

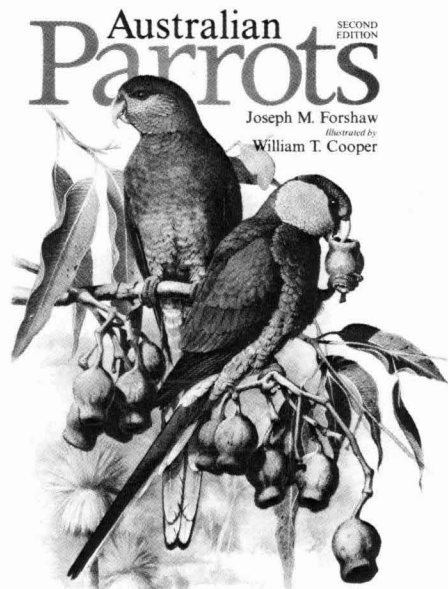
Data from Down Under or

Good News from Australia!

by Sheldon Dingle
Norco, CA

Many kinds of birds are kept in aviculture but I'm sure you will all agree that the parrot in its many varieties is the most popular bird in captivity. Most of you also know that about eight years ago Joseph M. Forshaw and William T. Cooper prepared a book that has become the aviculturists bible — *Parrots of the World*. In 1973 it sold for \$75.00 and I bought twenty copies that went to various and sundry friends and acquaintances. I even kept several copies for myself.

Whenever a question regarding a parrot's identity arises, out comes *Parrots of the World*. Whenever we acquire a new species of parrot for our collection, out comes *Parrots of the World*. Even the officials in the U.S. Customs and U.S. Department of Agriculture refer to *Parrots of the World* while monitoring the bird imports into the country.



In short, the volume has had a great impact on modern aviculture. Forshaw's data and Cooper's outstanding paintings have become part and parcel of our lives.

Well, my friends, that inimitable pair has done it again. Forshaw has revised, updated, and expanded his early edition of *Australian Parrots*. Being an astute young fellow, Forshaw measured the success of his *Parrots of the World* and designed his second edition of *Australian*

Parrots on the same format. For this second edition Mr. Cooper was commissioned to create all new paintings of the Australian parrots. The plates are all new — none were taken from *Parrots of the World*. The paintings are exquisite.

Now I should get to the matter at hand. My dear friends, a new book will be available to use about August of 1981. It is this second edition of *Australian Parrots* by Joseph M. Forshaw illustrated by William T. Cooper. It is published by Lansdowne Editions, Victoria, Australia, and distributed in the U.S. by Mereweather Press Inc., 420 Madison Ave., New York, New York, 10017.

This book is, as I have mentioned, designed as a companion volume to *Parrots of the World*. Both volumes should be on your shelf. The new volume will occasionally refer you to the *Parrots of the World* particularly regarding taxonomy and the origins of Australian parrots. Granted, most of you are disinterested in parrot systematics or fossil parrots but I mention this to point out the inter-relationship between the two volumes.

What most of you *are* concerned with is the Australian parrots in captivity. But Joseph Forshaw, you say, is no great friend of aviculture — what can we learn about captive birds from him?

A healthy philosophy for one thing. Forshaw may not be aviculture's most ardent supporter but neither is he a downright enemy. He seems to look upon aviculture with some suspicion and some of it, alas, may be justified. But he says, "Whether it be possession of one or two household pets or the housing of many birds in elaborate breeding aviaries, keeping parrots in captivity is an interesting, worthwhile hobby that can give much pleasure." True. One for Forshaw.

He further states that "...aviculturists have an obligation to ensure that at all times their activities comply with appropriate state or territory wildlife protection legislation." Also true. As a personal aside though, I might suggest that a good legislation should reflect reality in order to earn respect. The recent CITES fiasco that categorized virtually all psittacines as threatened does not engender respect for

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the law.

Another point that Mr. Forshaw casts light upon is the aviculturist's claim that captive breeding is an act of conservation. He says it just isn't so. "Aviculturists should acknowledge that they keep and breed birds because it gives much enjoyment and satisfaction: there is no need to seek justification by claiming to be saving species from extinction." Hmmm! True again, I suppose, but maybe only partly so.

