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I admit it, I'm rather stout. Fat, some people call me. But what's thirty pounds over fighting-weight? Food I love, diets I hate. I tried one once and found that I diet best on a full stomach. So what's the point of all this diet diatribe, you ask. Well, there is a new diet book just out and I love it. Move over Dr. Adkins, K.C. Lint is taking over. You might have guessed that the only diet to find favor with me is one I can apply to my birds whilst I continue to dine on truffles and good Bordeaux.

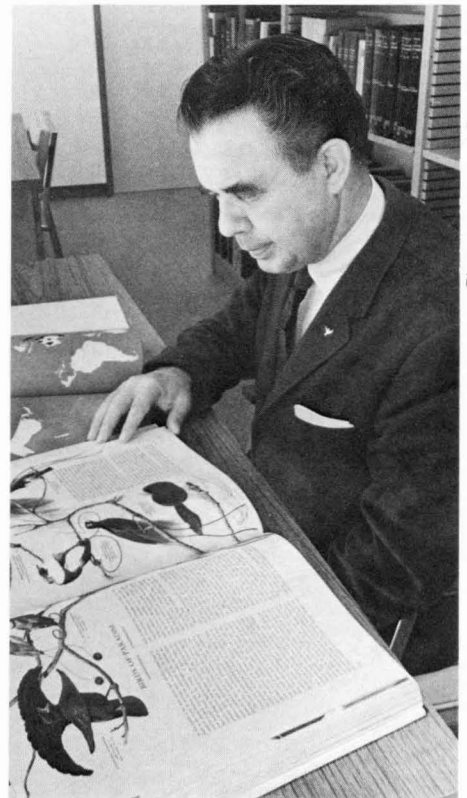
Kenton C. Lint and Alice Marie Lint have written a 222 page volume entitled **Diets For Birds In Captivity**. It was published in 1981 by Blandford Press in Dorset, England, but in the United States it is distributed by Sterling Publishing Co. Inc., Two Park Avenue, New York, N.Y., 10016. Remember, when you order it from your local book store refer them to Sterling Publications.

The main problem with keeping birds in captivity has *always* been diet. What should you feed those Amazon parrots that were, a few months ago, flying around a tropical delicatessen of the first order? Or what should your Bali mynah have for dinner? It is, of course, physically or logistically impossible to completely duplicate your bird's wild diet. My wife and I once thought to correct that problem by buying Australia and putting our collection at liberty, but when we considered all the sheep and rabbits that would be mooching we changed our minds.

The next best solution is to figure out as best you can what the birds eat in the wild and what are the best approximates or substitutes that can be gotten where you live. Unfortunately, most of us lack the time and concentration to solve that problem.

Fortunately, *very fortunately*, Mr. K.C. Lint has spent the time and effort to solve that very set of problems and, with his wife, has recorded the answers for us.

No one on earth is better qualified to hold forth on birds' diets. Mr. Lint spent forty years at the San Diego Zoo, most of that time as Curator of Birds. Under his direction the zoo built up the finest captive collection of birds in the world. Mr. Lint's entire professional life was spent working on the very problems that are most important to we keepers of smaller collections. K.C. traveled all over the world observing, studying, and collecting birds of all sorts. At the same time he applied his knowledge to the peculiar circumstances of keeping wild birds in captivity. He experimented, made formulas, changed them, took advantage of scientific research, at the zoo and elsewhere, and gradually, through ex-



K.C. Lint doing his homework.

Photo courtesy of San Diego Zoo

perience, came to certain conclusions regarding diet. Now most of us keep collections of birds containing two, three, or four orders of birds. Mr. Lint's experience at the zoo exposed him to *all* orders of birds so no matter what you keep, he has done your homework.

The proof of the pudding, so to speak, is in the health and reproduction of the birds. And even the most isolated reader of these pages must surely know of the great success the San Diego Zoo has enjoyed in the keeping and breeding of its birds. The zoo has had many first breedings and even more important has had *consistent* breeding success with the easy *and* the difficult species of birds.

Now, regarding the book itself, it must definitely be placed in the reference book category. It is forthright and simple in its format. The birds are listed by orders and, when necessary, differing diets are listed for diverse species within an order. There is a general introduction to each order of birds that touches on the general habits and food preferences of the wild birds. The specific diets are spelled out in detail and the ingredients are given in *daily* amounts per each bird. Many aviculturists provide a week's supply or more of food for their birds. I used to do that also. Only after heroic struggles did my wife convert me to the idea of daily rations for the birds (not for me, dear reader, on *my* diet I stand firm) and I have been able to see the wisdom of that method.

Perhaps I should mention that reference books cannot be priced. For example, I have an **Oxford English Dictionary** of thirteen huge volumes that cost \$300.00 years ago. I may never read every word in the 15,975 pages but, by Jove, when I want a word I know where to find it. Price is nothing compared to having what one needs. **Diets For Birds In Captivity** costs a paltry \$50.00 and is worth ten times that *if you use the data*. With better nutrition your birds will produce more and all you need is one more white cockatiel or an extra rosella or an additional cygnet and the volume is free — in fact you'll have a profit.

Rosemary Low, whom you know is no slouch at aviculture, says, "Here is an instant reference not only to diets, but to nesting habits and characteristics and peculiarities of many groups of birds. Perhaps more than any book on aviculture I have ever read, it contains a wealth of facts and absolutely no padding." She continues, "This is a classic among books on aviculture. No zoo can afford to be without it and no serious aviculturist should pass by the opportunity to reap the benefit of a lifetime's knowledge of an exceptional curator of birds." ●



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