

considerable destruction of their habitat. The completion of two major highways has made their range dangerously accessible. More recent brief and informal studies indicate that this species is most likely in immediate danger. The local human population needs to be educated about these birds. Surveillance of their habitat needs to be established. The preservation of this species will require protection against hunters, trappers, and the continued deforestation of their range.

The only way to accomplish this is to implement field studies to ascertain the real requirements necessary for the survival of these birds. Mike Reynolds (no relation) of the World Parrot Trust and I found that we had a mutual interest in this species when we met for the first time in Tenerife during September of 1998. As a result of our mutual admiration for this bird The World Parrot Trust has recently initiated a fund to finance a field study. The study will be done by Dr. Carlos Yamashita, Brazil's leading parrot biologist.


Information about the WPT-USA Golden Conure Fund can be found at:

[www.breedersblend.com/
goldenconurefund.html](http://www.breedersblend.com/goldenconurefund.html)

This special fund has been set up within the WPT-USA fund to guarantee that 100% of the money collected will go directly toward this field study. The WPT-USA will match the first individual donation of \$1000.00. Mike Reynolds and I have started the fund with donations of our own. A formal proposal written by Dr. Yamashita will be available for viewing at the web site in May of 1999. As more information comes available, the web site will be updated. The outstanding wildlife artist David Johnston of the UK has agreed to provide a painting of the Golden Conure and tee-shirts bearing the painting will be available in May 1999. The painting will also be auctioned off.

Donations can be sent to:

World Parrot Trust-USA
Post Office Box 49766
Sarasota, FL 34230

Make Checks Payable to the WPT-USA Golden Conure Fund. 

Building a Finch Aviary

by Myra Markley
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

You might never know it now but, like most people, I started out with a single bird, a male Zebra Finch. It was less than a month later when I bought a female for him. Two birds quickly became four, then six, and so on. Many years later I have a flock of around 80 finches.

I started out with a cage for each pair but after my flock grew to eight pairs, I realized I was running out of space for cages. I also found that I was spending a lot more time than I liked cleaning cages and changing food and water for the birds.

I tried buying a few large cages for my pairs to share. That led to some fighting, though nothing more serious than a few plucked feathers. At the time, I really had no idea what size cage should be used to house a few pairs of finches, but now I realize that the flights were small and that I have some very aggressive females.

After talking with local finch breeders, I decided to try to construct an aviary. This aviary would allow my finches plenty of room and fulfill my greatest wish – to be able to stand amongst my finch friends. Then the

reality of the cost set in. One small walk-in aviary could cost from \$500-\$1,000. I do not breed birds for a living, and there was no way I could afford that expense, so I talked the



Photo by Myra Markley

Details of the aviary inside.

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We are looking to buy molted, large macaw tail and other feathers, especially from Scarlets, Greenwings, Catalinas, Blue and Golds, Alexandrines and some other species as well.

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* Position open: contact regional vice president if interested.

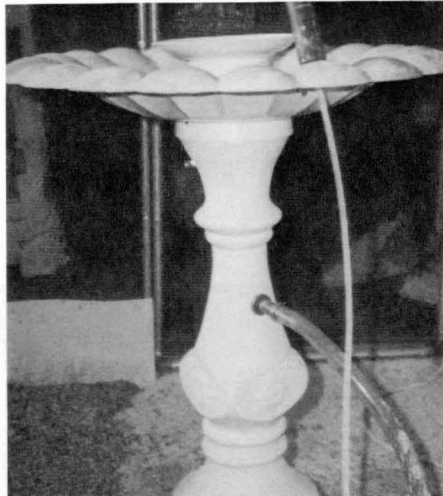
** indicates 2 year term has been fulfilled. If no new interested party comes forward and indicates a desire to serve, incumbent remains in position.

For information about contacting any of these member clubs, please call that club's state coordinator.

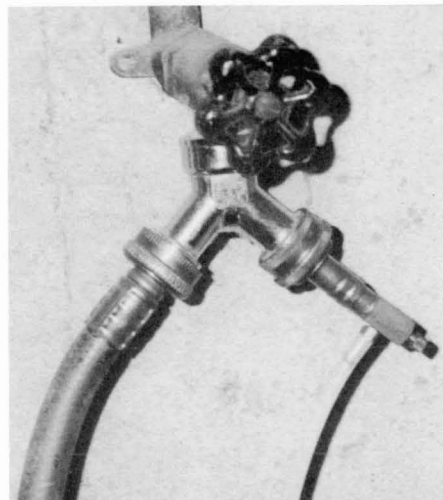
design over with my father and uncle and they agreed to help.

