

# THE NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY



March  
April  
1991

GWNOREEN

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Presidents' Message:

This month's NFS News & Notes page lists the 1990 CHAMPIONSHIP EXHIBITORS and EXHIBITORS OF EXCELLENCE. These members deserve our congratulations for a job well done. (Except, of course, for that Geesey woman who can't seem to get her act together!!!) Not only do these folks exhibit top-notch finches and softbills, they promote NFS wherever they go and they make friends for NFS and finches and softbills. Thanks and best wishes for many more top-winning seasons.

I also want to give "Honorable Mention" to Tina & Marvin Yoder who missed the Exhibitor Excellence Award last year by one point. (See, I told you not to miss the NEFF Show!) and to Wanda & Bob McCormick who had 49 points and missed the Championship Exhibitor award by one point. They showed some excellent birds against tough competition and did very well. Congratulations to all of you, thanks, and we'll see you in 1991 !

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

=====

NFS Panel of Judges, 1991.....	2
Zebra Finch Society of England, Overseas Section.....	5
If The Band Doesn't Fit, by Kris Kroner.....	6
Breeding Exhibition Zebra Finches, by Bill Novickas.....	8
NFS Affiliates, Delegates and Show Dates.....	11
Spice Finch Anyone?, by Kris Kroner.....	16
NFS News & Notes, <u>THE 1990 CHAMPIONS !!</u> .....	18
Breeding The Diamond Sparrow, by Les Gibson.....	22
Some African Serins, by Denise Cabral.....	24
Hand Raising A Gouldian Finch, by Ubaldo Leli.....	29
1991 Band Ordering Guide.....	33
1991 Band Order Form.....	34
Rocky Mountain High, by Joe Heard.....	35
Little Bird, The Happy Handfed Gouldian, by Jodie Davis.....	38
Warning About Wool, by Marlene Ayres.....	39
Classified Ads and FINCHSAVE Ads.....	42
NFS Membership Application.....	45
FINCHSHOP.....	48

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### ARE YOU A BIT TIMID ABOUT WRITING ?

Jon Hoffman, our Second Vice President, and well-known BIRD TALK columnist, has volunteered to help you! In a letter to me Jon wrote, "since some people are shy about writing and aren't comfortable about their ability to write, perhaps they could submit the outline or sketch of what they want to say, and then I can put it into an edited-form of article for them. The procedure might be that a breeder sends me the information or calls me to discuss what they want to say. I then write it up and it goes back to the breeder for approval. The breeder makes notes of any clarifications or requests for changes and sends it back to me. I put it into a final form and send it to the bulletin editor for publication."

=====

This is a very generous offer and I hope many members who have hesitated to write for the bulletin will be contacting you soon Jon! Thanks. The Editor.  
Send your ideas to Jon at:

1226 S. 6th Street  
Louisville, KY 40203

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**NFS PANEL OF JUDGES 1991**

=====

**CHARLES ANCHOR**  
630 Lake Park Drive  
Addison, IL 60101  
(708) 543-3757

**KELLY DAHILL**  
4497 Beachwood Lake  
Naples, FL 33962  
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**DR. A. E. DECOTEAU**  
P. D. BDX 369  
Groton, MA 01450  
(603) 878-4391  
Panel Chairman

**RAY JOHNSON**  
175 Stoneridge Way  
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(404) 461-8675

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M31 2WZ

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(805) 872-1063

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1001 Martin Drive  
Anderson, IN 46012  
(317) 642-0795

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

**JDSEPH KRADER**  
24692 Paseo de Toronto  
Yorba Linda, CA 92687  
(714) 996-5538

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Lee's Summit, MO 64063  
(816) 524-0921

**CECIL GUNBY**  
8121 Highway 54  
Sharpsburg, GA 30277  
(404) 254-1261

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

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

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2052 N. Fayetteville St.  
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(919) 495-3075  
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Louisville, KY 40203  
(502) 634 9240

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(203) 528-1438

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PO6 4ET

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Papillion, NE 68046  
(402) 339-8772

**MARTY VON RAESFELD**  
1135 Chapman St.  
San Jose, CA 95126  
(408) 985-2712

**MARTHA WIGNORE**  
5010 Wezel Circle  
Colo. Springs, CO 80916  
(719) 574-1594

**NOTE:** For more  
information on the  
Judges' Panel, contact  
Dr. Decoteau at the  
address above.

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TO ALL CLUBS WHO WILL BE CONTACTING AN NFS PANEL JUDGE:

PLEASE...Be sure that you are using this current list. It is up to date. Sometimes addresses, phone numbers, etc. change and all other lists are now invalid. Thank you for your attention to this. Dr. Al Decoteau.

=====

WELL, HERE WE ARE JUST BEGINNING 1991.. and already Tom Rood is busy working on our next International Exchange Program. I have a letter from him saying that he has corresponded with several of the clubs that we exchanged with in past years and they are pleased to be doing it again. Please help in this by sending "reconditionable" (Jon Hoffman won't like that word I made up!) trophies to Tom at:

313 N. Broadway  
Shelbyville, IL 62565  
(217) 774 5265

=====

Please remember that your "renewal date" is on your address label. Check it and please keep your membership and your correct address up to date. It'll save time and money if Russ doesn't have to send reminders to you.

RENEWALS AND ADDRESS CHANGES SHOULD BE SENT TO:

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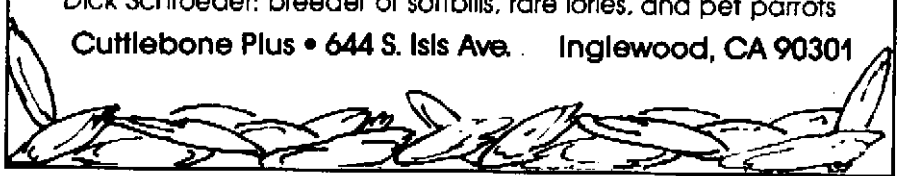
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## TO ALL FINCHSAVE PARTICIPANTS

All of the statistics and correspondence are now (finally) transferred from the previous director to Jeff Brissette. The 1989 year-end report that the previous director did not do will be handled by Jeff. PLEASE HELP JEFF make this program work the way it was intended to work! Please write to, (please don't call), Jeff today and update your status. It doesn't need to be a fancy or lengthy report, just get in touch so he knows you're still there. Thanks.

Jeff Brissette, 34 Liberty Street, Manchester, CT 06040

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**THE ZEBRA FINCH SOCIETY**  
(of England)

**OVERSEAS SECTION**

**By Brian & Margaret Binns**

Following our last notes the Society now has a supply of special rosettes for overseas members' shows. If any Zebra Finch specialist club anywhere in the World would like to exchange rosettes with us we would be very pleased to receive their requests. We have already sent rosettes to South Africa and the U.S.A.

The Society now has an agent in the U.S.A. where our members can pay their subscriptions in U.S. Dollars. (See below)

A letter from our Panel Judge in the U.S.A. Dr Val Clear thanking the Society for this new service as it will save them money. He also tells us that he has the best birds in the U.S.A., but the only problem he says is finding a Judge who agrees with him. (Nice one Val).

If anyone has any notes or articles on Zebra Finches in their part of the World we would be pleased to print them in forthcoming Newsletters.

Margaret and I will be in California in October/November this year, and we would be more than pleased to visit with you at San Diego bird show at Del Mar on 2nd November. Hope to see you there.

**CORRESPONDENCE** with officials of the Society is very welcome and appreciated, but do please enclose a stamped addressed envelope if you wish to have a reply. Thank you.

**NOTES FOR AMERICAN MEMBERS**

You can find Margaret and Brian's address on the Panel Judges list in this issue. Brian was nominated to judge this year's National Cage Bird Show but because of errors and tardiness in correspondence directed to him he was not selected. We apologize although it was not our fault and we hope to have him judge some year soon.

American members can now pay their subs (membership dues) to:

Bill Novickas

10724 Palm Avenue

Bakersfield, CA 93312

Phone (805) 589 2081

Due January 1st, each year. \$ 20 + \$ 5 (to offset banking charges) = \$ 25.

Make all checks payable to Bill Novickas. All newsletters are sent airmail. All new members receive a "Beginners packet" which is just full of information and helpful tips.

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## IF THE BAND DOESN'T FIT...

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by Kris Kroner

=====

As reported in the NFS general meeting in 1990, the sale of leg bands has reached a new high. I, for one, am very pleased with this development. Banding young offers many benefits, particularly in a breeding program.

The list of band sizes for the recommended bird species has been expanded, but many species are not represented as yet. As more of us band unlisted species and share this information, the list can be expanded further. But for now, what if you are breeding a species not listed that doesn't quite fit in any of the categories? I encountered this dilemma early last year when my Blue Billed Mannikins hatched their chicks. The list, at that time, said "small mannikins" wear a D band. "Small" was not defined, but the other species listed for a D all had bigger legs than my Blue Billed.

I then asked the opinion of Rick Szlachta, a local finch breeder who routinely bands all of his chicks. His suggestion was both a logical and a neat idea that I'd like to share with others facing the same situation. Band each leg with a different size. For example, band a C on the left leg and a D on the right. When the bird gets older, cut off the "wrong" one, whether it be too large or too small. Obviously, you have to own and be comfortable using a leg band cutter, but that is the only requirement.

I have found this idea extremely helpful and have used it during the past year with various species not listed. I find that the larger size many times falls off without incident after the chicks fledge. Also, sometimes I band with the smaller band first and then put the larger band on the opposite leg a couple days later. I also routinely keep the double-banded chicks to observe the leg size development. That way I can be sure, in the long run, that the smaller band doesn't get too tight. Due to this small research project, I now feel comfortable banding my Blue Billed chicks with a C band.

