

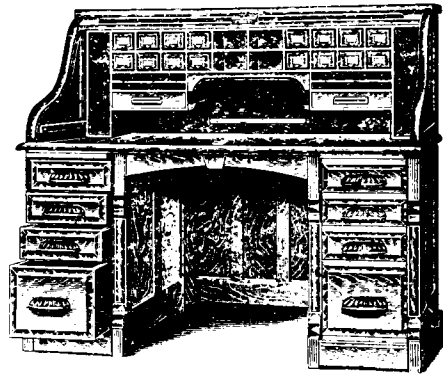
NOTICE

All correspondence intended for the editor of the Watchbird should be mailed directly to his address.

Sheldon Dingle
P.O. Box 340
Norco, CA 91760

From The Editor's Desk

by Sheldon Dingle



including which feeds in what amounts are good for our birds. This information should be of a scientific nature compiled by reliable sources that have no product to sell.

So, let this be a challenge to all of our fine bird-oriented veterinarians and others with scientific degrees. How about some straight answers to our problems, broken down so that even I, a mere breeder and ex pipe-fitter can understand them.

Ralph V. Smith
California

Ab, Ralph, my dear fellow, there ain't no such answer. When you consider that the scientists and doctors can't even agree upon what people should eat, how can you expect them to agree on bird food? All science, in my opinion, is just one big experiment. There are no fixed answers. In medieval literature doctors were called "leeches" because of the custom of using the actual leech to suck the blood out of ailing patients. Now they are called leeches because they suck the money out of your wallet. My point, however, is that a couple of centuries ago the best scientists really felt that blood-letting was actually beneficial to the ill. Nowadays, of course, nobody would agree with that remedy.

Eskimos eat virtually nothing but meat. Many other people (including the late Adolph Hitler) eat nothing but vegetable matter. Most people eat a combination (my wife being an exception—she lives on cigarettes and Pepsi), yet the vast majority of folks live lives of normal duration and activity. One interesting statistic is that the highest breeding rates generally take place in the parts of Asia and Africa where the nutrition is the poorest.

How can we figure these things out? Like you, I should like to feed my birds the very things they should have. Perhaps, as Jack Eitniear says, we should study what the birds eat in the wild. But even there many problems can occur. What if two or three years of drought louse up the natural balance of food? Too much rain could also cause an inevitable shift in the wild bird's diet. The critters have to be somewhat adaptable or they do not survive.

Use the old rule of thumb, my friend. If your birds stay on their perches and make lots of babies, something must be right. If most of your birds go belly up in a few months, something must be wrong. Don't worry too much about the

Dear Sir:

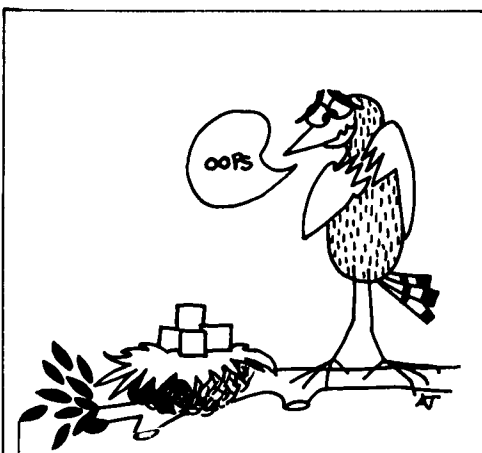
Why is it that the only people who know the exact feeds, vitamins, trace minerals, etc. our birds need to stay in top condition are the same people who just happen to have feed products for sale at exorbitant prices? Hmm.

Why is it that many of our Ph.D.'s quite often give talks on the minimum requirements of carbohydrates, protein,

fat, calcium, amino acids, etc. our birds need but they *never, never* state which seeds, fruits, or vegetables should be fed and what percentage of each we should use to achieve these minimums?

