

Comprehensive
and relevant
information
for bird people

Talking Birds

**BIRD
WORDS
EVERY
MONTH**

\$4 parrots, finches, budgies, canaries, pets, fancy poultry, fancy pigeons, veterinary advice, world news, conservation

June 2016

Sun conures simply stunning



**Don Burke
on budgies
and clubs**

**Old seed
bad for
canaries**

**Jacarinis
hate Cuban
finches**

**Gouldian
feathers
wanted**

**Profile of
a special
peacock**

**ANZ hit
by kiwi
greenies**

**Advice on
rehoming
pet birds**

**Fence fight
over night
parrot**

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LAST month we reported on efforts by the Australian Finch Society and the Canary and Cage Bird Federation of Australia to try to find a solution to the Victorian ban on sale of exotics at bird sales and this month in the adjacent columns we report on efforts by those groups to fix problems with importing birds into Tasmania.

The people involved know what they are about and it is great to see them addressing the problem.

■ **SEED PROBLEMS:** Canary man Jeff Leaney this month delves into the way seed deteriorates as well as providing valuable information on the various seed types and how they affect birds' wellbeing.

He recommends feeding seed to canaries in a flat dish, because canaries feed only on what's on the surface, which can often be largely made up of husk.

■ **STUNNING SUNS:** Reading between the lines of Joy Pym's contribution this month it quickly becomes apparent that sun conures are one of her favourite parrot species.

She describes them as endearing, charming, playful and personality-plus, which sums them up magnificently.

■ **BURKE'S VIEW:** Don Burke is well known throughout Australia

COMMENT

as an expert gardener and this month budgie man Fred Wright delves into one of the garden guru's first loves — budgerigars — where one of his main interests is heritage varieties.

Don also airs his views on clubs and their pitfalls and what he has to say will not find universal favour.

■ **JACARINI HOUDINI:** Jacarini finches are great escapologists, always finding any tiny hole in the wire of their enclosure through which they can pass.

This month finch man John Buchan profiles jacarinis and reveals their all-consuming hatred for fellow American bird the Cuban finch.

■ **REHOMING PARROTS:** It's often no picnic when parrots are rehomed for whatever reason and this month companion parrot expert Rachel Riley provides advice on how to ensure that those birds adjust to new surroundings and to new people.

It's never simple and Rachel advocates comprehensive assessment of those birds in order to ensure that they fit in as they should in their new homes.

Once again an informative and varied magazine, hopefully you'll enjoy it.

— Lloyd Marshall



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PARROT IMPORT REVIEW STARTS

THE Federal Department of Agriculture and Water Resources has started a review to consider risk management measures for the importation of household pet and non-commercial parrots into Australia.

The review was commenced after requests from pet parrot owners and hobbyists.

Conditions for importing parrots from all countries were suspended in 1995, conditions for importing birds

from New Zealand remain in force.

The next step is to prepare and issue a draft report to provide stakeholders the opportunity to comment on the analysis. The department will announce when the draft report is placed on its website and comments will be invited.

Following the consultation period the department will consider all comments when preparing a final report.

Two groups in Tas. approach

THE Finch Society of Australia and the Canary and Cage Bird Federation of Australia have made a joint submission to the Tasmanian Government as part of that state's Biosecurity Legislation Review, which will address problems encountered when importing birds into that state.

The two groups said they support trade in captive-bred birds nationally and internationally, particularly with regard to achieving outcomes related to securing critically endangered and endangered species.

"To achieve such outcomes requires efficient processes that are affordable, manageable and realistically accessible," the submission said.

The submission said attempts to assess the probability of feral populations establishing in the wild must include all significant parameters.

"The Tasmanian system for assessing establishment risk is based on the model developed by Mary Bomford, known as The Bomford Model," the submission said. "This model was never intended to assess establishment probability for escaped captive bred domestic species populations."

The submission said acclimatisation societies released large numbers of wild caught birds in multiple locations over many years and that those birds were protected and provided with feed to encourage establishment, and that in many cases they established, while avicultural species failed to establish.

"Scientific evidence supporting the low establishment risk of escaped captive bred birds in Australia is

somewhat paradoxically present in the majority of threatened species recovery efforts detailing attempts to reintroduce captive bred species back into native habitat.

"The extreme difficulties encountered during such captive breeding recovery and release efforts provides ample scientific evidence as to the low risk of captive birds establishing sustainable populations."

The submission said all captive populations in Australia are numerous generations distant from wild birds and should be considered domesticated. The submission made these recommendations for inclusion in the legislation:

1. All avicultural species to be classed as domestic stock (may be imported, bought, sold or held without permit) for the purpose of importation into Tasmania.
2. Form a consultative committee of avicultural, veterinarian and scientific experts with responsibility to:
 - a. Collaborate and develop a robust import risk assessment process for avicultural species.
 - b. Provide expert recommendations on the rejection or approval for importation of new species.
 - c. Provide an appeals process should import of a species be rejected.
3. Acknowledge the scientific, conservation, economic and social value of aviculture in terms of positive outcomes for Tasmanians.
4. Acknowledge the fact that no captive avian species has established a sustainable viable feral population in Australia.

Wierd food source

IT'S been a queasy season for nest cam viewers at Pennsylvania in the US, with a peregrine falcon feeding three chicks to another hatchling.

The infanticide was seen live by thousands via a live-streaming nest camera at the University of Pittsburgh's Cathedral of Learning.

Hope the female falcon laid two eggs this season before her mate died and she then laid a third egg just a few days after his death.

She later had a fourth egg, which must have been fertilised by another male.

ODD SPOT

Everything seemed normal enough until the second egg hatched.

Hope fed the second hatchling to the first.

When the third chick died she fed that bird to the first chick and Hope killed the fourth bird before it fully hatched, eating part of it herself and feeding the rest of the chick to the first youngster.

Art McMorris, peregrine co-ordinator for the Pennsylvania Game Commission, said that type of behavior has not been seen before.

COVER: SUN CONURE PAIR. PHOTO: JOY PYM.
SEE: BRILLIANT SUN CONURES ARE SIMPLY STUNNING — PAGES 6-7.

Canary book scam

THERE is a probable scam operating on the Internet involving *The Australian Canary Handbook*, with a PDF of the book offered after joining the service for a fee and after paying other costs via credit card.

The book or others may never arrive or involve cancellation costs, etc.

The book offered is an illegal copy of the first edition hard cover version published 25 years ago, which is covered by copyright. It is not the latest 2016 edition.

The latest soft cover version has been revised and updated, and includes many new photographs so why anyone would try to sell an old book on the Internet is a mystery.

Conv. looking good

DELEGATE figures for the Queensland-based Parrot Society of Australia's *Parrots 2016* convention — to be held in Brisbane from July 1-3 — are building well, according to club president Scott Hovelroudt.

"We are very happy with the way it is going and it promises to be a great event," Mr Hovelroudt said.

"Speakers are all locked in as is the program and Vetafarm will be the major sponsor."

He said there were still places available for what has been described as Australia's premier professional avicultural convention, a biennial event which was first held 18 years ago. ■ More info, see pages 18-27.

Swift move welcomed

THE Australian Government has listed the swift parrot as critically endangered, lifting its status from endangered, following research by the Australian National University.

Dr Dejan Stojanovic from the ANU Fenner School of Environment and Society is part of a team that published research which said the bird could be extinct in as little as 16 years.

He welcomed the reclassification which he said should provide greater protection for the Tasmanian bird.

"The reclassification is a major milestone for swift parrots and highlights the importance of finding a solution to the extreme effects of sugar glider predation and of protecting their habitat," Dr Stojanovic said.

Eagle numbers 'false'

THE number of Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagles electrocuted by power lines could be much higher than official statistics claim according to wildlife biologist Nick Mooney.

There are thought to be 1500-2000 of the endangered birds left in Tasmania. According to authorities between five and 10 birds each year die after flying into power lines.

A resident of Richmond in southern Tasmania found a wedge-tailed eagle which appeared to have been electrocuted close to power lines and delivered it to Mr Mooney.

Mr Mooney said the eagle caused a power outage which was repaired by TasNetworks, but the company did not attribute the damage to the bird.

Penguins' new patch

THREE endangered fairy penguins were recently spotted swimming in Sydney's Darling Harbour, further west than their usual fishing grounds.

Chris Jenkins was eating his lunch when he saw the birds and guessed they were fairy penguins.

"They lingered around for a while and then dived down and swam very close to the edge of the walkway" he said.

Falcons move to high-rise garden

IF you are getting sick of mowing your lawn and trimming your hedges spare a thought for the gardeners at Broadway's Central Park apartment house in Sydney, pictured right, who have to dance with death on a daily basis while dealing with a pair of peregrine falcons.

Bees, wasps and a small colony of green frogs are usual residents but the falcons have turned the high-rise into the ultimate urban jungle after taking up residence in the chimney stack of the old Carlton and United Brewery.

The explosion of life on the



country's most spectacular vertical gardens was fuelled by the unseasonably warm start to autumn, with April temperatures more than 2C higher than average.

Junglefy managing director Jock Gammon, who manages the six full-time garden staff, said bees are attracted

to rare and spectacular flowers in full bloom.

The complex's vertical gardens have an even number of native and exotic plant species including acacias, goodenia, grevillea, lomandra, poa, themeda and viola.

Balloon ban possible

A BID to ban balloons has been floated in the blue-ribbon Perth suburb of Cottesloe, leading to warnings that council rangers may burst into kids' birthday parties to confiscate balloons if a by-law is passed.

Most councillors voted in favour of a report on a balloon-ban bylaw after being shown images of a bird that died with the remains of a balloon in its stomach.

Coloured cockies

COLOURED sulphur-crested cockatoos in Sydney's eastern suburbs have residents and experts scratching their heads, with two theories put forward to try to explain the peculiar plumage.

The *Wentworth Courier's* Facebook post on the story was shared more than 1700 times and reached upwards of 310,000 people.

The post sparked a long debate on how the cockatoos became coloured, with bird rescuer Josh Cook saying it could have happened during the recent Color Run in Sydney, where thousands of people participated, throwing non-toxic corn starch powder at each other.

Curlew hit by arrow

A NATIVE bird is lucky to be alive after rescuers found it with an arrow sticking through its body for two days after it was shot.

Police at Airlie Beach believe the injury was the result of a freak accident rather than a sickening attack on wildlife.

The bush stone curlew was captured after walking around for two days with an arrow through its body.

A confronting photo of the injured bird provoked outrage on social media but police finalised their investigation without laying any charges.

NZ fines Dane \$10,000

A DANISH tourist in New Zealand will pay a \$10,000 fine for shooting a rare and endangered native blue duck, a whio, in South Westland.

Rasmus Neilson, a 24-year-old student, will borrow money from his parents to pay the fine and will spend years paying it back.

An experienced hunter, he was in New Zealand for a three-month holiday when he shot the whio after mistaking it for a mallard, his lawyer said.

When Neilson arrived in New Zealand in mid-February he obtained a firearms licence and bought a .270 calibre Mossberg rifle and ammunition from a gun shop in Christchurch but he did not obtain the necessary hunting permit.

Zambi takes in Rosie

ROSIE the Alexandrine parrot which was found in a tree west of Sydney has found a new home and a new friend to keep her company.

After being checked out by a vet unsuccessful social media efforts were made to find her owner and she ended up at the Zambi Wildlife Retreat in western Sydney, where she will stay permanently.

The people there believe in ensuring that birds and animals thrive in the environments created for them and with some animals that means a companion is crucial to their well being so they searched for a mate for Rosie, eventually finding a homeless Indian ringneck parrot at the RSPCA shelter at Katoomba in the Blue Mountains.

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Cone home to tits

A TRAFFIC cone has become home for a family of great tits after a hen turned her beak up at acres of mature trees at Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens in the UK, deciding instead to build a nest inside an old plastic traffic bollard, entering and leaving via a tiny hole in the top.

Volunteer gardener David Stanley and his team had been planting flowers and building a bee-feeding station at the site and put three cones on a flower bed to keep weed suppressant material in place.

When David later looked inside one of the bollards he discovered a large round nest with two tiny brown-and-white speckled eggs.

Warm hits red knots

NUMBERS of red knots, a bird that makes one of the longest annual migrations, are shrinking because climate change in their Arctic nesting grounds makes life harder during their winters in Africa.

Snow in Arctic Russia now melts earlier in spring and many red knot chicks hatch too late for the annual peak of insect food spurred by the thaw according to a scientific report, one of the first to link the impact of warming to a single species.

The food shortage means the birds grow with shorter bills, making it harder to dig up shellfish that live deep in tidal mudflats in wintering grounds in Mauritania.

Chinese killers charged

POLICE in north-east China's Heilongjiang Province have charged 13 people allegedly involved in illegal hunting and trafficking of migratory birds.

According to the public security department of Baoqing County in Shuangyashan City more than 100 migratory birds, including endangered wild geese and ducks, were found poisoned to death around the Dongsheng nature reserve.

Police, who found the suspects had spread pesticides mixed with corn and soybean oil near the nature reserve, said they were seeking more suspects.

They hunted and killed hundreds of birds and sold the dead or live birds for illegal profit.

Rare eagle in Ireland

A GOLDEN eagle chick has been bred in captivity for the first time in Ireland, sparking hope for efforts to reintroduce the birds of prey there.

The chick, whose sex is not yet known, is just over four weeks old and was bred using artificial insemination by Brian McCann, who owns Newgrange Falconry, a mobile falconry school based in County Louth.

Mr McCann said he has been trying to breed from the parent golden eagles for years.

"This has been a fantastic thing to do as it has never been done in Ireland before," he said.

"It is a first and we are making history here."

Grey trade end in sight

AN end to the trade in wild-caught African grey parrots is one step closer, with Gabon and several other African States, the European Union and the USA submitting a proposal to transfer grey and timneh parrots to Appendix 1.

If passed the move will prohibit all international trade in wild African grey parrots, saving tens of thousands of birds each year.

New mandible for palm cockatoo

A CHINESE zoo at Nanjing in Jiangsu Province has used 3-D printing technology to help a bullied cockatoo which lost its beak.

Palm cockatoo Huizai, or Grey Boy, had been harassed by other birds living in the Nanjing Hongshan Forest Zoo.

"At first there were only cracks on the beak," said keeper Chen Wei.

"But the cracks gradually grew bigger until finally Huizai lost almost all of his beak."

The loss of his beak affected the bird's looks, confidence and appetite.

"He could not put fruit or nuts



into his mouth and could only use his tongue to lick small-sized food," Chen said.

Vet Cheng Wangkun came up with the idea of using 3-D technology to rebuild Huizai's beak.

A 3-D printing firm offered to help for free and scanned Huizai and another bird, produced

the mandible and presented a resin beak to the zoo.

After reshaping the resin beak and Huizai's original one with a rasp they performed surgery under anaesthesia and connected the two parts with 11 bone nails.

Huizai regained consciousness soon after the hour-long operation.

Duck stays with woman

A PET duck can now legally live with a woman at Vermont in the US.

Peep has been living with Kimberlee Stevens for three years after one of her dogs brought him home when he was a duckling.

