

Breeding Parrotlets

An Overview

by Matthew M. Vriends, Ph.D.
Rocky Point, NY

Due to the increasing popularity of these charming, much sought after companion parrots, demand often outstrips supply. It is thus important that aviculturists know how to breed their birds in order to minimize importation from the wild. Although, due to the recent regulations, importation has come to an almost complete stop anyhow.

In the 1920s, most wild-caught parrotlets were imported into Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Denmark; this gradually increased into the 1950s when almost the whole of western Europe and England were

importing them. Unfortunately, in those early days priority was never given to the responsible captive breeding of the birds because they were usually easy to obtain or replace. So why would one "break one's neck" trying to breed them?

Today, however, the situation is quite different. Because the supply of wild caught birds from their native countries is likely to dry up in the not too distant future, future demands will have to be met by captive breeding. Fortunately, most species are not yet directly endangered in the wild but, in spite of this (and rightly so), all par-

rotlets are listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES).

Anyone desiring to breed parrotlets must first decide which species they want to keep and breed. It is highly recommended that one starts with a minimum of three unrelated pairs of birds per species or subspecies. The three pairs must not be related in any way, so that the young produced from these pairs also are unrelated; in other words, we will have three groups of unrelated offspring that can be paired up.

Experience has shown that each pair of birds are better housed in their own breeding cage or (even better) aviary. In this way, it is less difficult to leg band (diameter 4 - 4.2 mm) the young accurately and to keep an accurate record. Without accurate records (a card system, for example) it is impossible to maintain a healthy, noninterbred series of breeding pairs. Don't forget that many parrotlet species, especially hens, are quite difficult to distinguish, which can lead to unwanted hybridizations if inadequate care is taken.

Always take care in determining the species (or subspecies) you obtain; don't just study illustrations in one book, but check various publications (i.e. Forshaw's *Parrots of the World* [3rd edition], Alderton's *The Atlas of Parrots*, and Juniper and Parr's *Parrots*). My book *The Parrotlet Handbook* (fall, 1999, Barron's) will show many species and subspecies in color as well but most of these birds are captive-bred and therefore sometimes look nicer when compared with wild-caught specimens.

Due to the difficulty in determining the various species (and subspecies), it is recommended that beginners start with three unrelated pairs of Pacific or Celestial Parrotlets *Forpus coelestis*. Apart from the re-discovered subspecies *F. c. lucida* (see Molenda's article in *Watchbird*; Volume XXII, No. 5; September/October, 1996, pages 20-22), which is rarely commercially available, the Pacific Parrotlet has no subspecies to cause confusion.

We must set out to pair up pure birds, so that they in turn produce pure homozygous offspring; pairing

The Pacific Parrotlet's plumage is not at its best after being housed in a small cage. Although the bird is smaller than a Budgerigar, it likes a roomy environment.



This is a hybrid male Green-rumped Parrotlet x Blue-winged Parrotlet. Note what has happened to the wings and rump. The nominate form of the Green-rumped has a green rump; the male Blue-winged has a cobalt blue lower back and rump. One doesn't have to be a Rembrandt to see what happens when those species are crossed.

Photos by Dr. M. Vriends / P. v. d. Hooven

Birding Books from Yale

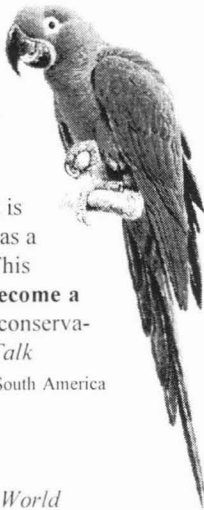
Parrots

A Guide to the Parrots of the World

Tony Juniper and Michael Parr
Illustrated by Kim Franklin, Robin Restall,
Dan Powell, David Johnston,
and Carl D'Silva

"This fine . . . book . . . is unique in that it is the first ever written to be used primarily as a field guide to all the world's parrots. . . . This important work [is] **surely destined to become a classic quick reference identification and conservation guide on parrots.**"—Ian Hinze, *Bird Talk*

Copublished with Pica Press For sale in North and South America
1200 color illus. (88 colorplates) \$55.00