Please try this with the birds you band. Also, remember the importance of networking with other finch fanciers. As an organization, I believe the National Finch and Softbill Society is the friendliest, with its members most willing to share ideas and tips with others. For the birds' sake, take advantage of this. Good luck with your flock!

=====

Kris is now working into the twilight each night building her own outside flight. As soon as she catches up on her sleep I hope we get an article on the trials and tribulations of carpentry for the birds. The Editor.

=====





**October 4 & 5, 1991**  
**in beautiful Clearwater, Florida**

*Hosted by: Sun Coast Avian Society, Tampa, Florida*

**JUDGES:**

- Parrots - Daren Decoteau
- Finches & Softbills - Stephen Hoppin
- Budgerigars - Ermafern Collins
- Love Birds - Lee Horton
- NCS Cockatiels - Glen Gibson
- Lipochrome Canaries - TBA
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**\* GREAT AMERICAN BIRD SHOW, INC. IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
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 OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM MANY NATIONAL SPECIALTY CLUBS.**



## BREEDING EXHIBITION ZEBRA FINCHES

by Bill Novickas

First and foremost, obtain young, healthy birds that are good quality stock from reputable breeders. When you buy stock it should not be older than the previous year, it should be close-banded, free from visual defects and should come with a guarantee. If you are offered birds that do not meet the above requirements, say "no thank you." The vast majority of problems that I've had in the past, particularly with hens that either do not lay, die suddenly, are infertile, pluck the young, or are generally poor producers, can be traced, in a majority of instances, to obtaining older or unbanded birds. I realize that many people do not band their birds. Simply put, you don't need any birds from them. When they are not banded, you have no proof of the parentage of the birds or of their age. We are trying to improve quality, not just raise birds. This applies to the buyer and the seller.

I firmly believe it is necessary to specialize. To do this, you need, at a minimum, three pairs of compatible colors, preferably related colors. If possible, buy birds in person. It is not reasonable to expect a serious breeder to sell their best birds, but try to buy lesser sons, daughters, brothers or sisters to the best. Expect to pay a fair price. Birds are discount priced for a reason that probably makes them unsuited for your needs. Know the standard for the bird that you are trying to breed. Learn it well as there are many who are all too willing to give advice that have never raised a good bird.

Generally, all of my young birds are flighted in 3' x 8' flights; cocks in one and hens in another. "Absence makes the heart grov fonder." We not only want the reproductive juices flowing between the birds, we do not want pair bonds developed between unsuitable pairs. (I might add, this is a prime reason to cull heavily.)

In California, our climate is substantially different than the rest of the country, so please consider this in reading this article and when setting up your birds.

Most of my breeding cages are indoors. The light has been extended to 14 hours a day and the temperature low is about 55 degrees. The number of hours of light are extended, starting in January until 14 hours is reached. Normally, about 15 minutes is added to the daylength twice a week. This has worked successfully for me. I know other people who have added more hours of light more rapidly and have been successful. The birds are bred in cages that are approximately 16" high, 12" deep and 2' long. Inside, on the wall, a wooden nest box that is approximately 5" square is placed. The bottom of the

nest box is filled to a 1" depth with Bermuda grass cut into pieces about 5" long. I make an indentation about the size of a tennis ball in the middle for a nest cavity. Additional items in the breeding cage include a bowl of health grit mixed with a small amount of charcoal granules and shaved cuttle bone, an ashtray for nestling food, a water drinker, and a feeder with premium finch mix. On the bottom of the cage I put a small amount of Bermuda grass to encourage nest building. This seems to be an important part of the courting ritual of most Australian finches.

It is important that all pairs set up to breed are in prime breeding condition and are suitable mates, in particular that they do not share any of the same faults. Size and type are the two hardest qualities to maintain in your stud of birds. A point I would like to emphasize is that I set birds up to breed, not by the calendar, or what is convenient to me, but when the birds are ready. It is important that the hens are flying hard in the flight cage, that the cocks and hens are calling to each other, and that they are shiny and active. Normally, I will take several birds from the flight and place them in individual cages to study closely. It is necessary to be aware of the faults and virtues of each of the birds and their parents. This is another reason why banding and records are important. Have good reasons to put the pair together. Examples would be to produce wider chest bars, depth and evenness of color, better feather texture and better size and type. We are trying to improve quality not just breed birds. Each of the pairs that are being considered are faced off in show cages. In most cases, the cock bird will immediately display for the hen with a courting song, bouncing up and down on the perch and the hen will act interested. These birds are placed in the breeding cage. You will notice the cock feeding the hen, mutual nest building, and egg-laying commencing in one to three weeks. One egg is laid each day, averaging four to five eggs to a clutch. Incubation normally starts with the third egg, with the first chick hatching in approximately fourteen days. The young will fledge in approximately five weeks. With a little care, young can be close-banded from three weeks to immediately after fledging.

Nestling food is given to the birds two to three times a week during the non-breeding season and daily when breeding. The following mixture is done with the aid of a food processor. As I give this mixture to a lot of birds, I prepare it in larger quantities than most people would use. Three pounds of fresh carrots are chopped in the food processor and placed in a large container. One bunch of spinach is chopped into one box of CeDe egg formula (2.2 pounds) and 9 eggs which have been hard boiled for 20 minutes. These are processed, shell and all, into the mixture. Cornflakes are added until the mixture is crumbly, not mushy. This is refrigerated until immediately prior to use. Approximately one tablespoon is fed to each pair three times daily when chicks are present. The well known breeder of budgies in England, Ernie Sigston, told me that 50% of the pedigree goes down the

throat. While this may not be literally true with Zebra Finches, the best have been well fed by their parents and of the birds poorly fed, none have ever amounted to much.

I would recommend that anyone serious about Zebra Finches read Chris Blackwell's book, CARE AND BREEDING OF ZEBRA FINCHES. The book is in depth and thorough.

=====  
Bill has done quite well with his Zebras and other species also. His budgies won the prestigious Kellogg trophy for Best in Division at a National Cage Bird Show a few years ago. He is the "contact person" to whom you can send your dues (in US funds) for a subscription to the British Zebra Society. See address elsewhere in this issue. The Editor.  
=====

Please check your address label and keep your membership and your address up to date. Save the Society the work and expense of sending reminders to you. Those who have dual memberships will see that now both names are on the label  
RENEWALS AND ADDRESS CHANGES SHOULD BE MAILED TO:

NFS Membership Services  
Russell Armitage, Jr.  
345 Boston Road, Middletown, CT 06457  
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5/6 '92

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**NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY**  
**AFFILIATES, DELEGATES AND SHOW DATES**  
\*\*\*\*\*

THE NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETYS' NATIONAL SHOW: November 14 - 17.  
In conjunction with the 43rd National Cage-Bird Exhibition, hosted by the  
Mid-West Cage Bird Club at the Hyatt Regency Hotel - Dearborn, Michigan.  
NFS Panel Judge: Earl Courts. For information call: Patrick Vance,  
(313) 443 0643. For hotel reservations: (313) 593 1234.

ALABAMA

Heart of Dixie Canary Club: (205) 471 4191  
Show: October 19, 1991 Mobile, AL Panel Judge: Stephen Hoppin

CALIFORNIA

Aviary Assn. of Kern Co.: Hal Koontz, (805) 872 1063  
Show: December 7, 1991 Kern, CA Panel Judge: Clayton Jones

Finch Society of San Diego County: Sharon Russell, (619) 274 2095

Fresno Canary and Finch Society: Richard Lujan, (408) 984 1453  
Show: October 25 to 27, 1991 Fresno, CA Panel Judge: Joe Krader

Golden Gate Avian Society: Mary Payne, (415) 449 8719  
Show: November 15 to 17, 1991 Tracy, CA Panel Judge: Marty Von Raesfeld

San Diego Bird Show, Inc.: Janice Pritchard, (619) 442 1164  
Show: November 2 & 3, 1991 Del Mar, CA Panel Judge: Brian Binns

South Bay Bird Club: Gregory Aden, (213) 379 2416  
Show: October 19, 1991 Lawndale, CA Panel Judge: Clarence Cuveii

COLORADO

Colorado Cage Bird Association: Martha Wigmore, (719) 574 1594  
Show: October 19, 1991 Colorado Springs, CO Panel Judge: Martha Wigmore

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

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut Association for Aviculture: Chris Voronovitch, (203) 649 8220  
Show: October 16, 1991 East Hartford, CT Panel Judge: Jon Hoffman

New England Finch Fanciers: Russell Arnitage, Jr., (203) 346 5875  
Show: November 30, 1991 East Hartford, CT Panel Judge: Brenda Geesey

## FLORIDA

Aviary & Cage Bird Society of South Florida; Len Brover (305) 931 3468  
Regional Show: August 24, 1991 Ft. Lauderdale Panel Judge: Dr. Al Decoteau

Florida State Fair Exotic Bird Show; Claire Remo, (813) 482 5352

Greater Brandon Avian Society, Inc.; Lillian Mount, (813) 886 6492  
Show: September 15, 1991 Tampa, FL Panel Judge: Gerald D'Agata

Jacksonville Cage Bird Assn.; Jerri Weisenfeld, (904) 731 7173  
Show: September 21, 1991 Jacksonville, FL Panel Judge: Cecil Gunby