She looked for a nest and his mother but couldn't find any hints of where he came from.

Earlier this year a warden from the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department went to Ms Stevens' house demanding that she hand Peep over.

A few months later the department issued her a permit letting her keep the duck, who roams the house with five dogs and seven cats, sleeps next to Ms Stevens' bed, and has his own Facebook page.

Oldest raptor rescued

A NEARLY 30-year-old bald eagle in the US that could be Indiana's oldest living in the wild has been rescued after suffering a dislocated wing.

Property owners near Worthington, about 30 miles west of Bloomington, discovered the injured bird last month and staff with the Indiana Raptor Center in Nashville took it in for veterinary care.

State non-game bird biologist Allisyn Gillet said after it heals the eagle may remain in captivity for the rest of its life, possibly as an education bird.

The Department of Natural Resources said the bird was moved as an eaglet from Wisconsin to a nest at Monroe Lake in 1987 during a bald eagle reintroduction program.

Central Park's rare bird

A BIRD that's been called one of the most secretive and least seen on the US continent is wowing birders in New York's Central Park.

The Swainson's warbler was spotted recently and has drawn crowds of bird watchers hoping to catch a rare glimpse of the migrating songbird.

The warbler usually spends summers in the southern United States and winters in the Caribbean.

Fowl goes to court

A SPIRIT Lake woman at Idaho in the US who is fighting a ticket she got for failing to restrain her pet bird took the bird with her to her court appearance.

Cindy Tefft said her pet chicken Grace apparently escaped from her pen and jumped the fence into her neighbor's yard.

"My neighbor said that my chicken trespassed onto her property," Ms Tefft said.

Police cited Tefft for failing to restrain her chicken so she decided to fight the ticket in court.

"I'm confused as to why my chicken didn't get any kind of warnings before I got a ticket," Ms Tefft said.

Parrot best friend

A MAN at Kennewick in the US is changing the meaning of man's best friend.

Mitchell Slaugh was kicked out of the local WinCo grocery store for taking his parrot inside.

"She's my baby. She's a companion," Mr said.

He is cleared by doctors to have her on his shoulder as his support system as he deals with anxiety.

Service animals can only be dogs or small horses in Idaho.

"I have owned parrots for about seven years now and I have never been kicked out of anywhere for having a parrot with me," Mr Slaugh, who has owned Kai for a year, said.

Hawks work in Cannes

THE last thing rich and famous visitors to Cannes want is a seagull swooping in to nibble their peanuts or steal their steak so the Grand Hyatt Cannes Hotel Martinez deployed a team of trained hawks to chase away gulls which could hover too close to its outdoor dining areas.

In the middle of the world's premier film festival in the French Riviera town recently a five-year-old Harris hawk named Tsunga swooped in to save the day.

As far as the hotel is concerned the hawks provide an environmentally friendly solution to the gulls, which are so used to humans that they don't hesitate to help themselves.

Teen avoids prison

A TEENAGER in Scotland who has been branded a danger to animals narrowly avoided being locked up after throwing his pet parrot around in a drug-fuelled rage.

George Clark went on the rampage at his mother's house in Aberdeen in the early hours of New Year's Day.

At around 3.45am on January 1 the 19-year-old returned home and ripped his bedroom door off its hinges before throwing it through a window in a fit of rage.

When his mother went to see what the noise was she saw Clark repeatedly throwing the parrot cage, containing the distressed pet, across the living room.



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Photos: Bob Philpot



Variety spice of life

IT is nearly the end of May and in my locality there are windy, cold days and plenty of rain.

The opportunity to monitor my many aviaries is limited and when I do it is a bit early to see much activity going on between the critters.

Oh well, time to concentrate on pressuring the brain cells to come up with some constructive comments for the June issue of *Talking Birds*.

My contribution for this month is a smattering of short topics brought about by some of the inquiries I have received recently when trying to reduce the number of young birds that have been maturing in my aviaries since last year's breeding season.

TOPIC 1: USING CURRENT DAY MEDIA METHODS TO ADVERTISE BIRDS:

I try not to let young birds leave until they have obtained their new feathers from their baby stage and have learnt to be independent and self-reliant.

As I scanned the email answers to my ads for sale, the questions and the way they were presented made me think, who the hell am I dealing with here?

It also reminded me of a couple of recent topics, one of which was mine and the other that appeared in *Australasian Poultry Magazine*, which caters for people interested in all forms of poultry.

Its editor Megg Miller writes articles on poultry for *Talking Birds* every second month.

I often obtain copies of that magazine and in one edition the comments in an article written by an enthusiastic poultry breeder struck a chord with me.

This chap was describing the problems he was having in trying to reduce his stock numbers. The number of times he was being

PARROTS

with
Bob Philpot
Associate Editor



strung out by people who were calling him, spending his valuable time, ordering stock from him, not paying in advance but never coming to pick up poultry they asked him to hold.

Reading between the lines he was indicating the current day lack of courtesy and manners of the people he was dealing with.

It was obvious he was pretty cheesed off by the antics of the so-called buyers and I can sympathise with him because it is a common situation I have encountered over the years.

In my words these people are time wasters. Time Waster. A person who consciously or unconsciously tries to engage you in a fruitless investment of your energy, time, money or attention.

A nickname I have heard often to describe that type of person is a tyre kicker.

I remember a comment I made in last month's edition of *Talking Birds* suggesting that some people had a lack of knowledge of bird keeping in general.

Here are a couple of examples of what I am talking about, this is just one advertisement I placed in the bird for sale section of *Gumtree*.

FOR SALE. Young male Major Mitchell's cockatoo. Parent reared 2015, DNA sexed, price \$350. Contact Bob.

I consider those details are pretty straightforward and informative to a bird-keeping person but I guess we are dealing with people who are not conversant with bird people language?

Here are a few examples of the types of questions I received, I have deleted the names of the people enquiring.

1. Hi
Do u still have your bird for sale?
2. Hay champ is the bird hand reared
3. From D. hi does u r major hand raise and talkable and does he bite if we tach
Sent from my iPhone

My answer to that inquiry: *Dear D, The ad says parent-reared, that means the parents raised the baby until it is old enough to know what the world is about. It is an aviary bird not a pet. Regards Bob.*

There were numerous questions simply asking is/was the bird still available?

What was interesting is that I answered all the emails regarding that Major and of those who asked if the bird was still available I answered yes and gave my telephone number. Not one of them went ahead with any further calls.

I check my emails several times a day, there would not be a great deal of time elapsing between a person posting a question and receiving an answer from me.

So what is the reason for people to ask: "Is it still available?" Beats me.

With today's communications technology is it just easy to bang out a query without any consequences? Even the language used by some people lacks comprehension.

TOPIC 2. SUITABLE INFORMATION CAN HELP SOMEBODY: Every now

and then I receive a pleasant surprise. One caller was asking about an advertisement that I had lodged to sell a pair of red-tailed black cockatoos. The caller had a substantial property and was considering building aviaries for a range of parrot-type birds.

The phone call went on for a considerable time and I then forwarded photographs and additional details on aviary construction that I considered worthwhile to help him in his project.

Later I received a very pleasant reply thanking me for the information in helping a newcomer to the hobby.

I have included some of that same information in this issue that may assist anyone wishing to construct a number of flights suitable for parrot-type birds.

I have used the same principles for both parrots and cockatoos, the only difference is for the cockatoos' larger flight areas stronger mesh such as arc mesh and larger framework.

TOPIC 3. KEY ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER WHEN CONSTRUCTING HOUSING FOR BIRDS:

In any decision about layout and construction of bird flights there are some variables that have to be considered and they will vary depending upon location.

1. Your particular climate.
2. The type of environment you wish your birds to enjoy.
3. The size of flights in which you intend keeping your birds.
4. The types/sizes of birds you intend keeping.
5. The time you have available for maintenance and to look after your charges.

In the items discussed here there is plenty of meat to digest, photos will assist the reader to interpret

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Variety is spice of life

the descriptions of my open wire service corridor. The same layout shown in these photos is utilised in three banks of 20 individual parrot breeding flights.

The design of these parrot aviaries and corridor system is for maximum safety to ensure that none of the birds being kept have an opportunity to escape, because the flight doors are large.

The corridor becomes a double or safety door, the outside door is closed then the inner safety door is closed before access to any individual flight door is opened, see photo 1, first access door.

I built the corridor access system to allow safe secure entry to any one of the flights in a bank at any time. I then realised that with the outside door closed the corridor was now a waste of an enormous flying area.

With the installation of an additional inner safety door 2.4m inside the corridor closed, see photo 2. I now had a safety area and the remainder of the corridor remained as a successful 22m long exercise area.

All the parrots — especially fast-flying members such as princess, regents, etc — are over the moon when it comes their time for long distance flights.

The corridor is now also a means to manipulate birds from one flight into any other flight in the bank of 20 and still observe security aspects for the occupants of all flights.

How is that achieved?
ESSENTIALLY THE CORRIDOR END OF EACH FLIGHT IS THE

DOOR: Each flight is 1.2m wide by 2m high. The corridor end of the flight is the door, it is 1140mm wide and pivots both into the flight area as well as outwards to block the corridor, which is 1060mm wide, see photo 3.

Making the door the full size of the end of the flight is a saving in material and fabrication time. The full door design does not create an obstruction to birds flying straight out of the flight into the corridor.

If the roof of a flight is higher than the open door it is amazing how many times birds do not fly down to exit through that door when you want them to, they prefer to fly near the roof.

Should you consider allowing birds out of their flight for additional exercise in a corridor/alleyway then there are three things about the door that are essential:

1. It is preferable to have it wider than the corridor.

2. It needs to be the height of the corridor.

3. It must have negligible room beneath it.

If any of those items do not match what I have described then birds — depending on size — will soon learn to crawl under, slide over the top or creep between the door and the wall of the corridor.

Automatically this will rule out any service corridor

with a skillion roof construction — that is a roof that slopes towards the front or back because any horizontal flight door opening into a sloping roof service corridor will not effectively block off that service corridor.

Most covered corridors I have seen have skillion roofs.

ADVANTAGES OF THE OPEN WIRE CORRIDOR: Where individual flights are arranged in banks bird control is simplified:

1. Stock can be moved easily to allow routine cleaning of one or all individual flights.
2. Stock does not need to be caught to shift from one flight to another.
3. Stock can be allowed access to the corridor for exercise and stimulation.
4. The corridor prevents predators from accessing your stock should the birds wish to cling to the front of their flight, especially at night. Effectively the corridor acts as double wiring of the front of the flights.

TOPIC 4. PERCHES AND THEIR SUPPORTS: In the May edition of this magazine the editor presented an article dealing with types and supports for perches in aviaries.

I would like to throw in my two penneth worth — now I'm showing my age — on that topic.

Way, way back I used to see articles that stipulated that perches had to be of different sizes, the reasoning was that it provided necessary exercise for a birds toes and feet.

I thought at the time they must be kidding, surely this is one of those myths that occupy space in written articles.

Let me assist you with the anatomy of a bird. The toes grip around the surface of a perch regardless of its size, the bird then lifts its body to fly to another location.

Do its little digits stay in that semi-curved position as it whizzes

through the air to land upright exactly the same as it left the previous perch?

Of course not! Those toes clench and the legs lift and flatten to the tummy of the bird's body only to open again as it descends and clench that next perch.

What more exercise could be obtained than that and what about walking around on the ground?

Supports for perches.

All perches in my aviaries run down the length of the aviary, not across its width.

I am never going to bang my scone on a heavy perch as I enter the aviary nor will I have to bend to pass under one carrying a bucket of seed. My birds flying in a panic from a goshawk attack will not smash themselves into that same perch.

Perches in the covered area are across the width but they are close to the back wall. Birds still fly out into the flight aviary, veer slightly

In the cockatoo aviaries the long, large, heavy perches that are needed are supported at one end by a V shaped steel support, see photo 4.



right and land on the perch.

In the cockatoo aviaries the long, large, heavy perches that are needed are supported at one end by a V shaped steel support, see photo 4.

The perch then drops into the second V support somewhere along its length, see photo 5. That means I am not constrained to cut my bush timber to a specific length and the V shape of the supports allows perches of varying diameter.

The doors to the cockatoo flights are wide and high, allowing me to manoeuvre the large perches in one piece out of the wide corridor through the big doorway.

Carnaby's rehabilitation & artificial nest construction masterclass

Wally Kerkhof has been observing and rehabilitating Carnaby's Black Cockatoo for 50 years, and constructing artificial nesting logs from fallen trees for over 30 years.

Join Moore Catchment Council & Wally Kerkhof for a day of hands-on outdoor activity to learn how to build and locate artificial nesting logs made from wood

Find out the best ways to rehabilitate and release injured Carnaby's Black Cockatoos

Learn about plants - both native & non-native which benefit and damage Carnaby's

When: Fri 15th July 2016
Where: 246 McKinley Street, Moora (corner of McKinley St & Robert Rd)
Time: 9:30am - 4pm approx. Catering provided (subject of dietary requirements)
RSVP: Rachel 9653 1355 / 0409 296 264 or mcc.nrmo@bigpond.com

FREE !! Limited places - open to maximum of 12 people

- This is a hands on day involving power tools & machinery, please wear appropriate clothing, closed shoes and bring gloves and safety glasses. Bring note pad/pen.

This Moore Catchment Council project is being funded through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program

The Wally Kerkhof Carnaby Group in Moora is run by volunteers and aims to help coordinate activities which conserve Carnaby's in the Moora area

Brilliant sun conures are simply stunning

PARROTS

with
**Joy
Pym**



IT was more than 30 years ago that I saw my first sun conure *aratinga solstitialis* while enjoying an aviary visit weekend organised by the Avicultural Society of Australia to the Mildura/Shepparton area.

From that time they were firmly entrenched on my must-have list of birds. At that time, with a pair priced at around \$8000, they were well above my budget but some 20 years later, when they were approximately \$800 a pair, my ambition to become the proud owner of some of these absolutely stunning birds was finally realised and several pairs remain an integral part of my hobby today.

I have seen them quoted as being endearing, charming, playful and personality-plus packaged into a vibrant bundle of feathers which sums them up magnificently.

Although I feel sure it would be a parrot watcher's dream to witness a wild flock of really brilliantly coloured, screaming sun conures alighting in a fruit plantation I have no doubt it would be a farmer's nightmare.

A flock of sun conures flying across an evening sky was once said to have resembled a beautiful sunset, hence the name sun conure was assigned to the species. The sun conure's body, with its brilliant blend of yellow, orange, red, blue and green in my opinion makes it a stand-out in appearance in the bird world.

DESCRIPTION: These stunning birds when adult have a yellow head and upper body, the lower abdomen and cheeks being an orange-red colour, the tail olive green and blue, upper wings are yellow with the lower wings and flight feathers green. The beak, which appears to be quite large in comparison to the bird, is black and they have a white eye ring.

Juveniles upon fledging have a general body colour of orange/

greenish red, the head is reddish orange with the wings and tail green and the beak black. They gradually begin to attain adult plumage at around eight months with full adult colouring achieved at approximately 12-15 months. They are around 30-31cm in length and weigh 100-120g. For their size they are quite long lived, with some known to live for up to 20 years.