Swifts

A Guide to the Swifts and Treeswifts of the World

Second Edition

Phil Chantler
Illustrated by Gerald Driessens

"This guide tackles one of the most difficult families. . . . A great deal of trouble has been taken to consult authorities on particular species and areas in order to produce species accounts and distribution maps that are as up-to-date as possible. . . . **Those visiting parts of tropical America, Africa, or Asia will need to add this guide to their luggage.**"

—*Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club*

Copublished with Pica Press
For sale in North and South America 24 color illus. \$40.00



Rails

*A Guide to the Rails, Crakes, Gallinules,
and Coots of the World*

Barry Taylor
Illustrated by Ber van Perlo

"This [book] sheds a great amount of light on rail identification, biology, ecology, evolution, and conservation status. . . . The species descriptions are quite comprehensive and the introductory material is excellent. . . . **Very highly recommended.**"—*Wildlife Activist*

Copublished with Pica Press
For sale in North and South America \$49.95

The Covenant of the Wild

Why Animals Chose Domestication

Stephen Budiansky
with a new introduction by the author

"**A subtle look at the mysteries of evolution** and a stinging response to animal-rights extremists. . . . Ambrosia for anyone—whether in agreement with Budiansky or not—who appreciates the beauty of an argument that combines careful scholarship with common sense."—*Kirkus Reviews*

For sale in U.S. and Canada only \$14.95 paperback

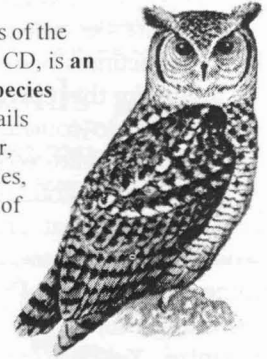
Owls

A Guide to the Owls of the World

Claus König, Friedhelm Weick, and Jan-Hendrik Becking
Illustrated by Friedhelm Weick

This book, accompanied by recordings of the distinctive voices of owls on a double CD, is an **invaluable aid to identifying owl species throughout the world.** The book details owl ecology and reproductive behavior, describes three new tropical owl species, and presents 64 beautiful color plates of these elusive birds.

Copublished with Pica Press
For sale in North and South America
64 color plates and maps
\$50.00; CD \$37.50



Nightjars

A Guide to the Nightjars, Nighthawks, and Their Relatives

Nigel Cleere
Illustrated by Dave Nurney

This book, with 36 superb color plates that capture the enigmatic beauty of nightjars, is the first to describe in detail every species of the nightjar order, an order of 119 species in five families



"**Most highly recommended** for those wishing to identify nightjars in the field as well as for anyone curious about this unusual group of birds."

—Dan R. Kunkle, *Wildlife Activist*

Copublished with Pica Press
For sale in North and South America
\$40.00 cloth; \$20.00 paperback

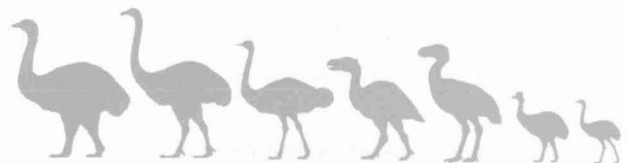
The Origin and Evolution of Birds

Alan Feduccia

"The best analysis available by far of this subject. **Not only should it be on the bookshelves of all ornithologists and biologists, both professional and amateur, who are interested in fossil birds and their evolution, it should be read carefully.**"

—Walter J. Bock, *The Auk*

Winner of the 1996 AAP Professional/Scholarly Publishing Division Annual Award Competition in the category of Biological Science
534 illus. \$29.95 paperback



Yale University Press



www.yale.edu/yup/ • 1-800-YUP-READ

between nominate and subspecies is taboo. Pacific Parrotlets, moreover, are easy to obtain in the U.S., Canada, and Europe and are thus readily available even in the yearly breeding season. Several color mutations are available in this species (which are given full attention in above mentioned book). In order to keep specific color mutations pure, they must be paired carefully, and it may sometimes be necessary to inbreed them. For this reason, I would advise beginners to concentrate firstly on the "normal" wild colored birds (but be careful that you use genuine wild-colored birds that are not split with a certain color mutation).

