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# Why Do People Raise Birds?

by "Sally's Husband"  
 (AKA Vince Huntington)  
 San Diego, California

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**American Federation of Aviculture**  
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If you are ever around a group of bird people at a convention, a monthly club meeting, or national bird show, you soon see the greatest pastime is "talking birds." As a captive bird person (married to Sally Huntington, bird breeder, avian artist, NFSS judge, NFSS 6th Regional Rep, and past president of the 230 member Finch Society of San Diego County) and as a professional psychologist, I've tried to figure out - what do people get from bird clubs?

Armed with my handy questionnaire, I've spent the last couple of years making my list, and checking it more than twice. Most of my data was gathered during club meetings, reading newsletters, magazines, and at regional and local bird shows. So, I thought it only fair to cap off my data by getting input from the bird-talkers at the 2000 AFA national convention, Los Angeles, August 3-5.

From things I've learned going meeting to meeting, listening to conversations in the halls, at lunches, at dinners, in smokeless bars, in smoke-filled patios, at vendor stalls, and more, I offer the following list as to why people belong to bird clubs. (Not necessarily in the order of importance for everyone, but it is in the "most mentioned" order)

1. To "talk birds" with others. For a sense of what many agree is "social connection" including the need to "take care" of people. To either "provide a service of information" or to

"become a leader in a project." To participate in fund raising for clubs, and to take part in the "action of the auctions."

2. For the "politics" (not the local club cliques and "political struggles") of the national and international play of the on-going issues of import-exports, the CITES list, the arguments with those who would prefer no one has a pet anything, etc. This includes gathering, originating, sharing and mailing letters of support to congress, the post office, and the senate. This includes keeping involved in environmental futures of avian species, government cross-communication and the like. This includes being involved in travel safety for birds by monitoring airlines, postal regulations, lobbying for better services, etc.

3. Serious involvement in matters of avian nutrition and health. Reading/writing, trying new foods, keeping track, weighing, recording results, sharing results, etc.

4. To be involved in the design of aviaries, cages, flights, travel cages, and devices including watering and feeding attachments, including always looking for a better way.

5. Teaching, which includes writing and publishing articles, including running a club's newsletter. Writing and distributing research results, which includes, passing on any educational feature, article, and information source.

6. Bird show participation including the social aspects of travel to new places, seeing friends again, etc. Getting birds ready for show, pamper-



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ing, hoping. The experience of seeing what is considered this years "best." Watching trends change. Participating in developing and setting "standards" for specific breeds.

7. Genetic record keeping and bird demographics. Participation in such as NFSS Finch Save, or other programs designed for genetic fact finding, the difference between nature/nurture, passing of traits, recording impact on species of dominant and recessive genes, the effectiveness of banding, branding, and tattooing to insure honesty and integrity in breeding programs.

8. Belonging to and organizing national and international organizational events such as National Cage Bird Show, Great American Bird Show, American Federation of Aviculture conventions, regional and local bird marts and sales, with or without shows.

9. To earn a living with birds and bird products, by selling and trading birds, locating birds as a broker, buying and selling bird related products as a primary profession.

10. Developing new and improved, safe and clean water use systems.

11. Mentoring new members one-on-one. Finding and motivating young members to become aviculturists.

12. In support of a spouse or other family member. Drive the car, build the aviary, feed the birds during the bird person's vacation, help watch the birds, and overall, help them be fulfilled in their pastime as an aviculturist.

Why are YOU involved in birds? 



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