

towards other blond women. This certainly does not mean the parrot will not eventually bond to a woman with black hair or a bald man.

I have often been asked if parrots form a lifelong monogamous bond like humans do. The answer is yes, just like humans do. The vast majority of companion parrots are capable of bonding on different levels to different people throughout their lives. Some companion parrots do have a tendency to form a strong, one-person bond. This does not mean the strong-one person bond is absolute. There are several ways to work with parrots to encourage them to bond on different levels with more than one parson.

Having several people, particularly the people involved in the bird's life, handle him frequently both in groups and individually can do a great deal to prevent a parrot from becoming a one-person bird. Single bird owners should try to involve as many friends and relatives in their parrot's life as possible. However, often just setting rules and providing guidance so the parrot looks to its owner for behavioral guidance can reduce aggression towards new people a great deal.

Unfortunately, many of the bonding myths become self-fulfilling prophecies when people believe they are true. If the owner of a young Double Yellow-headed Amazon is told enough times their parrot will be a one-person bird, he or she may simply believe there is nothing that can be done to prevent or change that kind of behavior and the belief is perpetuated.

Because parrots are intelligent animals, it is possible to teach them new behaviors. Although there may be fairly predictable species characteristics, it is important to realize that many exceptions are possible. These exceptions may involve the individual personality of each parrot. But a parrot's behavior is influenced even more by an owner who has good behavioral information and applies it to create the best pet possible. Because parrots are so capable of learning, they are often quite flexible in adapting their behaviors for life as a human companion. However, it is critical that they have a good teacher! ➤

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# Breeding the Five-colored Nun

*by Alvin & Dixie Lea, Hanford, CA*

[Note: This article has been submitted as part of the nomination procedure for a U.S. First Breeding Award. Anyone having good evidence of a successful breeding of this species prior to the dates noted in this article, please notify the AFA Business Office in Phoenix, Arizona.]

Sometime in January or February 1991, my wife Dixie and I took a trip to a quarantine station in San Gabriel, California operated by Sigie Meyer of S E Birds to get some finches. Once we were there Sigie caught the finches on our list, which included Five-colored Nuns. Dixie and I were looking at the Tri-colored Nuns and were about to change our minds when Sigie told us the Five-colored Nuns were rare and he did not know when or if he would ever have them again. So we kept them.

Once we got the finches home we had them quarantined in a heated room as they had been kept in a heated room at S E Birds. We kept them inside until May 1991 before putting them in an outdoor flight. We did not want a late cold spell to get them.

That summer and winter the finches survived outside but produced nothing. In March of 1992 we were checking finch boxes, cleaning, and putting in new nest material. The Five-colored Nuns had four eggs in a bare box, with no nesting material. Dixie took the eggs out and made a nice nest for the birds. I told her the Nuns would not go back into the nest box. Fortunately, however, they did and within seven days they had four babies. The Nuns did not seem to mind us checking the box and handling the babies. We got the babies closed banded with NFSS bands.

Later that year the pair had three clutches for a total of 10 babies. Also in the flight with them was a pair of Melbas and they seemed to get along.

The finches are housed in an inside/outside aviary which is 4 x 8 ft. and 7 ft. high and attached to a build-

ing that contains the inside portion of the aviaries. The finches are kept here year around with no heat. The inside flight is 3 x 4 ft. and that is where the nest boxes are located. I used a standard finch box 5 x 5 x 5 inches. The nest boxes are hung about 5 feet above the ground. On the wall between the inside and outside of the flights there is a 1 x 1 ft. opening which is open year round to give the birds access to both portions of the flights. Also located on this wall is a 2 1/2 x 2 1/2 ft. window which is covered with plastic during the winter. We keep feed and water inside and out all year.

In the summer time they are fed mostly in the outside containers, and in the winter time they are mostly fed from the inside to protect the feed from the rain and fog. The feed is a standard finch mix, a vegetable mix, and also an egg food. We make enough of the vegetable mix for a four to five day supply and keep it in the refrigerator. We also feed it to our hookbills. The vegetable mix is fed every day with Super Preen sprinkled on it. The egg food is fed during breeding only.

We mix the following vegetables in equal parts: broccoli, celery, carrots, and spinach leaves which are then run through a Sunbeam Little Oskar until they are in bite size pieces. It is mixed together with corn kernels—the corn being for our hookbills.

The following dry ingredients are mixed in equal parts. Wheat germ, High Protein baby cereal, rolled oats, and wheat bread crumbs. We boil eggs for 20 minutes. We add two finely grated eggs per 2 cups of dry mix. Then add one half a package of Knox unflavored gelatin per 2 cups of the above mix. To get the wheat bread crumbs we buy wheat bread then toast it, let it dry, and run it through a hand meat grinder. We make large portions of dry mix, and we add eggs and gelatin when we need more mix. ➤