One prominent breeder states that swiss chard used for greens will do great damage to the livers of some grass parakeets. (I wonder why it doesn't affect all of them the same?) Another breeder said sunflower seeds caused his birds to feather pick. How does he account for the birds that eat sunflower and *don't* feather pick? Another breeder used a dusting powder Buhach and claimed it killed a lot of his young peachfaced lovebirds. I used up the remainder of the powder he discarded and had no adverse effects on my grass parakeets. One acquaintance of mine who packages and sells his product to many bird breeders stated that his formula contains no sunflower seed because it contains a narcotic and could be compared with marijuana. My birds get sunflower every day and don't get high enough for me to notice. I'm sure most breeders will agree that sunflower seed is fattening and it should be doled out accordingly.

The list goes on and on. There is controversy regarding wheatgerm oil, corn, and nearly everything else you can think of. I think it is time we stopped all this wrangling. I really think it is time the true facts are brought out pertaining to our birds' daily needs and requirements



All things are relative. In the Oct./Nov. Watchbird the cover photo descriptions on page three were inadvertently reversed. Or, the front and back cover photos were transposed. Or, there was neither a front nor back photo at all. Both should be viewed from the side.

professors and doctors. Test their theories and if the results work in your aviaries, use them. If not, discard them.

The main concern I should think is to avoid too much stress and worry about positive laws of nature that no one seems to understand very well. Such stress may blow your pump and your birds will outlive you on their wrong diet.

Nothing delights me so much as seeing a radical health-nut get run over by a truck while jogging the roads to preserve his health.

Ed.



Dear Sheldon Dingle,

The photo of aviculturist Mattice was just great. I've been meaning to write you a letter of support, for more than likely your outrageous, direct-to-the-target editorial replies have drawn some criticism. Keep it up. Your humor is desperately needed to offset the U.S.D.A. and disease articles.

Hidden away here in my avian cloister behind three locked gates seven miles on a dirt road into the mountains, I'm concerned about how the A.F.A. is protecting the address I put on my A.F.A. Bird Registry form. Is someone down there dealing with the possibility of F.W.S. using this registry to finger the private breeder when the politics sway in their favor? What are you going to do when they want to know where we all are? How can members have access to each others stock through the registry without F.W.S. also having the same access? Hmmm.

Thanks for your energy,
Fred Bauer
Garberville, Ca.

I'll have to admit that I've never seen a better photo of Mattice. It seemed to catch all the innocent glow of his pure heart. I'm glad you liked it.

Now, on to your other comments. Let me assure you that your address is quite safe in the hands of the A.F.A. All A.F.A. name-lists are private property and are jealously guarded. The F.W.S. will not "finger" you nor any other breeder off of an A.F.A. list. You, on the other hand (no pun intended) may finger the F.W.S. any time you want to extend your arm and hand with the appropriate gesture.

Sometimes I worry that our paranoia regarding secrecy is somewhat unnecessary. What reasons exist for a legitimate bird operation to go undercover? The government has no interest in any legal operation. I can think of just two reasons for secrecy—fear of thieves (a very real problem), and an illegal operation. Now, I'm very confident that no A.F.A. member would do anything illegal such as rip off the I.R.S., keep illegal birds, or deal with smuggled stock. If your security system (walls, lights, alarms, dogs, gun turrets, moats, etc., etc.) is in good order, you have nothing to fear even if your address should become known. Even so, rest easy, sir. Your whereabouts won't be learned off of an A.F.A. list.

The main activity right now is the gathering of bird data. At present, Larry Shelton is not doing anything but gathering and organizing census data on captive birds. When the body of data is large enough, a committee will work out a foolproof system whereby breeders can arrange breeding loans or exchanges of birds but that must wait until more data arrives.

Many of our members don't seem to realize that if we remain hidden and invisible, we will be steamrollered by factions that oppose aviculture. Our only hope is to prove that we are keeping and raising lots of birds. When the government and the enviromaniacs actually see our spacious, well-planted, sanitary, flower-bordered breeding facilities, they will lose a great deal of their steam regarding the nasty way we jam hundreds of birds into tiny cages until they die.