Suncoast Avian Society; Joe Ventimiglia, (813) 392 9391  
Hosting the KAYTEE GREAT AMERICAN BIRD SHOW, October 4th and 5th, 1991  
Bellevue Mido Resort Hotel, Clearwater, FL Panel Judge: Stephen Hoppin

Sunshine State Cage Bird Society; Dale Laird, (407) 657 7989  
Show: October 12, 1991 Orlando, FL Panel Judge: William Parlee

## GEORGIA

Georgia Cage Bird Society; Cecil Gunby, (404) 254 1261  
Show: November 2, 1991 Atlanta, GA Panel Judge: Brenda Geesey

## HAWAII

Honolulu Canary and Finch Club; Cynthia Pregana, (808) 456 3793

## ILLINOIS

Greater Chicago Cage Bird Club; Jane Muscato, (708) 305 9043  
Show: November 2, 1991 Rolling Meadow, IL Panel Judge: Dr. Al Decoteau

Illini Bird Fanciers; Tom Rood, (217) 774 5265  
Show: May 18, 1991 Shelbyville, IL Panel Judge: Charles Anchor

National Institute Red-Orange Canaries; Catherine Wiegala, (219) 922 1146  
Show: November 29 - December 1, 1991 Elk Grove Village, IL  
Panel Judge: Jon Hoffman

Springfield Pet Bird Club; Robert Huff, (217) 522 4164  
Show: September 14, 1991 Springfield, IL Panel Judge: Dr. Val Clear

## INDIANA

Indiana Bird Fanciers; Dr. Val Clear, (317) 642 0795  
Show: October 12, 1991 Ft. Wayne, IN Panel Judge: Cecil Gunby

## IOWA

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

Show: October 5, 1991 Des Moines, IA Panel Judge: Earl Courts

## KANSAS

Kansas Avicultural Society; Marilyn Galvan, (316) 524 8128

Show: October 12, 1991 Wichita, KS Panel Judge: Paul Williams

## LOUISIANA

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

Show: October 18 - 20, 1991 New Orleans, LA Panel Judge: William Parlee

## MARYLAND

Baltimore Bird Fanciers; Deb Clark, (301) 242 8471

Show: October 19, 1991 Towson, MD Panel Judge: Brenda Geesey

Maryland Cage Bird Association; Theresa Brown, (301) 735 7662

Show: September 28, 1991 Timonium, MD Panel Judge: Ray Johnson

## MASSACHUSETTS

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

Regional Show: October 19, 1991 Mansfield, MA Panel Judge: Roddy Gable

## MICHIGAN

Mid-Michigan Bird Club; Mary Terwilliger, (517) 463 5695

Mid-West Cage Bird Club; Patrick Vance, (313) 443 0643

Show: Hosting the National, November 14-16, 1991 Panel Judge: Earl Courts

Motor City Bird Breeders; Patrick Vance, (313) 443 0643

Show: October 26 & 27, 1991 Detroit, MI Panel Judge: William Parlee

Society of Canary and Finch Breeders; Bro. Anthony Michael, F.S.D.,

(616) 245 0049. Show: October 19, 1991 Panel Judge: Conrad Meinert

## MISSOURI

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

Show: October 19, 1991 Kansas City, MO Panel Judge: Cecil Gunby

Missouri Cage Bird Association; Dennis Burhans, (314) 441 8525

Show: November 2, 1991 Eureka, MO Panel Judge: Jon Hoffman

## NEBRASKA

Greater Omaha Cage Bird Society; Elbert Traylor, (402) 435 7886

## NEW JERSEY

South Jersey Bird Club; Raymond Passaro, (201) 291 9224

Show: October 5, 1991

Panel Judge: Roddy Gable

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

Birds of a Feather Avicultural Society; Larry DeLorenzo, (508) 927 5494

Show: September 21, 1991 Panel Judge: Dr. Al Decoteau

## NEW YORK

Astoria Bird Club; Leslie Leber, (516) 431 9267

Show: November 2, 1991 Hempstead, NY Non-Panel Judge

Rochester Cage Bird Club; Jeanne Murphy, (716) 232 5477

Show: November 9, 1991 Rochester, NY Panel Judge: Cecil Gunby

## NORTH CAROLINA

Charlotte Metrolina Cage Bird Society; Wanda McCormick, (704) 825 1972

Show: September 7 & 8, 1991 Hosting the "Carolina Classic Bird Show", co-hosted by the South Carolina Bird Buddies and the Palmetto (S.C.) Bird Club. Charlotte, NC Panel Judges: Sept. 7, Conrad Meinert and Sept. 8, Earl Courts.

## OHIO

Cleveland Cage Bird Society; Maureen Mehozonek, (216) 234 7674

Show: October 12, 1991 Parna, OH Panel Judge: Brenda Geesey

## OKLAHOMA

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

Show: September 28, 1991 Oklahoma City, OK Panel Judge: Clarence Culwell

## PENNSYLVANIA

Central Pennsylvania Cage Bird Society; Jerry McCawley, (717) 288 0529

Show: October 26, 1991 Camp Hill, PA

Delaware Valley Bird Club; Kris Kroner, (215) 628 4143

Show: November 9, 1991 Montgomery County, PA Panel Judge: Gerald D'Agata

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

Show: November 2, 1991 Washington, PA Panel Judge: Roddy Gable

Philadelphia Avicultural Society; Rick Szlachta, (215) 635 2097

Show: November 23, 1991 Intercourse, PA Panel Judge: Brenda Geesey



## SOUTH CAROLINA

Palmetto Cage Bird Club; Earl Owens, (803) 855 3193

South Carolina Bird Buddies; Earl Owens, (803) 855 3193

Show: September 7 & 8, 1991 Charlotte, NC Co-hosts of "Carolina Classic" w/ Charlotte Metrolina (N.C.). Panel Judges: September 7, Conrad Meinert; September 8, Earl Courts.

## TENNESSEE

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

Show: October 26, 1991 Nashville, TN Panel Judge: Ray Johnson

## TEXAS

Bay Area Cockatiel & Cage Bird Club; Karol Deen, (409) 737 1557

Show: September 7, 1991 Galveston, TX Panel Judge: Ray Johnson

Fort Worth Bird Club; Clarence Culwell, (817) 523 5568

Show: October 5 & 6, 1991 Fort Worth, TX Panel Judge: Marty Von Raesfeld

Texas Bird Breeders and Faeciers Assn; Clarence Culwell, (817) 523 5568

Show: November 1 & 2, 1991 Killeen, TX Panel Judge: Clarence Culwell

West Wings of Houston; Dan Easter, (713) 855 7161

Regional Show: September 21, 1991 Houston, TX Panel Judge: Ray Johnson

## VIRGINIA

Peninsula Cage Bird Society; Linda Oja, (804) 874 8581

Show: September 21, 1991 Newport News, VA

## WASHINGTON

Northwest Exotic Bird Society; Nancy White, (206) 523 3602

## WISCONSIN

Badger Canary Club; Patrice Ripple, (414) 527 1980

Show: October 26, 1991 Oak Creek, WI Panel Judge: Paul Williams

Milwaukee Bird Society, Ltd.; Sue Feldstein,

Show: October 5, 1991 Milwaukee, WI Panel Judge: Charles Anchor

## INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATES

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

Show: September 21, 1991 Toronto, Panel Judge: Brenda Geesey

Durham Avicultural Society of Ontario; Vincent Moase, (416) 723 1978

Show: September 27 - 29, 1991 Panel Judge: William Parlee

Essex-Kent Cage Bird Society: Alfred Nion, (519) 948 6398  
Show: October 19 & 20, 1991 Non-Panel Judge: John Bennett

New Zealand Finch Breeders: New Zealand, Mrs. E. M. Foster

Queensland Finch Society: Queensland, Australia Gavin Dietz

Zebra Finch Society, England: Brian Binns, Manchester, England

=====

TO ALL DELEGATES AND JUDGES: Please read the list carefully!! If you see errors or omissions please call me at (717) 854 2604 immediately! This is the first listing of the 1991 season and I hope I got it right! It's quite a complicated job and it won't hurt my feelings if you catch my mistakes. Thanks, Brenda.

=====

## SPICE FINCH ANYONE?

By Kris Kroner

=====

Many of us, when first bitten by the "finch bug", obtained a pair of Spice Finches. These birds remain readily obtainable, and are still imported although easy to breed. In fact, many breeders have noted that these birds will willingly breed with many other species of birds. This results in the undesirable production of hybrid offspring, many of which closely resemble Spice Finches.

The Spice Finch has been seen in increasing entries numbers as entries to shows. More and more frequently, questions are arising from stewards, judges and exhibitors as to the purity of the species in some individual birds in the classes. These questions are primarily initiated due to beak size and color.

Marvin Yoder, another experienced exhibitor and myself are interested in working towards establishing a Standard for the Spice Finch. If anyone is interested in working on this committee, please contact me at:

433 Houston Road  
Aabler PA 19002.

If you are unable to help with the standard but have information based on experience and are willing to be interviewed or answer a short questionnaire, please also contact me at the above address. All help is appreciated.

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

NFS Editor, Brenda Geesey  
125 W. Jackson St.  
York, PA 17403

Thanks.

