

The International Parrotlet Society

by Sandee Molenda
Santa Cruz, California

The International Parrotlet Society is a non-profit bird club which is dedicated to the breeding, maintenance, education, showing, conservation and keeping of parrotlets. Although current members focus on birds from the genus *Forpus*, the International Parrotlet Society also encourages the breeding of the genera *Nannopsittaca* and *Touit*.

The club was founded by Sandee and Robert Molenda, and Gloria Balaban, aviculturists who had bred these tiny parrots exclusively for years with great success. Being frustrated with the lack of accurate information available and the anonymity of parrotlets in general, they decided to form a parrotlet-only bird club. This would allow pet owners and breeders to compare notes, exchange ideas and swap stories as well as promote the keeping of parrotlets within the avicultural community. So, with very little money, even less experience and a lot of hard work, the International Parrotlet Society was begun. In August 1992, the first meeting was held at the American Federation of Aviculture convention in Miami and it has been growing

steady and strong ever since.

Currently, the club has over 250 members in three different countries. Although most of the members are breeders, about 20 percent of the members keep parrotlets as pets only. Each member receives a bi-monthly newsletter with articles written by breeders and pet owners on subjects such as nutrition, identification of species and subspecies, breeding methods, training techniques, hand-feeding, banding, parrotlet psychology, color mutations and behavioral problems. Members are also encouraged to submit individual questions and concerns in the *Shorties* column. While other members most often respond, several veterinarians are available for medical and scientific advice. Since February 1993, each issue also contains a beautiful color photograph identifying a different species or subspecies of parrotlet.

In January of each year, a *confidential* survey is taken of the entire membership, both breeders and pet owners. All members answer questions regarding nutrition, hygiene, cage requirements, species and number of birds owned and any deaths. Pet owners are asked about socialization, favorite toys and talking ability. Breeders answer questions concerning incubation, handfeeding, banding, egg viability and baby production. This information is then tabulated and published in the newsletter.

In the fall of 1992, several shipments of captive-bred Spectacled Parrotlets *Forpus conspicillatus* were imported in the United States from Belgium. Due to their extremely limited number, the International Parrotlet Society decided to sponsor a studbook to ensure the continuing survival of this species in the United States. As of December 1993, 19 pairs and three single males had been registered. At least six pairs have produced offspring which are being traded among breeders in order to maintain genetic diversity.

The studbook is involved with the International Species Inventory System founded by Dr. Ulysses S. Seal for the zoological community. By using a computerized record keeping system and following a population management program, it has been possible to maintain strong bloodlines and minimize inbreeding. The International Parrotlet Society is so committed to the success of this project that membership in the club is not required to participate in the studbook. The results have been so positive that information is now being gathered to start studbooks for Mexican *Forpus cyanopygius* and Blue-winged *Forpus xanthopterygius* Parrotlets as well.

An annual meeting is held in conjunction with the American Federation of Aviculture convention and is open to anyone who wishes to attend. A brief business meeting is conducted to address any concerns, suggestions or questions of the members. Next, a slide presentation is given demonstrating identification of species and subspecies, aviary set-up, specific diets and keeping of proper records. The floor is then open to discussion of any topic concerning parrotlets and everyone is invited to participate.

Dues are \$18.00 per year and classified advertising is free to members. Back issues of newsletters are available for \$3.00 each. If you would like two complimentary newsletters, a catalog listing back issues and an application, please contact The International Parrotlet Society, P.O. Box 1932, Boca Raton, FL 33429.

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