similar to the Green-checked Amazon project and additionally an educational promotion to distinguish the Buffon's from the Military Macaw to prevent unintended hybridization.

The Buffon's x Military is one of the most difficult and insidious hybridization problems facing aviculturists today. Several Buffon's x Military pairs are known to exist. In the case of the Buffon's x Military cross, there is a serious threat of hybrids entering both gene pools through false identification. It is impossible to overemphasize the need to establish pure, self-sustaining captive populations of both species. Mixed pairs reduce the number of birds (in present populations) available for this purpose. Hybridization contributes nothing to either gene pool, but with this cross the issue of proper identification is further clouded by the similarity in appearance between Buffon's, Military and Buffon's x Military hybrids.

In appearance, the Buffon's has a massive beak similar to Green-wing or Hyacinth Macaws, the Military's beak is more like the Blue and Gold or Scarlet Macaw. Military Macaws also have a smaller facial patch than Buffon's. In mature birds, the Buffon's has dark, charcoal grey eyes with a thin, outer pale grey eye ring. Mature Military Macaws have a greenish ring closest to the pupil and an outer gold eye ring. Buffon's have a large tail of red orange, orange, greenish yellow and a bright turquoise tip, while the Military has a smaller tail of reddish brown with a blue tip. Hybrids exhibit traits from both species, although in some instances the variation in appearance from either parent species can be easily overlooked.

The Military Macaw is threatened in some parts of its range, but the overall population appears fairly stable at present. Buffon's, on the other hand, appear to be steadily declining. Captive propagation is required to ensure their survival. An unknown number of pairs exist in captivity. This AFA Conservation Committee project will attempt first to determine how many birds are in captivity and the extent of hybridization that has and still is occurring. Assistance in pairing odd Buffon's as part of establishing a viable, self-sustaining captive population will be one benefit of the census' success. The potential is also present for forming a breeding consortium. Education of the dangers posed by hybridization of these two species and how to distinguish Buffon's, Military and Buffon's x Military hybrids will also be a significant part of this project. For more information, see pp. 35-37 and the center insert (census form) of the Dec/Jan '90 *Watchbird*, or write to Buffon's, P.O. Box 620707, Woodland Hills, CA 94062.

Red Siskin Report

The AFA Red Siskin Project is now off the ground. Bands bearing AFA's logo have arrived, and the plan has become reality. See upcoming issues of *Watchbird* for enrollment applications and details of how the consortium will work. This project will take on major importance as it is AFA's first "internal" conservation project. Aviculture has been the main factor in the decline of the Red Siskin in the wild; AFA will be at the forefront of captive breeding efforts to ensure the survival of this species. Production of Red Siskins for reintroduction to the wild is part of this project's goal.

AFA...working for aviculture and you!

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