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joy reading about their favorite species,
even if they disagree with the author.
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that would make wonderful gifts, but we
have selected some more recent releases,
most of them readily available, so you
can see the range of topics on the market
to delight the bird lovers on your shop-
ping list.



**The Audubon Society Handbook for
Birders** by Stephen W. Kress, Charles
Scribner and Sons, New York, NY,
1981. \$17.50, hardbound, 332 pages.

It pays every aviculturist to know
something about wild birds. The more
one knows about wild birds the better
one can care for captive ones. And bird
conservation is more important today
than ever. The general information in
this volume will help one to gain a more
complete understanding of the part birds
play in the overall scheme of things.

This volume is a complete guide to the
popular and rapidly growing activity of
bird watching. A recent U.S. Fish and
Wildlife Service study suggests that bird
watchers were the best informed group
regarding ecology and animal life topics.
And the author helps you to become a
better bird watcher. The techniques can
even be used for observing the behavior

of your aviary birds.

There are sections on what to look for
when observing birds, how to choose and
use binoculars, how to photograph birds,
educational programs, research programs
welcoming amateurs, periodicals and
organizations, and building a library.

Many photos, charts, and drawings il-
lustrate the volume and add greatly to its
interest. It is well written and will make a
great gift to anyone who enjoys birds.

Adventures with Talking Birds by
Catherine Hurlbutt. T.F.H. Publica-
tions, Neptune, NJ. 1981. Hardbound,
285 pages.

This is a personal story of one woman's
experiences, successful and unsuccessful,
comic and tragic, in teaching birds to
talk.

The cover is misleading in that it
features an Amazon, cockatiel, macaw
and budgie. Although the author does
write of her work with budgies and
cockatiels, the only other important psit-
tacine character in her book is a rose-
breasted cockatoo. She is much more in-
terested in the Corvidae.

Ravens, crows, mynahs, starlings,
magpies, even jays are the birds the
author tries to educate. She deserves a
great deal of credit for keeping these
birds alive in a cage situation, in addi-
tion to coping with their mess. She is
good with birds and loves them dearly,
but to her dismay hers is not the voice
they learn to imitate. In her early ex-
periments, her budgies transferred their
loyalty to her mother and learned from
her, and later birds could not resist
mimicking Hurlbutt's neighbor, Mrs.
Hamm. Some people have the touch for
handling birds, some people have the
knack for training birds, and some peo-
ple have the voice for teaching birds to
talk. The author does not have that
voice, and admitting this lack is much of
the charm of the book.

Nevertheless, her observations will be
invaluable for people who share her fan-
tasy of teaching birds to talk, and her ad-
vice on care and feeding is solid gold for
those kind individuals who get involved
in rescuing abandoned and injured
native birds.

As a sample of her conclusions, she
thinks that budgies have the best
vocabularies, cockatiels are the best
whistlers, Indian hill mynahs have the
best "human" voices, and ravens are the
most intelligent.

This book is hard to put down. Bird
lovers will find it as personal and infor-
mal as an old friend.

Handbook of Macaws by Dr. A.E.
Decoteau, T.F.H. Publications, Nep-

tune, NJ, 1982. \$16.95, hardbound, 125 pages.

Again, the 8 1/2 x 11 size and the many color photographs make this volume well worth having. It is a modest "coffee-table" book, if you will.

The text is nicely written and well organized and covers all aspects of macaws. The first section deals with keeping macaws in captivity—feeding, housing, breeding, exhibiting—and an excellent section on preventive medicine.

The second section treats the species of macaws and is an excellent, informative reference source. All the species are listed and illustrated either with wonderful photos or artistic representations. The species that are similar are shown together with the differences pointed out.

Many helpful hints about caging and handling these large birds will be appreciated by anyone owning one or more. Indeed, the book may well convert those who have hitherto held little interest in these brilliant new-world parrots. All parrot lovers would enjoy having this book.

Breeding Birds at Home by Jürgen Nicolai. T.F.H. Publications, Inc. Ltd., Neptune, NJ, 1981. Hardbound, 154 pages.

"The most important discoveries which were made on cage and aviary birds during the last decade did not come from 'rarities' or 'first imports,' but instead, without exception, they came from species which are commonly available and of which 'everything' should have been known."

Dr. Nicolai advocates providing as natural an environment as possible for our captive birds, along with crediting them with a great deal of adaptability.

Rather than trying to discuss the breeding requirements of all birds, Dr. Nicolai focuses on Grass Finches and Waxbills, Whydahs, Finches (including canaries), Thrushes, Warblers and Flycatchers, and Doves.

These birds are profiled as to range, habitat, easy to keep/difficult to keep, dietary requirements, compatible/incompatible with other birds, and which ones.

Many species are pictured in both full color and black and white photographs.

This book would be a most welcome gift, especially for a beginning finch fancier.

Making Money with Birds by Dr. Val Clear. T.F.H. Publications, Inc. Ltd., Neptune, NJ. 1981. Hardbound, 189 pages.

