

Lucky Winner Gets Leadbeater Cockatoo

Dear Watchbird Editor,

I would like to share my wonderful Christmas news with all my fellow bird lovers. I think that by now everyone knows I won the AFA's Leadbeater Cockatoo Drawing last December.

What a gift!

I still have to pinch myself to make sure I'm not dreaming. I always dreamed of having a Leadbeater Cockatoo but it just wasn't in my budget.

I couldn't believe it when Laurella Desborough called and told me I had won the baby cockatoo. I now apologize to her for all the bad things I said when she called. She must have thought I was the most ungrateful person she ever talked to. I kept saying it must be a joke or prank. I asked her if this was some sort of new scam.

I had told so many of my friends that I was going to win that I now thought they were playing a joke on me. I called a friend (a new AFA member) to complain and she recommended I check it out. I called Debbie Clifton and she called Jim Hawley who was actually at the meeting and drawing.

Hawley confirmed that I had really won!!

I still had a hard time believing it until I called Rick Jordan. He was expecting my call. That did it. I had to believe it was real; I was not dreaming.

I want to thank my friend, Thelma, for joining the AFA and I know she'll enjoy the Watchbird as much as I do.

And a very special thanks to Rick Jordan for such a sweet baby. I just received baby "Jordan" (named after his breeder) on January 12th. He is a real sweet baby, gives me kisses and says "I love you." He also says "What you do?" and "Good boy."

He is bright eyed, talkative, active and in great feather. We get along real well together.

He is a beautiful bird. I LOVE HIM!!

Best Regards and Many Thanks
Delma Dickerman

Five Indonesian Cockatoos

Their Biology and Captive Management

Matthew M. Vriends, Ohio

Introduction

The impressive cockatoos (*Cacatuidae*) are highly active by nature and able to learn many tricks quickly. They are talkative as well, although they are not geniuses as talkers and cannot be compared with Amazon parrots or African Greys. Because they also are tamed easily, they are distinguished stock in zoos, as well as pets in the fancier's home. For the aviculturist cockatoos are interesting species, and various races are being bred in Europe and this country. These cockatoos are well adapted to climate and feeding conditions, are disease-resistant, and, in addition, are cage- or even handtame. However, the opportunities to produce such a young bird are still rather limited at this moment.

Most imported cockatoos are (or were) captured from the nest and hand-reared by natives in the birds' natural South Pacific habitats. By the time they arrive (or arrived) in the United States, such cockatoos usually are (were) hand-tame and accustomed to eating foods available to captive birds. Among the most popular varieties are the Sulphur-crested cockatoo (*Cacatua galerita*) and the Salmon-crested or Moluccan Cockatoo (*Cacatua moluccensis*).

Its scientific name, *Cacatua*, is of Malayan origin, meaning "old father" ("kaka" = father; "tua" = old or wise). This name is apt because cockatoos can live 60 to 80 years or more, and often remain with the same human family for many generations.

All or most cockatoos have many characteristics in common. Consider the following:

- All cockatoo species are endemic

to Australia and/or the Southeast Asia island groups north of it;

- All species have a crest that can be erected at will when the bird is alarmed or disturbed;

- All species emit a peculiar hissing sound when threatened or alarmed;

- All scratch their heads from under the wing;

- All are gregarious and are generally found in flocks, some of them numbering in the hundreds;

- All engage in mutual preening;

- Most species bathe either by flying in the rain or by fluttering through wet leaves in tree tops (at least one species bathes by hanging upside down, thereby permitting the rain to penetrate to the skin);

- Most species secrete a powder from a gland near the spine that is used in preening and grooming (powder-down feathers).

During 1982, 1984, 1993/94 I was involved in field studies regarding cockatoos. I hope that this presentation shows the beginner the way to the proper keeping of cockatoos, and offers the experienced cockatoo owner and aviculturist new and useful suggestions.

The Species Menu

Daily Seed Mixture:

- Barley 5%
- Buckwheat 5%
- Malaleuca* seed
- Bottlebrush bush) 5%
- Canary Grass seed 10%
- Millet 10%
- Corn 15%
- Oats 5%
- Eucalyptus seed 5%
- Paddy 10%
- Sorghum 5%

Sunflower 15%

Wheat 10%

As an extra, give birds corn on the cob (2%), banksia (2%) and pine (2%). Note, however, that not all species will accept them. Apple and/or orange, as well as greens, are also good.