Thank you very much for your kind words and thank you even more for sending in your A.F.A. Breeder's Registry form.

Ed.



Dear Editor,

I just received my October/November issue, and I must thank you for the useless bird show calendar on page 42-43. Almost all the listings, and especially the few in my area, are already past. It would be gratifying in the future if you would serve your membership in a timely manner. Also, I realize that A.F.A. was a California-oriented publication, but since you claim to be of national scope, how about some non-west coast articles, non-west coast ads, and

Bracken Bird Farm



Finches
Cockatiels
Lovebirds
Parrots
Quails
Doves

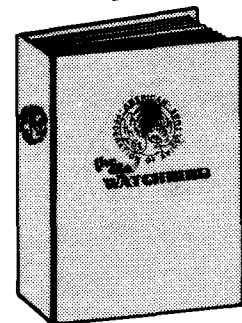
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non-west coast authors?

Phil Kramer
McLean, Virginia

The problem of timeliness is very difficult for us to correct. The magazine you refer to was mailed during the first week of October. It should take no longer than three days to arrive at your home but, obviously, it took about three weeks. Beating one's cane on the postmaster's desk doesn't seem to get the job done any better. We will continue trying to overcome this prodigious government inefficiency but my hopes are not high.

You would have done well, sir, to end

your letter with the legitimate time complaint. It has validity. Your "non-west coast" diatribe suggests that you failed to read anything in the magazine except the show calendar.

The magazine contained eight articles by eight different authors. Two of them reside in California, and one each in France, England, Virginia, Maryland, Missouri, and Texas. To preclude anyone else's making a fool of themselves, I'll publish the country or state of each contributing author from now on.

The same is true of the ads, my dear fellow. Nine states east of the Mississippi were represented in the advertising in-

cluding your own Virginia. If you read an ad, you will find that its place of origin is always listed in the ad itself. If you really wanted to buy something you should have noticed that.

I take valid criticism seriously and really endeavor to make corrections. But when I read this ridiculous "east vs. west" drivel it merely points out a serious flaw in your powers of observation. The Watchbird and I, your humble servant, are far from perfect but it is not done, sir, to take a serious shot with blanks.

Ed.

BABY CATALINA MACAWS: Hatched May 1980. SCARLET-CHESTED PARAKEETS: Sexed \$250 pair. PAIR TRITON COCKATOOS \$2000. WANTED: Red factor canaries male 1979-80. Yorkshire pairs. Saul G. Fruttero (213) 799-3533.

CATALINA MACAWS & UMBRELLA COCKATOOS. Handfed babies, cuddly. Hatched in my aviary. Brilliant colors. Mickey Hensel, Rt. 1 Box 222, Kankakee, Ill., 60901, (815) 932-9631.

PROBLEMS WITH FINCHES is a booklet designed to assist every finch breeder in keeping finches in good health and in handling daily problems with them. All common problems in maintaining finches are covered. Order direct from the author \$9.50 postpaid in North America. Add \$1.00 for overseas airmail. Robert G. Black, Route 10, Box 131-B, Franklin, N.C. 28734.

J & R Parrot Ranch is offering for sale: Hand-fed Yellow Napes \$450. Baby Blue & Gold Macaws \$750, and many more fine birds. Send SASE for list. 11217 Pala Place, Mira Loma, CA 91752, (714) 685-5118.

FOR SALE: Lady Gouldians in full color, all birds colony-bred in outside aviaries. Arthur Schultz of Escondido, California. (714) 745-1290.

FLIGHT PHOTOS of waterfowl, shorebirds, doves, sandgrouse, loons, and swifts. Slides, \$1.50 each, or \$1.25 for 4 or more. Send self-addressed, stamped envelope for list to: Grutek, 2229 Tulane Ave., Long Beach, CA 90815.

