

Breeding Blue-naped Parrots

by Penny Luczak

The Blue-Naped Parrot (*Tanygnathus lucionensis*) is a native to the Philippine Island where it frequents forests but often ventures out to open land. General color is green with the hindcrown a brilliant blue; wings have a scalloped effect edged in yellowish-green and margined with a dull orange-yellow. The beak is a red-orange being lighter in the hen; iris pale yellow.

Very little has been recorded on this parrot, a paragraph here and a mention there is just about all one can find.

I share this hobby with my mother, Jean Corbett. Together our collection includes; Cockatoos, Budgies, Cockatiels, Finches, Grass Parrakeets, Mini Macaws, Amazons, and of course the Blue-Naped.

The Naped entered our collection in September of '78. They were purchased from a breeder who could no longer keep them. They are housed in a six foot square cage, made of 1 x 2 inch wire. The diet consists of standard parrot mix, cuttle bone, grit, salt, vitamins, and fresh fruits and vegetables. From time to time a maple branch with leaves intact is placed in the cage for their chewing pleasure.

The nest box used is a grandfather type being on the large side; 29" high and 18" square. Wood shavings filled the bottom three inches. The box was first placed on the floor of the cage so as not to startle them. About one week later I noticed the hen coming out of the box; the nest box was still on the floor at this time. If she was happy with it on the floor who was I to tell her different.

There didn't seem to be any courtship, but on Feb. 19 I heard an odd sound coming from the parrot room; it sounded like

some one calling Joeeey — Joeeey. Quietly slipping down to check on the sound I found the Blue-Naped mating. The Joey sound was being made by the hen. The mating took place several times a day.

On March 29th the first egg appeared, the second was laid the 31st, and the third April 2. Each was laid between 8 and 11 am. The eggs were marked the day laid so I would have no doubts as to which egg hatched when. The day the third egg was laid I removed egg one and placed it in the incubator. This way I felt I had a better chance for success. If the hen did not sit tight I had the egg in the incubator, and if the power company had a break in the service, mother nature was still there. I couldn't lose or so I thought.

On May 2 one egg was outside the box broken. It was about half developed. I then checked the egg in the incubator — no heart beat. It was also dead in the same stage. Which proved the hen did not necessarily let the eggs chill. The egg in the box was also dead. Well, my foolproof method didn't work very well.

Obviously there was a problem with the diet or humidity; at least this was my thinking. The vitamins in the water were increased, wheat germ was added to the seed with vionate sprinkled on top. Next I decided to make sure there would be no humidity problem. Soaked peat moss was placed two inches thick on the floor of the box and packed down. On top of the peat was placed two inches of saw dust and wood shavings. Plenty of cuttle bone, grit and egg shell was made available.

On May 17 the hen dropped an egg from the perch. To this day I don't know what caused this. The next egg was laid in the box on May 21. She had dug a hollow down into the wet peat. The next egg was laid May 23; eggs were again laid between 8 and 11 am. Each egg was marked the day laid. This time both eggs were left with the hen as the electricity was going off from time to time. The eggs were candled about one week later and both were fertile.

The hen alone incubated the eggs. The cock was never in the box; the hen would not permit it! The hen came out only to relieve herself and eat. The male was never observed feeding the hen. At no time did I have problems checking the nest, the hen obliged me and the cock couldn't care less.

One June 12 the first egg hatched in the late afternoon before 4:30 pm the chick was bald with no down. His beak was a horn color not the red-orange of the adults. The hen was the only one to feed, again the male just sat on the perch doing nothing. She ate fresh corn and butternut squash along with very little parrot mix. The chick was checked the next day and the crop was packed full. At this time the

hen was becoming very protective. The second egg hatched June 19 one week after the first. Soaked seed was now being eaten in large amounts along with sprouted seed and a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables.

The chicks were both well cared for and started to get their orange beaks about one and a half weeks old. Their eyes were completely open at about 18 days of age. The oldest chick was removed for hand feeding when three weeks old. The second chick was removed one week later when it too was three weeks of age. The hen had just started to pluck at the youngest; the older chick was not touched.

The handfeeding formula was taken from *Parrots and Related Birds* by Bates and Busenbark. Both accepted handfeeding readily. They slept stretched out appearing to be dead which was very disturbing at first sight. They were completely weaned at eight weeks. They weaned themselves, many times refusing to eat their formula. They would eat fresh corn, petamine and pick at the budgie mix placed on the floor of their cage.

On July 22 the parents were seen mating once again, but nothing developed. The nest box was taken down for the summer and the young Naped were flighted.

