


The studbook improved considerably with each addition under the direction of Alan Lieberman but unfortunately he will no longer continue the project. Over two years has elapsed since the third edition was published. Optimistically, the number of unrelated breeding pairs has increased and, assuming another edition will be published in the future, it will include many more birds that were previously

not registered. The introduction to the last edition made clear the need to register more birds from the private sector. Although a number of birds are living in Brazil, there is not much information in the studbook about them either.

From the information gathered in the third and last edition, it is clear that a responsible breeding program for the Golden Conure can result if a studbook is available to guide us.

#### References

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## The Rufous-sided Towhee

In America the Rufous-sided Towhee *Pipilo erythrophthalmus* is a well known bird which is found from southern Canada southwards to Central America. There are 25 subspecies in this enormous distribution area. A 26th subspecies, the Guadelupe Rufous-sided Towhee *P. e. consobrinus* became extinct in 1897.

Very few Towhees have reached Europe during their migrations and if a bird is spotted in Great Britain (the only country where the species have been observed so far), all bird watchers worthy of the name gather at the location to see if they can also get a look.

The species is also quite rare in captivity in Europe. During the early part of this century—before import and export controls of any sort—they were kept with some regularity. At the moment, I'm aware of only one place where the Rufous-sided Towhee is kept—the Birdpark Metelen in Germany.

In October 1994, a pair of Towhees was placed together with a pair of Eastern Bluebirds *Sialia sialis* in a small outdoor aviary measuring 2m x 3m (6½ x 10 ft.). A small indoor enclosure was connected with this outdoor flight. The aviary was planted with heather bushes and small pine trees.

The Towhees took all the food offered including insect food, insects, fruit, berries and seeds.

At the beginning of May 1995, the female started to build a nest using thick grasses and animal hair. Although in the literature it is mentioned that this species builds its nest on the ground,

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the first nest at Metelen was constructed in a heather bush about 20cm (8 in.) above the ground. No mating was observed and, later, the four eggs of the first clutch all proved to be infertile.


A second nest was built, this time at the height of about 50cm (19 in.) up in as pine tree. This clutch also contained four eggs which, again, were infertile.

In March 1995 the Birdpark received another male Rufous-sided Towhee and it was placed with the female after the first male was

removed. The female accepted the new male without any trouble and a third nest was made. This time it was constructed in a half-open nest box which actually was designed for Bluebirds.

This time the clutch consisted of just three eggs but two of them were fertile and one young was raised to independence. It proved to be a male.

For Europe, this is without doubt a first breeding. I am unaware of any breeding results with this species in any other country so this may be a world-first breeding.

[Editor's Note: The Rufous-sided Towhee is a native or migratory species within the United States and thus cannot be held in captivity as an avicultural subject. DRT] 



The Rufous-sided Towhee has been bred in Europe possibly for the first time. It is a migratory bird in the United States and cannot be held in American aviculture.

Photo by Maarten de Ruiter