In a separate dish, provide a choice of the following nuts (15-20 grams per bird): Almonds, Brazil Nuts, Grated Coconut, Macadamia Nuts, Peanuts, Pine Nuts, Walnuts.

Also, in a separate dish: a commercial pellet (Harrison's; Kaytee's Exact; G/V's Avian Pride, etc.).

Species

Everybody knows the impressive Greater Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (*Cacatua galerita galerita*). Measuring 19½ in., the bird is predominantly white, with some yellow on the base of the cheek, on the throat feathers and on the ear-coverts. The underside of the tail and flight feathers have a yellow tinge as well. The eye-ring is white, without little feathers, while the beak, legs and feet are dark gray. The iris of the male is deep brown; the iris of the female brown-red. Immature birds resemble their parents, but with gray-brown color patches on the crown and on the back of the wings. They still possess brown irises.

Of the four currently recognized subspecies, only two are endemic to Australia (*Cacatua galerita galerita* and *C. g. fitzroyi*). The *Cacatua galerita galerita* has been recently introduced to New Zealand, and appears to have become established in several locations. The other two races (*triton* and *eleonora*) are found in the New Guinea region.

In Australia, the Sulphur-crested Cockatoo inhabits the entire northern coastal region from Western Australia through to and including the Cape York Peninsula area; also, the entire eastern portion of the country from the Cape southward down to and including all of Victoria. It is also found in South Australia (up to the Spencer Bay area), and on Kangaroo Islands and Tasmania.

The Sulphur-crested Cockatoo is by far one of the most popular of all cockatoos as a pet, notwithstanding, of course, its vocal propensity to shriek at

inopportune moments. The species has a good reason to be popular. It is attractive and easily tamed, gentle and affectionate, and often develops an extensive vocabulary, which it uses with considerable resemblance to the actual human sound. Its greatest drawback is the power of its voice, which makes it an exceptionally poor candidate as a pet for apartment-dwellers or even for suburbanites living in relatively congested areas. The species also has a reputation for longevity, and it may very well be that this beautiful bird outlives all other parrots.

Prestwick tells us in "After Four Years" (*Aviculture Magazine*, 5th ser., Vol. 48, 1943, pp 160-162), that the bird Cocky, a resident of the London Zoological Gardens, died at an authenticated age of 142 years! The species' longevity was recognized even as early as the last century. In 1899, Gurney wrote an article titled "On the Comparative Ages of Which Birds Live," in which he records the authenticated ages of three birds that lived 80, 81 and 120 years.

Given that there are few specimens in captivity (as compared to the wild), and that avian medicine was virtually unknown a hundred years ago, the fact that these kinds of instances of longevity exist is some indication of the genetic makeup and hardiness of the species.

Two Indonesian sub-species are known: the *Cacatua galerita eleonora* or Eleonora or Medium Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, and the *Cacatua galerita triton* or Triton Cockatoo.

Eleonora

The Eleonora or Medium Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (*Cacatua galerita eleonora*) is restricted to the Aru Islands which are situated approximately 200 kilometers west of West Irian and 500 kilometers north of Arnhem Land (Australia). The species was introduced to the Kai Islands.

Triton

The Triton (*C. g. triton*) is found throughout a wide geographical area, including most of New Guinea and its diverse island groups such as those found off the southwest coast of Papua, in the Sarera Bay Islands in

West Irian, the D'Entrecasteaux Islands off eastern Japua and the more southern Louisiade Archipelagos. Indeed, for the most part, *triton* is commonly encountered throughout most of the small island groups in the western area of the Solomon Sea. *Triton* was, according to Forshaw, introduced to Ceramlaut and Goramlaut, Indonesia, and to the Palau Islands in the Pacific.

Both races are considerably smaller than the Australian form. *Triton* also differs from the mainland races in that its crest feathers are somewhat more rounded and broader, and that there is almost no yellow to the ear coverts. Like *fitzroyi* its periophthalmic ring is a light blue. *Eleonora*, while resembling *triton* with somewhat more yellow to the ear coverts and underlying bases of the throat feathers, has a much smaller bill.