The author's intended reader is the beginning aviculturist who has a few

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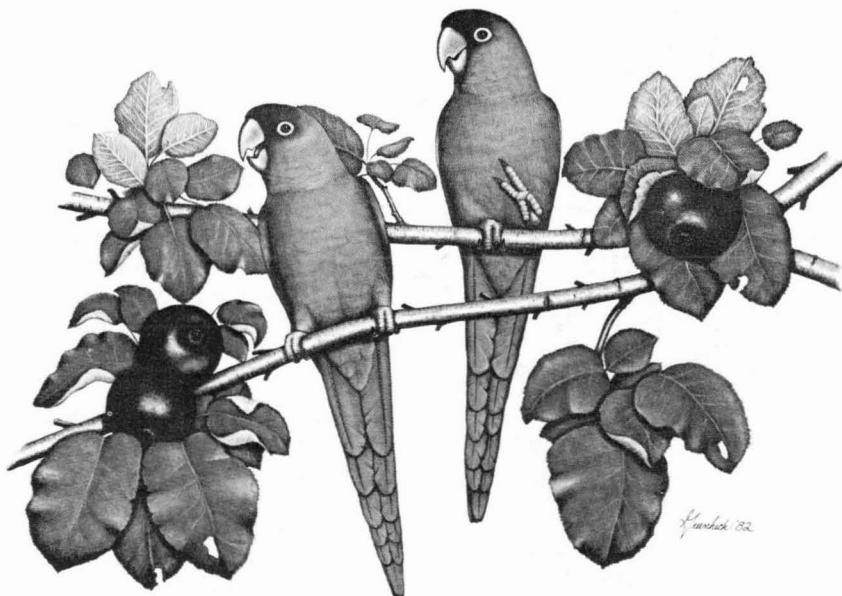
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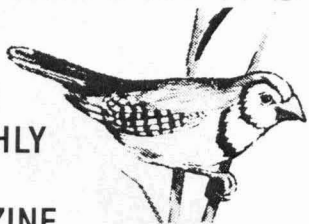
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birds, a little space, either inside or out, and some concern about what to do if his birds have more babies than he is prepared to keep.

Dr. Clear writes about supply and demand, and advises beginners to start with birds that are known to be easy breeders.

Experienced aviculturists may benefit from reviewing how to assess the real costs of their hobby/business. The hobbyist may be overlooking possible advantages to be gained through certain licensing, insurance, record keeping practices and tax laws.

Throughout the book the author stresses the importance of keeping in touch with other bird people through organizations such as the A.F.A., and recommends *The Watchbird*, along with other magazines, as a good place to advertise as well as to find reputable breeders from whom to purchase breeding stock.

Money-saving tips come in the form of advice on aviary design and building materials, buying feed wholesale, and general health care.

The end of the book lists associations and journals for bird fanciers.

All About Breeding Canaries by Merwin F. Roberts, T.F.H. Publications, Neptune, NJ, 1982. \$6.95, hardbound, 128 pages.

If you have a friend who is just becoming interested in canaries, you should give him this book. If you sell canaries to a beginning breeder, this book should accompany the birds.

Roberts is talking to the neophyte and his language is refreshingly strong and clear. He lays down the law. The first chapter opens with four do's and four don'ts, and they are so logical that no one can refute them. Don't buy the first bird you see. Don't buy the first cage you see. Don't buy what you can't afford to lose. Don't buy every gadget in the store until you are sure it will aid you.

The do's are equally simple and logical.

The author then expands and talks in simple terms about the history of the canary, about canary-fancy jargon (until now I couldn't understand half of a conversation between two canary breeders), about breeding, hybrids, colors, diet, and genetics. Roberts' genetic formula charts are very well done and easily understood.

All About Breeding Canaries is an excellent introduction to the canary fancy. Gotten in time it could save a beginner many a headache as well as a few dollars.

The T.F.H. Book of Cockatiels by Wilfried Loeding, T.F.H. Publications,

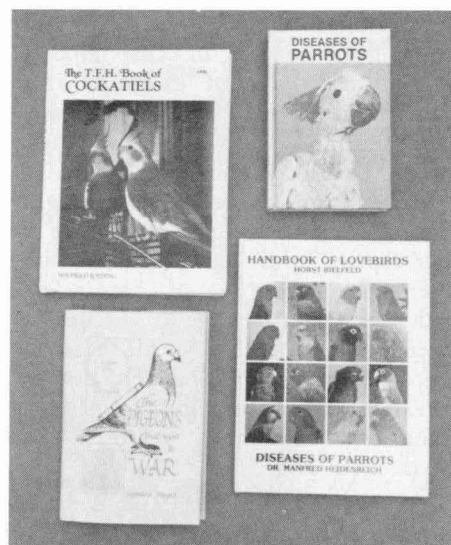
Neptune, NJ, 1982. \$6.95, hardbound, 77 pages.