P.S. Also all complaints, comments,  
compliments, colloquies, critiques  
and consternations. Thanks again.  
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<i>KRIS KRONER</i>	<i>204 POINTS</i>

## CHAMPIONSHIP EXHIBITORS 1990

<i>GENE &amp; JUNE MILLER</i>	<i>131 POINTS</i>
<i>KRIS KRONER</i>	<i>110 POINTS</i>
<i>MARVIN YODER</i>	<i>86 POINTS</i>
<i>JOHN DAPAS</i>	<i>75 POINTS</i>
<i>TOM ROOD</i>	<i>71 POINTS</i>
<i>BRENDA GEESEY</i>	<i>54 POINTS</i>
<i>RICHARD LUJAN</i>	<i>51 POINTS</i>

# 43rd National Cage-Bird Exhibition

NOVEMBER 14, 15, 16, 1991

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The Kellogg Company will sponsor the Division and Best-in Show Awards with the beautiful Kellogg Trophies and the Scannell Memorial.

The Mid-West Cage-Bird Club will host this year's event.

The annual membership meeting will be held on Saturday afternoon followed by the Awards Presentation Banquet at 8:00 p.m.

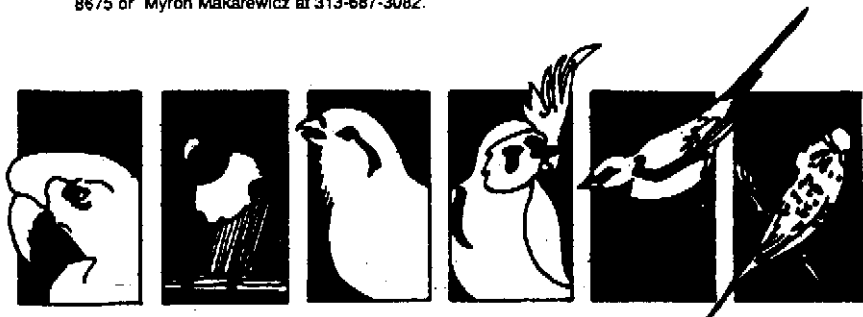
Members of the Board of Directors for the National Exhibition will all be on hand to assist with the check-in on Thursday evening and with the check-out following the banquet on Saturday night.

Judges selected for the show are:

Borders .....	Bert Reid (Scotland)
Type Canaries .....	Clarence King (TX)
Glossers .....	Harry Marriott (England)
Hertz .....	Margie McGee (CA)
Old Variety Canaries .....	Giovanni Bertoncello (Italy)
American Singers .....	Joyce Yuhas (NJ)
Lypochrome .....	Roberto Font (FL)
Melanin .....	Robert Van Dorp (Belgium)
Parrots .....	Conrad Meinert (IN)
Finches/Softbills .....	Earl Courts (MO)
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Budgerigars .....	Len Adams (IL)
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## SHORT TALES

---

'Here is another method of soaking ones' seed!' from Joleen Chrestensen, Florida.

Soak finch seed in water about 12 hours.

Drain and set in strainer over bowl.

Rinse in strainer several times daily until small shoots appear.

Put in 'fridge in covered bowl.

Feed daily sprinkled with vitamins.

Your finches will LOVE you for it!

---

Recently I was at a symposium where I had the opportunity to talk with Jan and Russell Burns. They're from New England and they raise and race homing pigeons. They brought a wonderful, professional video tape on these fascinating birds narrated by Michael Landon. They donated a copy of this video tape to the Federation of Pennsylvania Aviculturists and I assume that after it circulates to the clubs in the state it will be made available to other clubs to rent. It's a real education in an hour about the history and the current practices of pigeon husbandry. The CLEANEST aviaries I have even seen! Top-performing athletes can't be kept in dust and dirt you know! In a conversation Mr. Burns mentioned that pigeon breeders have a very good success rate transporting eggs across the country in a unique way. They bake a loaf of home-made bread, split it lengthwise, pinch out just enough dough to make room for the eggs, put the loaf back together, wrap it, box it and mail it! I couldn't wait to share that information! And now I can't wait to try it!

The Editor.

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SEND YOUR "SHORT TALE" TO

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## BREEDING THE DIAMOND SPARROW (*Steganopleura guttata*)

by Les Gibson

=====

The Diamond Sparrow is an easily kept, stocky bird that is best suited to life in an aviary. Confined quarters result in the bird becoming noticeably fat. Presumably this is just as undesirable in birds as it is in humans. The aviary was an inside flight 9 feet by x 5 by 5, and light was from 12 to 14 hours daily, mostly artificial (fluorescent).

The plumage is identical in both sexes, and while the hens often have lighter colored beaks, the birds are readily sexable when in breeding condition. This can be any time of the year. The cocks then sing their peculiar buzzing song while holding a long straw in their beaks, and at the same time do a little hopping dance, like other Australian finches. They are often very insistent, and this displaying will go on all day for days on end, right through the nesting activities.

When nesting commenced, the cock got quite violent with other birds of his own size and smaller. All the others were Australian finches and waxbills, and no large birds were present. Unless a planted aviary is used, it would be best to house the pair separately.

Starting January 11th, the pair laid 5 eggs (a common number) over 7 days. The incubation period was 14 days - when laying was done. Two eggs proved infertile, 2 hatched without difficulty, and the next day the last egg was broken open at noon when it failed to hatch that morning. The newly hatched chicks had 4 luminous spots on their gapes, just like Gouldians. The nest was examined daily, (as are all nests here), and the intrusion caused little disturbance.

The chicks did well, and were fed principally on softfood and the innards of mealworms. The softfood was made from equal portions of egg omelet and bread, mashed with a little soft margarine. At 7 days of age the parents started to feed some whole seeds (millet). Some greenfood and apple was also used.

When the chicks were 18 days old, the parents spent most of the day in a new nest which the cock built from material pulled from the original nest. This first nest was a roofed affair made of very long straws, and completely filled a half-open box. The cock dismantled most of it, leaving the chicks on a little platform of straw. He rebuilt in a plastic flowerpot, put in for other finches.

The chicks cheep loudly when being fed, so feedings can be counted, or checked. The chicks were hardly fed at all on the 18th day, so I blocked off the entrance to the new nest. The adults then attended to the chicks



## Breeding the Diamond Sparrow

again. It is therefore recommended that all other nesting sites be removed once nesting has commenced. In a big flight, a choice of nest sites is a good thing.

The cock, who took turns incubating the eggs, fed the chicks fairly well after 14 days. The birds were very secretive about feeding. They jumped into the box and always fed from inside at the back. They were never seen to feed from the entrance, or while being obviously watched.

When the chicks were 3 weeks of age their crimson tail coverts could be seen, and at this stage, the sooty plumage changed to a duller gray version of the adults feathers.

At 24 days the first chick came out of the box and the other 2 were lifted out. They were strong fliers but all 3 promptly went back in. They stayed inside the next day, then on the 26th day (25th for one), made several excursions out and in. The outings became more frequent, until at 4 weeks they were more often out than in. They roosted in the nest every night.

During incubation, and when the chicks were very young, the cock annoyed the hen greatly. He often entered the nest last thing at night and kicked her out. For this reason, a night light is essential. When the chicks were 6 days old, this role was suddenly reversed with the hen chasing the cock violently at roosting time, throwing him out if he came into the nest. About this time the hen began to roost out, but at 3 weeks she went back into the nest and laid 2 eggs beside the chicks. These were never cared for. Preparation for another nest is underway with the chicks one month old.

The chicks were all seen to be self-feeding at 30 days, 6 days after they came out of the nest. At 35 days they were removed to a separate cage because the cock was becoming aggressive and the hen was laying again.

The chicks were given a nest box and they still roost in it every night. Their beaks began to turn light red (from blackish) at 9 to 10 weeks and between 10 and 11 weeks the first black feathers of the adult plumage began to show through the juvenile gray.

Other than removing surplus nest boxes and providing a night light, this was a straightforward nesting, with no special requirements.

The parents proved to be rather erratic nesters. Two more clutches of 5 and 7 eggs were laid but abandoned in the first week. Some odd eggs were laid between the clutches and even when the cock was removed the hen laid another 3 eggs for a total of 23! This indiscriminate egg laying has been reported by others. The last 3 eggs were laid when the hen had started to moult.

The hen was then put in an outside flight with the cock and soon there was great activity in a nest box. However, after weeks of frustration watching eggs being abandoned, I am leaving them to their own devices, and do not intend to look into the box even once.

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## SOME AFRICAN SERINS

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by Denise Cabral

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Since the bird importation "blast" of the late 1960's, the common African Serin, the Green Singing Finch, has been one of my favorite cage birds. I like their color scheme and prefer their song to a canary's. Unknown to me when I first met Green Singers, they have a dozen or so close relatives in Africa. The Grey Singing Finch, Dark-throated or Yellow-rumped Serin or Singing Finch, Brimstone Canary and Alario Finch are lesser known members of the Serin group. Here is a discussion of what I've learned about these birds.

The Green Singing Finch (*Serinus mozambicus*) is the commonest African import from this group, and most finch keepers are familiar with it. Its overall color scheme is dark green above, bright yellow below, with a yellow eyestripe and a very dark mustache from the corner of the beak. Males are pure yellow below, while females have a necklace of dark spots across their throats. When buying young birds, be aware that they all have necklaces. If a few dots are missing, it probably means that the youngster is a male. I've been keeping Green Singers almost continuously since 1968, many single males kept because of their charming song, and I've always found them to be tough, hardy, adaptable and long-lived little birds. Most of mine have thrived on good quality finch mix, millet spray, the occasional bit of greens or fruit, some vitamins and cuttlebone. I now add a bit of game bird breeder mix several times a week.