In New Guinea the Triton Cockatoo prefers the thick jungles found on hill-sides, and while it is more commonly found in lower and moderate elevations, it is by no means uncommon in the forests often associated with higher altitudes, and in some instances as high as 6000 feet above sea level. (I believe that as forest destruction at lower altitudes accelerates in response to plantation development and expansion, the species is provided greater opportunity to explore and exploit new altitudinal levels—an excellent type of adaptation to man's alteration of the environment.)

It might be noted that there has been found to be a direct correlation between altitude preferred and the size of the species, at least as it is true of the Triton.

Ornithologist Dr. Arthur L. Rand found that birds collected at higher altitudes collectively were much larger than individuals collected at more moderate altitudes. Environmental changes do not appear to adversely affect the Triton seriously. The sub-species—almost exclusively arboreal—is rarely found in groups numbering more than a half dozen or so individuals. Since the race is a minor threat to agriculture at best, it is not persecuted and indeed, this race's adaptation, as has been noted earlier, to the encroachment by man has been to move into forested areas at higher alti-

tudes. Unfortunately, intensive trapping has occurred since the 1980s, and both sub-species are, I believe, threatened, regardless of existing ministerial decree since the late 70s (1978).

Both sub-species are, although somewhat demanding in captivity, extremely intelligent and fascinating birds for the serious aviculturist.

Lesser Sulphur-crested Cockatoo

Very well-known is the Lesser Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (*Cacatua sulphurea*). There are six subspecies, and they are widespread in Indonesia. Approximately 14 in. in height, the birds live in open woodlands, along the edges of forests and in cultivated fields up to 500 meters. They are extremely fond of coconuts, but eat all kinds of seeds and fruits, nuts, berries, grubs, roots and even insects.

Their general plumage is an immaculate white, with yellow wash under the wings and on the abdomen. Ear coverts are yellow, while iris, feet and legs are gray-black (the female has a reddish-brown iris). Immature birds possess a light-colored beak; also, their

feet and legs are lighter than those of the parents. After two years, the beak assumes its definite tint. At that stage, the young are fully colored and are indistinguishable from the adults.

In captivity, the birds breed regularly, especially when the pair has been together for a few years. During the mating season, the male circles around his chosen bride, nodding his head regularly, and even taking small hopping steps now and then. If, after a while, the birds start to preen each other's feathers, things are going just right!

The female lays two or three white eggs that are incubated for 25-27 days by both sexes—the male usually during the day, the female during the night (the reverse of most cockatoo species).

After approximately 70 days, the chicks leave the nest, but will still be fed by their parents for quite some time. While being fed, the young birds will flap their wings. Two weeks after leaving the nest, they can forage independently from the ground.

The birds are regularly obtainable, although unknown in Australia. It is not too difficult to form true pairs. In a large aviary, these birds are really impressive. I don't think them too suitable as cage birds, however, since their ability to speak is quite limited. They are, however, far from noisy. Experience has taught us that young, domestically raised cockatoos become extremely affectionate and trustworthy. Wild-caught birds seldom if ever become tame, remain nervous and males have the tendency to attack females during the breeding season.

Umbrella or White Cockatoo

Approximately 17 in. long, the Umbrella or White Cockatoo (*Cacatua alba*) is found naturally in the northern Moluccan Islands near Indonesia. Its range extends south to the island of Obi, not far north of Seram (the home of the Moluccan Cockatoo). In total, including expanses of sea, the Umbrella occupies an area less than 9,600 kilometers (5,850 miles) square.

The Umbrella's most outstanding feature is the uniformity of white coloration throughout its body plumage, except the minor yellow suffusion on the underparts of both tail and wing.

Its crest, extremely long considering the bird's size, is somewhat backward recurving, to the extent that the plumage does not totally follow the contour of the head when the crest is in resting position. When lying flat, the tips of the crest feathers often extend past the occiput, but not as dramatically as in the Sulphur-crested Cockatoo.