Another particularly attractive species, without subspecies, is the easy to recognize Yellow-faced Parrotlet *Forpus xanthops*. This species is extremely colorful, and is not especially difficult to obtain in Europe. In the

U.S. and Canada it has been intensively imported during the last five or so years and has been bred widely. The future of this species in aviculture looks rosy.

All of the other species have one or more subspecies, some of which are extremely difficult to distinguish from each other. If you want to breed these species/subspecies (which is quite possible), you must be very familiar with the various subspecies, so that false pairings and inbreeding can be avoided. At this point I will stress again, that only strict selection of pairs of pure nominate or subspecies can guarantee the continuing existence of the pure form.

For example, a nominate hen of the well-known Green-rumped Parrotlet, *Forpus passerinus*, paired with a cock Blue-winged Parrotlet, *Forpus xanthopterygius*, will produce offspring that are not only racially impure, but they also closely resemble the father Blue-winged Parrotlet. Inexperienced aviculturists would often mistake these offspring for pure Blue-winged Parrotlets. Such hybrids have demanded high prices when sold as "subspecies of the Blue-winged Parrotlet." Such fraudulent representations have no place in the avicultural community.

It is also very advantageous to know if the birds you are considering are wild caught, or captive bred. It is not possible to estimate the age of wild caught birds, and hens must be at least one year old before they can be safely bred. Additionally, older, wild caught birds are not always anxious to pair up when placed together in a cage or aviary (see below). Such difficulties are minimized if you use captive bred stock. I would therefore advise beginners to deal only with captive bred birds, using a trio of unrelated pairs, in order to build up a line.

Selecting Breeding Pairs

Parrotlet partners are very faithful and devoted. This is very easy to observe in their behavior. Should one bird fly to a perch, or nest box, the other will follow almost immediately. If it flies to feed or drink, the partner will join it without hesitation. The birds will frequently preen each other mutually. Though they have their occasion-

al short altercation, they will soon make up with renewed tenderness. They will separate themselves from other aviary inhabitants, and will chase them away if they get too close. They sleep, in their favorite spot, pressed tightly to each other and, when the hen is incubating, the cock will often spend the night with her in the nest box. Parrotlets can thus be correctly called the "lovebirds of South America." However, before this is all possible, cock and hen must be willing to pair up in the first place.

The easiest way to pair up birds is to place several unrelated youngsters (all leg-banded) of the same species (or subspecies) in a flight (indoor or outdoor, as long as we can keep adequate control), and allow the birds to pair up themselves. This is not always as easy as one may want it to be, as certain undesirable pairings may ensue (such as brother x sister). And, once the birds are paired up it is almost impossible to separate them without causing them an inordinate amount of stress, so you must keep a close eye on them.

Once you see which birds have shown an interest in each other, you can remove these individual pairs and place each pair in a roomy breeding cage or aviary (each pair should have its own run).

Another simple method is to place two birds of opposite sex together in a breeding cage or other roomy cage and hope that they will show interest in each other. This usually poses no difficulties if previously unpaired young birds are brought together.

Older birds that have already bred, those in which one of the pair have died, or pairs which have shown unwillingness to breed and need to be remated (for example: in order to maintain a particular color mutation) are, unfortunately, not always ready to accept a new, strange partner. This is especially the case when a bird can still see or hear its old partner, even when they are in different accommodations.

You can leave the newly introduced pair together for a few weeks but if, after two months, the birds have shown no interest in each other (by sitting well apart on their perches, etc.), then it is advisable to try again with totally new partners and, perhaps, a change of cage

Lifetime Membership

\$1,000

Installment \$100/month
for 12 months.

Installment plan available with
Credit Card payment only.

Regular Membership

Individual - \$30

Family - \$35

Supporting - \$50*

Commercial - \$100*

*Supporting, Commercial and Lifetime Members
receive Fast News/Fast Ads by 1st Class Mail.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State & Zip _____

Phone _____

Fax or E mail _____

MC/VISA # _____

Expiration Date _____

American Federation of Aviculture
P.O. Box 56218, Phoenix, AZ 85079-6218
phone 602-484-0931 • fax 602-484-0109

or aviary. Needless to say, best results can be obtained when newly formed pairs are not in the position to see, or hear, any of their previous partners – better to be safe than sorry.