The only trouble I've had with Green Singers has arisen when I've paired them for breeding or kept more than one pair in a community flight. Besides being tough, they're tough guys! I've had males beat up males or females and females beat up males or females. I have one 6 year old female that killed her first mate, in spite of my careful attention to what I'd read about providing satisfactory breeding conditions. This same little monster scalped her current mate's forehead in October 1990. From now on, I will breed this hen in a "double breeder" cage! Most of my other pairs have lived in complete harmony for years though. So, Green Singers can be said to have variable personalities, just like people. Maybe my nasty hen came from the same part of Uganda as ex-dictator Idi Amin.

The Green Singer has a very close relative, perhaps a subspecies, called the Yellow-crowned Canary or St. Helena Seedeater. It's a slightly larger bird with a broader yellow eyebrow and a more vigorous song. I believe my second male Green Singer, who was with us from about 1969 to 1973, was a member of this subspecies or species (*Serinus canicollis*). I've never owned

## Serins

another Green Singer that sang as frequently, as loudly or with as much variety.

The Grey Singing Finch (*Serinus leucopygius*) is probably the most underrated cage bird I know. Its low desirability undoubtedly stems from its completely unglorious color scheme. It's a little grey and white bird. Period. The grey doesn't even have the decency to form any really reportable pattern. There's a little streakiness on the underparts and a white or light yellow rump. All the published reports I've seen say you can't sex these little guys except by the song, but females sing too, though not as elaborately or loudly as the males. The male of my one breeding pair, circa 1979, and the only two other males I ever saw had solid grey breasts, as opposed to the streaky breasts of the females. I've had 8 females since 1981, and have not been able to find another male. As you may gather from the number of them that I've managed to find, I really like these little guys. Ever since an unpleasant landlord forced me to divest myself of my finches, I've been looking for more Grey Singers. Believe me, you haven't heard anything sing until you've heard one.

Basic Grey Singer maintenance is like the Green Singer. I give both singers "worry-beads" - frazzled twigs or tightly-tied hay-baling twine - so they have something to pick at and pester besides their mates. It's a really good idea to plan something like this with these feisty little Grey Singers. Groups of them are even more scrappy than Green Singers, constantly zipping back and forth in rotating fights, throwing out phrases of song as they go. It may be of interest to note that my breeding pair was set up in one of those nasty cylindrical cages, cut up the side, turned sideways, with new ends and a bottom added. I added a canary nest at top middle and put the cage in a large room kept unlit except by natural light from 3 large north windows. Maybe they liked the privacy. I've now got 8 new ones to work with; to figure out what sexes I've got and set 'em up to breed.

Probably imported as often as the Grey Singer is the Black-throated, Dark-throated or Yellow Rumped Serin or Singing Finch or Canary, (*Serinus atrogularis*). This bird has several distinguishable subspecies in Africa, leading to the profusion of common names. I've seen one with a very black throat, and more commonly, another with a whitish throat, with varying black stripes and streaks. Appearance-wise, you'd swear this bird was a cross between a Green Singer and a Grey. Its head has a paler eyebrow and paler stripe under the eye, and variable indications of a mustache. The yellow-rump is a soft tawny grey above, with the same sort of indistinct mottlings the Grey Singer has, above and below. Yellow-rumps have the same bright yellow rump as the Green Singers, but a less vigorous song. Yellow-rumps are a bit larger than Green Singers and a little less quarrelsome than Greens or Greys. they are probably a bird that should be carefully bred by a few Serin fanciers if we are to keep them in aviculture.

The next species I'm familiar with has an interesting story behind their appearance in New England. Once upon a time I read in a southern club's newsletter that an importer called Deep South Aviary had Grey Singing finches for sale. I ordered 4 pairs as part of a large finch order, after verifying that the birds in Louisiana matched my descriptions of Grey Singers. Imagine my dismay when I found some oversize Serins that looked a little like Green Singers in the shipping crate. I didn't have my desperately sought Grey Singers, but something more unusual, Brimstone Canaries (*Serinus sulphuratus*). They haven't acclimated quite as well as the other Serins I've worked with, but given the poor quality of the overall shipment, they had probably not been well-treated by the shipper. Sorry to report, but the shipper never replaced any of the birds I lost or refunded any money either.

My Brimstone Canaries were about 6 inches long, dark green-grey above, yellow or yellowish below and the one obvious mature male had a very bold yellow eye-stripe, with a bright yellow belly. The rest were duller, with a few showing brighter eye-brows. This lot turned out to be the most quarrelsome of the Serins I've had, and only the large size of their holding cage kept them from some really serious fighting. While I had them, these Serins only sang wisps of song, but what I heard was typical of this group. The lack of song may have been due to the poor overall condition of the birds. Brimstone Canaries seem to need a more varied finch mix than the other common African Serins, so I supplemented them with some ridiculously fancy canary song mix as well as greens, vitamins, etc. So far these critters haven't bred for their new owner, but time will tell.

The last African Serin I've seen is the Alario Finch (*Serinus alario*), also called the Black-headed Canary or Serin. I saw this bird once at a New Hampshire bird shop, in a dark bottom-row cage. About all I could see was the black head, darkish back and light underparts. Too bad I was suffering from "no-cashosis" at the time, or I would know more about this species. Alario finches have a pretty chestnut color above and are white below. They're said to have a nice song too. Maybe someday I can share observations of these Serins.

The other species of African Serins are:

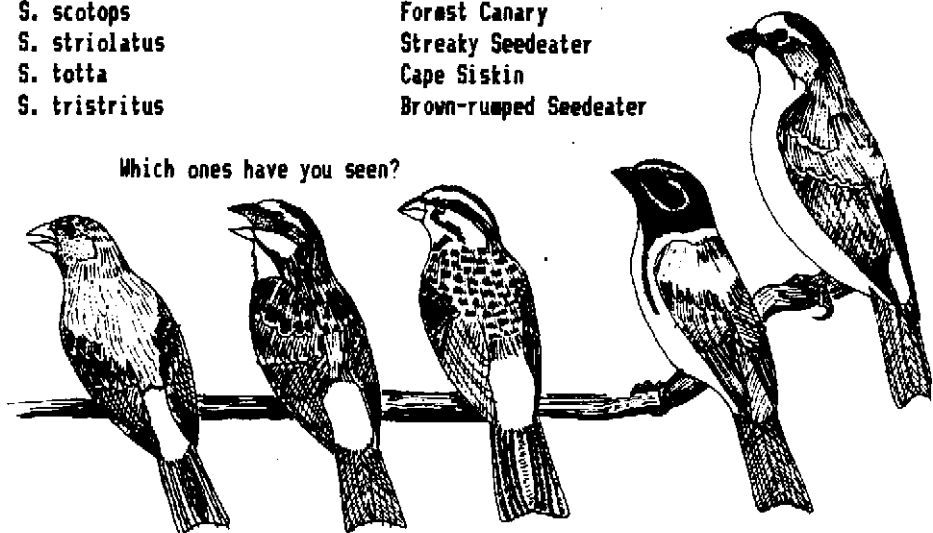
S. albogularis	White-throated Canary
S. burtoni	Grosbeak Seed-eater
S. capistratus	Blackfaced Canary
S. citrinelloides	African Citril Finch
S. citrinipectus	Lemon-breasted Canary
S. donaldsoni	Grosbeak Canary
S. dorsostriatus	White-bellied Canary
S. flavigula	Yellow-throated Canary

## Serins

S. flaviventris  
S. gularis  
S. koliensis  
S. leucopterus  
S. mœnelli  
S. nigriceps  
S. reichardi  
S. scotops  
S. striolatus  
S. totta  
S. tristritus

Yellow Canary  
Streak-headed Seedeater  
Koli Canary  
White-winged Seedeater  
Black-eared Seedeater  
Black-headed Serin  
Reichard's Seedeater  
Forest Canary  
Streaky Seedeater  
Cape Siskin  
Brown-rumped Seedeater

Which ones have you seen?



*Legend: left to right: grey singing finch, green singing finch, yellow-rumped serin,  
maria's finch, Brimstone Canary 2/91*

=====  
Thanks for your article and artwork Denise. Nice combination of talents! It's a pleasure to know more about this group. I agree that they are undervalued by aviculturists. As proof of Green Singers hardiness, I know that one who is about 10 or 11 years old is still doing very well on the show bench.  
=====

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## HAND-RAISING A GOULDIAN FINCH FROM THE EGG: A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

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by Ubaldo Leli, M.D.

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It is well known from both anecdotal reports and people's direct experience that the beautiful Gouldian finches (*Poephilia gouldii*) do not make good parents. Although many breeders foster the Gouldian chicks under Society or, less frequently, Zebra finches in order to increase their productivity, some aviculturists would like to have parent-raised chicks at some point in their career. Also, often times one is faced with the need of saving chicks thrown out of the nest by parents with unsynchronized breeding cycles.

I started keeping Gouldian finches three years ago, when I acquire a mixed color pair: a black-headed female and a red-headed male. I will not attempt to describe the beauty and sweet temperament of these birds, which is known virtually to every bird enthusiast. My Gouldians are kept in my bird room, in the company of many diverse avian species ranging from hummingbird and honeycreepers, to fig parrots and African greys. They are housed in a 3 x 1.5' x 1.5' cage, lit from 6:30 am to 8:00 pm. Temperature and humidity range from 68' to 75' F, and 60 to 80%, respectively. I feed them finch mix spray millet, soft egg food and cuttlebone all year round.