The Umbrella's crest is unique among the family *Cacatuidae*. The feathers are broader, totally an American Indian headdress with the crest forming a periphery around the forehead and not, as with other white cockatoos, standing in a row more or less from the back.

The eye ring is bare, exhibiting the faintest hint of yellow. The medium-sized beak is ebony black, but might appear gray because the birds secrete powder from their glands to groom themselves. The lower inner thighs are grayish due to the sparsity of plumage and downfeathers in that area. The feet are mealy black.

Males and females are differentiated easily, even at a distance, because the male has black eyes and the hen distinct warm brown. Upon fledging, immature Umbrellas resemble adults, except they have milky brown eyes.

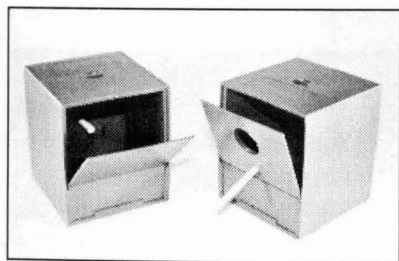
The call of the Umbrella Cockatoo is somewhat loud but not unpleasant, sort of a "heeeeeek" with the pitch rising toward the conclusion of the call. Because of its general quietness, however, the bird makes an ideal pet.

During the past 10 years, increasing numbers of Umbrellas have been offered for sale so they no longer can be considered exotic rarities when encountered in pet stores. I consider this species the most often bred Indonesian cockatoo in America.

Considering the size of the birds, an aviary for breeding pairs of Umbrellas must be relatively large. The size of facilities reportedly provided to breeding pairs ranges from a minimum of 14 ft. x 7 ft. x 8 ft. (Ridson, 1968) to 32 ft. x 4 ft. x 8 ft. (Schneider, 1960).

Pairs do not appear to be very finicky about nest box accommodations. Schneider (Avicultural Magazine, 1960) used an enclosed box with an entrance hole cut into it, whereas Guinn (Aviculture, 1970) simply hung a nest box with one end open facing

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south. In all instances, however, the bottom of the box was filled with humus covered by a rotting wood. Pairs interested in breeding immediately took to the nest upon introduction to the flight and began excavation of the materials. From all appearances, the parents are exceptionally dutiful to their clutch—usually two eggs, each 40.8 mm (1 2/3 in.) x 30.8 mm (1 1/4 in.)—and nestlings. Both adults share the incubation and brooding but the male seems to assume more responsibility than the hen. The young family is never left without a parent in attendance; the first evidence of both adults actually leaving the young alone does not occur before the seventh week.

Diet for brooding pairs relies heavily on fresh fruits, particularly peeled oranges, which also appear to be the primary food for nestlings. Other foods such as sunflower seeds, canary grass seeds, millets, brown bread, corn, beets, and an assortment of various greens have been supplied to these pairs. Guinn found that brooding birds have a special craving for both minerals and iodized salt blocks. After the young fledge, however, the birds ignore the salt blocks completely.

It is not clear at what age the birds fledge. From published reports and personal experience, we can infer that the young fledge in about 14 weeks. Incubation appears to take 27-28 days. Details concerning growth and development of these young birds also are sketchy, although Rosemary Low in *Cockatoos in Aviculture*, 1993, presents some interesting data.

My personal peripheral data, provides at least a cursory idea of maturation and development. At about 27 days of age, the young cockatoo is already quilled; crest feathering is far more advanced than body plumage. At about the fifth week, the youngster is almost completely feathered. By its eighth week, it has acquired more or less the full plumage characteristic of the adult. Upon fledging, the youngster is nearly identical in appearance to the adult, except for its dark gray eye color.

Guinn found that his brooding pair tended to favor the older of two nestlings during feeding, quite obvious by the fourth week of brooding. To

see what the pair would do to resolve the problem, he left the birds to their own devices; a few days later, he was disappointed to find that the younger of the two had starved to death.

A different sort of problem was encountered by Schneider (1960). He had to reduce the overall internal dimensions of the nest box to keep the pair from breaking the eggs. He did not detail the corrected dimensions of the nest box.

