

Vent Sexing Finches

by Maureen Newman, Victorville, CA

Some years ago I was shown how to vent sex finches and I thought I had been given the keys to heaven—suddenly pairing up my birds became a breeze. Although it is most obvious in Parrot Finches, it can be used on at least some other species; in particular, I have had great success with Diamond Sparrows and Grey-headed Social Weavers (the latter, I had confirmed by surgical sexing because, according to at least one reference book, there is no way to visually sex this species).

I am told that vent sexing finches is the same as for sexing canaries, but since I have never sexed canaries I have to take their word for it. In general, the male has a very definite protrusion immediately around the vent, usually causing a crease across the belly—the female is flat and her feathers, if not entirely flat, at least point more toward the tail. For accuracy, the birds need to be at least in adult coloring but I don't think they necessarily need to be in breeding condition—though it is more difficult if they are going through a molt.

Those of us who use this method have close to 100% accuracy. It can be readily applied to Red-headed and Blue-faced Parrot Finches (as verified by successful pairing and breeding) and there is every indication that it also applies to Bamboo Parrot Finches (verified at necropsy). I have not had the opportunity to try using this method on other Parrot Finches but it is my assumption that it applies to most, if not all, of them.

There has long been some confusion concerning the Bamboo Parrot Finches—mainly due to some misleading, if not totally inaccurate, information in some of our reference books. According to these books, the male Bamboo has a black band immediately above the beak whereas the female has a brown band. In my experience, the coloring of that band has little or nothing to do with the sex of the bird; I am under the impression that other breeders have come to the same conclusion.

Female. There is no protrusion around the vent, the flesh is relatively flat.

Although the feathers around the vent are not completely flat, they tend to lay toward the tail.

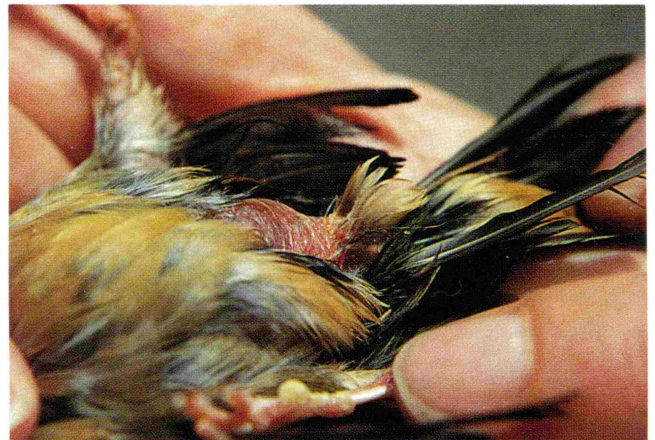


Photos by Maureen Newman



Male. The flesh immediately surrounding the vent protrudes causing a shadow in front of the vent.

Female. Side view - it looks as if there is a slight protrusion but when compared with the male in the next photo, the belly is very flat.



Male. Very obvious protrusion.



NOTE: In all of these photos the feathers around the belly and vent were wetted for ease in exposing the flesh. The female used is a Bamboo Parrot Finch, the male is a Red-headed Parrot Finch - but other species are consistent. Birds courtesy of Sigie Meyer, SE Bird and Supply Co., San Gabriel, CA.