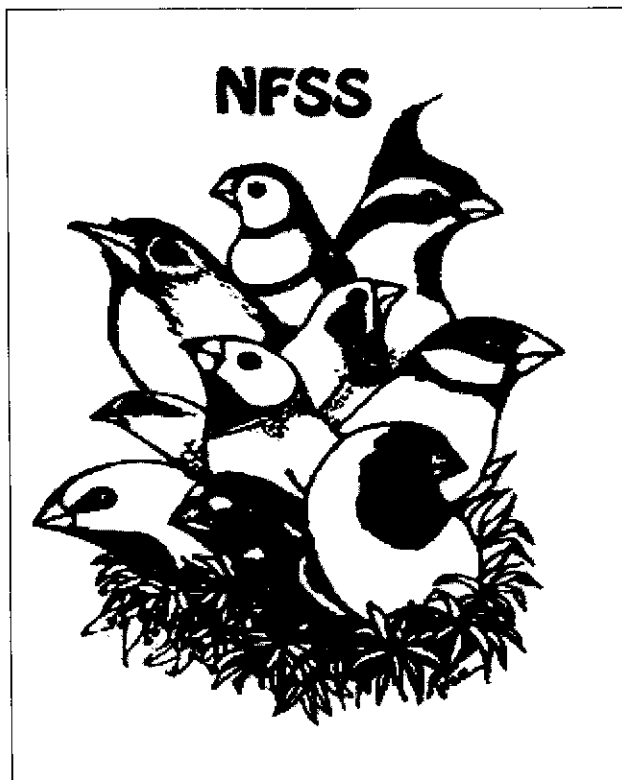


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1999

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National Finch and Softbill Society

The NFSS Bulletin

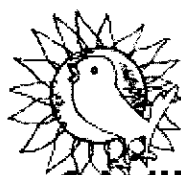


Special Points of Interest:

- ◆ Notes from Steve Hoppin
- ◆ Building a bird room for the city dweller, by Chas. Brill
- ◆ A story of importation, by Michael Marcotrigiano
- ◆ Tips/tricks for breeding the Owl Finch, by Harry Bryant

In the Next Issue:

- ◆ Egg binding, by Carol Heesen



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CORRECTION

Please note the correct email address for Jim Norman is:

JIMNSP@AOL.COM

Letter from the Editor

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new Editor of the NFSS Bulletin. As many of you may know, the previous editor is in the process of pulling up stakes and moving to a northern frontier, facing new challenges and, undoubtedly, new record low temperatures. I have volunteered to "take up the slack" concerning the publication of this document. I hope to maintain the high standards to which you are accustomed and will exert every effort to see that this is done.

Before I embark on the promised introduction, I would like to extend an invitation to all members of the NFSS to feel free to submit articles for publication, as well as suggestions and other *constructive* criticisms that would improve the quality of this publication, or increase the informative or educational value thereof. By the same token, I would like to encourage member participation in upcoming censuses and surveys that I promise will be helpful to many other members and will cost you little more than the price of a stamp. That being said, let's move on to the introduction.

(continued on next page)

MEA CULPA

To **Richard Pizzuro**, NFSS member #1053 of San Jose, CA for failure to recognize this outstanding exhibitor as 1998 Exhibitor Champion and 1998 Exhibitor of Excellence Award recipient in the January/February '99 NFSS Bulletin.

To **Sally Huntington**, NFSS member #2238 of San Diego, CA. The Individual Bird Report listed incorrect points for two Gouldians. The correction has been made as follows: Red-headed Gouldian D12128-95 has 28 points and Red-headed Gouldian D7876-94 has 23 points.

My name is Steve Poe and I am a Computer Network Consultant for a Surgery Department in a fairly large hospital. Although originally from the Midwest (Missouri), I am a current resident of Augusta, Georgia. I am a novice breeder of normal Gouldians and that is enough for me, at least for now. I've kept birds off and on most of my adult life, ranging in size from Bronze Wing Mannikins and Red Eared Waxbills to a Citron Crested Cockatoo and African Gray Timnehs, with many birds in between.

I have great hopes for contributing to the quality of this publication and would be most welcome assistance any members would care to give. I would most particularly appreciate articles and photographs contributed for publication, and suggestions for advertisers would be welcomed, as well.

That's it for this issue. Below is my contact information. Once again, feel free to contact me and to submit articles when possible. I'd rather have too many than not enough.

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THE ESTRILDIAN

The Estrildian is produced for the purpose of relating the most up to date information on all species belonging to the family Estrildidae both in the wild and in captivity. Within its 124 species are all of the Waxbills, Parrot finches, Mannikins and Australian finches. The aviculturist and the scientist have much to offer each other and the



brings together like-minded enthusiasts from around the world. The magazine is sent to 13 different countries ranging from Australia to Puerto Rico and has many leading Zoo's, aviculturists and Researchers as both members and contributors. With well over 100 members in the U.S.A. we have now been able to reduce our overseas subscription rates.

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ENGLAND

Notes from Steve Hoppin Judge's Panel Chairman

1. **NFSS at the 1998 NCBS.** The 1998 NFSS National Show was held in conjunction with the NCBS, Chicago, IL on Friday, November 20, 1998. The host club for this very large scale avian exhibition event was the Greater Chicago Cage Bird Club. This was a very special event for all attending as the NCBS was celebrating their 50th anniversary! And a truly triumphant show it was!

Finch and Softbill fanciers from various geographical areas of the country showed up to support the event. Whether it was to schmooze the various top breeders, exhibit birds, participate in the working aspect of the show, attend NFSS meetings, or come just for the camaraderie, NFSS members attended from all NFSS Regions.

The NFSS Division was judged by Mr. Clarence Culwell of Texas who did a superb job. Forty-two exhibitors entered a total of 225 exhilarating finches and softbills. Representatives of nearly all sections of the NFSS Classifications were on display, including one of the best arrays of softbills I've seen in a long time. Martha Wigmore of Minnesota took top honors, the Kellogg Trophy, with a fine Chestnut Flanked White Zebra hen. Harold & Margie McBrayer of Texas took top softbill honors and humbly accepted the Val Clear Award for their remarkable White Eye Zosterop.

The Division (and the NFSS booth!) was run by many of our seasoned veterans and both ran like clockwork. Throughout the day, various members rotated division steward and secretary roles allowing for breaks, enjoying other aspects of the show, and meeting other commitments. These people were cracker jacks! For the judge to be able to finish judging the large number of birds entered by 5:00 pm, it goes to show you that member pitched in and worked very well together. Thank you all.

A very special surprise and honor was in store for three NFSS members at the NFSS General Meeting on Saturday. William Parlee, Founding NFSS President, attended and presented Founders Awards to Dale and Eileen Laird of Florida, Martha Wigmore, and Dr. Al Decoteau of Massachusetts for their work accomplished. Also, Carolyn Belisle of Wisconsin, owner and exhibitor of the 1997 Champion Yellow headed Normal Gouldian, upon presentation of her award, chose for her \$50 NFSS donation to go to Soaring Eagle Wildlife Center in Prairie Du Sac, Wisconsin. Way to go Carolyn!

In closing, I would like to thank each and every member of the GCCBC, NCBS and NFSS for their contributions in making the NFSS National Show triumphant! If you did not have the opportunity to attend,

please try to join us in Buffalo, NY, November 18-20, 1999 as this years NCBS will be held at the Buffalo Convention Center and Hyatt Regency. If you need additional info, you can email me at n2finchs@peganet.com. Come on and join the fun. It's great to meet up with friend in the hobby!

2. Calling all NFSS Division secretary and steward wannabees! Are you interested in volunteering an hour or two of your time to help run the NFSS Division in Buffalo, NY, either Thursday night (November 18th) during chick in or during the show on Friday (the 20th)? Would you like to assist our adorable, loveable, ever popular NFSS Panel Judge, Mr. Paul Williams and make his day? If you are interested in helping NFSS at the National Show, give me a call at (941) 967-2237 or send a brief email to n2finchs@peganet.com. If you would like to help but feel you are too much a novice... not to worry! There are always plenty of seasoned veterans around willing to offer a helping hand and guide you. Give something back to NFSS and volunteer your services today.

3. Election Committee Update. As you saw in the March/April NFSS Bulletin, notice of the NFSS 2000/2001 Election of Officers and itinerary were published. We are currently seeking NFSS members that have the desire to become part of the team to lead NFSS into the 21st Century. If you have that desire and portray responsibility, accountability, and good communication skills, we would like to hear from you. Effective today (5/11/99), Elected Offices open are Treasurer and Executive Secretary. Refer to the March/April Bulletin and review the various offices and their respective duties. Please note nominations close effective July 31, 1999. We recommend all members review their membership renewal date and renew in a timely manner in order to vote. The NFSS Ballot will be included in the July/August Bulletin. All individuals running for elected office are requested to provide a brief "bio" for publication in the July/August NFSS Bulletin. **All bio's must be received by Tom Rood NLT Wednesday, July 7, 1999.**

Although nearly every elected office now has one nomination, we continue to accept nominations for all offices with the exception of Region 1 VP, as three nominations have been accepted. Once three nominations for any office are accepted by the election committee, nominations for that particular office must close (per NFSS by-laws). However, a write-in space will still be available for all elected offices.