Aside from these problems, the Umbrellas are responsible toward their young, easy to care for, and accept the environment provided them. From all accounts, they are (as a friend put it) a "dream" to breed, and they make excellent household pets. I have owned various individual Umbrellas and, while none of them talked, each made a fine, affectionate companion. By nature, these birds are somewhat shy and non-aggressive and the odd individual, if acquired when fully mature, might be somewhat retiring or standoffish toward people. However, most Umbrella Cockatoos are easily tamed, outgoing and friendly pets. Although less flamboyant than either the Moluccan or Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, the Umbrella is an intelligent bird that not only learns quickly and masters many tricks with little effort, it also learns in a dignified manner. Its cleverness was well known even by the 1800s. Dr. Greene wrote: "They may be readily taught to throw up their wings, dance on perch, hold out a foot to shake hands, and bow their head in salutation of a visitor."

Also, because they are slightly smaller than the Moluccan Cockatoo, they are easier to handle when carried on a handler's arm or shoulder.

Although rather common until the 1980s, due to trapping, the species may be considered endangered, although at this time not listed on Appendix I of CITES.

Moluccan Cockatoo

Found on the island of Seram, one of the far eastern provinces of Indonesia, as well as nearby islands, the Moluccan Cockatoo (*Cacatua moluccensis*) is the largest of all *Cacatuidae* species (about 22 in. or 55 cm). In the opinion of many, it is one

of the most handsome.

The Moluccan is basically white on top and bottom but, as it matures, its breast feathers assume a delicate, faint rose tinge. In both young and old birds, the base of feathers on the lower throat, breast and abdomen are faintly rose-tinged. Plumage is covered with a fine white powder used to protect and groom its feathers.

The most outstanding feature of this bird, aside from its impressive size, is its crest. Large and abundant, the crest recurves backward and gives the bird the appearance of having a much larger head than it actually has. The crest is different also in that it does not lie perfectly flat following the curve of the crown to the hindneck. Instead, it lies very loose and feathery on the head. When erect, the crest fans in a cluster at the front, similar to the Umbrella Cockatoo's display, rather than the linear fashion common to other cockatoos. The front crest feathers are white, almost covering the salmon-colored long inner feathers farther back on the crown. When the crest is flat, however, the salmon color is visible through



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the outer feathering.

The black beak usually is covered with the fine grooming powder. The periopic ring is bare, slightly tinged with blue. The same rich salmon coloration found on the crest characterizes the undersides of the flight feathers. Undertail coverts also are salmon shaded, but strongly washed with yellow.

A modest sexual dimorphism in this species is noticed in the eye color: male's eyes are black-brown and the female's are rich brown.

Nestlings still covered with pin quills already have salmon crest feathers. Fledged birds are much like the adult except, of course, their pure white appearance.

The quavering cry of the Moluccan Cockatoo is a loud "eeeeerak, eeeeeerak." At times, the bird also emits soft whining noises, almost kitten-like, but these generally are to itself. Most literature describes the Moluccan as having an outrageously loud voice, but my experience indicates that they generally are quite silent.

Because it is so attractive, the Moluccan is actively sought for the pet trade market, and the species has been exploited for at least 150 years. In a 1952 study concerning birds collected by Pierre Poivre, E. Stressemann (Ibis, 1952, p. 511) points out that the Moluccan already was being collected as early as the 1751-1756 period. At this moment the Moluccan Cockatoo is considered critically endangered. R. Wirth in "Moluccan Cockatoos and other Indonesian Parrots" (*Proceedings, 2nd International Parrot Convention, Loro Parque, Tenerife*) states: "If conservation activists do not succeed in establishing a rescue programme for Moluccan Cockatoos similar to the one set up for the Imperial Amazon (estimated population in the wild approximately 80, MMV), the cockatoo in the wild might become extinct long before the Imperial Amazon...."

Forshaw notes that the Moluccan likes immature palm coconuts and rips off the green husk in order to eat the soft pulp and drink the milk. In captivity, it eats various fruits, seeds, berries and greens. We could assume that these birds enjoy a diverse diet in the wild, but such is only conjecture as

captive and wild environments differ so radically in the availability of food and preferences developed.