The sun conure, as is the case with most members of the conure family, is monomorphic, making visual sexing impossible. Their behaviour cannot be relied upon to be any indication of gender because unlike most Australian parrots that generally only interact when coming into or during the breeding season conures are very affectionate towards one another and interact almost all year round, with two males or two females able to form a very strong bond, identical to that of a male and female.

They should be surgically or DNA sexed to ensure that you have a true pair. To make that easier to achieve young should be closed rung with a stainless steel band at around 10-14 days of age using a ring with an internal measurement of 7mm.

Aluminium rings, even closed ones, are not recommended for this species because their very strong beaks are quite capable of destroying those rings to the extent that colours and identification letters or numbers will be completely unreadable.

It also follows that never, never, never should a split ring be used with these birds because they are more than capable of closing them tightly onto their legs, resulting in damage to the leg due to circulation being severely restricted or cut off.

DISTRIBUTION: Sun conures are native to a region of eastern South America that includes the part of Brazil north of the Amazon River, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana.

Tropical rainforest covers most of that area with tracts of open forest, woodlands and savannahs. The climate is hot and humid. The area lies just above the equator so days are 12 hours long throughout the year.

Sun conures tend to inhabit more open areas from sea level up to



Photos: Joy Pym

Sun conures can become very aggressive when in breeding mode.

about 1200m with their favourite places being open forest, woodland savannahs and palm groves.

They are highly social birds and generally can be found in small to medium sized flocks.

HOUSING: Sun conures in my experience do not do well or seem happy in large open or exposed aviaries but rather those which are relatively enclosed. An ideal size for them is around 3m long and 1m wide.

My aviaries housing suns are fully roofed but positioned to take advantage of the morning sun. They are extremely destructive and should not be housed in a wooden-framed aviary because it will be

demolished in a very short period of time. Aviary wire needs to be of a relatively heavy gauge because they will certainly chew their way out of anything clad with lightweight wire.

Supplying them with plenty of branches for chewing will minimise destructive tendencies — willow, poplar or gum branches will keep them occupied for many hours.

Nest boxes should be provided year round because they use them not only to sleep in but on a cold winter day they will sometimes spend most of their time in the box.

They retire for the night well before other birds have gone to

...never
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the leg...

○ Sun conures are simply stunning

roost and compared to other parrots they usually get up much later in the morning.

Nest boxes need to be made of very sturdy hardwood because these birds take delight in remodelling them and when the hen is incubating she will sometimes gnaw into either the side or through the bottom of the box.

The provision of pieces of semi-rotting wood or willow pieces in the box, which gives her something to chew on, helps to alleviate the habit to some extent and also makes good nesting material. I believe that addition helps to bring them into breeding condition.

Another thing I have found to be good is to place a calcium block in the nest chamber, which has a two-fold advantage because the hen will chew on it and get additional much needed calcium into her system while at the same time minimising the amount of remodelling being done to the interior of the box.

Sun conures must be rated as being at the high end of the scale when it comes to noise levels so serious consideration as to the positioning of an aviary for them, particularly in an urban environment where you are close to neighbours, must be addressed.

FEEDING: In the wild their diet consists of nuts, seeds berries and fruits as well as some insects and insect larvae. In aviculture it is wise to endeavour to duplicate that diet as closely as is possible.

Their diet should include a large variety of fruits and vegetables including plenty of leafy greens. Sun conures can suffer from a condition referred to as conure bleeding syndrome which is believed to be caused by lack of vitamin K-rich foods being included in their diet.

In contrast to most other members of the conure family who seem to be happy to consume almost anything on offer suns can at times be quite picky so it is vitally important that they are supplied with a wide and varied diet from a very young age with fruits and vegetables changed daily. A good quality small parrot mix along with mineral and calcium blocks should be a constant with the occasional addition of hard-boiled eggs and almonds to add variety.

The inclusion of a soaked or sprouted seed mix is a welcome and advantageous addition to their diet, particularly when young are being reared. Sun conures are not keen to go to ground level to access food or water so provision for them to feed at around perch height is in my opinion important.

○ Provided their dietary requirements are adequately met sun conures have proved to be a quite hardy and for their size quite a long-lived species.



Young sun conures are not nearly as vividly coloured as their parents.

BREEDING: Suns cannot generally be expected to breed until they are approximately three years of age but once they start they will continue to produce multiple clutches throughout the year.

Three to four eggs form the usual clutch and incubation period is around 26 days. The hen takes on all incubation duties and once eggs are laid is rarely seen out of the box.

○ Chicks weigh about 5gms on hatching and have a pale yellow down. They fledge at eight to 10 weeks after spending quite a few days prior to that peeping out of the nest box.

At night parents can be observed shepherding them back into the box until they get used to returning to it of their own accord. It

takes about a month or so after fledging for them to be fully independent.

They can be left in the aviary together as a family group but if the hen begins showing signs of wanting to lay again it is prudent to move the young to another aviary.

Sun conures normally possess quite a laid back and happy disposition but that can change quite dramatically once they come into breeding condition, when they will begin to vigorously defend their territory and can become quite aggressive towards all comers.

For that reason I have made provision in their aviaries to enable me to service them with food and water via revolving feeders from outside the aviary thereby eliminating the

necessity to invade their space during that time.

Once they have successfully raised their brood they will revert to being their sweet, loveable selves and are happy for human interaction to recommence, particularly if they have been hand reared.

Sun conures are excellent parents and provided they are supplied with an abundance of food when feeding young they will usually rear the complete brood with no problems.

○ **PET POTENTIAL:** Sun conures are an extremely intelligent, active, fun-filled bird. Hand-reared birds make wonderful pets. They love to be handled and petted, absolutely loving to lie on their back in your hand to have their tummies scratched.

Some birds will sleep in that position, with feet straight up in the air looking for all intents and purposes like they have died and that can be very disconcerting the first time the behaviour is observed.

Pet sun conures are definitely a hands-on bird, they crave and need lots of interaction and attention from their owners — failure to provide them with that can result in a bird that reverts to screeching loudly and incessantly so serious consideration needs to be given before getting a sun conure because you must be sure that you have the capacity to adequately cater for their needs.

Provided you are willing and able to do that I highly recommend a sun conure as a wonderful pet that will give you many years of enjoyment and ongoing affection.



A young hand-raised sun conure will make a wonderful pet.

Breeder's Quality

GOLDEN COB™



Since 1895, we have been producing the GOLDEN COB™ Breeder's Quality range of seed mixes, to provide Australian birds with the nutrition they need for health & vitality.

A diet of seeds alone is typically low in essential nutrients, but GOLDEN COB seeds are coated with our unique vitamin & mineral enriched oil, to provide:

- ✓ **Vitamin A** – important for healthy immune system & good eyesight.
- ✓ **Vitamin D3** – to assist calcium absorption.
- ✓ **Vitamin E** – for reproductive health & increased fertility.
- ✓ **Iodine** – for healthy thyroid function.

GOLDEN COB Breeder's Quality range developed by reputable breeders & avian experts, includes specially formulated products in 5kg & 20kg packs.

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Knows birds best.™

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Jacarinis hate Cubans

FINCHES

with
**John
Buchan**



ONLY a few finch species from the Americas occur in Australian aviaries. Of those the best known would be the Cuban finch *Tiaris canora*, with the jacarini *Volatinia jacarina* claiming a close second placing.

Also known as the blue-black grassquit or the glossy grassquit, those names are very appropriate and highlight the appearance and colouring of this delightful finch.

In their natural habitat jacarinis favour grasslands, marshy ground and cultivated farm areas. Aviaries featuring low, shrubby plants and grasses meet their secretive requirements admirably.

Provided the aviary has been designed to exclude draughts and dampness artificial heating is usually not required.

In warmer months these birds can be sexed quite easily when males undergo their moult to acquire nuptial plumage. That vibrant blue-black colouring has led to them being described as miniature crows.

After the breeding season, during the cooler part of the year, the males moult again to their eclipse plumage, when they resemble the fawn plumage of the hen but still show traces of a few black feathers.

Jacarinis are best suited to being kept as single pairs. A combination of one male paired to as many as three hens can be tried in larger aviaries but only one male can be kept in each aviary due to their aggressive attitude.

They can be kept with other non-aggressive finches without concern although they have a profound dislike of Cuban finches, where fighting is almost certain to take place with tragic results.

Panicum, white and Japanese millet and a little plain canary form the bulk of their everyday seed mix.

A small serving of niger, maw, linseed and canola may be added although not all individuals take all those lesser known seeds.

The millet mix can also be fed sprouted, making a welcome addition when young are in the nest and an ideal medium for any supple-

ments to be added. In addition to a good supply of seeding grasses and chickweed, live food is necessary at breeding time.

Mealworms, bushfly maggots and their pupae, termites, aphids and other small insects are all welcomed by breeding pairs.

An obvious sign that young have hatched is the urgent activity of the male searching every corner of the aviary looking for spiders and other small insects to feed to the hatchlings.

A culture of fruit scraps is easily assembled to attract vinegar fly. The insects will invite investigation of this source of live food on a regular basis. The container needs to have a cover of bird wire to prevent the birds coming into direct contact with the decomposing fruit. Insectivorous soft food mixtures and cake may also be tried but fruit and other greens are usually ignored.

A good source of calcium is easily supplied in the form of sterilised cuttlefish bone, fine shell grit,

possible. Invariably choosing a low nest site, any planting need not be higher than about a metre tall. In unplanted aviaries the brush lining the shelter section may be selected.

The cup-shaped, open nest is constructed from fine grasses, plant and coconut fibres. A few small feathers may be used if they are available. Cotton wool, string and other synthetic items need to be avoided.

Those items pose the danger of birds getting them entangled around legs and toes. A roosting nest is not used and artificial nesting boxes and the like are ignored.

Incubation of the normal clutch of three eggs is undertaken by the hen for 10-12 days. Open to view in a cup-shaped nest, the eggs are well camouflaged and are a pale blue with mahogany-coloured spots.

...to
show some
aggression at the live
food tray when young are
in the nest but by providing
sufficient live food they
raise their young
without too much
difficulty.



Photos: John Buchan

The male jacarini, left, is easy to distinguish from the hen, right.

poultry eggshells or a combination of all three. River or beach sand, a little charcoal and mineral rock salt can also be included in the grit dish. A constant supply of clean water is necessary for drinking and bathing.

Male jacarinis perform an unusual mating ritual during the breeding season. That show is virtually unique in the bird world and consists of the male jumping up and down with both feet leaving the perch.

A height of about 30-40cm is reached and followed quickly by flipping in a backward somersault to land in the same spot where the spectacle started.

Once a display perch has been selected it becomes a favourite and is always used for that performance.

Jacarinis select a dense bush to give themselves as much cover as

much earlier than many other finches and give the impression that they have flown a week too early. Once fledged they take a very low profile and spend much of their time hiding in the aviary brush and do not return to the breeding nest.

As the young approach four or five weeks out of the nest the adult male may exhibit signs of his assertiveness.

That, together with his increasing aggression, poses danger to his youngsters, which should be removed from the breeding aviary to prevent disasters, especially if the parents decide to nest again.

Relining the old nest, it is possible for the breeding pair to accomplish three nests in a season.

Colour mutations of this attractive finch are virtually unknown with only a fawn having appeared in recent times.

The jacarini is on record as hybridising with the common canary.

Although a pair is compatible in the aviary with a mixed collection of finches they cannot be kept as a colony of their own species.

It is unwise to keep them in the vicinity of Cuban finches or other jacarinis because they have been known to fight through wire separating them from adjacent aviaries.

Given correct housing jacarinis have proved to be quite hardy, living up to six or seven years of age.

Their shy and secretive ways that are exhibited during the breeding season need to be catered for.

They are known to show some aggression at the live food tray when young are in the nest but by providing sufficient live food they raise their young without too much difficulty.

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JUST FINCHES and Softbills

Just Finches and Softbills is an excellent birdkeeping magazine devoted to the management and breeding of finch and softbill species, primarily focusing on Australasia, with each edition released every 3-4 months.

Subscription form and more information can be found at
www.justfinches.com

Gouldian feathers wanted

By PERI BOLTON,
Department of Biological Sciences
Macquarie University

AUSTRALIA is home to a fascinating array of flora and fauna including around 400 species of birds that are unique to Australia. By 2010, 27 species of bird were listed as extinct, an additional 148 species were threatened and another 63 species were considered near threatened.

Private aviculturists could contribute a lot to conservation efforts for threatened species. They have a wealth of knowledge on optimal bird breeding conditions, which can be vital to establishing and expanding captive breeding programs. Private aviculturists often have large bird collections which may represent a significant fraction of genetic diversity and breeding potential for a threatened species but those collections are a largely untapped resource for conservation programs.

Recently the sad decline of the red siskin has spurred interaction between conservation groups, researchers and aviculturists in an attempt to manage captive breeding populations. There are a number of threatened species in Australia that are widely kept in aviculture, including the black-throated finch and the Gouldian finch.

The Red Siskin Initiative is still in early stages but we would like to follow this model and examine the conservation potential of private stocks of threatened Gouldians.

GENETIC CHANGES DURING DOMESTICATION: Domesticated versions of wolves, cats, horses and cows can be very different from their wild ancestors in terms of behaviour and appearance. This is in part due to intentional breeding for certain favourable traits, for instance milk production.

Differences can also arise unintentionally because some traits are inherited with the traits of interest, think of health problems that arise with some dog breeds.

Further differences occur simply because only a subset of the total genetic pool of wild individuals was taken into captivity. Genetic changes from domestication can occur over as short timescales as a few generations.

Scientists have long been interested in the changes that occur due to domestication. We are interested in this from a pure science perspective, but also how this affects the potential of avicultural stocks for conservation reintroduction programs.

THE GOULDIAN FINCH: This bird is an iconic threatened finch, inhabiting savannah grasslands of north-western Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland. Its beautiful plumage makes it a popu-

lar avicultural species whose stocks and breeding programs could be useful for reintroduction in areas where Gouldian finches are locally rare.

This project seeks to address the conservation element by assessing the genetic diversity of captive stocks relative to the wild. We are also interested in basic questions about genetic changes that occur due to domestication and common avicultural practices.

This is part of a larger project that is exploring genetic changes through time. We are comparing samples from museums from 100 years ago, contemporary wild birds and contemporary captive birds.

Preliminary work has found that there are genetic differences between wild and captive populations, as well as genetic differences between red-head and black-head morph domesticated birds. We are interested in doing a proper survey of genetic variation in captive Gouldian finches.

PROJECT GOALS:

- Using genetic techniques, describe relatedness and diversity in avicultural collections across Australia.
- Describe genetic differences between collections within towns, between towns and across Australia.
- Compare the genetic changes that have occurred since domestication.
- Describe frequency of head-colour morphs (red or black) in captive populations.

HOW CAN I HELP? In this project you can help us investigate the captive populations across Australia, by investigating Gouldian finches in your back yard.

