

Letters to the Editor

Sheldon,

Thank you for your article, "Can Birds Fly? Animal Cargo on Continental Airlines," (*AFA Watchbird*, vol. XXX, no. 3, 2003). We use Continental QuickPak whenever possible.

The article omitted one point that should be of importance to many breeders. Because of the way Continental handles live animals, it does not enforce the same temperature restrictions as other airlines. When we take a bird to our local Continental freight office, the agent calls a courier to come get the bird. The bird then rides to the airplane in a heated and air-conditioned van. It will enjoy the same treatment during plane changes and upon arrival at its destination. Therefore, the bird is not subject to the conditions on the tarmac where temperatures may be extreme. During the summer months and often in the colder parts of the winter, we could not ship if it weren't for Continental.

Even Continental won't accept a bird if its destination is Phoenix and the temperature is 115 degrees or Minneapolis and the temperature is 10 below, but it is much more flexible than other airlines, some of which implement a blanket embargo on live animals from mid-May through mid-September. And, I'm not sure that people should be allowed to fly to those destinations under those weather conditions.

Delta recently introduced a fair for birds that is slightly lower than Continental's. But we ship Continental unless we *have* to use Delta. We want Continental's pets program to remain profitable so that the airline will continue to offer its current level of service.

The only problem with Continental is that its regional jets do not accept live animals. The cargo holds simply get too cold. Therefore, flights are limited to some destinations and non-existent to some smaller airports.

To sum up, we are very pleased with Continental and are willing to go out of our way to support it to help ensure that the airline continues to provide us with superior service for shipping our birds.

Regards,
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Re: "What To Feed (2nd Part)"

January 11, 2004

Just a couple of comments on Mr. Wilson's article. First, "IU" stands for International Units and not injectable units. Second, one of the major problems with seed diets is that few birds eat all the different seeds and other components of seed mixes. The vast majority of my clients that feed seed to their birds tell me that their birds generally eat only one or two of the seed types in the mix, leaving the rest in the bowl or on the cage floor. Just having the seed in the bowl is no guarantee that the bird eats all of it. Part of the idea behind pellets is to remove that variable from the equation. Some birds do thrive on an all seed diet. And some people drink and smoke and live to be 90 years old. Most, however, do not.

A pelleted diet is not perfect. The science of avian nutrition is still young.

I apologize if this was covered in Part One but my copies of "The Watchbird" seem to come sporadically and I never received that last issue.

Sincerely,

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