Pairing Up

If you possess two birds of opposite sexes that you wish to pair up, then it is best to place them together in a cage or aviary, late in the afternoon. The birds will still have enough time to accustom themselves to the new surroundings, to find the food and water dishes (but keep an eye on them) and to find a suitable roost before darkness sets in. The following day, you will be able to see if the birds settled together and tolerate each other. If one of the pair is acting aggressively to the other, it is best to remove the aggressor from the cage (or aviary), and to try again after three days. In the meantime, the “underling” will have had time to completely familiarize itself with its surroundings, and will be in a better position to defend itself. In my experience, such a re-introduction rarely results in serious problems and any minor skirmishes will soon diminish. After a week, a pair will be inseparable and will have become “real lovebirds.” Should they fail to hit it off, then you have no choice but to separate them, and try the same process again.

In general, young parrotlets are ready to accept each other within a day and once they start preening each other we can rest assured that we have a new pair. However, this does not necessarily mean that the pair will start reproducing immediately. We should give them a little time before introducing nest boxes.

To sum up: the best breeding results are likely when each pair is housed in its own cage or aviary, without the presence of other birds (including other species). If you have a number of flights next to each other, the adjacent walls should be shielded with vegetation, wood barriers, burlap, or similar, in order to prevent birds injuring each other through the mesh. For example: the Musschenbroeck's Lory, *Neopsittacus musschenbroeki*, and parrotlets (even smaller in size) will not release their grip once they have their beaks stuck “into their prey.”

Experience has shown that Mexican

“Quality Leg Bands With A Worldwide Reputation!”

PARROT BANDS • COCKATIEL BANDS • LOVEBIRD BANDS • PARAKEET BANDS
 CANARY BANDS • FINCH BANDS • STAINLESS STEEL FEEDING NEEDLES
 ALL SIZES PLASTIC BANDS • FEEDING SYRINGES • CLAW SCISSORS
 BAND CUTTERS • PIPETTES • NETS

Since
1978



Closed
Month
of July

**“New”
Stainless Steel
Parrot Bands**

L & M Bird Leg Bands
 P.O. Box 2943 • San Bernardino, CA 92406 Dept: AF
 Phone: (909) 882-4649 • Fax (909) 882-5231
 Monday thru Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Pacific Time) • E-mail: lmbird@earthlink.net



Send self addressed stamped envelope for brochure!






MARION, ILLINOIS
 “Growers of live pet foods”

Nutritionally Complete Selection of Live Pet Foods *for Birds*

- **STANDARD MEALWORMS** Mini, Sm., Md., Lg. 
- **GIANT MEALWORMS**
- **SUPERWORMS** Sm., Md., Lg. 
- **WAX WORMS**
- **CRICKETS** 10 standard sizes. Custom sizes available 
- **OTHER WORMS & ACCESSORIES**

Enjoy the highest quality live pet foods from Timberline's state-of-the-art growing facilities. Featuring unmatched customer service with Timberline's extended business hours. And only Timberline offers Superworms in three sizes to accommodate all your needs.

GUARANTEED LIVE DELIVERY

Extended Customer Service Hours!

800-423-2248 • Fax (618) 997-4692 • www.timberlinefisheries.com

Parrotlets and Yellow-faced Parrotlets breed most successfully in an aviary. That applies also to the other species, but most of them will also breed successfully in a roomy breeding cage.

Nesting Facilities

Wild parrotlets are not particularly fussy with regard to nesting sites; they seem to be easily pleased. In the wild I have found nests in hollow fence posts and holes in walls, as well as in tree hollows. My cage birds are always given a choice. A hollow birch stump (or other "natural" nest box), or a nest box made with planks. Strangely, preference is often shown for the latter. The main advantage of a "home-made" nest box is that the eggs are seldom damaged, even when the parent birds storm tempestuously inside – which they do frequently and may scare the living daylight out of the inexperienced breeder.

