

date of birth, parentage, prior history, type of identification, cage, mate, breeding record, offspring, sales information, and general history such as any medication given, problems noted or unique happenings. A good record system will allow you to analyze each bird, its reproductive history and identify any trends.

Network

I strongly encourage individuals to become involved in the avian network; join a club, subscribe to magazines, join a consortium, join a stud book program and just get to know as many aviculturists as possible. Expose yourself to as many viewpoints as possible. Keep an open mind. Have trusted associates you can call on when you have a question or are just puzzled. One can always learn something new that will be helpful by just listening to others. Listen to others who keep birds different from the ones you keep. The person who breeds owls may have the answer to your nesting or territorial problem; softbills may make you aware of dietary problems such as iron deficiency; cranes may alert you to the types of and need for courtship and display in successful breeding; endangered species will make you aware of DNA and the need for bio diversity; hornbills stress the need for monitoring your birds. I have listened to lectures on all of the above and I have come away with information that I could use or raised questions in my mind and got me to wondering what would happen if I tried that; would it solve the problem I am having with whatever? I attend any lecture that I can. Most of them are interesting and I come away with information that either I can use or it gets me to thinking how I can use or adapt the information so that my birds will be better off.

There is a warning I must put here. Do not change your practice drastically just because an "expert" says to do this or "never" do that. A lot of thought should go into any decision before changing any procedure you are currently using. Birds are creatures of habit and can be upset by the slightest change. God gave us all a brain. We must use it! Listen to what people say, analyze it, does it conflict with other information you have received, does it seem logical, is it practical, what do I hope to accomplish? After doing all that, sit back and wait a couple weeks before

making any changes. Unless it is a matter of life or death, you have the time to contemplate all of the above. You may just save yourself some money and a breeding season. Also, before you implement a change, make sure you understand the complete procedure. I am reminded of the person who heard a speaker say they used a certain additive to bring their birds into breeding condition. They began using the additive and were amazed at how successful they were in getting eggs and chicks. Unfortunately they were not told that the additive should be discontinued after the hens were sitting. They had high losses of discarded eggs and bloodied

chicks in the nest. The parents were ready to recycle before they had completed the current cycle, the eggs and babies had to go, for the next clutch.

What I have given you is what I am currently doing at my ranch at this time. Some of this may conflict with what I have said previously. I do not have 100% breeding success. Therefore I still have things to learn. I try to make any changes gradually, so the birds can adjust without major shock and so that I can monitor and measure any effects the changes may have. I do not pretend to have all the answers. By sharing information we may move closer to that 100%. ➔

Loro Parque Foundation Supports Census of Red-tailed Amazons in Nature

The Red-tailed Amazon (*Amazona brasiliensis*) has been a rare bird with a restricted wild population for many decades, at the end of the 1980's it was estimated that the wild population at that time numbered only 3,000 and was declining. This species survives from a small coastal region of São Paulo and adjacent Paraná states, in Brazil, where it migrates daily between the Atlantic forest feeding areas and the Mangrove forests which provide the roosting and breeding sites for this species.

A principle figure in the study of the Red-tailed Amazon in the wild has been Pedro Scherer Neto, who has been working with this species since 1982. He has been able to establish accurate estimates of the remaining wild population size by carrying out a census throughout the habitat of the species natural distribution. The most effective area to survey the Red-tailed Amazon is by undertaking a census of birds at known overnight roosting sites, which Pedro Scherer Neto has been doing for several years. In 1994 he experimented with the building of two observation platforms at forest canopy level close to known roosting sites, the result was extremely effec-

tive with much improved census observation becoming possible. The platforms also provided a good opportunity to undertake biological observation of this species as an additional benefit.

In the beginning of 1995 we received a communication from Pedro Scherer Neto who asked if the Loro Parque Foundation would be willing to fund the costs of two more observation platforms to further aid the census of the remaining wild population. We have been happy to provide \$1,500 (US) to cover the material costs of these two additional observation platforms, with the construction being undertaken by the staff of the Natural History Museum.

The result of this project should be improved census observation of the Red-tailed Amazon which is regarded as essential in the future close monitoring of this species. With a local education programme already running and local people being encouraged to act as guards for known roosting sites, then it can be hoped that the remaining wild population will remain stable and can be more closely studied in the next few years. ●