The first year my pair went to nest at the end of October. Prior to breeding, the female acquired a dark ash-colored beak, and the male a red tip on its bill. They also began to consume much more egg food than normal. I gave them a nest box of corrugated cardboard of 5" x 5" x 5", with the upper half of the front side open, filled with undecayed rope. They laid many fertile eggs (35), with a clutch size of 5 or 6, but never sat for more than a week. I managed to foster 5 chicks under societies. I also tried to incubate a clutch artificially in my Roll-I incubator. Setting was 99.5' F and 50% humidity. Three eggs hatched and one chick lived for 5 days. Autopsy revealed a gram-negative infection and a lesion on the mouth. At the time I was using Rodybush handfeeding diet (regular) diluted in Gatorade, and I was feeding the chick with a tiny spatula. The spatula was responsible for the mouth lesion.

The next year I changed the nest box and used a wooden 5" x 5" x 5" box with a 1.2" hole instead of the open front, hoping that the hen would sit more comfortably, being more protected. She certainly sat better than the previous year, but at day 12 she stopped. The second clutch was fostered under zebras, which did a fine job and raised all the chicks faster than the societies. The third clutch came too early and found me unprepared for fostering. Because the hen was sitting, I waited, hoping for a miracle. On day 15 I checked the nest and nothing was there. It did not take long to

realize that the male had cleaned house after the eggs hatched. I found two nestlings on the floor of the cage, but one died shortly after. The survivor was gaping and begging, and I decided to undertake the task of hand-feeding this chick from day 1.

The day-old chick was placed in an aquarium brooder with a temperature of 95° F and 60% humidity. For the first three feedings I gave the tiny chick only Pedialyte (every hour), heated to 105° F. Then I introduced the diet described in table 1, diluted with Pedialyte to a very liquid consistency. I was able to adjust the consistency so that the crop was totally empty every 1.5-2 hours. To feed the chick I used a thin painting brush through the fourth day, then a pipette.

The chick was fed every two hours around the clock until it reached a weight of 5 grams (at birth the bird weighed 1.2 grams). The night interval was between 1:00 am and 5:00 am. The parents, of course, feed the chicks more often, but the hand-feeding procedure causes an enlargement of the crop so that it empties every two hours on the average. When the feather tracts started to appear through the skin I added peanut butter to the diet, and thickened it somewhat. I banded the chick at day 14 and it flew at day 27. The weight chart showed in Figure 1 is a daily record of its weight gains.

Weaning was slow and difficult, and was effected by leaving the chick with older, independent siblings from a previous clutch, but still feeding it at least four times a day. The weight chart (Figure 1) shows a notch caused by a sudden drop in weight at day 31. That is because I tried to decrease the feedings too fast. The weaning process I played by ear, checking the weight gains or losses. Every time the chick would lose more than 10% of its body weight I would increase the feedings again. There must be a better method, but it worked and the bird finally weaned. Unfortunately I lost this chick due to a caretaker's neglect during one of my trips out of town. May it join in Bird Heaven by two Andean emerald hummingbirds that died of the same "disease": an unskilled caretaker.

I designed my diet based on the fact that the shorter the time a bird spends in the nest, the higher the protein content in the diet must be (R. Lov, Handrearing baby parrots and other birds, Blandford Press, Poole (1987) 32-33). For example, the budgerigar spends an average of 4 weeks in the nest and needs about 20% protein in the diet. So, finches need a rather high protein diet. Also, the content of fat in the food determines how long it will take to pass through the crop. The higher the amount of fat, the longer the transit time. The food should remain in the digestive system of the bird long enough for the proteins to be absorbed, but not long enough for the food to become spoiled or hard, in which case food poisoning or crop impaction might ensue. Spinach and carrot baby foods were added to make sure that the chick's crop would not become impacted. It is well known that the presence of fruit and vegetables can prevent formulas from becoming stone-hard, which tends to occur, especially with products that do not require cooking. Also, the carotene of the carrot helps with the coloring, and the



spinach contains beneficial calcium.

Of course, the sweet disposition of hand-fed Gouldians is unmatched by any other species that I know. The intelligence of these little jewels, however, is a bit questionable. I would not advise anyone to try to raise a finch from egg, except under emergency conditions; but my experience proves that it can be done. Perhaps there is even a specific market for this kind of hand-reared finch. I believe that the diet described in this article could be used with other birds with food requirements and development similar to the Gouldian finch.

I hope I have been of some help to the many aviculturists who have had to face the disappointment of seeing their precious chicks vacuumed away by overzealous parents, out of their proper breeding cycle. These notes offer some guidelines, which, combined with a lot of personal dedication may save a few chicks.

Table 1.

#### Hand-feeding diet for Gouldian finches.

Mix 2 teaspoons Nutri-start Baby Bird Food (Lafebre) and 3 tablespoons of cold water. Cook according to the instructions of the manufacturer in a double boiler or in a microwave, stirring often.

Add 2 teaspoons purified soybean protein (many companies produce it), and 1 teaspoon Nekton tonic-K, 1 teaspoon strained creamed spinach and 1 teaspoon strained carrot baby food (first or second foods).

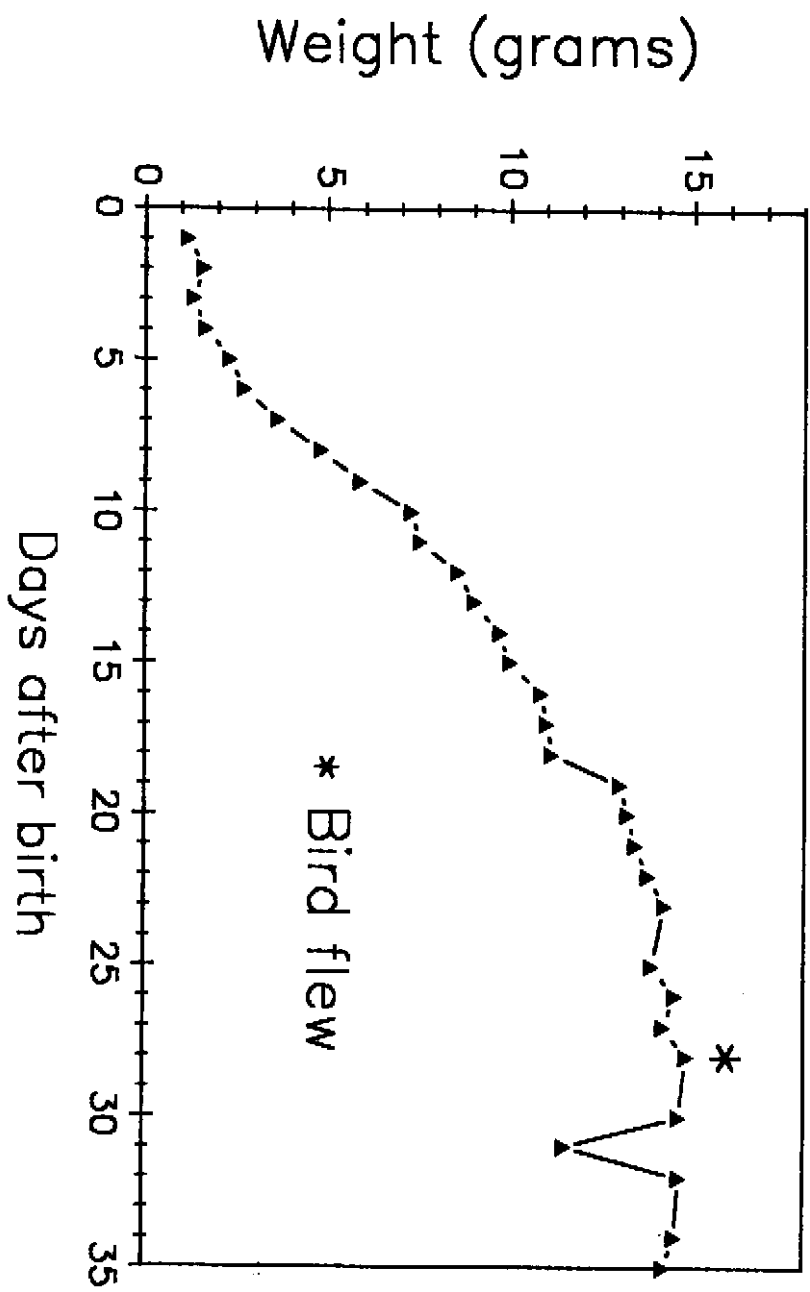
All through the development add to one daily feeding one pinch of Prime (Hagen) and one pinch of Nekton MSA ground in the mortar to a fine powder.

When the feather tracts start to be visible through the skin (about day 8) add 1 flat teaspoon creamy peanut butter to the formula prepared as above. Also, every other day add three drops of cod liver oil and 1/8 teaspoon finely ground cuttlebone to one of the feedings.