Hatched in my aviary & handfed. NOT QUARANTINE. All under 4 mos. Blue & Gold, Military X Green wing, & Catalina macaws. Umbrella & Citron cockatoos. African greys. Quality, not quantity. Mickey Hensel, Rt. 1 Box 222, Kankakee, Ill., 60901, (815) 932-9631, S.A.S.E.

Cockatiels 1980 hatch - normal \$25., pied & albino \$45. 1/2 English parakeets, 3 young orange wings in excellent health \$85. ea. trade for breeding pairs. Rod Hug (707) 539-3413.

1980 hatch rosellas, per pair. Mealy \$400.00, Golden Mantled \$175.00, Stanley \$350.00, also Pennant, Adelaide, Rock Pebbles, Barrabands, Ornamental pheasants, Ed Benhardt, Reardan, Wash. 99029. Phone (509) 796-5001.

INVESTORS WANTED. for new breeding bird farm, cockatiels, doves, lovebirds, parakeets \$5000-\$10,000 investment. Returns double or more. Farm located in California. Future plans include 1650 aviaries—50 holding pens, shipping building, much more. (213) 538-2076 evenings only.

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CLASSIFIED RATES — \$5.00 minimum charge for 4 lines of type (average 7 words per line). Additional charge of 9¢ per word for ad running over 28 words. (28 words to include name, address and phone.) All copy to be **RECEIVED BY 10th** day of month preceding publication. One inch boxed ad - 58 word maximum — \$12.00.

FALLOW COCKATIELS. First time this new mutation offered. Limited number for sale, \$400.00 each. Irma Vowels, 14551 S.W. 26th St., Fort Lauderdale, Fla., 33325, (302) 472-6436.

RECYCLING SEED DISPENSERS for wild birds, cages, aviaries indoor or outdoor. SASE for free brochures: Nature-Life Co., R-15, Box 763-L, N. Ft. Myers, Fl. 33903, (813) 995-4679.

SUPER BIRDS LTD. is a breeding farm and brokerage. Fertile macaw eggs and surgically sexed macaws always available. Resale birds—amazons, cockatoos, etc.—are cultured, wormed and fat before being sold. Wholesalers make money with our birds because 100% live or are replaced. Find out why. (305) 461-6484.

FOR SALE: Cockatiels & Lovebirds. Southern California breeder has many mutations for sale year round. Minimum order 25 birds. Jobbers inquiries invited. Canyon Acres Aviary, P.O. Box 1802, Escondido, CA 92025.

Imported exhibition Budgerigars, Lady Gouldians, Chestnut Breasted, parrot finches, owl finches. Wanted: mutation Bourkes, scarlet chested, Stanley's Rosellas, home bred birds only. Dr. R.G. Travnicek, Wilber, NB 68465, (402) 821-2121.

AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE SAFARI. 30 day camping trip into the Australian outback. Departs June 15, 1981. Write or call for free brochure. Escorted by Rod Barth, P.O. Box 1162, Yorba Linda, Ca. 92686. (714) 528-7926.

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Needed for breeding program. Surgically sexed male hyacinth, great bill parrot-female, crimson wing parakeet-female. Have extra female hyacinth. Will swap. D.S. McCall, 1202 Twin Palm Drive, Ft. Myers, Fla., 936-1627

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CANARIES: Parisian frills, Yorkshire, Border, English, Gloster, Lizards, Hunchback, Color Breed, Normal yellow. All color, soon Hybrys, Siskin, Norwich. Mr. Santiago, 1712 Parana St., El Cerezal, R.P., Pto. Rico 00926, (809) 767-2985.

FINCHES: Strawberries, Spices, tri-color nun, Societies, Silver bill, Orange cheeks, Weavers, Whydahs, Australian finches, and many others. Soft-bills too. Mr. Santiago, 1712 Parana St., El Cerezal, R.P., Pto. Rico 00926, (809) 767-2985.

Wanted. Red vented cockatoos for breeding purposes. Call Rick, (312) 281-3580, 294-4687.



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