

Deadline Schedule

January/February '97

Nov. 1 - editorial copy
Nov. 15 - display ADS

March/April '97

Jan. 1 - editorial copy
Jan. 15 - display ADS

May/June '97

March 1 - editorial copy
March 15 - display ADS

July/August '97

May 1 - editorial copy
May 15 - display ADS

September/October '97

July 1 - editorial copy
July 15 - display ADS

November/December '96

Sept. 1 - editorial copy
Sept. 15 - display ADS

Trap Cage for Small Hookbills

By Nancy Vigran, Exeter, CA

One of the most traumatic experiences with an avian friend can be watching him fly by you, out the door and up into the treetops or down the street.

Although it is natural in the wild for birds to do this, captive, domestically raised species often will not fare well and cannot fend for food and water by themselves or deal with unnatural predators. Many of these birds may be found by breeders who have a lot of familiar bird sounds emitted from their yards.

However, there are many species which, for various reasons, can often be retrieved by their owners. Finches are very gregarious and would prefer to stay close to others of their own kind than to wander off into the wild blue skies.

One morning years ago, I found (actually heard) a male Star Finch sitting in a tree near one of the aviaries. After a quick glance into the aviary, I realized that he somehow had flown out the entry the evening before without my noticing and had spent a windy night out on his own.

I cut a hole into the safety area of the aviary and folded back a flap of wire. One perch was placed outside in front of the new entry hole, and a second perch was placed inside the entry with a water cup and seed dish hanging next to it. Next to this was a perch inside the aviary where the female could sit.

From inside the house I periodically watched through a window. Within one hour the male went in and was sitting as close to his hen as he could. Quickly the flap was closed and the door from the entry into the aviary was opened by a prearranged wire. Once the male was safely inside, the door was pulled shut.

Recently I stepped into one aviary, while a lovebird, much to my surprise, flew by on his way out. He had managed to arrange the door of his cage to escape it and had been loose in the entry area. Apparently frightened as I went in, he exited. It didn't take long until he wasn't heard from anywhere close by.

As in many emergencies, I called on Dale Thompson for help and recommendations. He told me of luck he had found with a funnel-trap cage. Lovebirds, also gregarious, usually will not wander from their flock or mates. By the next morning a cage was arranged, divided in two. One side was set up normally with a perch, seed and water dishes; the other had a funnel leading into the cage with a perch, food and water in the main body of the cage. The remaining mate was placed in the normal side of the cage and the cage was placed atop the aviary.

Checking one hour later revealed only the solitary bird in the cage. By

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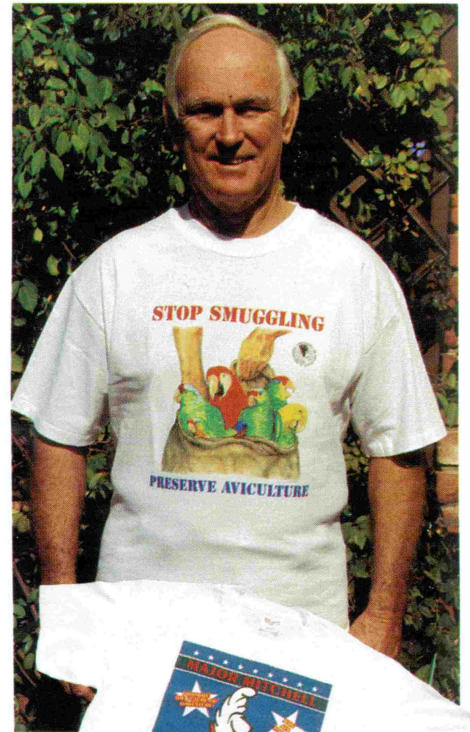
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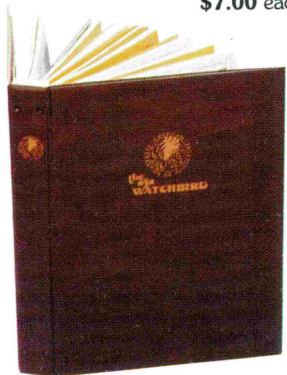


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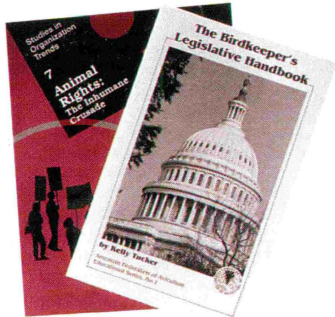
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This special devise looks like a bird cage but is, in fact, an excellent bird trap. It has two sections. One contains a decoy bird while the escapee can enter the other through a wire funnel.