We can and should acknowledge the pleasure we derive from our birds. That fact is indisputable. We can also suggest that a self-sustaining captive population of a species serves as insurance against some future condition that could wipe out a feral population. Such a captive population is, indeed, a factor in conserving the species if something goes wrong in nature.

A few days ago while researching some literature from my bookshelves I read in an undated old book, "These birds are common to Mexico and to all the southern states of America, where they always congregate in large flocks....the Carolinas ought to take a prominent place with the fanciers, and I recommend them to amateurs in this country." The author, of course, was speaking of the Carolina Parakeet. I admit to a lump in my throat when I read that passage. Who would have thought that in a few years not one bird of the species would remain alive — *not one bird*.

If the fanciers had taken the good advice the Carolina Parakeet could have been established in captivity.

The same holds for the Paradise Parrot (*Psephotus pulcherrimas*). A few were imported into European aviaries before the turn of the century but they were allowed to die out. Then in 1902 a great drought occurred in the Paradise's habitat in Australia and was followed by serious overgrazing of the land. The blow was more than the already declining bird could stand. The last verified sighting took place in 1927.

In this age of quick and catastrophic change, who can guarantee the future of any bird? Captive breeding is just another way to hedge a bet on a species' survival even if it isn't obvious at the moment.

But, by and large, I believe Mr. Forshaw is correct when he suggests most aviculturists do not have conservation uppermost in their minds when they build a collection of birds. Prestige and profit have a lot to do with it. Let us grant him that point as graciously as he grants us the privilege of *responsible* bird keeping.

For his part, Forshaw includes in his

Introduction a large, well done section on parrots in captivity. He talks a little philosophy then goes on to a very good section on housing (he shows diagrams of aviary design); feeding, including some good diets; breeding (including diet and techniques for hand feeding baby parrots); and ailments. I found the Introduction to be very readable, informative and rather unbiased.

Although I suspect most of you will hasten to the major portion of the volume which treats the species and subspecies on an individual basis, I recommend reading the Introduction. It will give you things to think about.

The genera and species data begin on page thirty five and continue to page two hundred ninety. There are fifty four species listed and fifty four magnificent, full page color plates. Mr. Cooper is an absolute master. His birds are perfect in color, form, and posture. My own collection contains many Australian birds and I constantly marvel at their various hues and colors as I see them in the sun and in the shade. The only way to describe such beauty is through paintings equally exquisite. Mr. Cooper succeeds to perfection. This is one book you will enjoy even if you can't read.

After studying the painting of a particular bird you will, of course, want to read about it. Forshaw presents a great deal of information on each species. The format of the text is like that found in *Parrots of the World* but includes much more data. The first improvement you will notice is the category of Other Names. Forshaw uses the names common in Australia but not always common here. He says Mulga Parrot when we would say Many-colored Parrot, for instance, and Regent Parrot for what we call the Rock Pepplar. Happily, in this edition of *Australian Parrots* he lists all of the common names that are generally applied to a species. That is a desired convenience.

He then goes on to a description of the bird, gives its Distribution then its Status. Under Status it may surprise you to learn that the rather common aviary bird, the Princess of Wales Parrot, is a rather uncommon bird in the wild. Forshaw says it is so seldom observed that it is generally considered to be rare. In all of his travels and field studies Forshaw, himself, has not had the good fortune to observe the Princess Parrot in the wild.

Further categories of interest are Habits, Movements, Flight, Calls, and Feeding. By careful reading of these categories one can become familiar with natural behavior of one's aviary birds. Many of us feel that the more natural our

captive environment is the better chance we have to breed the birds. It is good to know, for instance, that the Mulga Parrot (which is one of my favorites) eats seeds, greens, and insects and larvae. They also nibble on charcoal and grit. I have enough property to plant a number of trees and shrubs that are native to parts of Australia and can thus provide my captive birds with much of the same fare their wild brethren enjoy. Forshaw has thoughtfully provided me with the Latin names of the plants I desire.