If you have an interest in being elected to the NFSS Board of Directors, or simply wish to make an inquiry, please contact any of the following individuals: Steve Hoppin, Kerri McCoy or Tom Rood. Contact information can be found on pages 42 and 43 of this bulletin.

End

City Life
The Bird Room
by Charles A. Brill

For anyone beguiled by a serious birding habit it can be painful reading about expansive aviaries, generally in warm climates, with their vast collections of feathered friends. When you lift your eyes from the text and glance at your cages, piled on dressers, stacked on tables, on each other, you feel that pang. Then your eyes slide over to the window as the rain scurries down double insulated panes of glass pushing back the chill and you feel another twinge. Before you can get back to the text explaining how the colony of whatever enjoys flitting around the spacious environment, your Green Singer male, in the cage on the buffet, sweetly demands its mate. Maybe a little guilt arrives and the text becomes somehow accusatory. Are you really giving housing enough effort?

But you live in the city, albeit a beautiful city, Seattle. You are not giving up the view of Lake Washington against the backdrop of the Cascades for acreage to build those expansive aviaries. Something must be done with what you have. What you have is a bunch of commercial cages scattered about and one room loosely designated as the 'bird room', also the room for golf clubs, the camping equipment, trunks, emergency supplies, winter coats and miscellaneous junk. Its time to admit you are serious about this *hobby*. The 'bird room' must really become the Bird Room.

This requires thought. Up until this point each acquisition created its own location crisis, dealt with admirably while there was room left in the bird room, but as birds multiplied and cages began flying to other rooms, solutions became compromises. Maintenance became a headache. You resolve to do something.

Thinking that this requires a plan, you figure you better know what you are planning for: *a lot of birds*, at least more birds than you ever expected when you began this diversion. Early successes in breeding and show and club attendance established that each species pairings went much better with three distinct pairs. This allowed a greater choice of pairings and provided matching unrelated off-

spring. In the beginning the idea was to limit the number of species, in retrospect this is humorous. Abiding by the minimum three distinct pair rule are the Green Singers, Red Cheek Cordon Blues, Owls, Strawberry's, Diamond Firetails, and Lady Gouldians. Then there are the rule breakers such as Pekin Robins, Gouldian Mutations, Zebras, Societies, Bronze Wings, Orange Cheeks, and Diamond Doves, not to mention the temporary residents. A lot of birds. Not all existed at the onset of the transformation but after all, isn't this what a little organization is supposed to allow?

The obvious place to start is the bird room and a plan. Luckily there is a room taken over by birds and it may be a requirement for the next step from *hobby* to *serious hobby*. You also realize you have been at this long enough to have an idea of what you want. Breeding cages kept to a minimum, as they require the most maintenance. Flights around 6' long and 24 to 30 inches in depth so that a long arm can reach to the rear. You are now *serious* so these can be semi-permanent structures. That's enough of a plan, well perhaps a bit more thought. But the golf clubs, the camping equipment, trunks, emergency supplies, winter coats and miscellaneous junk, all to the garage? Car outside? This is *too serious*.

The flights will logically wrap around the perimeter of the room with a section for breeder cages. That being so, and the room being narrow, piling everything in the middle, however tempting, isn't a solution. There are 8' foot ceilings. Floor to ceiling flights do not seem necessary. Perhaps the birds can have the top five feet and after massive reorganization the junk can be relegated to the bottom three feet. With one stand up section for the golf clubs. Birds aren't the only priority.

On occasional visits to the kitchen, it can be observed the base cabinetry is about three feet high and two feet deep and comes in various configurations. A quick trip to the mega-hardware store can locate reasonably priced pieces for any size room. 'Reasonably priced' is a relative term and being handy can further reduce this to the price of plywood or particle board. Also doors weren't really needed. Without doors, commercial boxes become quite cheap but harder to locate. So the plan expands to install the cabinetry and build flights on top of the boxes. This could be done one wall section first to see if any problem developed, but in this case the distinct possibility arises that one wall

section would stand as a monument to good intentions. So the room was emptied and became bigger than it was. Walls were primed and painted with a good bathroom enamel. Cabinetry installed. While this entailed a lot of work there was nothing complicated; just do it. The most important consideration during this phase is to make sure you have access to electrical for your flight lighting. In this installation, one wall was left void of cabinetry, a run of countertop only (or flight cage bottom depending on your point of view) will allow an opening under the cages for trunk storage. Support for this ten foot run is done by constructing a torsion box. There is a need to be handy here or have help. Flight depth is increased along one wall by setting the cabinets six inches away from the wall and cleating for the top. The whole thing is covered by particle board tops and primed for water protection.

Water protection might not have such a prominent role had not the many cups of coffee consumed (this is Seattle) led to the realization that this room shares a wall with the bathroom. Chopping out some wallboard in the bird room revealed that there was access to the cold water toilet feed and, luck, the waste pipe from an upstairs bath. A little brainstorming and amendment to the plan (which really should get to paper very soon now) provided an automatic watering system for all the flights. Which it was now time to build.

The flights incorporate personal preferences. The first to be dealt with is the ubiquitous tray, rather, how to get rid of them. Each flight section was a minimum of five feet which would have meant at least two trays per flight and the thirty inch deep flights would make for an ungainly size. No tray? A bottom covered with sand? Corncob? Gravel or straw? This did not seem like easy maintenance. The floors of the aviaries are actually the countertops of the cabinetry so what about Formica? Picture that Red-Cheek Cordon Blue diving after a lost meal worm landing on Formica and skidding into the wall. Possible? Well, the countertops are the actually the floor of the flights so what about linoleum? This solves the traction issue with the added benefit of being easier to put down. After a return trip to the mega-store with cheap rolls of linoleum, a funny looking trowel, utility knife and can of goo, the tops were covered.

The room now looked like the hottom half of a kitchen done by a very forgetful group. Nothing but boxes and odd looking counter tops.

Referring to the plan (which consisted of sitting in the middle of the room with a cup of coffee and staring a lot) it was decided the water system was next. This proved easier than anticipated. Eschewing the mega-store, a local plumbing supply refined the system and provide the parts. The supply side was tapped with a screw in valve as used when adding a new refrigerator with ice machine and you need to tap into the sink supply. Around the room quarter inch flexible tubing was run under the countertops and through cabinets. The first stop was a set of sprinkler valves from a lawn watering system hung on the wall. This would provide automatic on/off control. At each proposed flight location a hole was drill in the tops and a 'T' joint installed in the tubing. From 1/4" copper tubing a gooseneck was created and fed down to the 'T'. Now at intervals you had a little copper neck poking out of the linoleum. The waste system was the same principle done with inch and a quarter pvc pipe. Holes were drilled in the top about six inches away from the gooseneck and utility sink drains installed. Pipe was run through cabinets sloping to the waste pipe and 'T' connected to the sink drains. This took up some room in the cabinetry, but it was kept as far toward the back as possible. The pipe must be cut to attach the system which is a little scary and some creative pvc-ing to connect the system must be done. There must be a P-trap, like under your sinks, or its equivalent after the last drain and before you get to the waste pipe or your nose might announce the presence of your bird room.

The boxes and counter tops now had odd looking copper faucets poking up and a seemingly useless drain in the general area of each faucet. While the linoleum handles water well it was not a good idea to just have it dump out of the copper goosenecks and hope it found a way to the drain. Something like a sink was needed. Rubbermaid to the rescue. Various high sided plastics containers were used, about the size of a large flat cake pan. The side fit under the gooseneck so the water directed into the container. The drain location was marked. A short stub of half inch pvc pipe only about an inch high was cut. A 1/2" hole drilled in the bottom of the container on the drain mark (1/2" for 1/2" pvc, you could use a 3/4" hole and 3/4" pipe). The stub inserted into the hole about 1/2" above the bottom, sealed with silicon top and bottom. This controls the water depth, also why utility sink drains were used. Utility sink drains are not flush but inset below the countertop level which takes the portion of the stub below your container bottom keeping all water in the drain. When the water is turned on it pours out of the cop-

per gooseneck into the plastic pan. When it gets to the height of the pvc stub it overflows down the drain.

Lighting was straightforward. One 4' double florescent fixture per flight. All wired together and controlled by a timer. The existing main room lighting was a single fixture, so the mega-store provided a timer switch to replace the wall on/off switch for a separate dusk system.

In an over zealous consideration of safety, all lighting fixtures were covered with hardware cloth. Observation has shown that this was an unnecessary precaution. Bare fixtures don't supply much of a risk. Covering them is a lot of work and a lot of wire cuts, not recommended.

All this added a peculiar, well lit decoration to the countertops but nothing resembling an enclosure for birds. Experience building smaller cages had refined the wire option. For fronts nothing beats the ½" by 3" wire. It's available in rolls from California Cage. It is stiff enough for large areas and a number of openings. Since the flights are large the stiffness is need as each one might need at least three or four doors, or one, the plan is flexible on this point. But an added bonus with this wire, a little cutting and wire bending allows very nice sliding feeder doors. To divide the runs into separate aviaries dividers may be fixed solid wood or for a more open installation, hardware cloth on a frame.