We are collaborating with private aviculturists and avicultural societies across Australia to collect DNA and information on captive Gouldian stocks. All we need is two tail feathers from a number of your birds and for you to fill out a survey.

That should be not much more difficult than sending samples to laboratories for molecular sexing of the sexually monomorphic species in your collection.

It is important that we get as many finch keepers involved as possible in this project because we are aiming to look at differences between wild-type birds and mutations, and between regions and even breeders. You can help science even if you only keep a few Gouldians.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

1. Order a sampling kit or pick one up at your local society meeting.
2. Please clean your hands between different birds.
3. With clean hands, collect two feathers from tail, primary or secondary feathers for as many individuals as you would like to donate.

If possible please do not send samples that include parents and offspring, siblings, grandparent and offspring, and cousins.

4. After sampling directly place the feathers from a single individual in a labelled envelope from the sampling kit. Labels must include your name, band number and/or colour (if applicable), sex of the bird, head colour. Please indicate whether the bird is wild-type or a mutation.

5. Fill out the associated required information provided in the sampling kit or online.

6. Send us the samples.

SAMPLING KIT: There are two ways you can help to sample birds. You can make your own sampling kit or use one we have created for you.

1. Create your own sampling kit. You need a way to keep feathers from different individuals separate. This is the most important part. Some suggestions on how to do that:

- Sticky-tape feathers to a piece of paper (with some space between individuals) and label them with the sex and head colour of the bird. At the top of the sheet you should provide your name.

■ Fold the feathers from each bird into a piece of paper so that it can't fall out. Then write your name, band/ring number/colour (if applicable), head colour and plumage variety of the bird on the outside of the folded paper envelope.

■ Put the feathers from each bird into different envelopes then write your name plus the bird's sex and head colour. Then you all you need to do is put them into a larger envelope and send them to us.

2. Use the sampling kit we provide, which includes:

- A postage-paid envelope for return postage.
- A number of small envelopes. Tell us how many envelopes you would like, you will need one per bird.

Send it to:

Peri Bolton
Department of Biological Sciences
Macquarie University
North Ryde, NSW, 2109

■ Sample packs and more information can be obtained from www.domesticgouldians.weebly.com or by calling 02 9850 1304 during business hours.

SRI LANKAN BIRD TOUR

Join Glen Holland for a two-week tour of Sri Lanka's National Parks and top birding spots.

Our local guide has spent his lifetime locating the birds of Sri Lanka and will be with us for the entire tour, introducing us to the birds, wildlife and the culture of the country.

With close to 500 species on the island, we will encounter the likes of as pygmy woodpeckers, trogons, flower-peckers and serpent eagles.

Asian elephants and leopard are on the list for the tour.

Dates: 2-14 December 2016

Cost: \$2900 pp includes all expenses except flights to Sri Lanka.

Contact Glen for further information on 0407 742 135 or glen-nat5@bigpond.com



Seed goes off as it ages, nutrients lost

CANARIES

with
**Jeff
Leaney**



IF bird seed was sold for human consumption it would carry a "best before" or "use by" date. Some bulk seeds carry a production date but when broken down into small amounts that information is lost.

Seed deteriorates with age and loses some of its nutrients until it is finally "dead". Oil seeds lose their food value quicker when compared to plain canary seed and go rancid with age because of the oil content.

HOW DO YOU DETERMINE IF SEED IS FRESH? Apart from professional analysis there is a simple way that gives a good indication. Fresh seed will sprout within a few days whereas old seed may not germinate or take a long time to send out shoots.

Put a piece of a kitchen sponge in the bottom of a small plastic container. Thoroughly wet the sponge and put a paper towel on top. Press the paper towel onto the sponge to dampen the paper.

Spread some seed over the paper towel and cover with a dampened towel. Replace the lid having first made some holes in the lid to let in air.

Check the seed each day by lifting the paper towel to see if it has sprouted. Some imported seeds such as niger do not sprout because they have been treated to prevent sprouting. Even some canola is imported in times of drought and although fresh will not sprout.

Canola used in a sprouted seed mix would be useless if imported. Always ask your seed merchant if it was imported.

Stale seed is harmful to birds because toxins can develop after several years. Never place new seed on top of any remaining seed in your storage bin — always empty the container before adding new seed.

If you use a winnower to clean discarded seed you must take care to keep recycled seed separate from fresh seed and note how many times it may have been re-used.

Seed has possibly been stored for several months before your purchase because most areas only harvest once a year. Seed is viable for about two years after which it dete-

riorates. Seed treated with oil or breeding aid cannot be recycled because the oil goes toxic after a few days.

Throughout the year a canary's food requirements change but many fanciers feed the same seeds all year. During the moult the birds are replacing feathers and need protein for new feathers. They represent up to 9 per cent of the weight of a canary and replacement needs plenty of protein.

Before winter they require fatty foods for protection against winter chills. During winter and leading up to the breeding season a plain diet is required.

A richer diet is introduced as the breeding season begins,

which imitates the wild bird situation, where food is scarce in winter, then in spring food supply increases and the breeding season starts. We simulate that natural process of extra food by feeding sprouted seed and high-protein soft food plus new-growth green food.

During the breeding season a canary needs twice as much protein as it does for the rest of the year. Calcium has to be increased for egg-laying plus more food to sustain breeding activities and extra food for babies and high in carotenoids for feather colour.

Properly fed canaries have the strength all year to survive a chill or a bacteria outbreak.

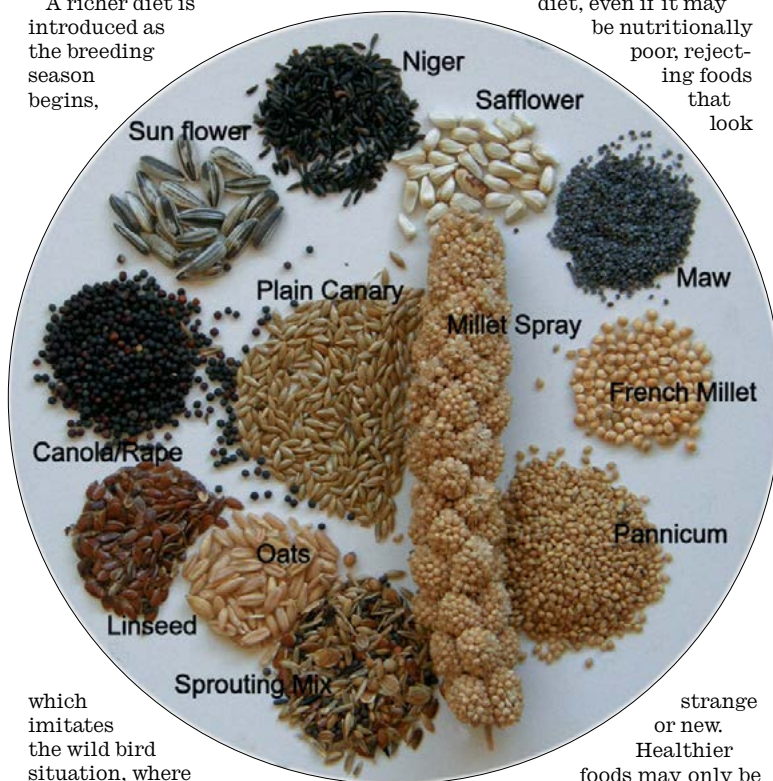
A sick bird most likely is missing

something from its diet or has even be overfed. Canaries totally rely on you to supply the correct diet.

The basic needs in any canary's diet are various amounts of protein, carbohydrates, fat, fibre, minerals and vitamins. Each seed has different amounts of those essential elements and green food adds other components which together balance the diet.

Birds have a limited sense of smell and taste, selecting their food mainly by sight. Canaries do not know by instinct what foods are good for them — their parents teach them what to eat.

They tend to continue on a diet, even if it may be nutritionally poor, rejecting foods that look



strange or new. Healthier foods may only be eaten with caution until birds become familiar with those foods.

Protein is the building material for feathers, muscles, feet and nails. It is broken down during digestion into amino acids.

Seeds such as oats, sunflower, safflower, niger, canola/rape and linseed have most of the amino acids that a canary requires, but canaries cannot be fed on those seeds alone.

Other seeds such as canary and millet, do not contain all the amino acids but a mixture of seeds from each group gives the full requirement and a safe diet.

Always add a small amount of the

oil seeds to any commercial mixed canary seed.

Feeding food containing too much protein throughout the year can be harmful. A canary fed on a high-protein diet has lower resistance to chills and its kidneys will not be able to handle excess waste.

Carbohydrates are a source of energy for a canary and a body tissue component — energy for flying, digestion, and in the breeding season, egg-laying. The amount of energy required in a diet is linked to the amount of protein consumed.

High carbohydrate seeds low in protein should make up the bulk of a canary's diet. Those include plain canary and millets.

Fats are a higher energy source than carbohydrates or protein. A small amount of fat is needed in a diet, too much causes obesity and poor breeding performance. Fats are found in oil seeds and soft foods. Only a small amount should be fed on a regular basis to satisfy the need for fat.

Iodine, which is necessary for the continued good health of birds, comes from the soil in which the seed is grown.

Seeds from southern states are low in iodine but that is compensated by the iodine content of seeds from the north of Australia. Most plain canary seed comes from Queensland so our canaries usually get enough iodine.

Analysis of seeds gives various values for protein, carbohydrates and oils or fats however each seed varies depending on growing conditions or the area where it is grown.

Some typical values:
Plain canary, millets, oats: 10-17% protein, 40-70% carbohydrates, 3-5% fats.

Oil seeds: 15-30% protein, 4-25% carbohydrates, 30-55% fats.

Canaries are wasteful feeders, flicking aside other seeds to get to the one they want. That can be controlled by serving seeds separately in single dishes.

The plain canary dish should be four times bigger than the canola dish for instance. Feeding like that can indicate how much of each seed is eaten and whether they are eating a balanced mix.

Seed is best given in flat dishes because a deep dish may contain enough seed but a canary eats only to a shallow depth and may starve if it cannot see uneaten seed covered by husks.

■ Photograph by Jeff Leaney, from *The Australian Canary Handbook*.

Heritage Don's focus

Garden guru preserving small birds

BUDGIES

with
**Fred
Wright**



Don Burke is well known to most Australians via his media exposure. Less well known is his persona as a budgerigar breeder, which prompted me to carry out an in-depth interview with him to fill some of those gaps.

DON lives on a 2ha block in Sydney, the city in which he was born. He started breeding budgies in 1954 at the age of seven and joined the Budgerigar Society of NSW around 1957 after meeting exhibition budgie breeder Greg Tunney at a local bird dealer's premises. Mr Tunney mentored Don until he was about 14.

At age 10 in 1957 he was taken to the aviaries of Australia's great budgie breeder Harley Yardley, who was the breeder who perfected the clearwing variety and Don was totally smitten by the birds in his aviaries.

After Harley's premature death a year or so later Don received some of his best clearwings from a close friend of Harley and he still breeds the same line of Australian heritage clearwings today, more than 56 years later, and he is still totally in love with that variety.

He believes he does not own his clearwings, he merely holds them in trust for future generations.

Don is a professional horticulturist and nurseryman who has worked in TV, radio and magazines for about 40 years. His prime-time TV program *Burkes Backyard* ran for 18 years and for a time on BBC2 in the UK.

His early years with budgies were the halcyon days, where 2000 or more birds were benched at the annual NSW budgie show in Sydney's huge town hall.

Australia then was very isolated and its budgies were quite different from the rest of the world. Australia aimed for smaller birds with less feather bulk but with exquisite colour, perhaps the best colour that the world had ever seen in budgies.

With the importation of European exhibition budgies from 1964 Don began to lose interest in exhibiting. He was desperately sad that in Australia they were abandoning their own type of budgies.

Much as most UK dog breeds were developed in isolation from each

other like Lakeland terriers and Norfolk terriers, and were then preserved, he felt that the budgie fancy should have preserved its own Australian exhibition budgerigars, as well as embracing the European breed of budgie but the clubs chose not to.

He has now formed the Australian Heritage Budgerigar Association, a non-profit group dedicated to locating and preserving what remains of the beautifully coloured Australian show birds.

The association aims to put breeders of heritage varieties in touch with each other and wants to organise separate classes at shows for those birds. So far the response has been wonderful and membership is growing rapidly.

The association's birds are being bred and judged to the 1962 Australian National Standard of Perfection, which will never be changed except to fix mistakes and to add new varieties.

The new group is working on Aus-

tralian golden-faces, banded peds, darkwings and its centrepiece, the amazing Australian heritage clearwing, which is nearly extinct. Those heritage clearwings are very different in colour, size and shape from modern Australian clearwings.

I asked Don a few questions.

YOUR BIRDS AND YOUR BIRDROOM, PLEASE TELL US ABOUT BOTH? I still breed some modern exhibition budgies, of which black-eyed whites, darkwings, normals and white caps stand out. Black-eyed whites are nearly pure white dilutes and they are agonisingly difficult to breed. I began breeding them in 1957 and am still trying to get them right. Maybe I am getting close.

My bird room is 8m x 8m and is constructed from Solarspan panels which are made of poly-foam layered between two sheets of color-bond steel. There are 55 breeding cabinets.

My seven outside flights are each about 2m x 7m. All cages and aviaries are open to the fresh air all year round. I average about six babies per nest with a maximum of around 11 babies. My best pairs produce around 20-30 babies per year, and yes, I do have witnesses.

WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON THE FUTURE OF THE HOBBY? I believe all budgerigar clubs worldwide are at a crossroads and membership numbers are dropping dramatically in many cases.

Young people are not joining at anywhere near replacement numbers. Some clubs have already closed down but I am very positive about the future — *if we are prepared to adapt and change.*

I am 69 this year and like everyone else I get grumpy and frustrated at times. I adore kids who breed budgies and I want to mentor them as Greg Tunney did for me when I was a kid.

I would love to see more women in clubs too and I love helping older people. I detest the grumpy old

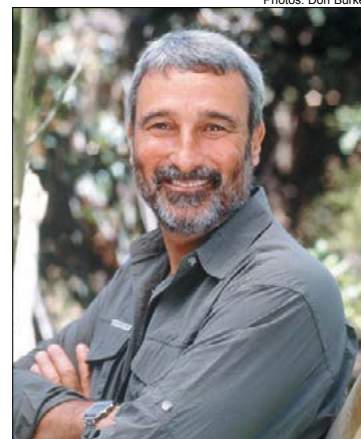
men who argue and grumble at meetings. I will not tolerate those who are killing our clubs — those are the people who refuse to change and adapt to the modern world. We all must change.

In too many clubs there are powerful elites, made up of judges, winning exhibitors and club office holders. All too often almost all of the success, recognition, rewards, service and money goes to those elites.

Many clubs are run to service the top five per cent of the members. I want to help and listen to all members. Committees are there to serve, not to bully the members.

We must experiment with new ideas. We must listen to the younger generations. We must move into the computer age. We need cyber clubs. But it is no good to fill websites with boring old fogey issues and articles.