Probably of greatest interest to the American aviculturist are Forshaw's rather extensive categories called Breeding and Aviary Notes. They, naturally, vary a bit with each species treated but the notes can be very helpful. In his *Parrots of the World* Forshaw made no such concession to aviculture but in this second edition of *Australian Parrots* he goes out of his way to accommodate the interest of the bird breeder. For example, he explains how the Hooded and Golden-shouldered Parrots prefer a nest box with an entrance spout and how several members of this *Psephotus* genus tend to quit brooding their babies too early and breeders have saved the babies by providing heated nest boxes.

Other facts of great interest to the aviculturist are included in the Aviary Notes. Forshaw mentions many hybrids and expresses doubts regarding other reported hybrids. I only just recently heard of a cross breeding between a Red-rumped Parrot and a Cockatiel. It was nice to learn that Forshaw doubts this breeding as I did. But he did verify a cross breeding between the Red-rumped and the Elegant Grass Parakeet which surprised me.

If one will study *Australian Parrots* closely one will learn a great deal about the birds. One's knowledge will be expanded in unforeseen directions and one cannot help but become a more knowledgeable bird keeper.

The price of this forthcoming volume is \$100.00. I have heard people say that it is not worth that much but how can one determine fair prices these days? *Parrots of the World*, a much bigger volume, sold for \$75.00 in 1973. Today it demands a price between \$300.00 and \$400.00. I wish I had kept the twenty volumes I originally bought. This second edition of *Australian Parrots* will cost you the price of going to dinner in a good restaurant and it will increase in value, which is more than you can say for your dinner. I recommend the book. Although Forshaw and Cooper will make money on the volume, it is money well earned. They have provided a very great service to aviculture and we should take advantage of it ●



This beautiful rendition of the Australian king parrot was painted by William T. Cooper expressly for Forshaw's second edition of Australian parrots. You can see that this species is dimorphic, the hen's head and breast never becomes red as does the male's. Also, in this photo, the bird's green back is visible. In the related Amboina king parrots the back is a deep blue (see page 12).



November 28, 29, 1981

20th Annual Show
presented by
**Santa Clara Valley Canary
and Exotic Bird Club**
to be held at the
Santa Clara High School
Bellomy & Washington
Santa Clara, CA
Judges:

Domestic canaries—Barbara Williams
Exotics—Paul Schneider
Type canaries—Sig Larson
Red factor canaries—Wilbur Tallman
Show secretary:
Deilah Quieto
1952 Beech St., Santa Clara, CA 95054

October 17, 1981

**10th Annual Open Breeders Show
Sunshine State Cage Bird Society**
Court of Flags Resort
Orlando, Florida

Judges:
Type & American Singers—John
Bassett, Jr.
Red Factors—Baldomero Hernandez
Exotics—Tom Ireland
Budgies—Bob Howard
Cockatiels—Nellie Herry
Finches—Juanita McLain
For information contact:
Lunda J. Bennett, Show Secretary
130 Sunset Drive
Longwood, Florida 32750

October 30, 31, November 1, 1981
18th Annual Show

will be presented by the
Fresno Canary and Finch Club
at the Hacienda Inn
Clinton and Highway 99
Fresno, California
Judges:
Color bred—Scott Richie
Type—Greg Farina
Finches—Joe Krader
Hook bills—Mike Cunningham
Budgies—Hugh Wilson
(sorry, no ship-ins)
Show secretary: Hazel Espindula
1633 W. Zumwalt, Tulare, CA 93274

November 6, 7, 1981
Annual Open Bird Show

presented by the
Missouri Cage Bird Association
at the
Noah's Ark Motor Inn
1500 So. Fifth St.
St. Charles, MO 63301
Contact show secretary:
Eileen Karius, 1111 Dover Place
St. Louis, MO 63111
Judges:
Color bred—Harry Knapp
Type—Harold Sodamann
American singers—John Schaefer
Budgerigars—Russ Roberts
Finches, Wildbirds, Hook bills,
Exotics—Charles Anchor

October 16, 17, 18, 1981
**The Buffalo Canary and
Budgerigar Club**

presents their
45th All Bird Show
Judges:
Budgerigars—Corienne Traver
Color bred canaries—Gino Abbate, Jr.
Type canaries—Robert Ross
Wild birds and Hook bills—
Fitzroy Hookumchand
For information contact:
Conrad Mencilwicz
23rd Erb Street
Buffalo, N.Y. 14211