Frames are the key to building the enclosures. They are just large rectangles, like flat picture frames made of 1x3 or 1x4 lumber. Height is from the ceiling to the underside of the countertops, width, the size of each section. Ceiling height and wire size are a consideration here. If the countertop to the ceiling is 5' and the wire is 4' high, double up the top and bottom rail of the frame. The idea is that the opening in the frame must be less than the wire height. Cleats are used to attach to the ceiling. First install the dividers the same width as the countertops so they are flush with the front and run to the ceiling. They can be frames with hardware cloth stapled to them, these will be the sides of flights so decide between the openness of frames and privacy of solid dividers. A cleat is run the full height on the front of the divider to allow joining sections. Cleats run on the ceiling between dividers and vertically along any walls. Now there are a lot of 5' to 6' open sections running the perimeter of the room. Since the plan is coming together nicely,

each section has its own light and watering station.

The front frames are made and join at each divider. They have no wire. While this isn't difficult, it is awkward. Lay out the frame on the floor. No matter how the thing was joined, butt joint, half lap, miter, they are flimsy as they are going to be about five feet high and at least that wide. They are going to be screwed into the countertop and the cleats so this is not a concern. Lay out the wire or measure so the wire is cut at least one inch over the frame opening size. The doors, and feeding stations are added to the wire fronts at this time. Easy way to attach the wire is staple but that's too easy and limiting. Inch and a quarter bolts are run through from the backside of the frame about every foot. These can be located by laying out the wire or measuring. Bolt heads can be countersunk and glued (epoxy) to save some aggravation later. Three quarter inch or larger washers and wing nuts attach the wire to the frame from the front. The whole frame assembly gets lifted, placed, and frames are screwed to cleats and countertop. Presto, the wire goes up and the room becomes smaller than it was.

An actual bird room. Three walls were used for the cabinet/flight configuration while the door wall was left for breeding cage shelves. Most of the junk returned to the cabinetry. Room in the middle for an small rolling chair to observe in comfort over the brim of a coffee cup. An actual bird room.

Since this was conceived using the "anything's better than piled up cages" theory, exceptions were low but optimistic. After two years of service there have been no changes. The depth of the flights at 24" and maxing out at 30" allows conventional capture of the bird with hand nets and long arms. The five foot or so width does make this simpler as a two person operation. The plan, of course, considered door locations to facilitate this, or not, they are easily added. A main key is the accessibility provided by bolting on the wire. By taking off the wing nuts on the bottom of the wire and loosening the top nuts the wire can be tilted out while still attached. This allows pulling out the water pans for cleaning. In a planted flight it is an easy way to get the plants out to hose them off. Or clean the linoleum, although a shop vac hose through a door handles most of the routine bottom cleaning. During these disruptions most occupants flee to the upper reaches of the flight quite content to kibitz and exhibit no desire to leave their home.

Routine maintenance is simple. While each section has a watering station, Oasis water bottles are used to provide vitamins and hung on the outside of the wire. Each section has sliding feeder doors for seed, with a little VMA from Noah's Kingdom added regularly, and ceramic feeders are hung with meal worms for cages that warrant it. Treats like veggies, fruits are tossed in through the sliders or hung through the wire. The flights may go an entire week without a door being opened. The shop vac comes out weekly as do the water pans for cleaning. Mineral grit is tossed on the vacuumed floor and millet sprays are hung. Depending on sensibilities this is all that is required for months at a time. But being a serious hobbyist you will always be fooling with your flights. While the initial setup is the most fun there will always be something new to add. Breeder boxes may be moved, new perches and plants added or removed.

It is a major commitment in time, money and space but without a doubt, one of the most enjoyable things that can be done for both you and your birds. The added space alone provides hours of antics. Without the options provided by the flights it would be nigh on impossible to experience the pleasure watching the pair of strawberry finches build their nest in the middle of the palm tree, or the surprise as the orange cheeks build their nest on the floor of the flight. Yes, right there on the linoleum in the corner of the flight. It's so damn cute you aren't even upset that they ignore the breeder boxes you have provided easy access to. As they sit on a perch or hang on the hardware cloth covering the windows staring out at the rain, you can wonder if you are appreciated. You need to know this because when the sun streams in and they track birds flying free you know you aren't. Even the daily chores become a show, the disruption is so minimal the birds just go about their business, except for those feathered predators that can't wait to attack your offering of meal worms.

You can read again about expansive aviaries, generally in warm climates, and have a small smile on your face knowing that here, in a generally almost-warm and mostly-wet climate, your birds can enjoy some of the amenities those far off resort locations enjoy.

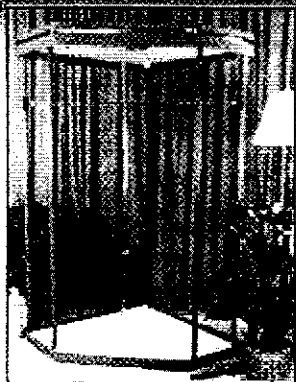
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Importing Society Finches from Tokyo: The Procedure

By Michael Marcotrigiano

In the last issue of the National Finch and Softbill Society Bulletin, I wrote an article describing an exciting trip to Japan to meet with one of their top society finch breeders and ultimately import some of his birds. The import took place this past December. I, along with two friends, imported several types of society finches. They included the Japanese "frills" (Bonten, Chiyoda, Chuunagon, and Dainagon), the newest color mutation, the "Pearl," and "European" colored (albino, ino, gray, etc.) societies that were in Japanese breeding programs for years and years. This included true albinos, grays, red grays, and inos. Visit www.exoticfinches.com to see images of these types. Since then, I have had several inquiries asking me to discuss the procedure for a legal importation into the US and the costs that might be involved. I thought I would share some of my experiences with other finch lovers.

Importing birds seems like an exciting idea, especially when the birds you want are not available in the United States. (Make sure they are unavailable or you are wasting lots of money.) However, as you will see, it is a costly, cumbersome procedure that has a risk factor. Simply put, there is no guarantee of live delivery from abroad or that the birds will live through quarantine. Yet most costs must be paid even if your gift at the end is a box of feathers. In addition, there seems to be lots of unnecessary paperwork and many people to pay. You will feel as if you are fueling a bureaucracy. Do not think you will get rich doing this. Believe me you will not. Yet, being the first to bring in new birds is a major contribution to aviculture here in America and it is worth doing if you feel it is important to increase the diversity of available finches in the USA.

If you are not a professional animal importer (i.e. someone who imports animals for a living), there are only four import quarantine stations you can use for "commercial imports" (i.e. not a pet bird). They are in Newburgh, NY (phone 914-564-2950), Miami, FL

(phone 305-526-2926), Inglewood, CA (phone 310-215-2352), and Honolulu, Hawaii (phone 808-861-8560). You must determine which is best for you before you begin the process. You need to pick the airport nearest the station. It is best to get a direct flight or one that continues without a change of planes. I am not sure, but it may be difficult or impossible to have the birds moved from one flight to another in route. Check with the USDA to see if this is necessary. We got a direct flight from Tokyo to NYC so we had no airline problems. The reason you want to pick your quarantine station carefully is that you will save money if you can pick up the birds after quarantine is over and not have a broker pick them up and ship them (for the second time!). If you live somewhere far from a quarantine facility (e.g. Wyoming), you will probably need to have the birds reshipped to you after quarantine unless you intend to drive all the way to a quarantine station. Picking them up yourself and flying them in cargo would require arrangements with a commercial airline. This is possible since the birds are past the quarantine part of the procedure. You could also hire your broker to ship them to you after getting them at quarantine (not a cheap option). Since we picked up our own birds after quarantine and we used commercial import permit, this procedure is what I will concentrate on below.

The first thing to remember is to start very early and get as much of the paperwork out of the way. Although it is possible to ask a professional animal importer to get the birds you want and quarantine them at his/her

approved facility, you probably will not be able to pick the breeder of the birds and may get "pet shop" quality or captive birds. Personally, I feel it is best to get the best specimens if you are going to go through the hassle of importation. So, the first thing to do is find a foreign breeder willing to ship birds and put up with some paperwork (although most of the paperwork is done in the country of import). Make an agreement with the breeder on the exact type and number of birds he/she will provide. Get a price quote and try to see if the breeder will agree to fix the price in US dollars at the time of agreement, so that later the price will not fluctuate if the value of the dollar against foreign currency changes dramatically.

Next find an airline that accepts live shipments of commercial size. Pay

to reserve space for one #11A shipping container (for each 50 finches) and get an "Airway Bill". This has the number the shipment will go by for the rest of its trip and is critical information for your broker and for you to track the shipment. It is like a tracking number and is used by all parties involved. Next find a commercial brokerage firm that deals with animal and plant imports. Get one nearest to the port of entry (US airport closest to quarantine station). It is necessary to have a broker, as will be described below. The broker will bill you later but will pay airport fees, USDA airport veterinarian fees, Fisheries and Wildlife crate inspection fees, etc. and drive the birds in a special van to the quarantine station. The import station you choose will suggest brokers with whom they have had positive experiences. Your broker will ask for a deposit and make you get a "Power of Attorney" form to them, which allows them to act on your behalf and accept your birds at the airport without you being present. Make sure your broker gets copies of every single form, transaction, and communication with the USDA and Fisheries and Wildlife. Keep copies of everything just in case someone challenges you later. Then decide if you want to choose the "pet" or "commercial" import route. If you want to consider your imported birds as pets, the procedure is very different and costs much much more per bird. Quarantine for a pet finch is \$30.00 per day as opposed to \$1.00 per day for a commercial shipment. The other costs of a pet import are a bit lower since some fees are omitted for pet birds, but the cost per bird is still astronomical if you choose the pet route. This is because each pet is assumed to be from a different source and must be quarantined separately. Your one or two birds receive the same isolated aviary as a group of commercial birds would receive. It is wise, therefore, to go the commercial route unless you are bringing in one or two high priced parrots. This is what we chose so I cannot give advice on "pet" importation procedures.

