

## Hand Feeding Schedule (Zebra Finch)

Days Old	Feeding Frequency
1-5	every 15-45 min.
5-9	Every hour
10-20	Every hour during the day, a few feedings at night. Provide millet although the baby may only play with it at first.
20-weaned	Every other hour or as needed


Each chick is different. Some just eat more than others. Watch your bird and work out a schedule that works well for you and your bird.

My finch took longer than a finch normally should to wean fully but when she was ready to stop taking the formula she just stopped begging and started eating fully on her own.

Hand raising finches is not something everyone should try. It is very hard, and the little ones do sometimes die. I have lost three chicks and successfully raised four Zebra Finches and two sparrows. All of the birds I have raised were tossed from the nest or abandoned. I did try to foster these chicks to more capable finch parents but the foster parents do not always take new chicks, which is why I learned to care for them myself.

The one tame Zebra Finch that I have kept tame and not introduced back into the flock is "DevNull." She is a Pied Grey Zebra Finch. DevNull eats just about everything I do. We eat most meals together and she eats right off my plate. It has taken months but she will no longer walk on our plates, she sits next to the plate and nibbles off the edges. She has also learned not to land on anyone's head anymore. Now if I could just potty train her...

She does like to be held and to have her neck gently rubbed. She also takes naps on my lap while I am working on the computer or watching TV. She has her favorite chair in the kitchen where she likes to sit and look out the window. She is very people friendly and will fly over to anyone who walks into the house.

DevNull is a true delight and even though she is a finch, she is very smart and affectionate. 

# The Socorro Dove

## Its Destiny

by Jan Parrot-Holden, Vancouver, WA

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*This article reflects the AFA's early interest in field studies and the conservation of wild avian species. It also notes the very important fact that but for aviculture, the Grayson's Dove would surely be extinct.*

**S**xtinction. We read about it. We hear about it. But we seldom think about it—that sometimes gradual, sometimes rapid demise of a species. To bird people it is mystifying, intriguing, sad. It arouses anger, pity, even greed. Yet sometimes it leads to serious, intelligent efforts for reclamation. The Socorro Dove, *Zenaida macroura greysoni*, it appears, may just be one such story.

The story has its beginning on Socorro Island. Now if the name does-

n't sound familiar you aren't necessarily ill-informed. Few if any high school geography courses dwell on the Revillagigedos, a cluster of islands situated 210 miles south of the tip of Baja California. Socorro, the largest in the grouping, was once the homeland of a unique dove variety, whose discovery has been attributed to Edward Grayson, son of Andrew Jackson Grayson, naturalist and artist. In fact, the bird is also known as the Grayson dove but in this article I'll continue to use the island name.

This monumental find of an endemic species (one that is known to exist in no other habitat) occurred in the spring of 1867. According to the writings of Dr. Luis Baptista of the California Academy of Sciences, the Graysons, while shipwrecked on the island, made impressive collections and records of Socorro's flora and fauna. Among these collections were a great many discoveries as yet unheard of to science. And most significantly to



*The female tends the nest while the male looks on.*

Photo by Gene Hochlan, Council Bluffs, Iowa

our story was their first encounter with the Socorro Dove.

Grayson, a meticulous observer, kept fastidious notes on these birds. He also made detailed studies of avian numbers, behaviors and distribution. It was a grand beginning, which not many years later led to further explorations of the island.

Dr. Baptista mentions that scientists from the California Academy of Sciences made at least three pilgrimages to Socorro between 1903 and 1932. Each time a party visited the island the Socorro Dove was noted. Though distribution seemed to vary with the seasons, it appeared that the doves were especially drawn to high elevations where broadleaf tropical plants, including wild figs and wild currants grew in abundance.

What did the Socorro Dove look like? And how did these men know for a fact that this was a distinct species and not merely a subspecies of its closest living relative, the Mourning Dove?

First notes taken by early island expeditions pointed out the beautiful coloration of this bird. Unlike the

Mourning Dove which tends toward pale gray brown hues, the Socorro Dove's coloration was a rich, ruddy brown. In addition, according to observations, the latter was at least forty percent heavier than its relative. Its legs were longer, presumably to enable it easier passage through scrub vegetation. Later findings evolved from a trip taken by Dr. Baptista's colleagues, Dr. Joseph Jehl of Hubbs/Sea World in San Diego and Dr. Kenneth Parkes of Carnegie Museum.

But the interesting thing about this particular venture to Socorro is that there were no longer any of the doves to be found in their native habitat. They had vanished somewhere between the years 1958 and 1978. The reason? Actually there are two main reasons. The first being that these birds were exceedingly tame, actually unafraid of predators. Grayson's own diaries reveal that the birds were seemingly "unconscious of danger." Not perhaps altogether surprising, since Socorro was uninhabited until 1957 when the Mexican government erected a military outpost and a weather

station.


With the arrival of man came the arrival of his animals. Among these were cats. And herein lay the downfall of the Socorro Dove. Those who have diligently studied, explored and followed the lifeline of the species, have concluded without a doubt that feral cats obliterated the wild population of the Socorro Dove.

Had it not been for several concerned aviculturists, who saw the inevitable and set up captive breeding programs, there would be nothing left of this beautiful avian specimen but the pictures painted by artist and discoverer, Andrew Jackson Grayson. How many of the doves are alive today? It has been estimated that the number is in the hundreds, perhaps as many as 1000. I must confess that I do not know.

According to Dr. Baptista, chairman and associate curator of ornithology and mammalogy at the academy, there is great hope that one day the Socorro Dove will live again on the island of its origin. A program is already in the works to eliminate the feral cats and funds are being sought to maintain a breeding program at the California Academy of Sciences. It is Baptista's goal to one day be able to return young birds to their ancestral land where they will be provisioned for until they can fully fend for themselves.

Will it happen? Since captive-release programs have met with success in the past, and since the Socorro Dove has been termed a relatively easy breeder, the chances look good. And, when it means the difference between survival and extinction, chances are always worth the risk.

If you are interested in additional information or are desirous of donating to the academy's captive breeding program, write: Dr. Luis Baptista, California Academy of Sciences, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, CA 94118.

With special thanks to Gene Hochlan, Council Bluffs, Iowa for his photographic work and to Louie Caniglia, Omaha, Nebraska for his cooperation in providing Socorro subjects. 



*A female Socorro dove on her nest in a avicultural environment. There are none left in their natural habitat to nest. Socorro doves are rather easy to keep in captivity responding well to the normal care afforded pigeons and other seed-eating wild doves.*

Photo by Gene Hochlan, Council Bluffs, Iowa