

# The AFA in Africa

## CITES Accepts AFA Documents

The AFA CITES Supplement has been shipped to Zimbabwe, was inspected by the CITES Secretariat, was approved and delivered to all the representatives of countries attending the meeting. The AFA has been well represented.

Many thanks are due to the authors of the papers and to the staff members who compiled and prepared them.

And special thanks go to three southern California bird clubs that donated money to help finance the the whole AFA CITES effort.

### Hemet Valley Bird Society North County Aviculturists Orange County Bird Breeders

These three clubs donated a total of \$1750 which was very helpful and covered almost half of the total CITES expenses.

The Hemet Valley Bird Society is a small but excellent club centered about a hundred miles east of Los Angeles. They donated \$500 which is a huge amount for them.

The North County Aviculturists came up with a whopping \$1000 which shows what a lively and concerned club can do at need.

The Orange County Bird Breeders raised \$250 this time and it is just added to the thousands of dollars they have donated to other AFA projects over the years.

The AFA is very grateful to these wonderful supporting clubs that helped in such a tangible way to make the AFA in Africa a success. ➔

# The Family Tree

## Three Generations of Yellow-crowned Amazons

by Eb Cravens, Waiohinu, HI  
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### Aviculture in Progress

For the first time in our knowledge, there are three generations of Yellow-crowned Amazons, *Amazona o. ochrocephala*, setting on eggs at one breeding facility. For reference, this is a continuation of the story "A Favorite Amazon" in The Natural Choice, of the May/June 1996 issue of the *Watchbird* journal.

### An Incredible Founder Pair

The grandparents ("Ompah" and "Tutu") are wild-caught birds (founder stock) and have produced every year since 1976. This pair was kept by Dale Thompson for 20 years. They averaged three to seven viable babies per year. Usually they produce (in California's high desert) one clutch per year with three to four babies. They have never had fewer than three babies in any clutch. They have been moved to a different facility three times over the 20 years and have survived the Northridge, California earthquake in 1994. They still did not miss a breeding season through these moves. They have so far had over 100 young in their captive lifetime. This pair has double-clutched approximately eight times with three babies in their second clutch. This pair has also fed their own babies from 14 to 21 days before the babies were removed for handfeeding. Only one second clutch (1995) has been infertile and this is the *only* time they have ever been infertile.

In 1986, this pair had a double-yolked egg that was fertile but both embryos died at full term. One baby had its head at the large end and the other had its head at the small end. Drowning within the egg was determined to be the cause of death. This pair has also fostered other related and non-related parrot babies along with her own young. Some of these species include Sun Conures, Yellow-naped Amazons and Hawk-headed Parrots.

### Howdy and Tai, the Second Generation

In 1986 one of their babies was given as a pet to a very good friend. This friend was a woman who kept the baby Amazon for four years before the young adult bird (sexed to be a male) began to hate all men and loved women. It was during the fourth year that the owner's adult son stayed in the same house with her and the Amazon did everything to give grief to the son.

The Amazon (now named "Howdy" because he yelled this word at the top of his voice) was given back to Thompson and was paired with a mature female pet ("Tai") owned by Eb Cravens.

In 1993 this pair had infertile eggs but produced babies in 1994. Cravens held back one of their 1994 babies which appeared to be a female. This bird was named "Tia" and was raised in a partial free-flying environment.

### Tia and Yoga, Third Generation in a Family Dynasty

In 1996, Tia proved herself to be a female by her begging/mating behavior. In August 1996 she was introduced to a three-year-old handfed male ("Yoga") held back for breeding by Gail Worth. Yoga had been handfed from day-one.

Of interest is the way these two

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were introduced. Since Tia had been nestbox trained as a baby and given cardboard playboxes at puberty, she had no fear of the nestbox darkness. She and Yoga were placed in two cages side by side some eight inches apart with perches matching up at both ends. An 18in. long by 8in. diameter box was turned on its side and mounted as a tunnel passage way between the two cages at the front perch end. The top and bottom were cut out and a round hole was cut into them so each bird could enter the tunnel from its own cage. A wire divider of small mesh (for safety) was inserted in the midsection of this box keeping the birds apart.

Within one week, Tia was playing in her side of the box and within two weeks Yoga was entering his side of the tunnel. Talking, whining and playing went on for weeks especially from the hen who was one year older than her mate.