As with the Umbrella Cockatoo, there are not too many accurate reports of Moluccans bred in captivity, although in general this species is quite willing to nest: in 1990, according to TRAFFIC (USA) Psittacine captive breeding Survey, there were 317 pairs in the USA which hatched 158 young; at least 120 of which were reared.

A common theme runs throughout all breeding accounts: There is either a predominance of infertile eggs or the nestling(s) die soon after hatching. Rosemary Low, in her book on cockatoos, mentioned above, was rather successful with breeding this species.

It is our understanding that nestling Moluccans are very nervous birds, startled easily at the slightest unusual sound. When startled, the youngsters (the hen usually lays two eggs, rarely 1 or 3) often regurgitate their food. The incubation period is 28-29 days; the young remain in the nest for about 14 weeks.

Goffin's Cockatoo

Due to over-trapping, the Goffin's Cockatoo (*Cacatua goffini*) is endangered; in 1992 it was placed on Appendix I of CITES.

The species is endemic to the Tanimbar Islands in the eastern regions of Indonesia. It has also been found near the town of Tual on Kai Kecil (Little Key) of the Kepulauan Kai (Kai Islands), approximately 200 kilometers to the north east. It is believed that the Goffin's was introduced by man. These islands, which are sparsely populated, cover an area of about 2500 square miles.

The Goffin's Cockatoo is one of the smaller of the white cockatoos (12 in.). In general overall appearance it is a white species with minor head coloration. The crest is short, thick, and recumbent backwards. Unlike most other cockatoo species, the ends of the crest feathers do not extend past the rear of the crown. The lore is a pink salmon color. A faint yellow patch tinges the ear coverts. The periorbital ring is bare and white, and the bill is a slate gray. Both the undersides of the under tail coverts and the flight

feathers are tinged in a light yellow. All other plumage is white. The lower part of the legs appear grayish, particularly the inner sides, due to sparsity of feathering and down; the feet are mealy colored.

Males can be differentiated from the females, especially in bright light, by eye coloration: males have a distinctly black eye, whereas the female's is a reddish brown.

Nestlings have a primrose colored down. Upon fledging, immature birds closely resemble the adults except for their eyes which are dark gray; the eye ring is only tinged with blue.

The average clutch is two, rarely one or three.

This species was for a long time a rare representative of the cockatoo family, not frequently encountered in captivity, and while various individuals from time to time have been held in captivity, there are no records of captive breedings until the 1970s.

The first successful breeding of the Goffin's was by my countryman E.G.B. Schulte (1975) of Eindhoven, Holland, the city where I was born and raised. Schulte's pair had three clutches within two years. All three clutches were incubated, but it was only the four nestlings from the last two clutches which were raised past the fledgling stage. Mr. Schulte published, in 1990, the results of his breeding the Goffin's Cockatoo in *Avicultural Magazine* 96 (4); pages 171-3. During 1974-89 he reared 19 young.

The second breeding, Britain's first, was an event in the Neil O'Connor aviaries at Coulsdon, Surrey, in 1977. O'Connor's pair produced a clutch of three but they were only able to rear one youngster into fledglinghood. The aviary size reported in both instances was unusually small. O'Connor's pair were housed in an aviary measuring 9 x 3 x 6 feet high with a nest box 22 x 15 x 11 inches, whereas the Schulte's Goffin's were the first few years provided a box cage measuring 87 x 44 x 70 cm high, and a nest box measuring 25 x 25 x 40 cm. In both instances, the pairs showed immediate interest in the nesting facilities.

Copulation is frequent, continuing well after the clutches have been successfully incubated (even as late into

the year as mid winter when frost has covered the perches). Mutual preening of the vent areas both proceeds and follows copulation. O'Connor found the copulation manner of the Goffin's unusual, a behavior which he described as "versatile." He describes the behavior as follows: "...both birds remain on the perch facing opposite directions and back on to each other with tails raised and appear to perform the function in this manner. Another variation involves the cock gripping the perch with one foot and the wire side of the aviary with the other adopting an upside down posture with the vent on the same level as the perch; the hen remains on the perch and positions herself in a suitable manner..." Mr. Schulte did not report any variances to the manner of normal copulatory behavior of birds. Rosemary Low gives detailed information regarding her Goffin's breedings in her above mentioned book.