With the exception of the housing and health tests at quarantine, much of the cost of importing is in the procedure itself and is not paid on a per bird basis. The best deal per bird is when 50 birds are imported since this is the limit of finches that are permitted in a #11A internationally approved shipping container and going to a second container would be more expensive (although much less than twice as much). You can get plans for building this #11A shipping container from the airline that you will use or from your broker (or you can rent the one I built!). The USDA may also have copies of the building plans they can

send you. If you use any other type of container or overcrowd the birds, you risk seizure of shipment with Fisheries and Wildlife at the airport. If your breeder can not supply the 50 birds, you can ask him to gather birds from his club members. If the breeder has gathered all the birds before the shipment, it makes the inspection by the foreign veterinarian easy. You can try to arrange for two breeders to ship to you using a foreign broker as an intermediary but this would be a logistics nightmare and wind up costing more. Assuming you decide to import a commercial shipment, you will next need to obtain a commercial (not a pet) import permit from the USDA. Some of the quarantine stations will send you this form directly. If not, call the USDA and tell them you want to import finches commercially and need the import permit form for the USDA (VS 17-129). Fill it out and PREPAY 100% of the fees for the application, housing and disease testing. The original copy (after you receive it approved) must be sent to the breeder to accompany the shipment in the envelope attached to the shipping crate. On your import application form state that the purpose of import is "to obtain show birds" (if you say "breeding stock" as we did, you open up another can or worms as you will see below). Then the USDA requirements for the shipment will be as follows:

- 1 - an original import permit issued in advance of the shipment must accompany it
- 2 - it must be accompanied by an original health certificate issue by a salaried government veterinarian in the country of export
- 3 - it must be offered for inspection by Veterinarian Services veterinarian at the port of entry listed on the import permit (this is the airport's veterinarian hired by our government)
- 4 - bc quarantined for a minimum of 30 days for commercial birds

Any club or group (even represented by you as an individual) can import as a commercial importer. Most species are not considered domestic, so you must contact the US Fish and Wildlife Service (i.e. Fisheries and Wildlife or F&W), and obtain the paperwork to import wildlife (you should send F&W a copy of your approved USDA import permit which will arrive not to long after your check clears). However, you most likely will need obtain a F & W Importation/License Permit (Form OMB No. 1018-0093). Unfortunately, the F&W Service has policies that are confusing at best. I had talked to a Wildlife biologist for the F&W Service. She informed me of the location on the web site (<http://>

www.fws.gov/r9dia/global/wbcaacbs.html) where I could see that the species is exempt from the wild bird conservation act. Yet, even though we imported only *Lonchura domestica* (Society finches), a bird which wasn't a wild bird and was at par with chickens (in that it was a man-made complex hybrid or synthetic species of which no feral populations exist), the F&W inspector at the airport maintained it was a commercial breeding venture of wild birds and threatened the shipment with seizure unless I decided to pay my license fee and the associated inspection fee which follows. I argued a bit, reminded myself of the seizure of shipment potential, took two antacids, and paid for the permit. I am now a licensed importer of wildlife for those of you interested in importing tigers and lemurs.

The cost of the birds must be stated on a bill of sale written in the language of the country of origin (if the breeder can not speak English) and a translated version must be attached. The purpose of the receipt is to allow your broker to pay taxes (2.5% of total receipt) when going through customs at the airport. The receipt should be itemized, and state what kinds of birds you have (e.g. six albino society finches - *Lonchura domestica*), so that if the USDA or Wildlife and Fisheries want to check out the shipment to make sure no endangered species are being smuggled they will not question your shipment and confiscate the birds. A faxed copy of the breeder's receipt should be sent to you for you to give to your broker. The original must be attached to the shipping carton. I had attached a large manila clasp envelope to the top of my shipping box with duct tape so that all of the necessary forms would be secure. On it, I listed the contents in the envelope to make things go faster at the airport.

The only paperwork that must wait until a day or two before the birds are put on the airplane is the Health Certificate from the foreign veterinarian. The quarantine station will provide this form but don't forget to ask them early in the process since you have to send this to the exporter. This form must be filled out by the foreign veterinarian just before shipping and included attached to the shipping box. Its purpose is to assure that the country of export has determined that serious disease (Newcastle e.g.) is not obvious in the flock of the exporter's birds. A copy should be immediately faxed to you and your broker so that they can start the paperwork earlier and make their trip to the airport shorter. The cost is up to the veterinarian in the country of origin.

It is sometimes possible for your breeder to place the birds on the plane as cargo. Yet, in many countries (including Japan), commercial shipments are not accepted by airlines unless a commercial company is doing the shipping. These companies can be called brokers in some countries, but more likely are called "freight forwarders". Your airline can tell you whom to use or perhaps your breeder can call around. This can be inexpensive or very expensive depending on the country and the distance between the breeder and his airport. Nevertheless do not forget this step. If the birds are not accepted on the flight, you will be stuck with all the quarantine fees and no birds! Now to top it all off we have the problem of overtime. I call it the "overtime scam" although those reaping the reward will deny this if you challenge them. It is virtually impossible to get away without paying significant amounts of overtime. We had our shipment arrive at 10AM at JFK figuring this is the best time to get the broker though the procedure before overtime kicked in. Guess again. It took them until 4:30 to clear airport cargo system, vet inspection, USDA, F&W, etc. There isn't even a F&W office near the airport so they had to drive to another town outside NY. To make a long story short, the broker charges somewhere around \$ 35.00 per hour for every hour past 5PM including the trip back from the Quarantine Station. The USDA airport employee's overtime costs about the same if the forms are not complete by 4PM. Then the Quarantine Station gets overtime if the birds don't arrive by 4:30 PM. So, plan on paying overtime and lots of it. If you can't help but get your birds into the airport in the middle of the night it will all be overtime. Of course, my broker said it is much faster getting things done at night so the procedure takes less time. If you believe that then they will sell you some land on the runway. And trust me - you'll get no where arguing that things took too long. By the way, if I had to pay myself overtime for all the paperwork, I'd be living in a cardboard box by now. So, in summary here are the steps:

- 1 - make arrangements with breeder, prepay him/her and get a receipt in both languages, ship him/her the shipping box.
- 2 - pick port of entry and airline nearest to the quarantine station of choice
- 3 - pay the airline and get a copy of the 'Airway Bill'
- 4 - pick the broker, pay the deposit, and give them Power of Attorney
- 5 - get the USDA import permit and reserve space at the quarantine

station

6 - get the F&W import permit

7 - arrange for a freight forwarder in the country of export

8 - call the airport vet a few days before shipment to tell him what's coming - give him 'Airway Bill number, airline, time of arrival, etc.

9 - a day or two before shipping have foreign vet inspect and then fax you the health certificate

10 - the day before shipping confirm the schedule with the broker, the cargo manager at the airport, warn the port veterinarian that your shipment is coming, etc. You should be near a phone the day of shipping just in case a problem arises. Remember to send copies of everything you get to your broker and keep the chain of communications open! If someone makes a mistake you are ultimately responsible.

Things to have the breeder and/or freight forwarder put in the envelope (attached to the shipping box) when it leaves export country:

1 - Foreign veterinarian's original signature on your original health certificate

2 - Bill of sale in both languages

3 - Copy of F&W Import Permit

4 - Original of USDA Import Permit

5 - Large laminated sheet of paper, taped to the box with duct tape saying the following:

SHIP TO: your name c/o broker's company name, address, and phone plus URGENT: AIRLINE EMPLOYEES WHEN SHIPMENT ARRIVES AT JFK (or another port of entry) PLEASE CALL:

1) USDA PORT VETERINARIAN (PUT PHONE NUMBER OF PORT VET HERE)

2) BROKER: PUT BROKER'S PERSONAL NAME, COMPANY NAME AND PHONE NO.)