Every club needs to have a junior



Don Burke says argumentative, unpleasant bullies should be banned from all budgie clubs.

president and we must listen to what they say — not just a token appointment. We must all seek out different types of budgie people for our clubs, kids with one or two pet budgies, women and girls who love breeding and caring for baby birds, those who love pet shop budgies, those who love wild (bush) budgies and silly people like me who love heritage varieties of budgies. There should be a place for all of us.

We need to explore the future of budgies in the suburbs. We need designs for less obnoxious, quieter aviaries.

We need to get top designers and landscapers to create the spectacular garden aviaries of tomorrow — to replace the ugly humpies of yesterday.

We need to get amazing aviaries built in the gardens of display homes to inspire home buyers. We need to explore the design possibilities of houses with built-in aviaries. In short we need to make the hobby of keeping budgies relevant to modern families.

IF YOU WERE KING OF BUDGIES IN AUSTRALIA, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

1. All members would be expected to mentor at least one young budgie person.
2. I would ban auctions, to lower prices of budgies for old and young members.
3. I would immediately set up an inquiry into budgie welfare. We need to clean up our act so that the animal welfare people don't nail us like the pedigree dog people in the UK were nailed a few years ago.
4. I would donate 10 of the most spectacular budgies in the world — Australian heritage clearwings — to HRH Queen Elizabeth in recognition of her service to the colonies and Australia in particular.
5. I would change all budgie club constitutions so that they had a clause that required all argumentative, unpleasant bullies to be banned for life. That clause would state that "all budgie clubs are to be for fun, friendship and the love of budgerigars."



Black-eyed whites are difficult to breed. Don began breeding them in 1957 and he is still trying to get them right.

VEHICLE-ACTIVATED signs will be trialled on the Tully-Mission Beach Road in Far North Queensland in an effort to prevent cassowary strikes by motorists.

Qld Main Roads and Road Safety Minister Mark Bailey said the recent deaths of three juvenile cassowaries highlighted the need to take action to help protect the iconic species.

"Transport and Main Roads has been working closely with the community through the Cassowary

New signs to assist cassowaries

Recovery Team to try to find new solutions to this ongoing issue," Mr Bailey said.

"The Cassowary Recovery Team is meeting with representatives from Transport and Main Roads.

"The group is made up of experts and volunteers, including representatives from indigenous and conservation groups, natural resource management, Wet Tropics man-

agement, state and local government," the minister said.

"Their primary function is to co-ordinate the implementation of a recovery plan for the southern cassowary.

"The community's input has been invaluable in developing this trial and the concept plans put forward by TMR have been well received."

The vehicle-activated signs, asso-

ciated static signage and linemarking will be trialled in the vicinity of the Lindsay Road intersection.

The area where the signs will be trialled was identified by the community as a cassowary vehicle strike hot spot.

Mr Bailey said protection of the birds is an important, challenging and complex issue and he was conscious of the need to take action.

Named for appearance

FANCY PIGEONS

with
**Barry
Ross**



AT the recent Queensland State Pigeon Show there were several breeds of owls on display but not one hoo-hoo was heard. Why? Because the owls on display were pigeons.

There are a lot of breeds of fancy pigeons that resemble owls and all are grouped collectively into the owl and frill pigeon group. The breeds featured in this article all have the word owl as part of their breed name.

Those breeds are named after owls mainly because they have heads and beaks that resemble an owl's face — they all have short, blunt beaks, large eye ceres and very round heads, and most breeds have short, cobby bodies.

The most popular breed of owl pigeons in Australia are the African owl and the English owl.

I believe the English owl was the first owl breed imported into Australia a long time ago. I have newspaper clippings of show results that say the English owl was exhibited at the Brisbane Royal Agricultural show in 1891.

African owls were shown several years later and were popular in the 1920s. Good stock was imported in the 1920s by Joe Maud and later by his son Harry. They would go to England and bring back lots of dogs, poultry and pigeons by ship.

They had pigeon lofts built on ships' decks for the long journey home with all the stock bought on consignment for fanciers in Australia. Both men were well respected judges.

The only difference between the English owl and the African owl is size. The English owl was an established breed in England in the late 1800s and when the smaller African owl was imported into England in



African owl pigeon



Old German owl pigeon



Figurita pigeon

the late 1890s it was decided to call the larger variety the English owl.

The more recent imports, the smaller birds, became the African owl because it came from Tunis in Africa. When they first arrived they were referred to as foreign owls.

The English owl is a cobby-bodied bird of medium size with tight feathering except for a frill that comprises a crest of divided feathers running down the front of its breast, which is called the jabot, also known as a cravat or zipper frill. It has a very large round head with medium eyes and cere.

The most striking feature is the short, down-turned beak, which is vertically thicker than most breeds and gives the English owl its name.

The African owl has a short, plump body and has tight, smooth feathering. The beak of this breed is short and stout, it really is just a smaller version of the English owl so I will not duplicate the above features.

African and English owls come in the same varieties of colour. Self-coloured birds are the most desired to show because black-coloured owls of both breeds look great. But whites usually stand out well.

The old German owl has only recently been exhibited in large numbers after it was imported into Aus-

tralia within the past 10 years but was only exhibited sparsely by the importer. He let a few pair go a couple of years ago and they are now becoming very popular, with several new colours appearing.

The German owl has probably been around possibly for centuries in various forms. But was only recognised formally in Germany in 1956. The old German owl is a compact bird of medium size, these birds have large bull-coloured eyes with a medium cere.

Their beak is not as short or blunt as the other owls I have mentioned. Their heads are almost completely rounded and topped with a crest of feathers that ends with rosettes on either side. They have a zipper frill on the chest.

A German owl has a fairly short tail compared to other pigeons. They are tight feathered, their stocky necks hold their heads slightly backwards, giving them a proud appearance. Most German owls bred in Australia are shield-marked birds.

A shield-marked German owl is white with a shield of contrasting color, ideally with 10 white flight feathers and feet free from feathering. They are a delightful breed that can feed and raise their own youngsters.

The Chinese owl is another small-bodied breed with a multitude of

unusual feather formations that make it very unique.

Why it is called a Chinese owl is anyone's guess because most records say it was developed in Spain or India. It is very closely related to a breed of pigeon that has similar feather features, the Spanish chorrera, a larger pigeon.

They are recorded as being in Germany in 1865. Germany is credited with the early development of the breed, which has several fancy feather formations. It has a neck frill which comes up above the shoulders and reaches up to just underneath the eyes.

It has its chest adorned with feathers fluffed out in a circular fashion with the feathers divided by a horizontal line about halfway up the chest. Feathers above the line face upwards and feathers below the line face downwards.

It has clumps of feathers sticking out above the thighs in a pantaloons fashion. This breed raise and feed the own young — a very delightful, quiet breed of pigeon.

The Valencian figurita is a breed that is in Australia but is very seldom exhibited. It originated at Valencia in Spain hundreds of years ago and is a very small, dainty breed that is known for its angular-shaped head and small beak. Many fanciers call them owls.

It has a zipper frill and is mainly kept for its flying ability. It does not fly long distances but will fly for short periods of time up high around the neighborhood but it is a bit flighty for the show circuit.

A
shield-marked
German owl is white
with a shield of contrast-
ing color, ideally with 10
white flight feathers and
feet free from feathering.
They are a delightful
breed...

Photos: Barry Ross

Assessment needed for rehomed parrots

with
Rachel Riley
Avian behaviour
and training
consultant



THIS month I will focus on how to set your rehomed parrot up to present good behaviour and how to manage behavioural baggage.

Many new parrots people bring into their homes are rescued or rehomed birds, which means more often than not they come with some form of behavioural baggage that their new owner may not be prepared for.

They may still be young birds, they may be old and have been rehomed because they outlived their owners or they may have been rehomed due to change of circumstances or behaviour.

Due to their long life expectancy, high maintenance care and our ever-changing human lives, it is very rare for a companion parrot to have only had one home in its lifetime, no matter how good the owner's intentions are.

The first step when taking in a rehomed bird is to accept that even though it is the last thing on your mind you too may need to rehome it one day so you must prepare the bird as best you can to make any future transitions less stressful.

That often means working through behavioural issues that may have caused the bird to be rehomed in the first place. Luckily even the worst behaviour can become at least manageable.

Before you can help your bird settle into its new environment you need to be savvy about what type of behaviour you can accommodate in your home, otherwise the chances of you having to rehome it again are high.

Find out its history, what its behaviour is like around men, women, children, pets and other birds. Find out if it has had any previous medical issues and whether these are likely to crop up again.

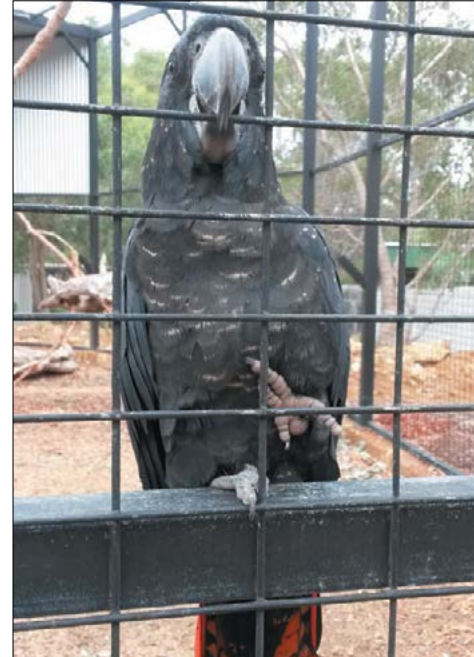
Find out any phobias it has and anything that brings it joy.

Find out every little bit of information you can and make sure you meet the bird prior to bringing it home.

Just like with people first impressions count. Create a positive



LEFT: Chopper, a rehomed galah who came with a lot of behavioural baggage to work through.



RIGHT: Some rehomed birds, like this red-tailed black cockatoo, are lucky enough to end up in a sanctuary, but most are shuffled from home to home.

relationship with the bird over a few visits if possible.

When you meet the parrot for the first time the best thing you can do when you walk into the room/area is to pretend to ignore it, no matter how friendly it is. Keep your attention on other things, like chatting to the old owner, keep your shoulders facing away from it and have a relaxed posture.

As a prey species, your new parrot will appreciate having time without your direct attention to size you up and make sure you aren't a threat. Once the parrot has stopped trying to get your attention or has gone back to normal, relaxed activities you can try to approach it.

Remember the golden rule to desensitising is to only go as far as the bird is wary, but not moving away. If you can approach and give it a favourite treat that is fantastic, if not don't push it, respect its space and retreat if it moves away from you.

The assessment activity will help you to figure out how to proceed with the bird once you have it home, as well as beginning to build trust between you and your bird, which you can then introduce to other family, friends, pets, etc.

That assessment is vital whether this bird is very gentle, bites,

screams or is fearful. If the bird isn't suitable for your home and your lifestyle, for instance a cockatoo that is very easily overstimulated/bites and you have an infant, then politely decline — be honest with yourself as to what you can manage.

I took on a galah who flew at faces to bite when overstimulated, startled, fearful or territorial. He would not have been suitable for most people.

He is a fantastic demonstration bird now but it took a year of hard work and a few bites to get him to a stage where he was truly manageable.

Have your environment set up before bringing the parrot home. The cage or aviary is a place of rest and refuge for your bird, so you want to begin by introducing them to their area without pressure to begin interacting with you or your family.

Let them see you putting a few of their favourite treats in their bowl then go about your daily business and let them observe their new surroundings. Once the bird is visibly relaxed and has started to eat try the approaching activity again and see if you can deliver some more treats.

The bird has begun to associate you with positive things, now you can begin to introduce other family

members and other stimuli in the same way, always keeping a close eye on your parrot's body language.

After your bird has relaxed you can see if it is ready to interact with you directly.

Based on its history that you uncovered you will know whether it steps up and you can begin rewarding a step up from inside the cage or enclosure or begin the desensitisation process if it is fearful of hands.

Reactions your bird has to different things will tell you a lot about its past history.

Work slowly and build trust. Work through behaviours as they arise and start your relationship with the bird as you mean to continue.

For instance if you give the bird a huge amount of attention for the first few weeks while it settles in then pull back once you are familiar with it the bird will wonder why it is suddenly getting less attention, which can cause issues.

The single largest tip for setting up a rehomed parrot for good behaviour is to be realistic with your expectations.

A fearful bird will take plenty of work and training before being a hand tame pet and a bird that has a history of biting will always have the potential to bite again when under duress.

As always, if you need help working through behavioural issues with your bird contact us via www.parrotlife.com.au

Let
them see you
putting a few of their
favourite treats in their
bowl, then go about
your daily business
and let them
observe their new
surroundings.

My peacock, my pal

AVIAN HEALTH

with
**Pat
Macwhirter**
Registered
specialist in
bird medicine



I LOST Edward, my peacock buddy of 23 years, more than two years ago but I still imagine him in his favourite haunts and his antics often come up in conversation with friends.

Edward's parents, Victoria and Albert, were included in the price when my family bought Harewood, the 1860s house where I live on the north shore of Western Port, an hour's drive east of Melbourne.

The pair had lived free range on the property for years and Victoria proudly strutted out from under a Boobialla bush with a cute little bundle of fluff soon after we moved in.

Alas it wasn't to last, Victoria's body was found soon after, the victim of a fox attack. It wasn't coincidental that she had only one surviving chick when 4-8 eggs is a typical peacock clutch.

In Queensland and Tasmania, where foxes are absent or rare, feral peacocks can be pests but foxes were introduced to Victoria by the same group of British colonists who built homes like Harewood and we have one of the highest fox populations in the world. They keep local feral peafowl populations in check.

Phoenix from his mother's ashes, little Edward was raised at the veterinary clinic and eventually grew up to become an extraordinarily regal lord of the manor.

There is something quite cat or tyrannosaurus rex-like in the aloft strutting of peacocks, they have staff rather than being desperate-to-please like dogs. Having been hand reared Edward remained bonded to me and liked to follow me around and shimmer and display his beautiful tail in spring and summer while I did the gardening.

I confess I found it quite flattering but I wasn't the only one to whom he made amorous advances. He also liked to block the driveway by displaying and refused to move — guests just had to drive their cars around him on the lawn.

I loved his loud call but forgot to mention it to friends from the Wader Study Group who decided to camp under his favourite summer roost, a hoop pine, on one, just one, occasion. They abandoned the idea and moved into the house.

While there are surgical tech-

niques used to devocalise peacocks, none are foolproof and they carry unacceptably high risks of complications. Deslorelin (anti-sex hormone) implants, sedation or shutting up in an enclosure with a low ceiling can be tried but success rate in resolving the problem is poor.

Peacocks are not birds for urban areas, I recommend re-homing rather attempting any surgical devocalisation procedures.

In spite of foxes Edward managed to survive free range for 23 years, I loved the fact that I didn't have to lock him up.

Each winter, when he was tailless, he would camp out on the front porch. Oh the mess I used to have to clean! I would have thought he



Edward, very handsome and he knew it. Studies show that peahens are attracted by the number of ocelli (eye spots) on the peacock tail.

would have been vulnerable but the fact that he survived for 23 years attests to the fact that, in his prime, he had the foxes bluffed.

