

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.

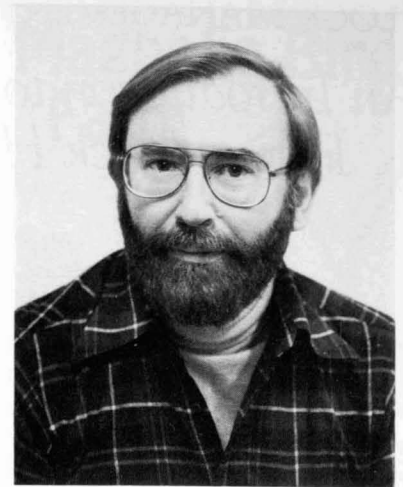
Schulte, on the other hand, provided a diet consisting of 50% canary grass seed and soaked sunflower seed. The balance of the daily diet was a mixture of wheat, oats, buckwheat, and corn. On occasion, his pair were also fed carrots and some greens (particularly spinach and dandelions). Schulte's birds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