So, what does this all cost? For us it costs \$79.00 per bird for the process without the cost of the birds! It could run more if you hire people to do things you can do yourself. Costs are broken down below. It varies greatly, but our costs were as follows (rounded to nearest US dollar) and I've included some others you might have if you don't do some of the work yourself:

- 1) Cost of birds (this is between you and the breeder)
- 2) Hand-built International Shipping Box #11A (Materials \$60.00)
Labor to build the box - 12 hours (did it myself)
- 3) Shipping of #11A container to breeder (depends, bring it yourself when you visit)
- 4) USDA Import Permit (VS 17-129) with associated fees
Quarantine Fees Rates for finches (effective 6/6/96 to present but may change) \$1.00 per day per bird for 30 days (= \$1,500.00 for 50 birds) Newcastle disease testing done at quarantine station (\$29.75 per 5 birds = \$297. 50 for 50 birds) Salmonella testing done at quarantine station (\$15.00) per entire shipment Grand Total for Quarantine for 50 finches = \$1,812.50
- 5) Broker's Fees (All items below are paid by the broker who will bill you)
First Time Account Processing Fee (\$15.00)
Broker's Fee - Customs Entry (\$150.00)
Delivery of Birds from Airport to Quarantine Station (\$250.00)
Pick-up Birds and Ship to us (\$0.00 We did it ourselves and saved \$250.00)
US Customs Fees (2.5% of your receipt value of the birds)
Bonds (\$50.00)
Carrier's Certificate (\$10.00)
Reforwarding Release Services (\$15.00)
USDA User's Fees (\$33.00)
Fisheries and Wildlife Inspection at Airport (\$55.00)
- 6) Fisheries and Wildlife Import Permit (\$50.00)
- 7) Foreign veterinarian's inspection - and NECESSARY health certificate processing in foreign country (\$174.00) - price very variable and depends on currency exchange rate and the particular veterinarian's fees.
- 8) Foreign Freight Forwarder (\$987.00) - includes the airline fee for cargo (very variable) plus transportation from breeder's house to airport (3 hr) and paperwork with foreign government and airline.
- 9) Overtime Fees (this is our total with an arrival time of 10AM at the airport) USDA at port of entry - airport (\$ 28.00) Broker's overtime going to Quarantine Station and back (\$105.00) USDA Quarantine Station overtime (\$113.00)
- 10) Seed plus shipping (We sent Vita-Finch to Quarantine Station)

(\$47.00)

We also had the cost of the interpreters, meals for them, etc. and other costs that may not apply to your shipment

As you can see this is not a procedure to start if you are not dedicated to the project from start to finish. It is my hope that the importation of the Japanese finches will bring lots of happiness to many generations of finch breeders. It is unlikely that anyone will ever again need to import society finches from Japan (until, of course, some new mutations are discovered that we all MUST have).

End

Good luck with them eggs!

Michael Marcotrigiano (michael@exoticfinches.com)

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FOR SALE: Owl Finches and Yellow Rumped Diamond Sparrows. Call Gene Miller @ (405) 382-7066

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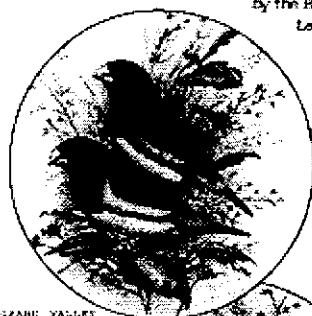
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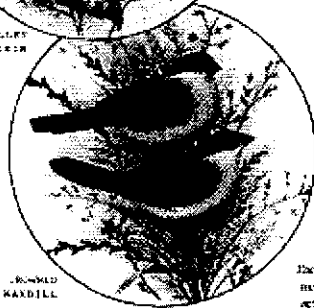


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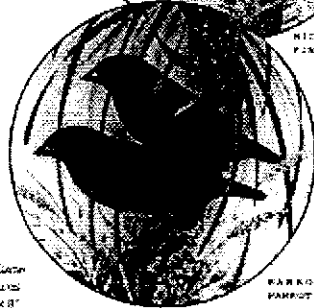
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Owl Finches

Poephila Bichenovii

By Harry Bryant, NFSS #1675

e-mail – utuweb@aol.com

I seem to get more inquiries about how to breed Owl finches than any other bird. I have never really had any problems with them, although apparently other people do. While there have been many articles published about this popular finch over the years, perhaps by my writing another one with my views, someone might pick up a tip or two that may help them.

The Owl Finch is also known as the Bicheno, Double-Barred Finch, Banded Finch or Ringed Finch. Found in the dry areas of Australia, usually in flocks of 20 to 40 birds, this is another one of the Australian grass finches that has developed the habit of “sucking” up water in the same manner as Gouldians and Zebra finches.

This species has always been one of my favorites, and ever since I first purchased some, I have never been without them. They are peaceful, inquisitive, highly active birds (or lively, as I say), and just “darn cute.” If you look head on at their face, the ring surrounding the face reminds one almost of a barn owl’s face. I always wondered why they weren’t called “Cat” or “Kitten” finches since one of their calls reminds me of a kitten.

When purchasing birds, especially finches, I always recommend that you purchase several pair if you can. An old saying that I remember was told to me by a dealer in the aquarium business – he always said that if you buy a pair of tropical fish to breed, you are a hobbyist, but if you buy a group of the same fish and breed them, you will become an expert. I think that saying certainly applies equally to the aviculture world.

DESCRIPTION:

This is one of the smallest grass finches, being only 3-1/2 to 4 inches long. Although it does not possess the bold bright colors of

many finches, in my opinion its delicate and pleasing shape and blend of plain colors are still very beautiful. The basic colors are shades of black, brown, white and gray. For an exact description, I will quote from "**Australian Finches,**" (1977), by **Klaus Immelmann, Pages 127-128.**

***Adult Male:** General color above, including crown of head, pale brown, with fine barring of dark brown, coarser towards rump; band across rump black, remainder of rump and upper tail-coverts white; upper wings like back, remainder of wings brownish-black, spotted white; tail-feathers black or brownish-black; lores, feathers above eye, cheeks, ear-coverts, chin and throat white, bordered with narrow black line, which widens on forehead into a wide black band; fore-neck and chest white, slightly tinged in center, and washed with brown on sides of chest, followed by second broad black cross-band; remainder of under-surface white washed faint creamy-buff; under tail coverts black; bill bluish-gray; legs and feet gray; eyes dark brown. Total length about 4 inches.*

***Adult Female:** Similar in plumage to male, though black bands above and below white breast may be somewhat narrower in female. As there is a big overlap of "male" and "female" characters, sexing is very difficult and in many cases impossible.*

***Immature:** Duller in coloration, the barring indistinct throughout and upper parts tinged grayish-olive."*

The Owl finch has two color varieties, the nominate white rumped race (the most common in captivity in the U.S.) which is native to Queensland and New South Wales, and the black rumped race from the Northern Territory and northwestern Australia. I have both, and outside of the color difference, their care and behavior is identical.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT:

The Owl Finch is very peaceful and I have kept them with Masked Grassfinches, Gouldians, Cherry Finches, Star Finches, and various small waxbills with no problems. Owl finches like to bath, and I provide an 8" bowl with fresh water daily for their bathing.

If I had to list just one piece of equipment you should have with these finches it would be a wicker or bamboo finch basket. At least one (I use several) should be hung in their cages or flights. They like to roost in a nest at night and seem to be very nervous and restless if not provided with a basket to roost in.

FEEDING:

I feed all the birds with my own finch mix, which I make by mixing 50% of a locally made standard finch mix (1/), and 50% of Clifford's Finch Booster (2/), which is kept before them at all times. Every day they receive sprouted seed and egg food (my eggfood consists of hard boiled eggs with shell, plus one tablespoon per egg of RichLife Vionate (3/), one teaspoon Japanese millet, and one teaspoon of CFA (4/) for each egg used. They also receive "mini" meal worms and/or wax worms twice a week, unless they are feeding babies, when they receive "mini" meal worms and/or wax worms daily. Don't be overly concerned if your owl finches will not eat mealworms, (some never do), as long as they get the egg food. My birds also receive green food (5/) three times a week, and spray millet at least twice a week. A cuttlebone and a bowl or gravel/grit is also kept in each cage or flight

HOUSING:

Living in northern Ohio, my birds are kept indoors, in a basement bird room. My bird room averages 74° F during the day, dropping to 68° F at night. Is this too cool for the birds? You wouldn't know it by observing them. I have a variety of Australian and African finches which all bred freely and live long lives. I used to keep the temperature in the bird room at 80° F during the day (for the Gouldians) until I decided it was a waste of money. Many of the so-called tropical finches we keep are actually from the deserts and plains where the temperature is hot during the day and drops dramatically at night. I have found that they can be maintained at average room temperatures, as long as any changes are made *gradually* - they do not have to be "hothouse" birds.

I have flights in the bird room that range from 3' x 6' x 6' high to 6' x 14' x 6' high. They are lighted 14 hours a day by 4' shop lights, which have vita-light bulbs in them. Some of the flights have large plants in them (fig trees, spider plants), while others are bare. I use natural tree

branches as perches in my flights and cages. All the flights also have 3/8" corn cob bedding (marketed as small animal bedding by the Andersons, of Maumee, Ohio) on the floor.

My cages are all "box style", made from 1/2" plywood with the front made from 1/2" by 1" welded wire. They are painted with flat white enamel paint inside and are lighted by a small, 12" florescent light (6/). They range in size from 24"x 24" and 48" long to 24"x 24" and 72" long. I use newspaper on the floor of these cages.

SEXING:

Owl finches are very difficult to visually sex, but sometimes a hen will have a paler breast color, and sometimes the wing coverts of a hen will be blackish gray while the coverts of the cock will be black. The problem with this method is that you can pick the bird with the whitest breast, boldest bar, and blackest coverts, only to have it lay eggs. After many years of raising these wonderful finches, I depend more on their behavior to sex them. I have found that after observing the birds for a while that the cocks will usually act bolder (or "cocky"), as compared to the females. A. J. Mobbs describes another method, in his book "Bicheno Finches," where he writes about a sexing technique where the birds are separated to induce the males to sing. I have also found this method to be very accurate.

