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Canary Culture

by Tony Bucci

A common practice by serious canary breeders is to band their birds. Several advantages will result from the practice. First of all it is the only way of keeping effective records. "Closed" bands (rings) have the year of bird inscribed on the ring, and as they cannot be placed or removed after a certain age, they are a guarantee of the birds age. Other information inscribed on the band is a serial number and initials of your club or a specialist society you purchase the band from. Records are kept by the club in regard to whom particular numbers are sold, therefore these bands become traceable. A form of pedigree record keeping is achieved when you buy the rings from the club or a specialist society. These closed rings are made of aluminum and each year the color is different, therefore you can tell the age of the bird from a distance. For example the color for 1976 is blue, for 1975 was red, for 1974 was green.

When exhibiting your canary at the show, young canaries compete with the young, and old compete with the old. If your young canary is not "closed" banded it will be placed to compete with old birds; therefore your canary will be handicapped. Older birds are more mature and exhibit better conformation.

Placing closed leg bands on your bird is a simple process and requires no experience. Time to band your bird is anywhere from five to nine days old. At the fifth day, I take the bird from the nest and attempt to place the ring;

if the ring goes on too easy it is too early, if left on it will fall off. Take it off and attempt again in a day or two. You will soon learn to judge the proper time.

Here is how to do it; place your baby canary in the palm of one hand, with the tips of your thumb and fingers free to hold the leg and foot. Now place the ring over the three front toes, see figure 1. Next pull the ring over the knuckles with the back toe bent back, see figure 2. Now push the ring as far up to the leg as it will go past the back toe. It may be necessary to push the ring while holding the front three toes. If you are late, and the band is too hard to slip on simply - spit on it. This will lubricate the skin and the band will slip over easy. Do not attempt to force the band if you are too late. The final position of the ring should be as seen in figure 3.

In addition to these permanent applied bands, there is also available a temporary plastic band. These plastic bands can be placed at any age. Plastic "split" bands come in many colors and they can be used to identify family or any other special reason. We use these plastic bands to identify sex and family. These bands can be removed at any time with a simple tool supplied with the purchase of the bands.

We purchase our bands from "Red Products, Inc." You will find their ad in the A.F.A. Watchbird magazine.

To summarize, close band your canary. It is necessary if you exhibit your canary. A close banded canary has more value and keeps everybody honest. ■