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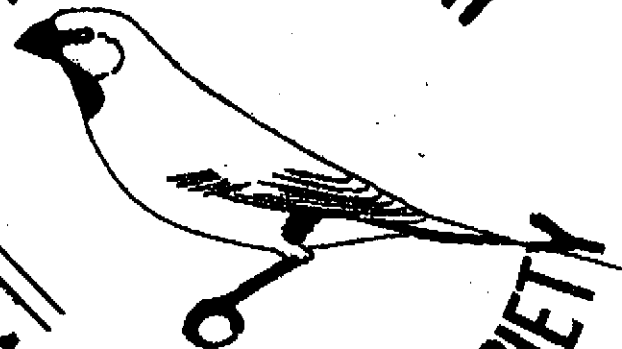
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Poephilia Gouldiae  
(Born January 7, 1991. Hand-fed)



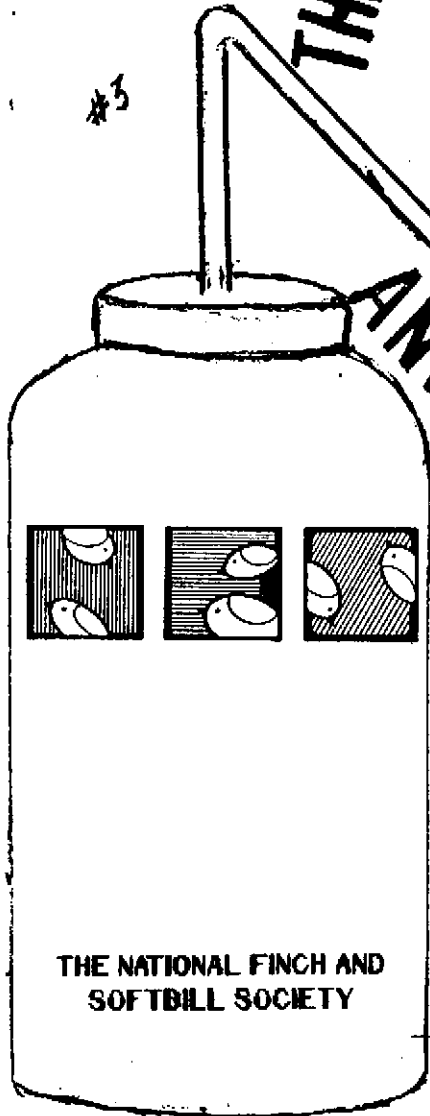


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AND...Bruce, the cut and paste master, got them all on one page! Hooray! The Editor.

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Thanks to the work done by the Band Size Committee we are able to offer an expanded list of suggested sizes for more species of finches and softbills. We're hoping to get more updates from societies overseas in 1991. We also welcome members suggestions for the list.

### SIZE TO FIT LEGS OF:

- 
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- 
- B Cordon Bleu, Black-cheeked Waxbills, Fire, Cuban Melodious, Olive, Lavenders, Rufous-backed Mannikin and others.
- 
- C Blue Caps, Green Singers, Silverbills, Stars, Shafttails, Cherry, Red-headed Parrot, Painted, Heck's, Pileated, Grey Singers, Pytilias, Bronze-wing and Black and White Mannikin.
- 
- D Zebras, Gouldians, Pictorellas, Yellow-rumps, Chestnut-breasted, Blue-faced Parrot, Pintail Nonpareil, most other Parrot finches, most smaller Mannikins and most Twin Spots.
- 
- E Society, Spice, Siskins, Golden Song Sparrows, Diamond Sparrows, Muns, Peter's Twin Spots and Black Crested Finches.
- 
- G Magpie Mannikins, and other large Mannikins, European Goldfinch and small Tanagers.
- 
- J Pekin Robin, Silver-eared Mesias and other small softbills.
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- K Java Rice, Shama Thrush, Saffron and Red-crested Cardinal.
- 
- L Diamond Doves, other small doves, Quail and other softbills.
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THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY.

# ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH

by Joe Heard

I'm haaack! You really shouldn't encourage me but you asked for it!

My second show season was even better than my first - 50% more points and enough ribbons to make nesting material for four pairs of Goulds (they prefer the yellow but I'm partial to the blue. They all cost a bunch! Thought I had a new mutation, expensive too! But the gold flecks disappear as the juveniles moult out. I'll work on it and keep everyone posted. Sex-linked? In my case, probably.) It was exciting too but more about that as follow. But you be the judge...well, maybe not.

The show in Omaha in September 1989 was a bit early but as usual the early wove deserves every bird that he can get. Although there were less than fifty finches there my Black-cheek did pretty good. Not so good later but that's a short story I'll make longer. Turns out that bird was just starting to fill out. This past year she had her own Vita-Lite and dressing room. All she needed was several good baths and a longer tail. Viola! This year I plan on entering my very own white Shafttail (no, the bird). The markings look kinda funny but I've kept her with Black-cheeks for two years now. Tell me there's no lead in that gold paint (and the glue tastes funny, too...probably old!)

Omaha gave nice awards too. The usual ribbons, rosettes, plaques (my dentist loves it) and MEDALLIONS! I had no idea what to do with a medallion so I tossed and turned all night...have you ever tried to sleep with a medallion around your neck? Finally, after forever I managed to sleep...some. Since my canary friends wanted to get an early start back to Denver I reluctantly staggered to my morning ablutions. While admiring my caricature in the mirror it slowly (very) dawned on me that I had been victimized by big city crime as I slept. Some deranged (fellow traveler) intruder had branded me on the left cheek (no, the mirror was high...well, for me it was high - see title)! I tried 911 and was put on hold. In frustration I tried Dial-A-Prayer. No answer. Figures. Reluctantly, I realized that my crime fighting efforts were making me late so I began to scrape my face with my rusty hunting knife. Viola, again! I knew I would have to sleep on my solution to this crime. Although I've always wanted dimples, the sad, uncomprehending look as total strangers try to find some way to compliment me on my unatched dimples (look, if you sleep on your right side don't you have to turn the medallion over?) leaves me suffused with a wane glow. I know it's probably just the base metal or the old glue but it hasn't affected my spatial reasoning, no siree! Every time I look in the mirror I remember aha00.

## Rocky Mountain High

Although Denver and Colorado Springs resulted in only consolation prizes, the Colorado Springs ribbon must have cost Martha a hunch. I just love the Scottish background design. It seems to subtly change every time I gaze at it. But I've had that problem a lot lately.

In an effort to get diverse offspring for this show-season, I have traded some stock with my Mississippi mother-in-law. My cocks just go wild with that Southern accent but all the Southern Gould hens do is whisper conspiratorially amongst themselves. ..probably about the manners of Northern boys. But I keep hoping for an egg...any egg when I dejectedly gaze at my Mason-Dixon captives. I'm sure a sonogram would show a strange sound but the mysterious and sultry sounds I have heard from my birdroom are only vaguely familiar (yes, Chantilly there is a Virginia!)

All has not been unsuccessful in my birdroom this year. Lots of Cherry, Star, Diamond Firetail and Gould juveniles now grace my spare perches, but it could have been better. Early in the year, I was losing a lot of youngsters. I suspected a lot of things but nothing seemed to be the true cause. Finally, I noticed the strange droppings (watch the pellets, folks!) outside the cages, no less. Now I know you won't believe me but contrary to all scientific facts and in accordance with all mythological nostrums, I had VAMPIRE BATS in my belfry (really!?). Well, just like ahaaO, I knew I could solve this big-city crime! The canaries I got are a pain to feed, what with all their fruits and vegetables. The lovely song and the awful STENCH! but it took more than the canaries garlic, oh yes! I had to rearrange my birdroom and change nesting material and even my own diet (?) BUT it worked! The new aisles intersect at precise 90 degree angles and the new brand of burlap has a very effective cross-stitch pattern. The few bats that remained wouldn't hold still for the dull sirloin stakes I tried to hammer into their furry little chests, but my wife still buys them when I tell her they're for the birds (fills out my growing caricature, though). The thing that finally cleared my belfry still brings sailes of knowing amusement to all who see my new birdroom. Each cage now has its own set of silver serving dishes. (Now you know why your own CPA charges so much.)

I'll keep you posted on new developments with my gold Goulds, old glue and new silver) or is that Old Golds and silver Goulds? I can't remember. Must be the bats. And ahaaO.

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Joe sent this last October (1990) with a note that said "everyone seems so serious and soeber now, I thought it might help someone to unwind and saile just a bit. I know I'll find something funny in the 1990 show season and I'll try to include that with my Mid-East finch exchange report." Soooooo friends....I guess we can count on the roving CPA for my amusing news. Nice going Joe, and thanks.

The Editor.

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# LITTLE BIRD: THE HAPPY, HANDFED GOULD

by Jodie Davis

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"Tweet tweet!" Sure enough, the clock says 7:15. Lil Bit, the Jack Russell Terrier gets up from her pillow bed and burrows under the covers between two stone-like sleepy heads. "Tweet tweet!" 7:25. Right on time, a round greenish-grey body lands softly on the pillow between us. "Tweet tweet." Good morning, Little Bird! A cock of the head to both of us in turn and the beak disappears into the back. Little Bird becomes a ball of feathers.

As far as I'm concerned, Little Bird is a miracle. From the time I heard my friend Sharon's voice on the other end of the phone line asking me to handraise the Gouldian chick she had rescued from the floor of the aviary on the eve of New Year's Eve 1991, until he fledged, I never expected the pathetic thing to live. I had been keeping birds for just over a year at the time and was up to about thirty-five finches and one cockatiel. (Note my great self-control --only 35!) My CFW and Florida Fancy Zebras had thrilled me with chicks in the house but this time I was mommy, responsible for the life of a creature for whom nature had not prepared me.

Goodness, the little thing was pitiful, if not down right ugly. The eyes were open but the crop didn't look right. Sharon called Brenda Geesey who, as usual, offered her expert advice. She estimated the bird to be about ten or eleven days old but she didn't extend much hope. We fed the bird before I left for home; this was the second feeding. I was excited and nervous during the 30 minute drive home and truly expected to find the worst when I opened the box upon arrival. One hurdle down, it was still breathing!

I moved the bird to a plastic margarine container lined with tissues. I put this inside a plastic box which had a ventilated top (made for small animals) and placed the box on the counter in our bathroom. I turned the baseboard up full and crossed my fingers, legs, and arms.