My homebuilt aviary cost about \$250. It was built over a period of two weekends and assembled in my basement because that was the only place it would fit, and because it allows me to give the birds proper lighting. It stands 5 feet 5 inches tall. I'm a short gal so I have no problem standing up in this aviary which is 4 feet wide and 8 feet long. I use hanging bird feeders for their seed, and a small fountain that supplies fresh water constantly. I also installed large removable bowls (the kind you buy for T-Stands and Parrot Cages) to hold the fruits, veggies, egg, and other treats.

If you are interested in building an aviary like mine, feel free to use my design as a guide:



A little creative work made a pedestaled birdbath into a fountain of fresh running water.



Water-flow control valve and food grade polypropylene tubing keeps fresh water running all the time.

Flight area Building Supplies

- 17 - 10 foot sections of 1/2 inch thin-walls electrical conduit.
- 1 - 50 foot roll of 1/4 inch hardware cloth.
- 34 - 2 inch #8-32 steel machine screws and nuts.
- 100 - 1/2 #8 PH wafer k-lathe screws.
- 2 - small hinges
- 1 - door latch

Flight Area Construction

Walls

This is the main framework of my aviary. All side panels are interchangeable. Screw holes are shown as small dots on the frame. Holes on top and bottom are drilled vertically and holes on the sides are in both directions as needed.

The corners are cut at an angle and welded together like a picture frame.

Height of the aviary is 66 inches but can be adjusted to your needs.

Width of the aviary is 47 and 5/16 inches. (Subtracting the diameter of structural component.)

Cover frame with hardware cloth and screw tightly into place.

Door

The panel with the door has the same dimensions as the wall panel. The only difference is that the door is mounted in this panel. The hinges can be any type of hinges that you can find and that will work easily with your aviary design. They must be mounted on the outside unless you want the door to swing inward.

Fit the door as tightly as possible to the frame so that none of your birds can sneak out or get stuck half way through during an escape attempt.

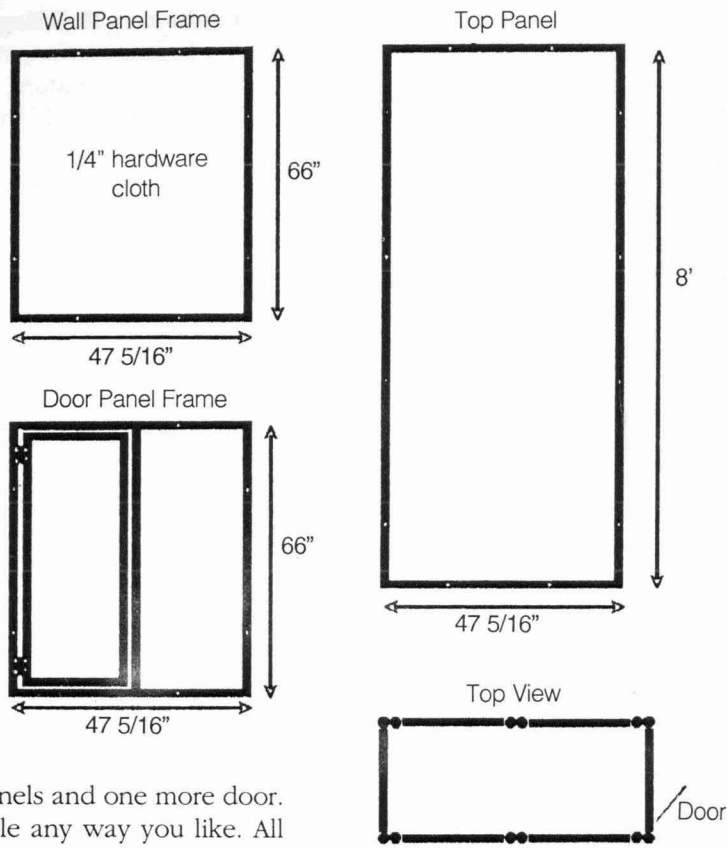
Top Panel

The top panel is one large panel. The location of all the screw holes in the illustration is where the top panel is fitted to the wall panels. The screw over the door itself may not fit and still allow the door to swing freely. I have removed the screw in that one place on my aviary for that very reason.