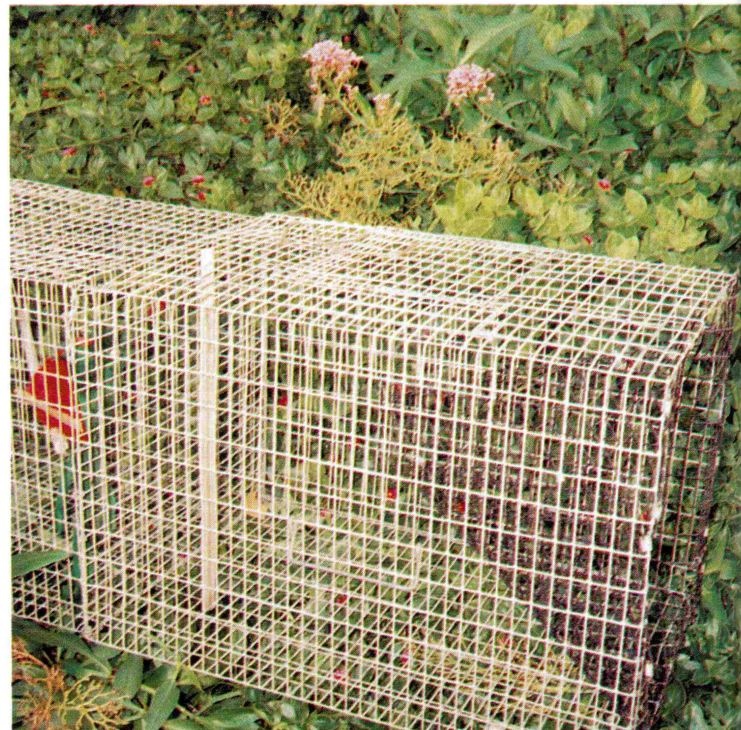
the second hour two bodies were seen. Quickly and quietly, a towel was stuffed into the open funnel end. The lovebirds (one very tired) were placed back into their now repaired cage and the next day were both back to their normal selves.

This type of funnel-trap cage should work equally well for budgies. However, other species can be more independent from their bird and human friends. Cockatiels, for instance, who are domesticated and very often humanized, can fly out an open win-

dow or be frightened off an owner's shoulder and may not stop at the first available tree branch, but go on for a block or two and fly off into another direction. In many areas of the U.S., cockatiels can be seen flying free and, if tame, may light with a new owner in a different neighborhood. Therefore, sometimes advertising a lost pet in neighboring areas can bring a little friend back home.

Many larger pet birds such as Amazons may take to the wing when frightened or offered the chance; however, since these birds have a tendency to be overweight, they may not fly too far. When tame or one of a pair, Amazons will often remain in a nearby tree calling out their alarm. The tame ones can often be caught by hand, the others are more tricky, but a similar larger funnel-trap cage may just work. When feasible, these birds can also be doused with water so that their wings are wet and they cannot fly.

Prevention is the best key to the loss and heartbreak from a feathered friend on the wing. Pet hookbills should have their wings clipped on a routine basis. Other pets such as canaries and mynahs should be kept safely in their cages when doors or windows are open. Aviary birds should be kept with a second safety door on the aviary. ➤



The funnel device is easy to enter but hard to exit. Food and a decoy bird make this a very effective trap for lovebirds, etc.

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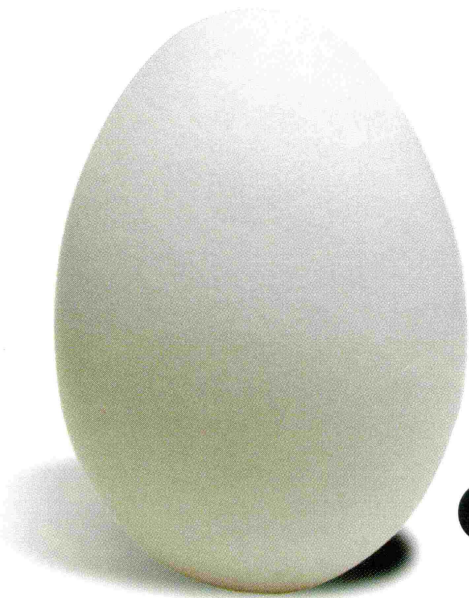
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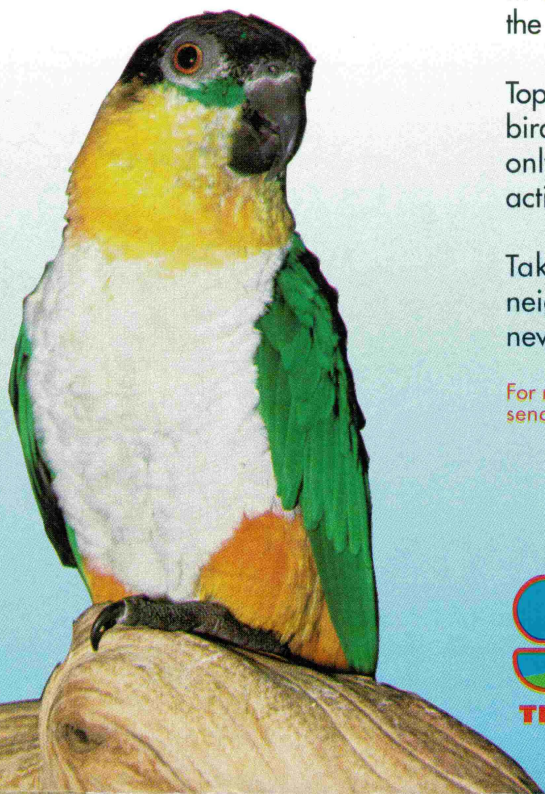


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