Compatibility between the pair is very important and I usually place a group of color banded birds in a flight or large cage to "pair up." I watch them closely for signs of pairing, then remove the pairs as they form. If you have provided enough nest baskets, a bonded pair will usually roost together, and it is a simple matter to sneak your hand in the cage during the dark of night, and place a hand over the opening of the nest basket, and remove the basket with the birds inside to place in a separate cage.

BREEDING:

I have bred Owl finches at all times of the year, and when they are kept inside in captivity under artificial lights they don't seem to have any set breeding time of the year. I set my Owl finches up to breed in both cages and aviaries. They seem to do better breeding in large cages,

provided you have a compatible pair, and you have the added benefit of control over mate selection. I always provide large finch nest baskets (made in China of bamboo or wicker material) which are available from most pet supply stores or feed dealers. I have also found some large finch baskets made from grape vines or small twigs at the craft stores. My Owl finches will normally choose a nest basket over a nest box when offered a choice. Still, I do provide a selection of boxes ranging from the standard 5" x 5" x 5" box to special Gouldian boxes (with a "front porch") in all my flights. I also have used small cardboard boxes, large tin cans, etc., for my birds. Don't be afraid to be creative when it comes to nesting sites!

I sometimes add a pair of owls to a flight with other birds, and the owls usually do well and breed in an environment like this. I also have a separate colony (started as an experiment) of 5 pairs in one of my flights, which measures 6 feet long by 6 feet high and 2-1/2 feet wide. This flight contains a large ficus tree, and has corn cob bedding as flooring material. I have a couple of wooden finch boxes (seldom used) in the flight, seven or eight large finch baskets, and I have even had one pair build their own grass nest in the foliage.

I also have several pair set up for breeding in box cages, which are 24"x 24" and 48" long and made from 1/2" plywood, with the front made from 1/2" by 1" welded wire. These cages are equipped with two large woven finch nest baskets and contain some artificial foliage.

I provide soft grasses for nesting materials; I try to find an abandoned house in the country where the lawn grass has become overgrown. Tall grasses can also be found along roads or in parks. The most important thing is that they are "fine." Always make sure to wash the grass with clean water before giving it to the birds. I have also tried using coconut fibers, however, I was always afraid the birds would become entangled in them and so I stopped using them.

Owl Finches usually lay four to five white eggs, and if you find more in the nest the chances are good that you have paired together two females. Incubation is 12 days, and both sexes take turns incubating the eggs during the day, and both roost together on the eggs at night. When newly hatched, Owl finches are a light flesh color, and they become darker each day until they are almost black in color about the fourth

day. When the babies finally emerge from the nest after about 22 days, they are dull little copies of their parents. After the babies have left the nest, I leave the babies in the cage or flight with the parents for three or four weeks before removing them.

FOSTERING:

It seems like fostering is a bad word to some finch fanciers. My own feelings are that a lot of finches have been saved and also established in captivity due to fostering. I usually don't have to do it since most of my birds feel secure enough to raise their own babies. However, occasionally a young pair of birds will throw a baby out of the nest and if I find it in time, I will usually try to return it to the nest. If it gets thrown out again, or if more than one baby has been thrown out by the parents, then I will place the babies under another pair of finches that have babies approximately the same age or size. I have successfully fostered Owls under other Owls, Cherry finches, Gouldians, Masked Grass-finches and Societies.

REARING THE BABIES:

Owl finch babies are very small when they first hatch but they do grow fast. You can usually band the babies at seven or eight days of age. I use the NFSS size "A" closed leg bands.

When the parents are rearing the babies, make sure that every day they receive sprouted seed and egg food. I also make sure they receive "mini" meal worms and wax worms every day after the babies hatch.

When the babies have fledged and I catch them up to remove, I will put on plastic colored band on the unbanded foot so I can positively identify the bird if I see it singing.

EGG BINDING:

I very seldom have this problem, a fact that I attribute to the fact that I always have cuttlebone available and also furnish broken up egg shells with my egg food mixture. If I do happen to notice a hen that appears to be egg-bound I will do the following:

If she is on a perch, but is “puffed up” and appears egg bound and slightly stressed out – then I leave her alone, but I keep checking on her every hour or so. Usually she will pass the egg on her own and be fine.

If she is on the floor of the flight or cage, and is “puffed up” and appears egg bound – then I catch her, and place her in a “hospital cage,” in my case, a small cage 12” x 12” x 12” with a incandescent aquarium light fixture, and a 60 watt bulb, where I can maintain the temperature at 90° F or so, (by using the light, the bird can maintain the temperature by moving closer or further away from it). Once placed in the “hospital cage” and left alone, the hen will usually pass the egg within a couple of hours and will then be fine, perching and flying around the cage. I usually leave her in the “hospital cage” for another 24 hours before returning her to the original cage or flight.

ARE YOU A “FINCH BREEDER?” OR JUST A HOBBYIST!

How many of us produce a number of babies of an expensive or rare finch, sell all the babies we produce, and then lose one of the breeding pair and can no longer produce that species? Its easy to purchase a proven pair of Owl finches (or for that matter, any species of finch) and raise a few babies, and then call yourself a “finch breeder.” But are you? To really be a “finch breeder”, you need to be able to produce generation after generation of finches, year after year.

How do we do this? I think the secret is to specialize in several species that you really like. Have several pair of each, and keep them in their own aviaries and/or cages. Learn all you can about them, and when you produce babies, always keep some for yourself as future breeding stock. I also try to acquire some new blood every year by trading (or buying) unrelated birds, and then I breed them into my strain of birds. Only then will you become an “expert” on your birds and you will be a real “finch breeder.”

End

See the back cover for information on the new NFSS video!

REFERENCES:

- (1.) Goodwin, Derek, **Estrildid Finches of the World**, 1982, Cornell University Press (ISBN-0-8014-1433-4))
- (2.) Iles, G. W., **Breeding Australian Finches**, Published by Isles d'Avon, LTD (ISBN-0-905714-02-4)
- (3.) Immelmann, Klaus, **Australian Finches**, 1977, Angus & Robertson Publishers (ISBN-0-207-13626-2)
- (4.) Mobbs, A.J., **Bicheno Finches – Their Care & Breeding**, 1988, Nimrod Press (ISBN-1-85259-038-6))

FOOTNOTES:

- 1/ Mixture of white proso millet, red millet and canary seed. (protein – 12%, fat – 3.00%, fiber – 8.00%.)
- 2/ Clifford's Finch Booster consists of yellow millet, canary seed, Siberian millet, proso millet, Japanese millet, grass seed, hulled oats, niger, caraway, hulled sesame, flamen oil, corn oil, mineral & vitamin mix, protein – 13.04%, carbohydrate – 71%, fat – 5.42%. (Clifford's Pet Supplies, P. O. Box 1994, Blasdell, NY 14219 (716) 822-3278)
- 3/ I purchase vionate in ten lb. cans, and the most reasonable supplier I have found is: Cutter's Supply, 3805 Washington Rd, Carsonville, MI 48419 (810) 657-9450, e-mail – Cutlers@greatlakes.net
- 4/ CNF is a nesting food from Clifford's Pet Supplies, P. O. Box 1994, Blasdell, NY 14219 (716) 822-3278
- 5/ Romaine lettuce, dandelion leaves, cclery leaves, depending on availability.
- 6/ Model #1008 (Econo) , Lampi, P.O. Box 1769, Huntsville, AL 35807 (205) 837-3110

| |
|----------------------------|
| UPCOMING SHOW DATES |
|----------------------------|

JUNE

- Show: Illinois Bird Fanciers
June 5, Shelbyville, Illinois, Shelby County 4-H Grounds
Judge: Steve Hoppin
Delegate: Tom Rood (217) 774-5265
Email: tjrood@bmmhnet.com
- Event: June 12 & 13
Grandview, Missouri, Super 8 Motel 15201 S 71 Hwy
Judge: Earl Courts
Delegate: Moses Linn (816) 523-4661
Contact: Maria Michel

JULY

- Event: July 10, Ft. Wayne, Indiana, Allen County Fairgrounds
Contact: Conrad Meinert, (219) 269-2873
Email: BirdmanofWarsaw@kconline.com
- Event: MARE/Alburgueque
July 15-18
Contact: Gail Renshaw (505) 822-1483
Email: ransaw@swcp.com

AUGUST

- Event: August 1, Swap, Suncoast Avian Society
Largo, Florida, Honeywell Minnreg Bldg.
Contact: Joseph Ventimiglia (727) 392-9391
Email: sas-club@usa.net
- Show: Midwest Zebra and Society Finch Club
August 8, Raymore, Missouri, Super 8 Motel
Delegate: Nita Haas (816) 331-5285
Email: TJHaas@OasisKC.net

- Show: Aviary and Cage Bird Society of South Florida
August 21 & 22
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, War Memorial Auditorium
Delegate: Carrie Efstathion (954) 432-3349
Email: carrie2@juno.com
Contact: Melba Wilkat (954) 792-6017
Email: al_n_melba@juno.com
Contact: Marcia David (954) 321-9229
Email: Marbilld@aol.com
Information: Two shows, fully airconditioned, vendors, famous raffle table, partial proceeds benefit Avian Veterinarian Scholarship at University of Florida.
- ship
- Event: Feather Fair, Mid America Cage Bird Society
August 22
Des Moines, Iowa, Des Moines Botanical Center
Contact: Nat Strickland (515) 278-9159