My golden retriever Meg certainly treated him circumspectly and so did all her puppies once he pulled them into line.

Human males who didn't respect his personal space had been known be on the receiving end of two flying feet, but that was rare, he was generally very co-operative if there was a bit of food involved.

He even got himself written into the script as the symbol of death in a short murder mystery film that was being shot at Harewood.

Charles Darwin used peacocks as an example of selection for exaggerated male sexual characteristics and in later studies peahens were shown to be particularly attracted to the number of ocelli, eye feathers, in a peacock's tail, although that wasn't always consistent.

There were studies done in Britain that showed that peacocks with larger tails were less prone to fox

attack than those with smaller tails. So, even though on the surface, the tail might seem just beautiful burden, in fact there is a proven positive correlation between paternal tail length and chick survivability.

For my 50th birthday the staff at our clinic gave me a peahen. Peacocks are "lek" breeders and males typically display to multiple females. Edward was overjoyed with Alexandra's arrival and he would not leave the poor girl alone.

She was obviously stressed and not really settling down. I was contemplating how to deal with the situation when, in broad daylight, in the middle of the day, she too was taken by a fox.



Crop feeding can be lifesaving with sick birds, including peacocks.

I was sad and guilty on a number of levels, Edward remained a bachelor and we upped our fox baiting program.

While Edward led a remarkably healthy life until the last, peacocks have some problems we see regularly at Bird Vet Melbourne. They show some similarities in disease patterns to domestic chickens, eg susceptibility to coccidia (a gastrointestinal parasite that can cause bloody diarrhoea) and mycoplasma (a germ that causes respiratory infections) but there are interesting differences, like resistance to Marek's disease and increased susceptibility to histomoniasis (blackhead).

That last disease is caused by the germ histomonas that can be associated with the roundworm heterakis. It is classically seen in peacocks or turkeys that are kept with chickens.

The chickens may show no signs of illness while peacocks or turkeys may be very ill or die showing severe liver damage. Droppings and blood tests are needed to diagnose those illnesses.

As soon as you acquire a peacock it is a good idea to have it checked by an avian vet, who can do a physical exam and laboratory testing looking for worm eggs and coccidia in the droppings and possibly blood tests. The vet can advise on appropriate husbandry and whether any treatment is needed, depending on findings.

While not common, I had one memorable white peacock patient, Peter, who was a diabetic and was maintained for years on insulin injections. He also had problems with tendon contraction, which was managed with special shoes which he tolerated quite well.

Another unusual one, for our clinic anyway, was a peacock whose owner thought it had blackhead. The blackhead turned out to be a thick infestation of stick-fast fleas. Injuries from dog or fox attack are all too common.

In the end Edward, after years of good health, was missing. I eventually found him looking poorly and hiding, he had lost a lot of weight and was dehydrated. After taking him back to the clinic blood tests showed severe kidney failure and his droppings showed flagellate parasites, an unusual finding for peacocks.

After three weeks of intensive care and many setbacks he put on weight and was back to eating normally, drinking and looking much better. Taken back to Harewood all seemed to be going well when suddenly, about 10 days later, he disappeared. In spite of calls to all the neighbours and many searches of the property he was nowhere to be found.

Weeks later some feathers and bones turned up that were obviously his. I thought about it a lot. In retrospect I regret not having kept him locked up at the end but, on balance, 23 years of freedom was worth it. Vale Edward, you were a great pal.



Stick fast fleas on a peacock's head. They can be treated with insecticidal sprays, such as permethrin/piperonyl combinations registered for birds.

Stick fast fleas are not to be confused with blackhead, which is a totally different disease.

ANZ Bank gets fossil fuel ultimatum

NEW Zealand conservation group Forest & Bird has warned the ANZ Bank it could lose its business if it fails to divest from the fossil fuel industry.

"We have given them a six month timeframe to develop a credible fossil fuel divestment plan," Forest & Bird chief executive Hone McGregor said. "If ANZ won't divest we will re-evaluate our banking options with a view to transferring our business to a banking provider who has, or will."

McGregor said Forest & Bird was a strong advocate for reducing greenhouse gas emissions."

Farmers key to quail-like bird

FARMERS living in south-western New South Wales are believed to be the key to the future of one of the world's most unique birds, the critically endangered plains-wanderer.

The NSW Government has added the quail-like birds to the state's iconic species list.

Environment Minister Mark Speakman said the listing would give the birds priority investment under the \$100m Saving our Species program.

"The plains-wanderer is so discreet that only a handful of farmers, scientists and avid bird enthusiasts are likely to lay eyes on it in the wild," he said.

For the first time in 30 years the bird has been bred in captivity, as part of a partnership between the NSW Office of Environment and Taronga Zoo.

A pair at the zoo produced eggs and so far five healthy chicks are thriving.

In the past decade plains-wanderer numbers had dropped up to 90 per cent due to habitat loss, with an estimated 200 still living in the wild.

The bird is known to occur in scattered sites across Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia but its stronghold is the NSW Riverina, specifically in an area bounded by Hay, Narrandera, Urana and the Billabong Creek.

"In evolutionary terms it's really unique," Matt Cameron, Ecosys-

tems and Threatened Species team leader, said.

"It's got no close relatives, there's no other bird like it anywhere in the world. It's as unique if you like as the giant panda or the greater bilby.

"The female is the more colourful of the birds, they look something like a quail — a bit more lanky than a quail. She competes for male attention and she competes for the territories so it's a bit of a role reversal."

Mr Cameron said the hen helps out with incubation but the male does most of that and once the eggs hatch the males are left to rear the young and the female will go off and breed with another male.

The Oolambeyan National Park near Carrathool was gazetted in 2001 to partly help secure populations of the bird.

Mr Cameron said while national parks and zoo breeding programs help they would not secure the future of the species.

"If we're going to get enough birds to have a viable population in the long term we also need to look after its habitat on private land," he said.

"Probably most of the habitat is on private land subject to grazing and we're really keen to work with landholders to assist in managing that land in a way that benefits plains-wanderers.

Qld. to address feral cat threat

PUBLIC/PRIVATE partnerships are emerging as the future of reversing Australia's shocking reputation as the worst nation on the planet at protecting its endangered fauna.

The main problem is the four million feral cats in the outback, each eating four to five animals a week.

Queensland is to trial a unique \$3m plan to protect the endangered night parrot, its final 600 bilbies and the marsupial rat, the kowari.

Australia's poor record includes 29 mammal species lost and nearly 1800 species nationally listed as being under threat.

The largest-ever philanthropic conservation plan ever considered in Australia, valued at \$3m, is being evaluated by Queensland's Department of Environment.

The Australian Wildlife Conservancy has designed the protection plan based on two 8000ha feral cat free zones in New South Wales.

It wants to build a 2m high fence and to keep feral cats out of a 700,000ha section as part of a \$3 million project in two western Queensland national parks.

Queensland's feral cat problem is the catalyst for AWC's plan, focusing its philanthropic activities on two national parks in western Queensland.

Chief executive Atticus Fleming said the main problem was four million feral cats in the outback.

"When you think they could be killing four to five animals each a night we have a real problem," Mr Fleming said.

The plan is being considered for the Diamantina and Astrebla Downs national parks nudging the Northern Territory border in south-western Queensland.

The two parks are home to the night parrot, rare and endangered bilbies and the kowari.

The Queensland Environment Department shot 3000 feral cats in Astrebla Downs National Park in 2013 and 2014 at a cost of \$350,000.

Naturalist John Young, who works for AWC and who discovered the night parrot in 2013 after it was believed to be extinct for 101 years, will help to identify and protect the bird's populations.

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GUEST SPEAKERS

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Download form at www.parrotsociety.org.au/events/parrots-convention

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**MORE
INFO
Pages
18-24**

Ben Bawden (Queensland, AUS)
Des Boorman (New South Wales, AUS)
Pamela Clark (Oregon, USA)
Simon Degenhard (New South Wales, AUS)
Dr Scott Echols (Utah, USA)
John Griffith (North Queensland, AUS)
Hillary Hankey (California, USA)
Rosemary Low (United Kingdom)
Steve Marven (Canberra, AUS)
Dr David Phalen (Sydney, AUS)
Dr Cromwell Purchase (Qatar)
Rachel Riley (Western Australia, AUS)
Jade Welch (Queensland, AUS)



Raising the perch in avicultural education



Announcing
**PARROTS
2016**
TWENTY-SIXTEEN

1, 2 & 3 JULY 2016

*Announcing Parrots 2016 (P2016) the next instalment
in Australia's most highly regarded avicultural convention.*

Parrots 2016, the Parrot Society of Australia's 9th international biennial convention, continues the theme of *"Raising the Perch in Avicultural Education"* with a lecture program designed to appeal to the widest audience of bird enthusiasts, topics of both interest and educational value are on offer. The comprehensive programme offers approximately 22 sessions to choose from over the weekend and is the only convention in Australasia catering to parrot

breeders, veterinary staff, pet shop employees, companion parrot owners, zookeepers, young bird keepers and conservationists alike.

The diversity of our unique program is something that we are very proud of and gives you, as a delegate, a plethora of choice during the 2-day convention and, as with previous Parrots Conventions, P2016 will continue with the concurrent program of lectures. Each stream is designed to appeal either to those seeking breeding and husbandry based

knowledge or to those with interests in the behavioural and enrichment aspects of aviculture and delegates can tailor the programme to meet their own interests.

As well as the abundance of up-to-date information based on sound research and personal lessons from experienced aviculturists, P2016 offers you the chance to meet other people whose interests match your own, and the chance to socialise and network with others in the bird keeping community.

We look forward to seeing you!



GUEST SPEAKERS

We know that you will be impressed by the diverse range of guest speakers, lectures and focus sessions on offer at **Parrots 2016** that have been especially selected to inspire you to learn more about psittacine aviculture over the course of the weekend.

Here is a list of the confirmed speakers to date:

Ben Bawden (Queensland, AUS)

Des Boorman (New South Wales, AUS)

Pamela Clark (Oregon, USA)

Simon Degenhard (New South Wales, AUS)

Dr Scott Echols (Utah, USA)

John Griffith (North Queensland, AUS)

Hillary Hankey (California, USA)

Rosemary Low (United Kingdom)

Steve Marven (Canberra, AUS)

Dr David Phalen (Sydney, AUS)

Dr Cromwell Purchase (Qatar)

Rachel Riley (Western Australia, AUS)

Jade Welch (Queensland, AUS)

Over the next few issues we will be profiling the Guest speakers along with their lecture topics and providing further announcements regarding the Guest Speakers as arrangements are confirmed.



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Once again, delegates will have the option of marvelling at the great achievements of fellow bird keepers who kindly let us visit their aviary complexes for the Aviary Tour. This time we will be travelling west to enjoy some of the most impressive set-ups that South East Queensland has to offer. The convention aviary tour always sells out well in advance and is strictly limited to convention delegates so be sure to get your registration in early.



Parrot Trust
OF AUSTRALIA
Conservation • Education • Research

OFFICIAL PARROT 2016 OPENING

Friday night offers the opportunity to mingle with the speakers and get to know other delegates, as well as to register and collect your delegate pack to be fully prepared for the week end ahead. Finger foods and light beverages will be served and the evening will culminate with the formal opening presentation.

PARROT TRUST OF AUSTRALIA CONSERVATION GALA DINNER

The Saturday night dinner is a highlight on the calendar of many aviculturists and gets us thinking beyond our own backyards. With the Parrot Trust of Australia being on the Federal Governments register of Environmental Organisations, the dinner will not only be an enjoyable evening but also an opportunity to learn more about conservation efforts for parrots in the natural environment but to offer our fundraising support via the Parrot Trust of Australia to assist in these vital efforts.

REGISTRATIONS

With a lecture program designed to appeal to the widest audience and topics of both interest and educational value, **Parrots 2016** offers approximately 22 sessions to choose from over the weekend. There is the option of a one day conference registration for those not able to attend the entire weekend and discounted spouse registration pricing available as well.

Super Early bird registration is now open offering the chance to register at a highly discounted rate, with Early Bird registration then commencing 1 October 2015 and will be on offer until 30 April 2016. Registrations from 1 May 2016 will be then at the standard rate. All details and the registration forms will be available on the website at www.parrotsociety.org.au/events/parrots-convention

Should you wish to take advantage of the Early registration rates but are concerned about budgetary constraints, you are welcome to call Registrar Bev Bennion to organise a time payment plan that suits your budget. Please phone Bev on 07 54 33 1486.





VENUE

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Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea is provided throughout both Saturday and Sunday, with hot finger food offered on the Friday night meet and greet, being an optional extra.



ACCOMMODATION

Further information regarding accommodation options will be published next issue of Parrot News.

Be sure to keep a sharp eye on the Parrots 2016 website.

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The organising sub-committee have inspected a number of accommodation options for **Parrots 2016** in the Carseldine area, in close proximity to the convention venue being held at Tavernetta Function Centre, Carseldine Queensland.

With this in mind, we recommend Aspley Carsel Motor Inn situated at 1549 Gympie Road, Carseldine, which provides a combination of affordability, suitability and comfort.



We have negotiated a rate below the corporate rate and this tariff rate can be accessed by all delegates by contacting the management (Leige or Grant) on (07) 3263 5988 or email info@aspleycarsel.com.au – *advising them that you are attending Parrots 2016.*



Rosemary Low

United Kingdom (UK)

Rosemary Low has kept parrots for more than 50 years, concentrating on lorries and South American parrots. Rosemary is the former curator of birds of Loro Parque, Tenerife, and Palmitos Park, Gran Canaria. With more than 20 books published on parrots, these books have been translated into German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Czech, Hungarian and Dutch. Rosemary has been writing for specialist magazines worldwide, especially in the UK, Australia and Europe, since the 1970s, and has had literally hundreds of articles published. Main topics are conservation and birds, especially parrots.



Rosemary has visited 27 countries to observe parrots in the wild, especially in South America. In recent years has been involved with, raised funds for and written widely about bird conservation projects, and has spoken at many symposiums on the subject. She has been employed solely with free-lance writing since 1995. Her website is:

www.rosemarylow.co.uk

Lecture topics

Amazons and Pyrrhura Conures: Aviculture and Conservation

Rosemary Low focuses on two of the most popular groups of neotropical parrots, Amazons and *Pyrrhura* Conures. She describes their breeding and status in aviculture, now and in the future. Selecting endangered species with well established conservation projects, she discusses their status and prospects in the wild.

Lories: breeding and management for quality of life

Rosemary highlights spacious accommodation, planting, play and toys – all essentials for these active birds. The many components of a varied diet are discussed, also breeding and problems that occur. This is a lavishly illustrated Powerpoint presentation with photos from Rosemary's aviaries.

Dr Liam Flanagan

Queensland (AUS)

Dr Liam Flanagan has been a practicing veterinarian in Brisbane for the past 5 years. He graduated from the University of Queensland in 2010, with honours, and worked for 4 years at an avian and exotics clinic in the northern suburbs. In 2014 Dr Liam joined the Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinarian Scientists after successfully completing his Avian Membership Exams. He has a real passion for avian medicine and surgery as well as being an advocate for avian education. Dr Liam currently works at the RSPCA Wildlife Hospital at Wacol where he is responsible for the triage and care of not only our native birds and wildlife but also any domestic birds that come to the RSPCA.