Catch Area

I don't have a catch area on my aviary because it is inside, but adding one would not be hard. Just build two

Photos by Myra Markley




tube that runs the water from the house to the aviary. I used the food grade tube because it will not rot or break down and poison my birds.

I also used a larger polyethylene tube to run from the fountain to the drain in the basement floor. It doesn't really matter what you use for the second tube as long as it is big enough that the seed and droppings will not clog it up.

To adjust the amount of water flow into the aviary we used a needle valve. This valve is not something you can find at your local hardware store unfortunately. I acquired mine through my uncle. From what he has told me, it came out of an old 8-track winding assembly machine. It does work very well though and the slightest turn will adjust the flow of water from a few drops per second to a steady stream.

The fountain itself is a bird bath. I bought it at the hardware store when I picked up the tubing. A few old plates and a drain finish it off.

The best advice I can give you is to experiment and be creative. As you can see by mine, aviaries do not have to cost a small fortune to build. 

more wall panels and one more door. Then assemble any way you like. All the panels are interchangeable except for the top. For the top panel must build another wall panel or make the original top longer.

Building Notes

Assemble panels using the 2 inch #8-32 steel screws and the #8-32 nuts

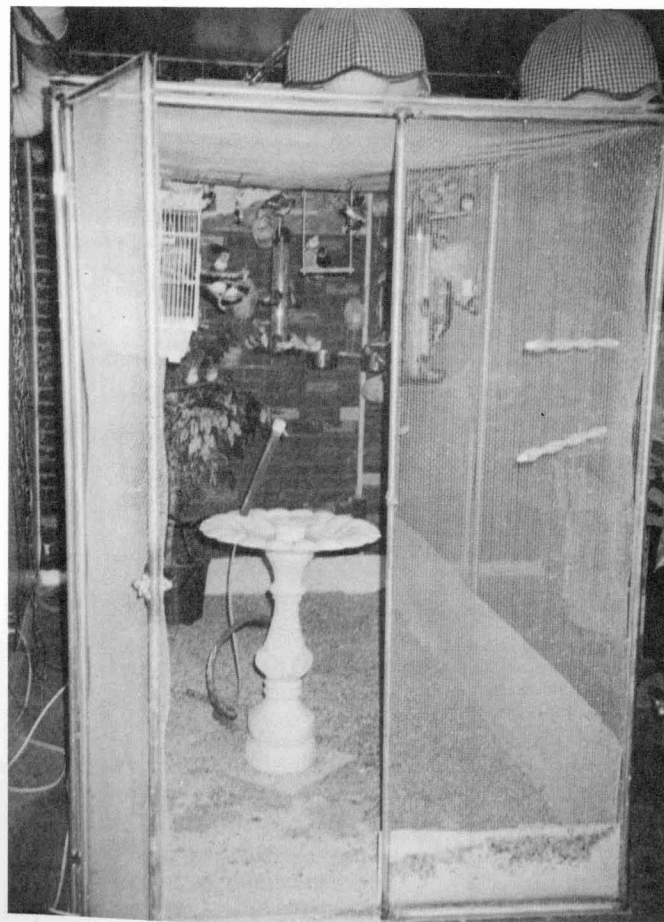
Attach hardware cloth to panels using #8 1/2 PH Wafer K-LATHE screws. The heads of these screws are large and will not go through the hardware cloth

The floor is a piece of plywood screwed to the framework with Masonite or any other waterproof material on top for easy cleaning.

Fountain

The fountain has gone through two phases. It started out as large bucket of water and a small pump that circulated water. The water ran over two small plates and drained back into the bucket through a few small holes. This, however, required someone to change the water in the bucket everyday. Finally my father and I redesigned it to constantly have fresh water running into the aviary. This is really a kludge but it does work very well for me.

First we needed some tubing. One hose is a food grade polypropylene



Completed aviary showing the seed guard around the bottom.

Photo by Myra Markley