After one month the wire insert was removed from the box and the birds were allowed to pass into and out of each other's cage. They would play together each day but go back to sleep apart (in their own cage) each night for the next three weeks. Finally the male began sleeping in the same cage with the hen, but on a far perch. Two weeks later he was sleeping on the

same back perch with the hen, but on the opposite end of the perch. After three more weeks, the two were seen sleeping side by side. Truly, Amazon bonding can move with very slow and careful progress and should not be rushed.

The pair was left with their playbox, but not given a dark nesting box since they were still so young and it was the non-breeding season.

In early spring of 1996, Tia and Yoga began courting and making crude attempts at copulation. As it was well before their parents and grandparents had taken to the box to nest, a dark full nestbox was denied the youngsters. We wanted to get their timing right, and every month that Yoga put behind him on the way towards age four was most important both for mature parenting behavior and for getting fertile eggs. The two were very affectionate and would spend hours each day trying to mate with clumsy effort.

Finally on April 4th, Tia began sleeping in her nestbox and prepared to lay. On May 8th, Tia and Yoga were given their first true dark nestbox (8 x 10 x 30 inches deep) made of thick 2 x 10 lumber. And what excitement the young birds felt, with their tails flaring and bodies prancing. Tia was in and out of the nestbox the first day. She

chewed on the opening and spent many hours chewing on the rotting wood chunks provided in the box to create bedding. Then three weeks went by and the grandchildren seemed to calm down and little mating tries were observed. We began to feel the two birds were too young to cycle.

In late 1996 the grandparent pair was sent to Hawaii and joined the other two pairs (which included their son Howdy and granddaughter Tia) under the care of Eb Cravens.

Surprise! On May 5th, 1997, Tia (the granddaughter) disappeared into her box and began setting. She has been tight on the presumed eggs ever since and is seldom ever seen. As with all of our first-time pairs, there is absolutely no monitoring of the egg chamber. The hen is given every chance to raise her first family without *any* human intervention. This is very important training to preclude bad habits from forming. She is due May 31 and we will see..

### A Family Affair

The grandparents, Ompah and Tutu, began setting around April 29, hatched and, at the time of this printing, are feeding three babies. The parents, Tai and Howdy, have three babies hatched beginning May 11 and are feeding them. The granddaughter, Tia, and grandson-in-law, Yoga, have infertile eggs but are being allowed to incubate for the full time period.

### Building Your Own Avian Family Tree

When several generations of the same avian species are reproduced within one breeding facility, it suggests that there was an earlier conscious decision to hold back some of the offspring for future breeding stock.

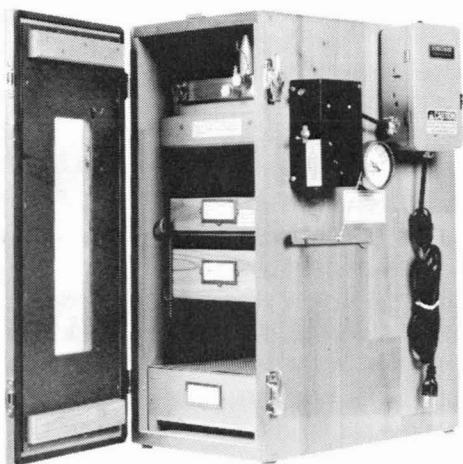
This is where aviculture really shows its true worth. It shows that records are kept and that the breeding facility has made an effort to do its part in keeping that certain species from disappearing in captivity.

It shows that there is a certain confidence in the breeding ability of their own birds to go for several generations.

We urge all aviculturists to pick out even one species that is of personal

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*This wild caught Yellow-crowned Amazon hen, along with her mate, are now grandparents. Their offspring now have babies. All three generations are housed in the same facility.*



*This pair of Yellow-crowned Amazons have produced almost 100 young over a period of 21 years of straight production. They incubate and feed their young and have fostered other species.*

*This 12" x 12" x 24" pine nest box was used for 18 years before it was changed to a large boot-shaped box.*

interest and set aside a few aviaries to hold back captive-bred young and reproduce them into multi-generations. We are aware of a number of breeders who have multi-generations of birds that can reproduce within one to three years (Indian Ring-necked Parakeets, *Pyrhura* conures, etc.) but only a few that do this with the larger parrot species. We encourage all to do this now as no more wild-caught imported stock will be coming into the United States.

When one takes on the commitment and adventure of holding back young birds for future breeding, one must realize that three generations of breeding stock could give you 100 years of breeding potential—especially in the long-lived parrots. Taking the case of the Yellow-crowned Amazons above, their breeding potential could easily be still going on under the care of one of our grand or great grandchildren if the interest in aviculture continues through the *human* generations. 🐦



*Photos by Dale R. Thompson*