Clutches are often laid in late spring with the eggs hatching before July. Both adults remain in the nest from the time the first egg is laid until about a month after hatching, except of course to leave the nest for feeding. The close brooding begins terminating after about a month and the adults are observed spending longer periods of time outside the nest site, even roosting in the outdoors.

O'Connor's pair was reported displaying considerable nervousness at intrusions in the immediate aviary area. It is not clear, however, from Schulte's first experiences whether the brooding pair were nervous at the human presence. Whatever the case, in each instance, the young were cared for without noticeable aberrations in adult behavior.

After being hatched naked, the nestlings grow a primrose colored down within two weeks. By the third week, feather sheaths begin appearing on both the wings and head. At about 10 to 12 weeks of age, the young birds fledge (Schulte reports fledging at 10 weeks, O'Connor at 80 days, Rosemary Low at about 10 weeks). From all appearances, the young resemble the adults except for the irides which are dark gray. For approximately three weeks after the young have fledged,

the hen continues to feed them. After that, they appear to be quite independent.

The food stuffs provided the Goffin's in both instances relied heavily on grains. O'Connor fed his birds sunflower, hemp, soaked corn, oats, bread, and chickweed; he noted that his pair refused to eat fruits of any description.

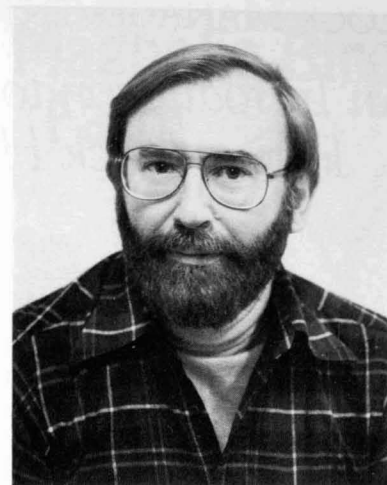
Schulte, on the other hand, provided a diet consisting of 50% canary grass seed and soaked sunflower seed. The balance of the daily diet was a mixture of wheat, oats, buckwheat, and corn. On occasion, his pair were also fed carrots and some greens (particularly spinach and dandelions). Schulte's birds refused to eat either bread or corn on the cob.

The Goffin's Cockatoo is a rather common bird in captivity. Given the extremely small geographical area which this species inhabits, it is highly doubtful that this beautiful species can sustain extensive trapping in the wild and still maintain a stable and viable breeding stock in its natural environment.

The Goffin's Cockatoo has proven to be a charming and intelligent species. They are not as nervous as some of the other types of smaller cockatoos and in general are reliable and tamable birds. Their behavior, however, is not as colorful as that encountered with other cockatoo species. As well, they do not seem to be able to develop an affectionate and intimate relationship with people as is commonly found with other cockatoo types. Nevertheless, the Goffin's Cockatoo makes a very fine pet and in view of its rarity, it is quite inexpensive.

Dr. Greene advised, almost a century ago, that "There seems to be no limit to the capacity for acquiring knowledge of the human language possessed by this intelligent bird which often picks up, not only words, but long sentences, which have been pronounced in its presence but on a few occasions."

Greene's opinion should be viewed with considerable caution by the cockatoo fancier interested in acquiring a cockatoo with a reasonable potential for mimicry. There is no evidence to support his contention. ➤



Memorial to Bird Curator Larry Shelton

by Dale Thompson, Editor-in-chief

Larry Shelton, past Curator of Birds at the Philadelphia and Houston Zoos succumbed to cancer in January 1997. Larry was a great AFA supporter during the 1980s and spoke at several of the annual AFA conventions. His expertise was in waterfowl and softbilled birds. While Curator of Birds at the Philadelphia Zoo, he accepted several AFA First Breeding Awards for the zoo. He was also an early pioneer of the AFA census program (before the WWF's psittacine survey of 1991-1992) when there was very little support for it. His efforts have now been rewarded through the AFA's current Exotic Bird Registry program. We shall all miss Larry but we'll always remember his wonderful enthusiasm and his expert advice on the reproduction of softbills. ➤