Lecture topic

Updates in Avian Medicine: Fact vs Fiction

Avian Medicine and Husbandry is an area which has seen a lot of changes over the years. Increasing numbers of birds are being kept as close, companion pets, and this in turn is driving a demand for a higher level of veterinary knowledge and care. Pet owners are also seeking a higher standard of husbandry and behaviour advice as birds increasingly become valued family members. Unfortunately, a large number of "Myths" persist about the treatment and care of birds, and many of these result in birds not receiving treatment before it is too late. This lecture aims to address some of these "Myths", and assist in educating bird owners about the value and importance of having a trained Avian Vet as part of their flock.



Steven Marven

Canberra (AUS)

Steven Marven starting keeping birds at an early age, coming across a pair of red fronted yellow turquoise parrots in a pet shop while still in primary school. From here was the beginning of keeping these magic little Aussie grass parrots. Whilst living in Melbourne, due to backyard restrictions, He decided to expand his Neophema collection as he could keep more pairs without disturbing the neighbours. Since then he has kept and breed the Turquoise, Scarlet chested, Blue-wing, Elegant, Rock and the Bourke parrot. With this he has kept and breed most mutations readily available in Australia. Steven has also breed these birds in north central Victoria and southern New South Wales (just outside Canberra), and combated most obstacles on the way associated with moving those distances.



Lecture topic

My Experience in keeping and breeding Neophemas

I will be talking on my experience with the genus Neophema. I will be covering the housing requirements for these little Aussie gems, feeding them, breeding and touch on a few of the mutations I have kept and breed. I will also go into a little detail on my experience moving my collection over 800km from a dry north central location in Victoria to an area in New South Wales just outside of Canberra. With this I will also touch on some of the different feeding requirements and setup for some of the trickier Neophemas.

Raising the perch in avicultural education

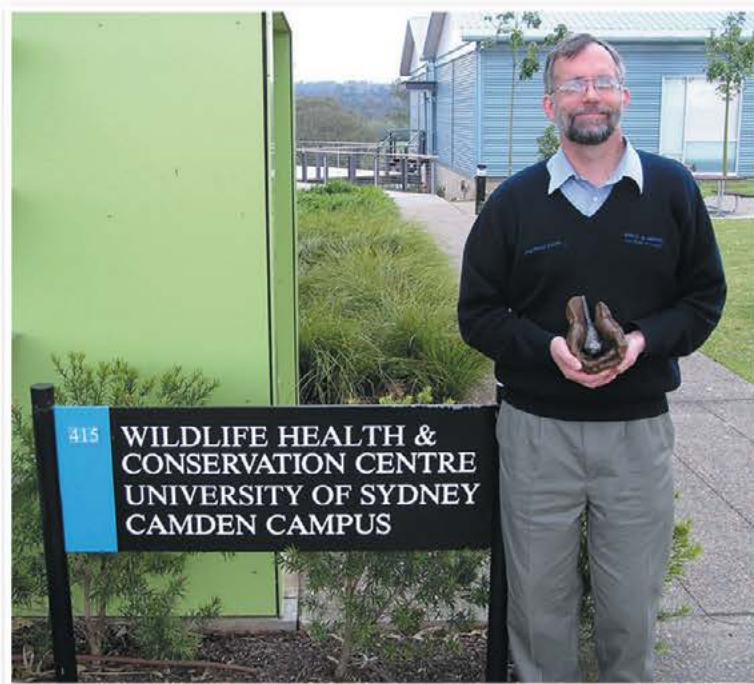


Dr David Phalen

New South Wales (AUS)

Doctor of Veterinary Medicine – Cornell University 1983, PhD – Texas A&M University 1992. Studied virus diseases of birds and avian pathology – Topic of the Dissertation was Avian Polyomavirus. Taught exotic pet (including pet and aviculture medicine) to veterinary students at Texas A&M University from 1993-2006. From 2006 to the present, taught clinical avian, exotic animal and wildlife medicine as part of the Wildlife Health and Conservation Centre and the Avian Reptile and Exotic Pet Hospital. Our current case load is 2500 exotic cases (approximately 1250 bird cases) per year and 500 wildlife cases (about 50% are birds).

Prior to coming to Australia, the vast majority of my research has been into infectious diseases of birds. The most significant have been avian polyomavirus of parrots and other species, herpesviruses of parrots, passerines, and pigeons, identification, detection and treatment of *Macrorhabdus ornithogaster* (aka megabacteria). I have also done important research on calcium metabolism in budgerigars and iron metabolism in mynas and toucans. Since coming to Australia I have continued my research into infectious diseases of birds and have expanded my areas of research into infectious diseases of other species of wildlife and other areas of conservation.



Lecture topics

An Introduction to Infectious and Nutritional Disease Prevention

The ability to keep your birds healthy is key to the success of a breeding program, key to maintaining your reputation and key to a long life for pet and aviary birds. This talk will cover basic nutritional information and will discuss specific nutritional diseases that are commonly and at times increasing seen in cage birds. The second part of this lecture will cover ways of preventing the introduction of infectious diseases into a collection and minimizing their impact if they are introduced.

Avian Bornavirus and Avian Polyomavirus

Avian Bornavirus is the cause of Proventricular dilatation disease and variants of this virus cause disease in other species of birds. This presentation will provide the most up-to-date information on what we know about Avian Bornavirus, its status in Australia and the diseases that other similar Bornaviruses cause. Avian polyomavirus has been around for a long time.

Much has been learned about how it is transmitted and how disease can be prevented. Never-the-less outbreaks of disease continue to occur. The second half of this presentation will cover the biology of this infectious agent and how you can manage your birds so that it does not cause disease in your aviary.

Dr Cromwell Purchase

Director at Al Wabra Wildlife Preservation, Qatar

Cromwell Purchase graduated from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg South Africa with a BSc degree majoring in Biochemistry and Physiology, and honours in Molecular Medicine and Medical Biochemistry. He went on to gain a Masters in Veterinary Science at Onderstepoort concentrating on Avian Diseases, Medicine and Vaccine Technology, and a PhD at the University of Pretoria in Zoology specializing in Avian Nutritional Physiology.

He has been involved in aviculture since 1987 (aged 10) and has more than 25 years of self-taught avian incubation and hand-rearing experience. In addition, he has over 10 years of hands on reptile/arachnid husbandry and large mammal husbandry and training experience. Since December 2010, Cromwell started as the Blue Macaw Captive Coordinator at Al Wabra Wildlife Preservation, and was soon promoted to Head of Birds, he has also been placed in charge of all the reptiles and research due to his background and education. In 2013 Cromwell was promoted to the director position at Al Wabra, and continues to fill the role of Blue macaw captive coordinator and head of research. Cromwell is currently the International Studbook Keeper, Genealogist and Management consultant for the Spix's macaw recovery program.



Lecture topic

Reproductive Research techniques used for the Spix's macaws, with great results... Where to from here?

Breeding endangered species, can and normally does have problems associated with it, especially when that species is going through a serious genetic bottleneck like the Spix's macaw. In extreme cases like these without comprehensive reproductive research these species can be lost.

In this presentation I will explain the different research we are doing to save the Spix's macaw a species that has been extinct in the wild since 2000 and where most birds in the population are genetically considered almost siblings. We have worked on different levels of research and are now at a level where Science fiction is taking over. We are reaching levels never seen before, and working on ideas and planned research that boggles the mind.

Besides the constant nutritional and management constraints we have in place, our birds are monitored constantly with camera's in the enclosures and nest boxes. They are trained to fly onto perches that measure their weight on a regular basis without stressful interactions. Our keepers are well trained to monitor any subtle changes and all information is noted and filed.

Research is an important tool, and we have monitored stress and reproductive hormones year round, egg analysis is performed on the visibly non developing eggs, semen collection and artificial insemination is performed

in collaboration with Parrots Reproduction Consulting, and we have even produced eggs from same sex female pairs due to our female sex bias in the population and inseminated the females, thus having our excess females producing in the population. Attempting to fertilize already laid eggs is another aspect of the program that has revealed surprising results. We have also just started looking at cryogenically freezing semen to have a resource for inseminations when there are no semen producing males active and eggs are laid.

The Genome sequencing of the entire Spix's population has been incredible and we are extremely fortunate to have had the possibility to do this in collaboration with Cornell Medical University in Qatar, the only species in the world to have the entire population sequenced, and this has opened new doors. Given us untold insight into the Spix's, as well as narrowed down the genetic compatibility and pairing options. The Genome sequencing is complete, and now we are analyzing the massive amount of information and thinking up the next steps, we have many new avenues that are planned and hopefully by the time we are done, the Spix's macaw will be flying free in its natural habitat and other species will also be reaping the rewards of the cutting edge research made possible by a seriously endangered species and Sheikh Saoud Al-Thani's family vision and support.



THE PROGRAM



DAY 1 FRIDAY 1st JULY 2016

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION	DETAILS
8:00am boarding for 8:10am departure	Parrots 2016 Aviary Tour from Tavernetta Function Centre (144 Dorville Rd, Carseldine, Queensland)	West Brisbane Lockyer Valley & Toowoomba	The official Convention Aviary Tour to some of South East Queensland's most exclusive avicultural breeding complexes. Limited to 55 participants
6:00pm – 8:00pm 7:00pm	Parrots 2016 Registration Meet and Greet	Tavernetta Function Centre	The Parrots 2016 Convention will officially open with a delegate registration period commencing at 6pm. Delegates will have the opportunity to 'meet and greet' the Guest Speaker Team with finger food and beverages available.



Check this out!

DAY 2 SATURDAY 2nd JULY 2016

TIME	DURATION	SPEAKER	PRESENTATION TOPIC
8:45am – 8:50am	5mins	Scott Hovelrould PSOA President	<i>Welcome & Overview</i>
8:50am – 9:00am	10mins	Scott Hovelrould	<i>Housekeeping</i>
9:00am – 9:10am	5mins	Major Sponsor – T.B.A	<i>Sponsor Welcome</i>
9:10am – 10:00am	50mins	Dr Scott Echols (Utah, USA) <i>Grey Parrot Anatomy Project</i> – How advances in new imaging technology (CT, MRI, etc) is being developed and invented to address health issues that face animals and humans alike.	
10:00am – 10:40am	40mins	Morning Tea & Trade Display Viewing	

TIME	DURATION	BEHAVIOUR, TRAINING & ENRICHMENT	BREEDING, HANDREARING & HUSBANDRY
10:40am – 11:30am	50mins	Pamela Clark (Oregon, USA) <i>Feeding the Companion Parrot</i> Examines the nutritional needs of companion parrots, including some of the differences that occur among species, and examines the best way to meet those needs. Also covers the challenge of converting a parrot from a seed-based diet onto a more nutritionally balanced one.	Dr David Phalen (New South Wales, AUS) <i>An Introduction to Infectious and Nutritional Disease Prevention</i> The ability to keep your birds healthy is key to the success of a breeding program, key to maintaining your reputation and key to a long life for pet and aviary birds.
11:35am – 12:25pm	50mins	Liam Flanagan (Queensland, AUS) <i>The Vet Appointment – Dispelling some myths</i>	Rosemary Low (U.K.) <i>Management and breeding of Lorikeets</i>
12:25pm – 12:30pm	5mins	Q&A with Speakers – Lunch Housekeeping	
12:30pm – 1:50pm	80mins	Lunch & Trade Display Viewing	

TIME	DURATION	BEHAVIOUR, TRAINING & ENRICHMENT	BREEDING, HANDREARING & HUSBANDRY
1:50pm – 2:40pm	50mins	Hillary Hankey (California, USA) <i>Train or be Trained</i> How we influence our birds' behaviour without even knowing it. This lecture explores the dynamic relationship between captive birds and their caregivers	John Griffiths (Queensland, AUS) <i>Specialising in the northern Australian sub-species</i> A comprehensive overview of breeding the NQ subspecies of Rosellas, the King parrot, and the Golden Shouldered parrot examining all aspects of their diet and breeding behaviour in the wild and applying those lessons in a captive environment.
2:40pm – 3:30pm	50mins	Ben Bawden (Queensland, AUS) <i>Foraging for companion parrots – treating your bird to a wild time!</i>	Steve Marven (Canberra, AUS) <i>Australia's Grass parakeets – the Neophema family</i> A comprehensive overview of breeding the Scarlet chested parrot and mutations along with other Neophema species as well.
3:30pm – 4:00pm	30mins	Afternoon Tea & Trade Display Viewing	

TIME	DURATION	SPEAKER	PRESENTATION TOPIC
4:00pm – 4:45pm	45mins	Rachel Riley (Perth, Western Australia) <i>Karakin Black Cockatoo Conservation Centre: Rescue, Rehab and Release – Highlighting the large scale captive management, rehabilitation and conservation of WA's black cockatoos.</i>	
4:45pm – 5:00pm	15mins	Committee	<i>Housekeeping for Conservation Dinner and Raffle draws</i>

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION	DETAILS
6:30pm – 7:00pm	Pre-Conservation Dinner Drinks	Tavernetta Function Centre	Delegates attending the Parrots 2016 Conservation Dinner are invited to attend a pre-dinner drinks and social gathering.
7:00pm – 10:00pm	Official 2016 Parrot Trust of Australia Conservation & Fundraising Dinner		Dr Cromwell Purchase – Director at Al Wabra Wildlife Preservation <i>Reproductive research techniques used for the Spix's macaws, with great results, and the question "Where to from here?"</i> Aviculture and conservation – a natural partnership



DAY 3 SUNDAY 3rd JULY 2016



TIME	DURATION	SPEAKER	PRESENTATION TOPIC
8:45am – 9:00am	15mins	Scott Hovelrould PSOA President	Welcome to Sunday delegates, Overview & Housekeeping
9:00am – 9:50am	50mins	Des Boorman (New South Wales, AUS) <i>Natural and Native Foods for Avian Diets: The real diet, not enrichment as most would say</i> Highlighting a range of plant families critical for the survival of Australia's Parrots. A look at the range of plant genera commonly utilised by native parrots and their nutritional content and how they can be used in the aviary as a part of a balanced nutritional diet.	
9:50am – 10:30am	40mins	Morning Tea & Trade Display Viewing	

TIME	DURATION	BEHAVIOUR, TRAINING & ENRICHMENT	BREEDING, HANDREARING & HUSBANDRY
10:30am – 11:15am	45mins	Pamela Clark (Oregon, USA) <i>Mindful Living with Companion Parrots: Practical Ethical Considerations that Ensure Quality of Life for All</i> Provides an easy method for sorting through the information overload regarding parrot care to focus on the factors most important to keeping parrots well and to meeting our own need to know that we are doing so ethically.	Simon Degenhard (New South Wales, AUS) <i>Meet the Glossopitta Family – Australia's smallest lorikeets</i>
11:20am – 12:05pm	45mins	Rachel Riley (Perth, Western Australia) <i>Becoming proactive with behaviour</i> How to create solid behavioural foundations in your parrot and mitigate future behavioural issues.	Rosemary Low. (U.K.) <i>Amazon Parrots and Pyrthura Conures. Breeding (Aviculture) and Conservation.</i>
12:05pm – 12:10pm	5mins	Q&A with Speakers – Lunch Housekeeping	
12:10pm – 1:20pm	70mins	Lunch & Trade Display Viewing	