At this writing, April 1980, the adults are once again mating, the hen has dug a hollow in the peat moss, the cock once again is just sitting on the perch doing nothing. The female's wings are dropped and she appears heavy with egg. Now to sit and wait with fingers crossed. Is she really with egg or is it the eye of a very impatient breeder? •

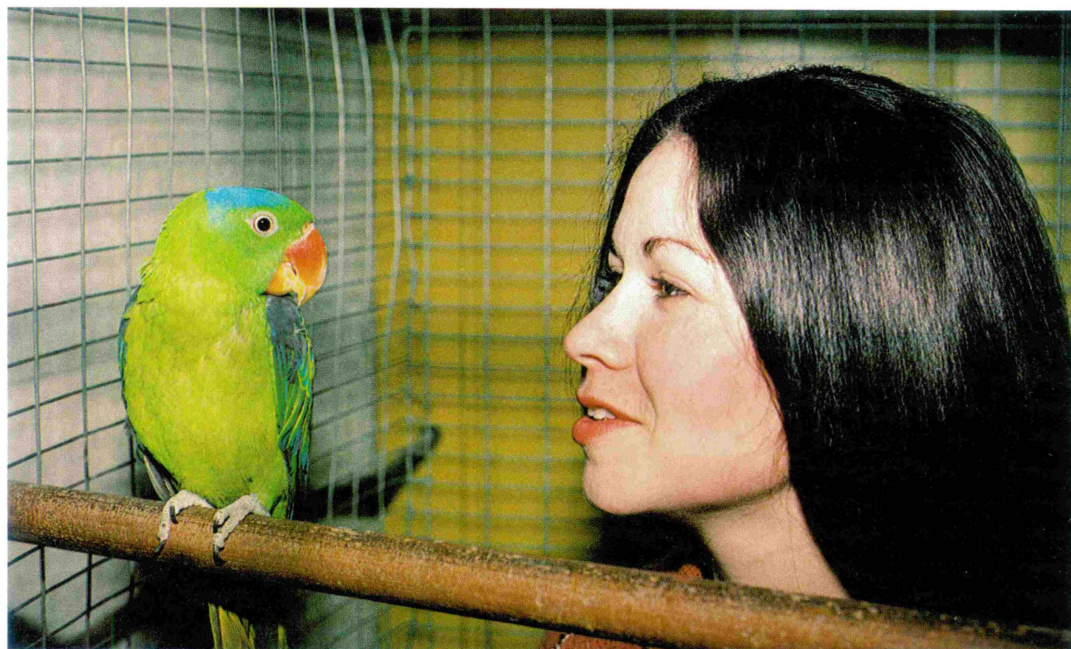
Addendum:

The editor received updated information on the 1980 breeding season of Mrs. Luczak's Blue-naped parrots. One year and one week after the hen began her first clutch in 1979 she laid the first egg of her first clutch of 1980. She laid three eggs of which two hatched, one on 5 May, the other on 6 May. As this article is being prepared to go to press both chicks are doing fine.

Mrs. Luczak has the very worthy goal of wanting to help establish a captive self-sustaining population of these beautiful birds. As far as is known her 1979 breeding success was just the second time the Blue-naped was bred in captivity. If any of you have Blue-naped parrots or know anyone who has, please send such information to Sheldon Dingle who will forward it to Mrs. Luczak. This is the precise sort of data that the A.F.A.'s non-domestic bird registry will deal with as soon as Mr. Larry Shelton irons out a few more details.

Ed.

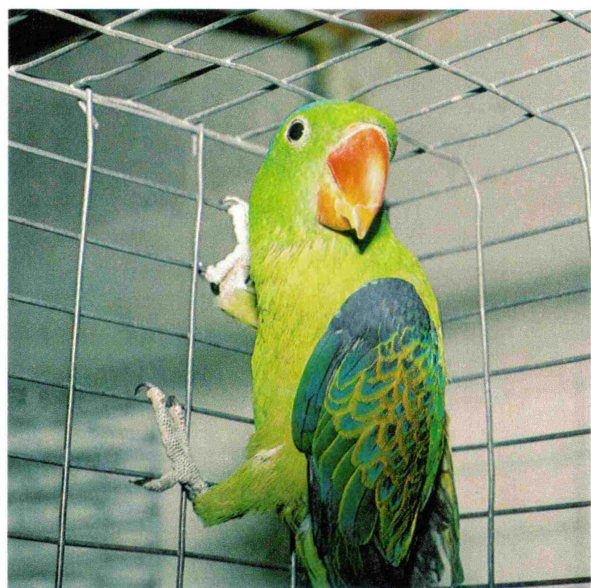
*The adult blue-naped
cock bird and the
author eye one
another.*



*This is how the youngest
chick of the first clutch
looked ten months after he
hatched.*



photos by Stephany Logue



*The blue-naped adult male shows the beautifully con-
trasting colors and patterns the species displays.*

*The blue-naped hen
is very domestic and
refused to leave the
nest box for a good
portrait.*