Nest boxes made with one-inch thick oak or beech are best as this wood is durable enough to withstand the gnawing of the birds for some time. Such boxes provide more room for the nestlings, and for the father bird when he spends the night with his mate. Vertical nest boxes do not provide adequate space, so horizontal models are better. Additionally, the latter are easier to service when, for example, you may want to hold the hen back with a piece of cardboard in

order to remove the babies should you wish to handfeed them.

Unrestrained hens, unfortunately, may have the habit of attacking their young if you try and remove them from the nest. You should ensure that the nest box floor is provided with a shallow cavity, so that the eggs cannot roll about and can be fully covered by the brooding bird.

Natural nest boxes also, as you will imagine, have their good points; the interior will stay warm far longer than in a board nest box. However, because the natural nest box cools slowly and gradually (which may be a problem in the warmer days of summer!), it could cause desiccation of the egg membranes. Natural nest boxes are quite decorative in the cage or aviary, but they are so heavy as to be almost unhandleable. Examination of the interior is also difficult to perform, without sending the birds into a fit.

As nesting material, we should provide strips of willow bark (fresh) and somewhat moist humus, that can be collected from rotting tree stumps. I don't recommend cedar bedding, wood shavings, or sawdust, as small particles can lodge in the eyes of the nestlings, or adults, and promote various infections. And that is without mentioning respiratory problems.

From the above, you will have realized that parrotlets don't collect their

own nesting material like the various lovebird species of Africa do. You must place the nest material in the nest boxes yourself, pressing it down into the cavity with your fist.

The dimensions of the nest box can be more or less the same as those required for the Peach-faced Lovebird, but "the other way round" – height 25-30 cm (9.8-11.8 in), width and depth 30-35 cm (11.8-13.75 in); diameter of entrance hole 4-5 cm (1.6-2 in). The entrance hole is best situated in the upper, right hand corner, with the nest cavity on the left side of the floor. A few pieces of batten attached to the inside of the box just below the entrance hole will make a "ladder" to enable the birds to get in and out easily.

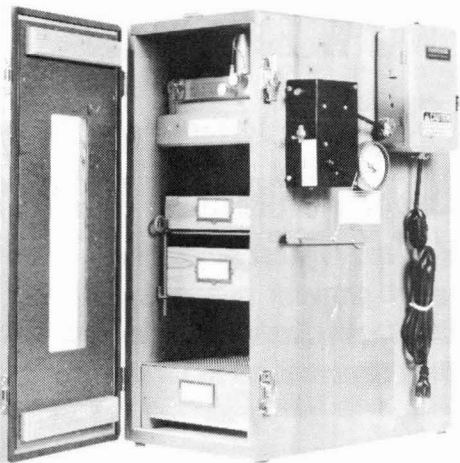
If you have battery breeding cages (several cages stacked together in a breeding room), it is necessary to mount the nest boxes on the outside of the cages, to leave as much room as possible inside the cages; in small cages parrotlets are more likely to squabble than in runs or aviaries. The nest boxes are best fixed to the front, upper corner of the cages, with the entrance holes facing the cage backs. In aviaries where we can use natural or manufactured nest boxes, the boxes can be affixed as high up as possible in a light area. If possible, the entrance hole should face south. All of the nest boxes must be hung at the same height; if you don't do this, you will notice that the birds will choose the highest boxes, making the lower boxes a waste of time and expense. However, I would like to advise again to keep only one breeding pair per run.

Don't be surprised if the birds (especially the Green-rumped Parrotlets) push the nesting material you supplied into one corner of the nest box, or even toss it out altogether. The nesting material must be returned because youngsters reared on the bare floor can develop orthopedic problems (especially so-called rigid legs: legs that are spreadeagled at right angles to the bird's body and the joints seemingly fused; the youngster is unable to bend these joints due to close sitting of the female parent on a shallow concave, with too little or no nesting material beneath the chick to allow for the pressure).