November 19, 20, 21, 1981

**4th National American
Cockatiel Society Show**
held in conjunction with the
33rd National Cage Bird Show
Hilton Airport Plaza Inn
8801 N. W. 112th St.
Kansas City, Missouri 64195
ACS Panel Judge: Harold Bowles
For information contact:
Nancy A. Reed
55 Sunnyfield Dr.
Windsor, CT 06095

October 3rd, 1981
**Aviary and Cage Bird
Society of South Florida**

will present its
Annual Open Show
at the
Holiday Inn Lakeside
8144 State Road 808
Boca Raton, Florida
(Florida's turnpike exit 28)
Dan Gallo—Budgies
Russ Snyder—Exotics
Nellie Herry—Cockatiels
Ignacio Perea Sr—Canaries
Contact show chairman:
Jim Stewart
1321 N.E. 43rd Street
Pompano Beach, FL 33064

October 2, 3, 1981

Mid American Cage Bird Society
presents their
6th Annual Show

at Howard Johnson—North
Des Moines, Iowa
Judges:
Color canaries—Mark Whiteaker
Type canaries—Bill Reichert
Budgies—Don Powers
Foreign and hook bills—Robert Ziegler
Show manager:
Dorward Horrell, 3941 29th
Des Moines, Iowa 50310

September 20th, 1981

5th Annual Bird Fair
presented by
Missouri Cage Bird Association

at the
Kolping House
4035 Keokuk, St. Louis
Contact:
Dennis Karius
1111 Dover Place
St. Louis, MO 63111
(314) 351-2580

December 12th, 1981

2nd Annual All-American Gloster Show

to be held in
St. Louis, Missouri
Judge: Mr. John Knipp
St. Louis Harley Hotel
Earth City, Missouri
Contact show secretary:
Eileen Karius, 1111 Dover Place
St. Louis, MO 63111

September 4, 5, 6, 1981

**The Alamo
Exhibition Bird Club**
presents a bird show
at the
Sheraton Inn, San Antonio, TX
For information contact:
Sec. Peggy Walton
238 Golden Crown
San Antonio, TX 78223

November 7th, 1981

Greater Pittsburgh Cage Bird Society

presents their
7th Annual All Bird Show
to be held at the
Ramada Inn North
Route 8, Allison Park, PA
Judges:
Type canaries—Carl Welsch
Color bred canaries—Bill Henderson
American singer canaries—
Bill Hardingham
English budgies—Dan Gallo
Foreign birds and American budgies—
Dr. Val Clear
For information contact show
secretary: Sara Prince
107 Richard Dr.
Glenshaw, PA 15116

October 30, 31, 1981

The Greater Omaha Cage Bird Society

presents their
All Bird Show
to be held at the
Village Inn Motel
2216 27th Ave.
Council Bluffs, Iowa
Judges:
Canaries—Harold Sodamann
Budgerigars—Crawford Maddux
Hookbills—Ralph Bowman
Foreign Birds—Paul Williams
American budgies—Ralph Bowman
For further information contact:
Diana Humanik
1211 N. 146 Plaza
Omaha, Ne. 68154

November 7, 8, 1981

Rocky Mountain Society of Aviculture

presents their
Annual Bird Show
to be held at
North Valley Center
84th & Valley Highway
Denver, Colorado
Judges:
Colorbred—Otto Manke
Type—Clarence King
Parakeets, finches, hookbills—
Ray Johnson
Contact:
Kevin Wirick
748 Santa Fe Dr.
Denver, Colorado 80204

October 16, 17, 18, 1981

**Aviary Association of Kern
Bird Show**

Kern County Fairgrounds,
Hall of Flowers
1142 South P Street
Bakersfield, Ca.

October 24, 25, 1981

**Capitol City Bird Society
of Sacramento**

presents their
5th Annual Bird Exhibition
to be held at
Rusch Park Community Center
Carmichael, California
Judges:
Budgerigars—John De Victoria
Canaries, red factor—Frank Crane
Canaries, type—Scotty McNiff
Hookbills & parrots—Hank Johnson
Finches—to be announced
For information contact:
Capitol City Bird Society
Gwen Worman
3840 Lankershim Way
North Highlands, Ca. 95660
(916) 334-9256