Feeding time arrived. Still alive! (It's not that I hadn't checked on him every two seconds in the meantime.) I mixed the formula with hot water in a Pyrex cup. To keep the mixture warm I put the cup in a pan of hot water and carried it to the bathroom. The chick ate right off the end of a toothpick. To avoid the possibility of aspiration, I was advised against an eyedropper or syringe. The chick ate so well I was afraid I was overfeeding! Thinking smaller, frequent meals were the best bet, I got up every four hours the first night to feed the chick. Each time I was sure he would be dead. But no, he wiggled when I touched the box to open it.

Day 2: Chick greeted me with gaping beak, and a bit of a scream-- "Feed me!" I still wouldn't get my hopes up.

As with any endeavor I embark upon, I turned to finding as much



\*\*\*\*\* WARNING ABOUT WOOL! \*\*\*\*\*

by Marlene Ayres

I bought some raw wool (at 70 cents a pound) from a local farmer. I made sure that he had not treated his sheep with pesticides for external parasites. That was proven true, evidenced by the numerous ticks in the fleece. I could not bring myself to give the "raw" wool to my birds. Besides the bugs, it had a generous amount of bedding hay in it and plenty of good ol' fashioned dirt. I washed a few handfuls in hot water and dish soap, rinsed it in more hot water, and dried it in the sun. Fearing that the wool might get tangled around the birds' feet, I tried breaking the individual strands. They seemed to break quite easily. When it was dry I offered it to a few pairs of finches (Goulds, Shafttails, Silverbills, and Zebras) along with my usual shredded burlap. NONE of the birds used the wool first. Shafttails used some of it, but only when the supply of burlap was exhausted. Still fearing the possibility of foot entanglement, I kept a close watch on them. All went fine for awhile... then during chores one morning, I noticed that the male Shafttail had a fluff of wool tangled on one foot. I removed it with tweezers and then checked the hen. She, too, had a few strands of wool tangled around her foot. Needless to say, I will not be using wool, washed or otherwise, for nesting material again.

Editors note: Marlene sent a letter to a firm that is widely advertising wool as nesting material asking the following questions. She got no reply.

1. What breed(s) of sheep are you taking the wool from?
2. Have the sheep ever been treated with pesticides for external parasites?
3. Is this shorn wool or tufts gathered from fences, etc.?
4. Do you offer any other type of nesting material to your Gouldians or do they build their nests entirely of wool?
5. Do you have any other species of finches using the wool?
6. What percentage of the eggs laid in these nests actually hatch? I am concerned about the natural lanolin in the wool clogging the pores of the eggs.
7. Have you ever had a problem with the wool tangling around the nestlings legs?

Her questions represent valid kinds of inquiries any serious aviculturist should consider when purchasing new supplies and/or products.

about caring for my new charge as I could. Out came the back issues of the numerous bird magazines to which I subscribe. Pay dirt, I discovered an article profiling a long-time finch breeder which included his handfeeding formula. Next thing I knew, we were conversing. When I described the bird and its behavior, he told me the bird was doing great and he expected no problems. Relief! He added that he pulls his chicks for handfeeding at ten days of age and feeds them only about five times a day, not at night.

I quickly learned to tell when the bird's crop was emptying and found that the 5 times a day schedule was just right for him. The chick's crop looked less like a bubble about to burst, but I still wondered if feathers would ever grow there.

Well, they did and now that he had some protection, I began holding Little Bird more as I worked at my computer, surely not conducive to getting a lot of work done. (Hey, he won't be a chick forever, I thought.) After his last feeding each evening Little Bird nestled in the front of my bathrobe or the collar of my shirt. I was so afraid to crush him I hardly moved.

When he became strong enough to hop around I added two low perches to Little Bird's house. He took right to them when I placed him on one. After a few days he used them exclusively, returning to the floor of the box only to eat. At this time he was also increasingly anxious to be with us. No longer did he let us return him to the box without a peep. Uh-oh, a teenager.

The day Little Bird fledged--well, he flew out of his plastic box and landed about a foot away onto a towel on the counter (relief). Lee and I were the proudest of parents. And I ran off to the hardware store for special cage-building supplies. Well, Little Bird hasn't seen the inside of that cage yet. He graduated directly from his box to a ficus tree in the living room. All the birds live there. Lots of glass lets in lots of light and my green thumb makes the birds feel right at home. So, Little Bird roosts in the evening before we go to bed and in the morning he makes the short trip to the bedroom. "Tweet, tweet!"

Until the age of eleven weeks Little Bird was just a fluff of feathers--sort of a green Chickadee or Snowbird. We looked at the bird, at the picture of a grown Gouldian, back at the bird, and shook our heads. No way. Little Bird could never grow up to look like that! In a matter of days this changed. Little Bird's body slimmed. And he started trying to sing, taking little hops in place on my finger or serenading Lee from his shoulder, curtain rod, or high atop a cage. In no uncertain terms Little Bird announced that he/she/it was a he.

Though he lives at liberty, Little Bird is quite well-behaved. He hops on or off a finger as needed. And while we were concerned about the inevitable meeting of Big and Little Birds (the cockatiel is really named Ami but Lee has a habit of making up his own name for everyone he knows) we needn't have worried. In fact, Little Bird established his superiority from the get up. Now, Little Bird tried to chase Ami off Lee's shoulder. What he lacks in size he makes up for in noise and his devilish sense of fun. Ami

switches rather than fights: she shuffles across Lee's chest to the other shoulder. Actually she deserves the recompense for her nickname is B---Y Bird. But they couldn't hate each other too much. They're often found in the bedroom on top of Ami's cage perched on a teddy bear's head.

As for Little Bird's cuisine, he is a fantastic eater. While Ami acts insulted when I offer her anything. When I pour cereal and milk into a bowl, he jumps to the edge and drinks and munches. So I chop up the hard-boiled eggs. In a few minutes he's crunching shells and has a yellow beak. Now I can eat. Next he becomes king of the pile of Romaine, freshly rinsed and waiting to be distributed amongst the cages. At lunch he shares a carrot with me. At dinner, "Cornbread, please."

To wash it all down? He'll land on a hand near the sink and cock his head, "Please may I have a drink?" and sip right from the faucet. Now if you cup your hands and let a pool collect...bath time!

As Little Bird clumsily flies off with three page's worth of the edges of computer paper I realize that the reason I'm so fond of him is the same reason I love my five kitties, dog, and best friend Lee. They are all perennially cheerful and happy. He's a simple wisp of fluff, happy-- simply happy. "Tweet-tweet!"

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NEEDED: New blood for Cherry Finches. Could use two extra hens. Jose Aleman, A-1 Aviary, 5503 Axiom Ave., Orlando, FL 32809 (407) 352-1593

NEEDED: White Eyes (Zosterops) and Swee (Dufresne's) Waxbills for FINCHSAVE breeding program. Jodie Davis, 7721 James Madison Hwy., Gainesville, VA 22065, (703) 754 9643.

WANTED: Grey Singing Finches for breeding program. Young preferred. D. Cabral, (508) 586 3293.

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## BENEFITS OF JOINING THE NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY

The National Finch and Softbill Society is dedicated to the preservation of all finch and softbill species.

1. Our bi-monthly Bulletin connects you with other finch and softbill keepers around the country. It includes articles on diet, breeding, management and the experiences of other aviculturists. NFS keeps you abreast of the news on legislation.
2. NFS has a program named "FINCHSAVE". The goal is to establish and maintain all finch and softbill species in American aviculture. All members are encouraged to enhance the propagation of finches and softbills.
3. NFS maintains an annual census that can connect you with other breeders for the purpose of exchanging information or breeding stock.
4. NFS offers, to members, closed, traceable, leg bands.
5. NFS has an affiliation program. Your club can affiliate and receive plaques and rosettes as show awards. Non-show clubs can affiliate and receive service awards for members. Speakers are available, with slide programs that feature finches and softbills.
6. Each year NFS holds a National show. All members are encouraged to attend and participate. An International Patronage Exchange brings awards from foreign countries.
7. NFS has a Judges Panel, composed of individuals who have completed the apprenticeship program. All judge by the NFS Standard of Judging, are approved by the Board of Directors and are available to local clubs.
8. NFS has established exhibition standards for; Cordon Bleu Naxbills, Gouldians, Green Singing Finches, Java Rice Birds, Shafttails, Society Finches and Zebra Finch Standards. Lavenders, Star Finches, Fire Finchs, Diamond Sparrows and Pekin Robin Standards are now "in the works".
9. NFS sponsors a "Championship Exhibitor" award program and a "Championship Bird" program. Both reward high achievements on the show bench.
11. "Finchshop", the sales division, offers various items for sale to members. The profits are used to support the Society's other programs.

JOIN WITH US . . . SEND IN YOUR APPLICATION . . . TODAY !



# THE NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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Please list second name for dual membership. \_\_\_\_\_

Canadian and foreign subscriptions are mailed first class.  
Please send US funds. Canadian, add \$5.00, foreign, add \$10.00.

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Please give us some more information about you !

Species of finches and softbills you are interested in: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the topics that are most interesting to you in the Bulletin:

\_\_\_ nutrition \_\_\_ breeding \_\_\_ management \_\_\_ exhibition

\_\_\_ conservation \_\_\_ classified ads \_\_\_ NFS news & notes

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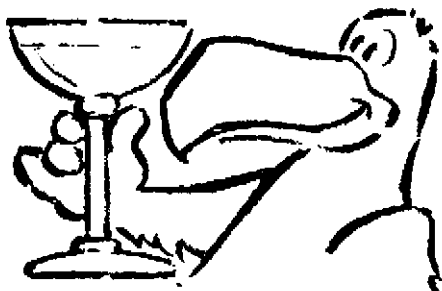
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