Species, such as the Mexican

The Egg and Us

FIND OUT WHY HUMIDAIRE EQUIPMENT HAS BEEN THE CHOICE OF ZOOS, PRESERVES AND PROFESSIONAL BREEDERS WORLDWIDE FOR OVER SIX DECADES. WRITE, CALL OR FAX FOR YOUR FREE CATALOG!



HUMIDAIRE
INCUBATOR COMPANY

P.O. BOX 9, NEW MADISON, OH 45346 U.S.A.
TELEPHONE [U.S.A.] Toll-Free (800) 410-6925
WORLDWIDE (937) 996-3001 • FAX (937) 996-3633
E-MAIL hatch@bright.net

Parrotlet have a habit of pushing their eggs beneath the nesting material. In such cases you have provided too much nesting material, and you should remove enough to expose the eggs so that the birds can brood properly. Take note of the habits of the various pairs so that you know how much nesting material to provide for the next round of breeding. Fairly coarse humus is good as it is difficult for the birds to bury the eggs.

Pairing, Incubation, and Rearing

If you possess a harmonious pair and provide them with a roomy breeding cage or aviary, with the right kind of nest box, chances of successful breeding are high as long as the temperature doesn't fall below 15°C (59° F.) and the humidity lower than 70 percent. A stimulus at breeding time is the addition of vitamin E to the soft food which is fed almost exclusively to the young for the first few weeks. A good, commercial vitamin/mineral supplement is adequate. This soft food can be given throughout the year, but if you want to use it just as rearing food, you must ensure the parents have access to it at least 6-8 weeks before the breeding season commences.

In aviaries and runs, nest boxes are usually inspected (by the parents-to-be) at night; boxes in breeding cages can be inspected also during the day, especially late afternoon and evening. The cock takes the initiative and tries to entice the hen into the nest box. After the courtship display, and once the pair stays for prolonged periods in the nest box and the male feeds the hen with regurgitated food, we can consider that the pairing is "clinched." The first egg can be expected in a few days. However, don't think that the cock feeding the hen is necessarily a sign of imminent breeding; this can occur at any time, both in captivity and in the wild.

Under normal circumstances it is the cock bird that begins the courtship display. The wings are held out from the body at the "elbow" while the remainder of the wings are pressed tightly against the body. This behavior is repeated slowly, but the wings can also be quickly raised and lowered as though the bird is trembling. The wing

LIVE PET FOOD



**MEALWORMS
SUPERWORMS
CRICKETS
WAXWORMS
FLY LARVAE**

Call for
FREE brochure
1-800-222-3563
24 hour fax
1-513-874-5878



INCORPORATED

BOX 15001

HAMILTON, OHIO 45015-0001

Visit our WEB SITE at
<http://www.herp.com:80/grubco/>



**Looking For The Best
Lory Diet?
You Just Found It!**

Lory Life Powder & Nectar



Breeders of Lorries & Softbills

Also offering: Cuttlebone, Spray Millet,
Soak & Cook, Nest Boxes, Spirulina



EXACT NUTRITION • NO MESS

CUTTLEBONE PLUS

P.O. Box 305, Fallbrook, CA 92088

(760) 591-4951

Orders only: (800) 747-9878



movements are usually accompanied by bowing movements towards the hen. The hen, in response, may drum her beak against the branch or perch on which she is sitting. The male, also, sometimes may perform this beak drumming.

Occasionally the cock may approach the hen with tripping steps; but this is only possible when there is adequate room on the branch or perch. Sometimes the whole dance may be performed on top of the nest box or, rarely, on the ground. In the wild, I have never observed the courtship display performed on the ground in any species. If the hen is ready to mate, she will make little bows, and raise her tail. The cock will then raise one of his feet on to her back while using one of his wings to hold her body; the second foot is held fast to the perch in order to maintain balance. Copulation is not via "back-sitting," but "sideways" – for parrots a somewhat unusual posture.

Eggs are usually laid every second day, but sometimes a hen may lay daily. I have observed this in Mexican and Yellow-faced Parrotlets. The usual clutch contains 5-6 eggs, rarely more, and seldom less than four. Exceptions include the hen Pacific Parrotlet, which can lay up to 10 fertile eggs.