TIME	DURATION	BEHAVIOUR, TRAINING & ENRICHMENT	BREEDING, HANDREARING & HUSBANDRY
1:20pm – 2:10pm	50mins	Dr Cromwell Purchase Director at Al Wabra Wildlife Preservation <i>Manipulating sex ratios in parrot offspring, a study using nutrition and management showing remarkable results.</i>	
2:15pm – 2:55pm	40mins	Hillary Hankey (California, USA) <i>So you want to train your pet parrot for free flight?</i> A discussion of extreme risks inherent in unrestrained outdoor flight for the purposes of helping companion parrot owners understand the dangers of this activity.	Dr David Phalen (New South Wales, AUS) <i>PDD and Pacheco's Disease</i> Proventricular dilatation disease and Pacheco's disease are two important diseases that have had devastating impacts on aviculturists. This talk will cover the signs of these diseases, how they are transmitted and means to reduce your exposure to them.
2:55pm – 3:35pm	40mins	Question & Answer <i>All BTE Presenters to field and answer questions in Open Forum</i>	Jade Welch (Queensland, AUS) <i>The Importance of socialisation and flocking of parrots</i>
3:35pm – 4:10pm	35mins	Afternoon Tea & Trade Display Viewing	

TIME	DURATION	SPEAKER	PRESENTATION TOPIC
4:15pm – 5:00pm	45mins	Dr Scott Echols (Utah, USA) <i>The Guacamayos – Protectors of Peru's Amazon</i> An exciting overview, including significant new video, of conservation efforts with the Large Macaws in the Peruvian Amazon.	
5:00pm – 5:30pm	30mins	Scott Hovelrould PSOA President Committee	Parrots 2016 Closing Address Guest Speaker Gift Presentations Final Raffle Draws
5:30pm – 6:00pm	30mins	Finger Food & Celebratory Drinks	





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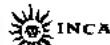
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Emu-wren probe

ONE of the smallest birds in Australia is now only found in Victoria's Mallee, after bushfires in 2014 wiped out the bird in South Australia.

Mallee emu-wrens are one of six endangered birds in the Mallee region.

Researchers from the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, and project partners La Trobe University, Bird-Life Australia and Parks Victoria have launched a project to revitalise the species.

The Mallee emu-wren Fire Ecology Project will research population numbers and the effect of fire on the birds.

Dr Natasha Schedvin, the department's protection landscape evaluator for the Mallee Murray Goulburn area, said the project would focus on species in the Wyperfeld, Big Desert, Murray-Sunset and Hattah-Kulkyne national parks.

"As far as we know there are no

living Mallee emu-wrens in South Australia any more," Dr Schedvin said. "So now the Victorian Mallee is the global distribution of the species."

"We take our responsibility for that species really seriously given that we're the land stewards with Parks Victoria and we're actively trying to manage fire in these landscapes."

Dr Schedvin said Mallee emu-wrens were tough little nuts.

"Because they are so small they have a really fine energy balance and are very dependent on getting enough tiny insects to keep themselves going," Dr Schedvin said.

She said the Mallee emu-wren had such a high-pitched call that some people could not hear them.

"We use their calls when we are surveying for them. At set intervals we play the calls out into the bush and because they are quite territorial they will often come in

and call back to them," she said.

"Because they're so cryptic and tiny, and brown, fluffy blobs, we use that to make them more obvious."

Dr Schedvin said researchers used recorded calls under permit to survey birds by numbers and sex.

"Males are the bright ones, the show-offs and they're the ones who are most territorial," she said.

"You see them when they come up to the top of the spinifex clumps and call back and try and look very fierce, which is comical when you are human looking at a bird that is only five or seven grams."

Dr Schedvin said the birds were often seen in family groups.

"They tend to move around and have quite a short breeding period so it can be very hard to be there at the right time," she said.

"We go through quite dry times in the Mallee and have quite long droughts at times so during those periods their populations become



smaller. They're one of those species that are really tightly associated with the spinifex, or porcupine grass.

"It's that terribly spiny, very hard grass that is very characteristic of the deeper sands of mallee areas and it offers a fortress for them to hide in and be protected."

Dr Schedvin said a large fire in any of the national parks could cause devastation to species numbers.

"If we got a large fire we could potentially lose a large proportion of those populations in one hit," she said.

Dr Schedvin said researchers did not know how many Mallee emu-wrens were in existence.

Night parrot fence argument

PRIVATE nature conservation organisation Bush Heritage Australia announced recently it had established the 56,000ha Pullen Pullen Reserve to protect an estimated population of 20-40 night parrots at the site where naturalist John Young took the first photographs and film footage of the bird in 2013. BHA took out a \$1.5 million mortgage to pay for the land.

Mr Young claims he was forced out of the BHA project but he has been hired as a senior ecologist with Australia's other major nature conservation organisation, Australian Wildlife Conservancy, which is locked in a heated dispute with BHA.

AWC has announced a \$3m program that includes the construction of a fence to keep feral predators out of 8000ha of the 507,000ha Diamantina National Park.

AWC plans to establish a population of 800 bilbies, doubling the Queensland population of the endangered marsupial.

The proposed fence is understood to be less than 50km from Pullen Pullen.

The last night parrot recorded before Mr Young's 2013 discovery was a dead bird found in 2006 in the national park. It had been decapitated when it struck a fence.

Allan Burbidge, chairman of the Night Parrot Discovery Team, which works with BHA, said there was a risk of parrots striking the fence and being killed.

"We would like to know what action would be taken if one or more parrots are killed following collision with a predator-proof fence,"

Dr Burbidge said.

Frank Manthey of Save the Bilby Fund said he opposed the fence because it would restrict the movement of bilbies from their last known haunt in Astrebla Downs National Park, 40km from the fence site.

AWC chief executive Atticus Fleming said the site was not near known populations of bilbies or night parrots and would cover just one per cent of Diamantina National

Park.

"In our experience these fences have not had an adverse impact on other species," Mr Fleming said.

"The fence is just one of the strategies being employed. There will be a range of feral-animal controls."

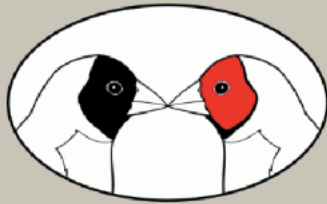
A decades-long absence of confirmed night parrot sightings ended with the discovery of a dead bird on a road near Boulia in 1990. The bird found in 2006 was in Diamantina

National Park, 120km south-east of Boulia.


Mr Young photographed his parrot in 2013 on Brighton Downs, 30km north of Diamantina.

Researcher Steve Murphy subsequently heard parrots calling at a second site on the property, 40km from Mr Young's site.

Also in 2013 naturalist Glenn Holmes saw a night parrot on the Winton-Jundah Road, 60km east of Brighton Downs.



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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

● There is no charge for Forthcoming Events listings. Entries are restricted to date, location, club name, event, phone number and email address. Information should be sent to the editor, whose contact details are on page 2 of this edition. If any entry contains errors, please contact the editor so they can be updated.

- June 4**
Toowoomba. Downs Bird Breeders, table sale. 07 4630 4469.
- June 5**
Berkeley. Illawarra Parrot Club, sale. 0455 613 457, 0448 414 588.
- June 9-12**
Sydney. Royal Agricultural Society of NSW, National Poultry Show. 02 9704 1111, poultry@rasnsw.com.au
- June 11**
Kempsey. Kempsey Macleay Bird Club, show. 0422 121 491, 0428 646 350, 02 6562 3194.
- June 11-12**
Sarina. 26th Northern Avian Conference. Donna 0438 162 196, Zoe 0439 735 102.
- June 12**
Kempsey. Kempsey Macleay Bird Club, sale. 02 6562 2019, 02 6563 1056.
- June 12**
Mandurah. WA Budgie Council, state pre-selections. 0402 409 937.
- Widura.** Mildura and District Bird Club, sale. 0458 004 866.
- June 18**
Wagga Wagga. Wagga Wagga Cage Bird Club, sale. 02 6922 8200.
- June 19**
Ararat. ASA Ararat, sale. 0437 491 373.
- Bathurst.** Bathurst Regional Avicultural Society, show 0421 207 548, sale 02 6337 1886.
- Inverell.** Inverell Social Birdkeepers Group, sale. 02 6723 1388, btwood ham2@bigpond.com
- June 26**
Barmera. Riverland Birdkeepers, sale. 08 8586 5497.
- Gulgong.** Gulgong District Avicultural Society, annual show. 02 6374 1348.
- Rivervale.** Avicultural Society of Western Australia, open day. 08 9478 2447 after 6pm.
- July 1-3**
Brisbane. Parrot Society of Australia, Parrots 2016 convention. 07 5433 1486, www.parrotsociety.org.au/Parrots2016
- July 3**
Maryborough. Hervey Bay Bird Club, sale. 07 4121 4605, 0447 231 801.
- Newborough.** La Trobe Valley Avicultural Club, sale. 03 5983 0093.
- Sydney.** Border Fancy Canary Club of Australia, derby & oaks day plus auction sale day. 02 4981 9404.
- July 9**
Brisbane. 2016 Queensland Ornithological Conference. 0419 431 210, extondr@gmail.com
- Cobden.** ASA Centre West, sale. 03 5595 1234.
- July 10**
Clarendon. Parrot Society of Australia (NSW), sale. 0403 017 855, 02 4571 2141.
- July 17**
Felixstowe. United Bird Societies of South Australia, seminar. 08 8642 3314.
- Gold Coast.** Gold Coast Aviary Bird Association, licenced bird sale. 07 5522 6666, 07 5579 8962.
- Hobart.** Budgerigar Council of Tasmania, 42nd Australian National Budgerigar Council Championship Show. 03 6423 6727 (AH), 0409 257 131.
- Mandurah.** South West Budgie Club, championship show. 0402 409 937.
- Strathpine.** BRASEA budgie auction. 02 9747 6642, contact@brasea.com
- Urana.** Urana Progress Society, bird sale. 0429 208 267.
- Warragul.** Gippsland Caged Bird Society, sale. 03 5167 1150.
- July 24**
Perth. WA Finch Society, table sale and open show. 0478 214 311, 0422 131 784, fswa@live.com.au
- July 30**
Toogoolawah. Toogoolawah Show Society, sale. 0427 807 550.
- July 31**
Rivervale. Avicultural Society of Western Australia, open day. 08 9478 2447 after 6pm.
- August 6**
Ballarat. ASA Ballarat, sale. 03 5368 9288.
- August 7**
Hobart. Tasmanian canary sale. 03 6249 2226.
- August 13**
Forbes. Central West Bird Club, sale. 0406 512 851.
- August 14**
Newcastle. Newcastle Budgerigar Society, annual show — to be confirmed. 02 4988 6539.

NEWS FROM BIRD CLUBS

Murray Bridge success

THERE were six traders and 84 sellers at the Murray Bridge sale, with all tables taken and four sellers on the waiting list accommodated at the last minute due to cancellations.

"The hall was completely full and we couldn't fit any more in," club president Brian Dabinett said.

"There were around 400 people through the door and it was a very successful day for the club."

Brian said there was a good variety of budgies, canaries, finches and parrots but not many cockatoos.

"I saw a pair of Major Mitchell's and a few galahs but no other cockatoos," he said.

There was a good array of finches, with most species represented, including painted and Gouldians, whose numbers included very few mutations.

Eastern and western rosellas were offered together with king parrots, kakarikis, green-cheeks and Indian ringnecks, mostly mutations, although one normal bird was sold.

Mask, peachface and Fischers lovebirds were benched and one seller who took 12 red rump parrots sold eight of them.

All neophema parrots were there, including a pair of rock parrots.

"There were not a lot of permit birds but it was a very successful day for the club," Brian said.

Thorn hit at Nanango

BEENLEIGH Bird Breeders Club president Martin Thorn did a great job promoting the raffle at the Burnett Bird Keepers sale at Nanango according to club spokesman Wally Sawatzki.

"There were more people but fewer tables which meant more space to move," Wally said.

The 60 sellers who attended offered around 500 birds and he said the main drawcard was the raffle which had a \$500 petrol voucher as the main prize.

"Martin did a great job encouraging people to buy raffle tickets and it would not have gone nearly as well without his efforts," Wally said.

White-bellied caiques were among the birds offered, together with sulphur-crested cockatoos, galahs, crimson, mutation eastern, northern and golden mantle rosellas.

Fischers, masked and peachface lovebirds were there, no quail were benched but budgies, canaries and finches were present.

Mornington birds down

BIRD numbers were down at Victoria's largest sale at Cranbourne Racecourse but visitor numbers appeared to be up, with the carpark almost full.

The Mornington club event was held there because it was refused permission to use its previous venue at the state dog centre.

Trade stands were in a separate hall with birds in a huge area with one side open to the elements, which was enclosed by orchardists' mesh.

The largest species by number was budgies, followed by neophemas and their mutations.

There were also cockatiels, princess, several rosella types, blue bonnets, mulgas, twenty-eights, regents and red caps.

Finches offered included zebras, Gouldians, redheads, diamond sparrows, a picrorella, painted, stars, longtails and blue-faced parrots.

Diamond doves and mutations were there and there was a good display of exotics — parrots, finches and canaries.

1000 at Fairfield sale

A THOUSAND people paid to enter the Fairfield bird sale in Sydney, which according to organiser Keith Gallagher, was around the same as last year.

Keith said there were 4000 birds including native pigeons and doves, quail, budgies, canaries, finches and parrots, with many Indian ringneck mutations.

"Overall it was a good day for the club and everyone seemed to have a good time," Keith said.

Barossa went well

PAUL Kremmer, president and secretary of the Barossa Bird Club, said the group's recent sale went pretty well.

"There was a 50 per cent clearance rate with numbers of birds and people up on last year," he said.

"We had three more sellers than last year and the eight trades people said they did better than last year."

A lutino galah was offered as well as eastern and crimson rosellas, Port Lincolns, green-cheeks and kakarikis.

There were a fair few birds and the club did well, with a good day for the canteen and the raffle.

Funds to Yanco school

PROCEEDS from the Yanco charity bird sale went to the local school and spokesman John Bartel said the sale went well.

"There was a good crowd, around 400 people and 300 birds," he said.

Major Mitchell's cockatoos were offered, also budgies, canaries, finches, eastern rosella mutations, green-cheeks, Quakers and princess parrots.

Swan hill exotics sold

FIVE boxes of exotic parrots were displayed at the Swan Hill sale and a few of them were sold after the sale, according to the club's sale steward Neil Wilkinson.

"It wasn't a bad day for the club although numbers of birds and people were down," Neil said.

There was a good selection of Australian parrots as well as budgies and finches, but no quail, doves, pigeons or cockatoos.

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CLUB NEWS
in the Club News section of
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