SEPTEMBER

- Show/Event: Toledo Bird Association
September 16, 2d Annual Bird Fair
Lucas County Fairgrounds, Maumec, Ohio
September 25, Show, Toledo, Ohio, Holiday Inn Toledo West
Judge: Conrad Meinert
Delegate: Rick Yunker (419) 691-9432
Email: OPRRLY@UOFTOL.UTOLEDO.EDU
- Show: Durham Avicultural Society of Ontario
September 24, 25 & 26
Pickering, Ontario, Canada, Pickering Recreation Centre
Delegate: Bob Yake (905) 433-3944
Email: smccullough@sprint.ca
Contact: Alyson Afermann alferman@ican.net
- Event: Fall Bird Fair, Missouri Cage Bird Club
September 26, Fenton, Missouri, Stratford House
Delegate: Rich/Rose Dickman (314) 928-3444
Email: skdatl@inlink.com

Show/Event: New Mexico Bird Club

Last Weekend of September, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Delegate: Gail Renshaw (505) 822-1483 Judge: none listed

Contact: Candy Dunlap (505) 255-2990

Email: tdunlap@sandia.net

OCTOBER

Show: Mid America Cage Bird Society

October 2, Des Moines, Iowa, Best Western Airport Inn

Judge: Earl Courts

Delegate: Rhoda Shirley (515) 243-1511

Show: Fort Worth Bird Club

October 2, Colleyville, Texas, Colleyville Community Center

Judge: Paul Williams

Delegate: Clarence Culwell (817) 220-5568

Email: Janice Millican circlm@swbell.net

Show: Society of Canary and Finch Breeders

October 2 & 3, Livonia, Michigan

Judge: Tom Rood

Delegate: Patrick Vance (248) 443-0643

Show/Event: Middle Tennessee Cage Bird Club

October 2 & 3, Nashville, Tennessee, Tennessee State Fairgrounds

Judge: Clarence Culwell

Delegate: Darlene McDonnell (615) 893-0690

Contact: Joy Johnson joy@hotmail.com

Show: Kaytee Great American Bird Show

Organizacion Puertorriquena de Aves Exoticas

October 2 & 3, Isla Verda, Puerto Rico, San Juan Grand Hotel

Judges: (10/2) Marion Spartzak & (10/3) Daren Decoteau

Delegate: Jacky Civitarese (787) 752-4433

Email: Lix4me@aol.com

Show: Indiana Bird Fanciers

October 9, Ft. Wayne, Indiana, Allen County Fairgrounds

Judge: Marion Spartzak

Delegate: Conrad Meinert (219) 269-2873

Email: BirdmandofWarsaw@kconline.com

- Show: Sunshine State Cage Bird Society
October 9, Orlando, Florida
Delegate: Dale Laird (407) 657-7989
Email: dalel@magicnet.net
- Show: Cleveland Cage Bird Society
October 9, Tri-City Senior Center, Middleburg, Heights, Ohio
Judge: Paul Williams
Delegate: Annette Howard (330) 337-7654
Contact: Linda Brandt (330) 364-6198
Email: jum1006@bright.net
Other Events: Fall Bazaar, Oct 10
Contact: Laura Szahler (330) 764-3086
Email: Ohiobird@aol.com
- Event: Bird Fair, Society of Canary and Finch Breeders
October 10, Livonia, Michigan
Delegate: Patrick Vance (248) 433-0643
- Show: Essex-Kent Cage Bird Society
October 15, Windsor, Ontario, Canada
Fogolar Furlan Sports Complex
Delegate: Alfred Mion (519) 949-6398
- Show: Badger Canary Fanciers
October 16, Waukesha, Wisconsin, Waukesha Expo Center
Delegate: Sue Feldstein (414) 968-4514
Contact: Pat Holm, bpholm@webtv.net
- Show: Massachusetts Cage Bird Association
October 16, Bellingham, Massachusetts, Bellingham High School
Delegate: Kathy Vieweg (617) 730-4821
Email: kathy_vieweg@hphc.org
- Show: Suncoast Avian Society, Inc.
October 16 & 17, St. Petersburg, Florida, St. Petersburg Coliseum
Judge: Dr. Al Decoteau
Delegate: Stuart A. Sandler FLDOCSTU@aol.com
Contact: Joe Ventimiglia (727) 392-9391
Email: sas-club@usa.net

Show/Event: Greater Kausas City Avicultural Society
October 16 - Show, October 17 - Bird Fair
Super 8 Motel, 15201 S 71 Hwy, Grandview, Missouri
Judge: Martha Wigmore
Delegate: Nita Haas (816) 331-5285
Email: TJHaas@OasisKC.net

Show: Florida West Coast Avian Society
October 23, Palmetto, FL, Manatee Convention & Civic Center
Delegate: Joy Johnson (941) 966-6238

NOVEMBER

Show: Central California Cagebird Club
November 6, Modesto, California, Sportsmen of Stanislaus Club
45th Annual Show
Judge: Clayton Jones
Delegate: Richard Pizzurro (408) 927-0734
Contact: Ben Jones, Show Manager (209) 579-2530

Show: Missouri Cage Bird Club
November 6, Eureka, Missouri, Days Inn
Judge: Martha Wigmore
Delegate: Rich/Rose Dickman (314) 928-3444
Email: skdatl@inlink.com
Contacts: Debbie Maneka (314) 831-3843
Linda Kratky (314) 296-4355

Show: Texas Bird Breeders & Fanciers Association
November 6, Temple, Texas, Mayborn Convention Center
Judge: Charlie Anchor
Delegate: Clarence Culwell (817) 220-5568
Email: culwell5@flash.net

Show: Finch Society of San Diego County
November 6 & 7, Del Mar, California, Del Mar Fairgrounds
Judge: (11/6) Joe Krader, (11/7) Miki Sparzak
Delegate: Sally Huntington (619) 452-9423
Email: huntington-center@worldnet.att.net

Show: 1999 National Cage Bird Show
 Hosted by: The International Canary Society
 November 18 - 20, Buffalo, New York
 Contact: John Bernacki jbernacl@rochester.rr.com

Show: Santa Clara Valley Exotic Bird Club
 November 7 & 8, Santa Clara, California, Wilcox School
 Judge: Clarence Culwell
 Delegate: Richard Pizzurro (408) 927-0734
 Contact: Doreen Waugh Doreen123@earthlink.net

DECEMBER

Show: Aviary Association of Kern
 December 4, Bakersfield, California
 Harvest Hall, Kern County Fairgrounds
 Delegate: Leon Harris (661) 588-4511
 Email: LHHARRIS@aol.com

Show: Organizacion Puertorriquena de Aves Exoticas
 December 4, Guaynabo, Puerto Rico
 Judge: Jacky Civitarese
 Delegate: Jacky Civitarese (787) 752-4433
 Email: Lix4me@aol.com

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Changing your address?

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

Be sure to notify:

Club Delegates also notify:

NFSS Membership Director

NFSS Liaison Officer

Eileen Laird

Dianna Rubly

P.O. Box 2459

1102 Allen Street

Goldenrod, FL 32733-2459

New Cumberland, PA 17070

Name: _____

New Address: _____

City: _____

St: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Membership # _____

1999 AFFILIATION AGREEMENT

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

Mail to: **Dianna Rubly, Liaison Officer**
 1102 Allen Street
 New Cumberland, PA 17070
 Phone/Fax: (717) 774-3354

Club Name: _____

Club Delegate: _____

NFSS #: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Address: _____

*Phone: _____ *Email: _____

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

Delegate's Signature: _____

Club Officer: _____

Address: _____

*Phone: _____ *Email: _____

Club Email Contact: _____

Show/Event Date: _____ Panel Judge: _____

Show Location: _____

Send NFSS Bulletin to: _____

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

AWARD ORDER FORM FOR SHOWS/EVENTS

Award order forms for shows and events will be sent to each affiliated club as soon as possible after the affiliation papers are processed by the Liaison Officer, Dianna Rubly. Allow a minimum of eight weeks before the actual show/event to process the order. The form and fee *must* accompany the order.

The prices remain the same, however, we have added a new rosette. Many clubs have indicated a desire to have an official Novice rosette with the NFSS logo. These have been designed and will be available for \$5.00. There are no NFSS rules regarding this award. Each club will set its own standard.