Incubation (brooding) is carried out by the hen and begins usually after the appearance of the second egg, so that the young hatch in the order in which the eggs were laid. There can, therefore, be a considerable time difference between the laying of the first and last egg, especially in large clutches.

However, under normal conditions, eggs take about 21 days to hatch. As we

have stated, hens brood alone and, during incubation, rarely leave the nest. During this time she is fed regularly by the cock bird. During the day, the cock stays close to the nest box, ready to defend it fiercely should danger threaten. This is particularly applicable to wild birds. The cock frequently spends the night in the nest box with the hen and, occasionally, may brood the eggs for several hours. Some hens, however, will not allow this to happen.

Brooding hens have white, fluid droppings which they usually pass only once per day, and then when they leave the nest box to feed. *This is the best time to inspect the nest.*


Should the clutch be too large, that is to say at least six eggs, then the eggs should be candled to assess any that may be infertile. Infertile eggs must be removed. A clutch of five eggs is ideal for brooding. With more than five, one or more of the eggs may not be covered during incubation, will cool down, and the embryo will die. As the eggs are frequently turned, interchanged, and moved by the hen, this can mean that a high percentage of embryos can be lost when the clutch is too large.

On hatching, the deaf, blind, lightly-downed chicks, frequently herald their arrival during the day with their loud cries. The young of Blue-winged, Green-rumped, and Spectacled Parrotlets are especially lively, and create pandemonious sounds a few hours after hatching. From that time, the nest must not be disturbed for the first few days. It is important to supply adequate rearing food, millet spray, germinated seeds, and finely chopped greens at this stage.

At the age of about eight days the young will be large enough to be banded. with the help of a little saliva or petroleum jelly (after banding, wipe clean with a piece of wadding), hold the two front toes and the longer of the rear toes to the front, leaving the shorter rear toe to the rear. The diameter of the band is just a little greater than the joint, and slips easily over it. You can pull the small rear toe through the ring (band) with a sharpened matchstick. Check after 3-4 days if the ring is still in position. It is advisable to darken the ring with a black, felt-tipped pen in case the hen tries to toss it out of the nest, complete with its wearer. The inner diameter of the band should be 4 mm in most cases, but for the larger species such as Yellow-faced Parrotlets, Pacific Parrotlets and Mexican Parrotlets, a Budgerigar band of 4.2 mm diameter is better.

If all goes well, the young will have their first feathers after 12-14 days. At 20 days of age the whole body is feathered and after a further 10 days they will have their complete juvenile plumage. The young will leave the nest at 32-35 days.

As soon as the young have left the nest, they will begin to seek out their own food. This will consist initially of soft food and germinated seeds (especially from millet spray). They learn to feed from their parents (especially the father), which continually make pecking motions as though they were about to take up food. The young copy the parents and in a short time, learn to feed themselves. However, they will still let themselves be fed by the parents who will allow this sometimes to continue for one to four weeks.

For this reason, it is not advisable to remove the chicks from their parents too early, even if it seems they are no longer being fed. As long as the young continue to make begging calls, it is probable that they are still being fed at intervals. If the parents start making obvious moves to nest again, the chicks must be removed in case the father bird should suddenly turn on his sons – this can happen especially in those species with conspicuous blue patches in their plumage, such as the Pacific Parrotlet. Young hens, however, are seldom attacked by their father. 

NEW "ALEX THE GREY" VIDEO TAPE!



TRAINING YOUR PARROT THE ALEX WAY \$39.95+S&H

Dr. Irene Pepperberg & Chris Davis. 75 minutes VHS. 1998.

This video tape features Dr. Irene Pepperberg and her famous research subject, Alex the African grey. In it, Dr. Pepperberg demonstrates her training techniques, providing evidence for the model/rival technique to teach parrots to truly communicate rather than mimic. Bird behaviorist Chris Davis then adapts these techniques to train other parrots.

A percentage of all proceeds will benefit the Alex Foundation.

AVIAN PUBLICATIONS

6380 Monroe Street NE • Minneapolis, MN 55432

ORDERS: 1-800-577-2473 • CATALOG: 612/571-8902 • WEB SITE: www.avianpublications.com

Wholesale
Inquiries
Welcome