These are the 1999 awards available:

| Ck Box | PLAQUES All plaques are \$25 each. They are walnut finish with the engraved NFSS logo on brass over black plate on one side and the club information on brass over black plate on the other side of the plaque. They can also be customized by | Cost |
|-----------|--|-------------|
| | Service/Breeder Award Plaque (7"x 9") | \$25.00 |
| | "Best in Show" Plaque (7"x 9") | \$25.00 |
| | "Second Best in Show" Plaque (6"x 8") | \$25.00 |
| | "Third Best in Show" Plaque (6"x 8") | \$25.00 |
| | "Best Softbill in Show" Plaque (6"x 8") | \$25.00 |
| | ROSETTES The basic set consists of ten 15" long rosettes for the ten best finches or softbills, plus one best unflighted rosette. Unflighted birds are those banded with 1999 bands. | |
| | Basic Rosette Package | \$35.00 |
| | Unflighted 2nd and 3rd place rosettes | \$7.00 |
| | Novice Rosette | \$5.00 |
| | Total amount of check payable to NFSS | |

For more information on awards, contact the Awards Manager:

Ginny Allen

307 Brookwood Court

Opelika, AL 36801

Phone/Fax: (334) 749-7168

Email: gndallen@earthlink.net

| |
|--|
| <p>The National Finch and Softbill Society Membership Application</p> |
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Name: _____

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| |
|--|
| <p>Mail application and check or money order payable to NFSS: Eileen Laird NFSS Band Secretary P.O. Box 2459 Goldenrod, FL 32733-2459 (407) 657-7989</p> |
|--|

**The National Finch and Softbill Society
FinchSave Application**

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

Name: _____ NFSS# _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

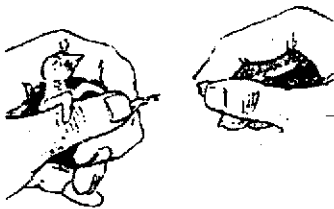
What would you like to accomplish through FinchSave?

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

**Thank you for supporting aviculture's foremost
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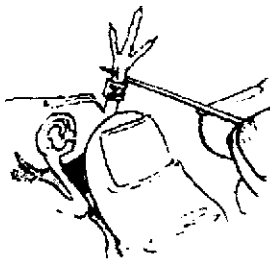
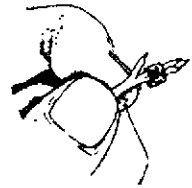
The National Finch and Softbill Society. Banding Procedures

The important thing to remember when banding chicks is to do it over a counter or table so if the chick is dropped, it doesn't fall to the floor. The age to band varies between species but is generally between 5 and 10 days. You can tell by looking at the ankle joint (the joint where the toes come together) and the size of the band. Have the bands, a toothpick (or other small blunt instrument) and some lubricant ready. Be sure you have the bands "right side up" for easier reading. The band is generally placed on the bird's right leg. Banding just before the parents go to roost in the evening will help prevent them from picking at the band. By the next morning, they will have forgotten about it.



Hold the chick firmly, but in such a way as to not cut off its' breathing, and so that you don't harm it. Remember their bodies cannot tolerate compression.

Put a little bit of lubricant on the chick's foot and slide the band over the three front toes and finally over the ankle joint.



The back toe will probably have to be gently pried out from under the band with a toothpick.

The band should now be in the proper location between the ankle and the elbow joint.



Check on the chick the next few days to be sure that the band has not slipped off and that there are no scrapes or irritations on the foot or leg.

The National Finch and Softbill Society Band Order Form

Mail form and payment payable to NFSS:
Eileen Laird
NFSS Band Secretary
P.O. Box 2459
Goldenrod, FL 32733-2459
(407) 657-7989

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

Write "New" for membership number on the order form. Orders processed weekly as received. Please, no mail requiring signatures. **\$1.00 handling fee effective 3/1/99**

| Band Size | # of Strings | Price per string | Total Amount |
|-----------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| A | | \$2.75 | |
| B | | \$2.75 | |
| C | | \$2.75 | |
| D | | \$2.75 | |
| E | | \$2.75 | |
| G | | \$2.75 | |
| J | | \$2.75 | |
| K | | \$2.75 | |
| L | | \$2.75 | |
| M | | \$2.75 | |
| R | | \$2.75 | |
| S | | \$2.75 | |
| T | | \$2.75 | |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Postal Insurance: Under \$50 = \$.85 From \$50 - \$100 = \$1.80 Over \$100=\$2.75 If you choose NOT to include this sum, NFSS will NOT be responsible for replacement of bands lost in shipment.</p> | <p>Subtotal: _____ Insurance: _____ Handling \$1.00 Total: _____</p> |
|--|--|

Name: _____ NFSS # _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

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

| Bird Species | Size | Bird Species | Size |
|------------------------|------|--------------------------|------|
| Aracaris | S | Gouldian Finch | D |
| Black & White Mannikin | C | Green Singing Finch | C |
| Black Cheeked Waxbill | B | Green/Purple Starlings | R |
| Black Crested Finch | E | Grey Singing Finch | C |
| Blue Capped Waxbill | C | Heck's Shaftail | C |
| Blue Head Parrot Finch | D | Hornbills (small) | T |
| Bronze Wing Mannikin | C | Indian Hill Mynah | S |
| Cherry Finch | C | Java Mynah | S |
| Chestnut Breast Finch | D | Java Rice Bird | K |
| Cordon Blue Waxbill | B | Lavender Finch | C |
| Cuban Melodious Finch | B | Leaf Birds | M |
| Diamond Dove | L | Magpie Mannikin | G |
| Diamond Sparrow | E | Mannikins (most smaller) | D |
| Dove (other small) | L | Mannikins (other larger) | G |
| European Goldfinch | J | Nuns | E |
| European Greenfinch | E | Olive Finch | B |
| Fire Finch | B | Orange Cheeked Waxbill | A |
| Gold Breasted Waxbill | A | Owl Finch | A |
| Golden Song Sparrow | F | Pagoda Mynah | M |

NFSS welcomes comments and suggestions for this Guide.
Contact the Home Office

| Bird Species | Size | Bird Species | Size |
|---------------------------|------|----------------------------|------|
| Painted Finch | C | Silverbills | C |
| Parrot Finch (most other) | D | Siskins | E |
| Pekin Robin | J | Society Finch (Bengalese) | E |
| Peter's Twinspace | E | Softbills (other small) | J |
| Pictorella Finch | D | Softbills | L |
| Pileated Finch | C | Spice Finch | E |
| Pintailed Nonpareil | D | Star Finch | C |
| Plush Capped Jay | T | Strawberry Finch | A |
| Pytilias | C | Sunbirds (large) | M |
| Quail | L | Superb Starlings | R |
| Quail Finch | A | Tanagers (small) | G |
| Red Crested Cardinal | K | Toucanettes | S |
| Red Eared Waxbill | A | Toucans (small) | T |
| Red Head Parrot Finch | C | Touracos (small) | T |
| Ring Neck Dove | S | Twinspots (most) | D |
| Rufous Backed Mannikin | B | Waxbills (small) | A |
| Saffron Finch | K | White Tailed Jay | S |
| Shaftail Finch | C | Yellow Rumped Finch | D |
| Shama Thrush | K | Zebra Finch | D |
| Silver Eared Mesias | J | (intentionally left blank) | () |

FINCHSHOP – The National Finch and Softbill Society

| ITEM | QTY | SIZE/STYLE | EA | TDL |
|---|-----|---|--------|-----|
| New NFSS T-Shirt Design Ten Colorful Finches in Stalks of Grass All t-shirts are white 50/50 blend | => | <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> XL <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> XXL | \$18 | |
| VIDEO "The Wonderful World of Finches and Softbills: An Introduction | | Members & Affiliates | \$17 | |
| | | Non-Members | \$22 | |
| NFSS Show Cage Plans | => | <input type="checkbox"/> #1 <input type="checkbox"/> #2 <input type="checkbox"/> #3 | \$4 | |
| All 3 Show Cage Plans | | Save \$2 by ordering all three | \$10 | |
| NFSS Plastic Water Bottle | | | \$6 | |
| NFSS Zebra Pin | | | \$6 | |
| NFSS Gouldian Pin | | | \$6 | |
| Eric Peake Lithograph The Diamond Firetails Signed by the Artist | | | \$35 | |
| NFSS Name Badge (Members Only) Comes with one line of engraving Print name clearly | | Second line of engraving add \$1. For optional mag- netic backing, add \$1.50 | \$7.50 | |
| Past Bulletin Issues 1994 and later issues | | | \$4 | |
| Past Bulletin Issues 1993 and earlier issues | | | \$3 | |
| 1998 NFSS Handbook (Membership Yearbook) | | | \$4 | |
| NFSS Judges Handbook and Official Standards | | | \$15 | |
| NEW VIDEO! Finch Husbandry | | Add \$3.20 S & H | \$25 | |

Shipping & Handling: Orders \$10 and under add \$2.00,
orders \$10.01 and over add \$3.00 \$ _____

Total _____

Mail form and payment (check or money order payable to NFSS) to:
FINCHSHOP, Attn: Ms. Julie Duimstra
4201 NE 125th Place #163, Portland, OR 97230

NFSS SHOW CAGE PLANS

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.NFSS.NET

New NFSS Video Just In!

This video by Vince Moase, formerly of the Metro Toronto Zoo, spans time and aviaries built in two different residences. It was originally produced to help budding aviculturists in Vincens's local bird club. It cover general bird husbandry and touches on many subjects such as:

- aviary size
- feeding and care of breeding birds
- banding
- caring for an ailing bird

Vince includes information for the beginner and many tips for the seasoned enthusiast, facts that apply to all breeds, and some that are specific to finches. The response to this tape has been so positive that the logical step was to make it available to more hobbyists. We are pleased to offer it to members of the NFSS through FinchShop.

See the FinchShop order form on page 50 for details.