This is one of the best-written books you'll find on cockatiels or any other bird. The writing is lucid, clear, and very readable for which much credit goes to Christa Ahrens who translated it from the German.

Another great plus is the format. The book is rather large (8½ x 11 inches) and has many color plates—not the same old photos you used to see in every T.F.H. bird book, but new photos appropriate to the text. In fact, the exquisite color makes the book a bargain at twice the price. There are only three pages in the text that do not have full color plates.

The volume is well organized into four sections ranging from chapters on the bird in the wild to care and breeding, color varieties, and the cockatiel as a show bird. The color varieties, again, are beautifully photographed. Eighteen pages are devoted to easily understood and well-illustrated genetics, a great boon to the less-experienced cockatiel fancier.

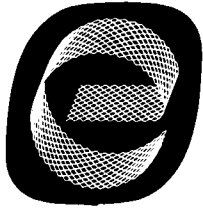
All things considered, I think this is the best book I've read on cockatiels. Keep the first one for yourself and give the others as gifts that will be truly appreciated.



The Pigeons That Went to War by Gordon Hayes, Hayes Publication Co., 3636 S. Mayler, San Pedro, CA 90731. 1981, \$10.00, hardbound, 146 pages.

If you think you love your birds and know them, you must read this book. A whole new world will open up before you. This book tells a true story—a story told nowhere else—about pigeons of the Second World War and the men who flew them.

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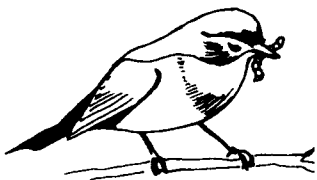
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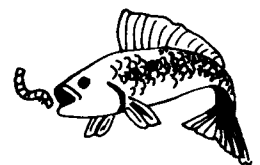
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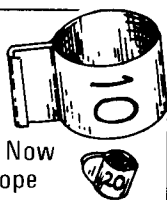


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Another pigeon named George was aboard a British plane that was shot down at sea. The surviving airmen revived George, dried him off, wrote their position on a message and tossed George up out of the life raft. George crashed into the sea immediately. The bird was wet, covered with oil, and half-drowned but on the second toss he flew 100 miles over water and delivered the message. The airmen were rescued.

Little Black was ferried by a spy on a submarine to the coast of occupied France. When the spy released him a few days later behind enemy lines, Little Black was to carry a message over water to Corsica. Little Black took a bullet in the chest and couldn't quite complete his flight. He did make it to Corsica, though, where he was found limping down a road toward his home loft.

There are many such moving stories in this fascinating book. You'll also read many of the secret messages the birds carried, including some sent by Germans who took birds off of captured or killed Allies.

The book contains many photos illustrating the men, the mobile lofts and the pigeons. It is very well written, is full of human interest, contains a history found nowhere else, and dramatically portrays how closely intertwined are the lives of man and bird.

The Pigeons That Went to War is a book for the whole family. No one who likes birds should let this unique book get by. I liked it so much that I obtained two pairs of the extraordinary birds that fill its pages.

Diseases of Parrots by Elisha W. Burr, D.V.M., T.F.H. Publications, Neptune, NJ, 1981. \$20.00, hardbound, 318 pages.

There are many books on bird diseases now available. If you have only parrots, this volume may be the one you want.

Although all the parrot diseases are dealt with, the chapters on parasites, external and internal, are a cut above the ordinary. Since parasites are a major problem in aviculture, the bird keeper

can gain some very helpful knowledge here.

The best bulwark against disease, however, is good nutrition, says Burr. His chapter on nutrition is full of general information that every parrot fancier should know. For example, he explains the physical difference between the gizzards of fruit-eating parrots and seed eaters. The fruit eater (loris, for instance) aren't equipped to grind seed very well so an all-seed diet is not right for them.

Burr's narrative style is easy reading (although a bit technical at times) but not well subdivided. You'll have to use the index when you want to look up a specific point—but that won't hurt you.

If you have parrots you ought to have *Diseases of Parrots*.

Handbook of Lovebirds by Horst Bielfeld with a special section on Diseases of Parrots by Dr. Manfred Heidenreich, T.F.H. Publications, Neptune, NJ, 1982. \$12.95, hardbound, 111 pages.

If you love lovebirds, you'll love the lovebird photos in this book. Every species is shown in full color. Even the rare black-collared lovebird is represented, although the subject is a mounted specimen. All the other species were photographed live. There are also photos of more peachfaced color mutations than I have ever seen in an English language book.

By and large, the text is well written and informative. Bielfeld's section on diet is quite good and it would be well if more American breeders fed their lovebirds according to the author's suggestions. His section on color inheritance is also easy to understand and gives the various formulas for color expectation. These tables will save the novice a lot of head-scratching and genetic calculations.

The text contains many helpful hints on general care, how to germinate seed, breeding tips, etc. The only statement I take issue with is "...these birds are virtually unable to survive without each other's company." We all know, of course, that a lovebird *can* live alone and do quite well. In view of all the sound advice Bielfeld offers, he ought to be forgiven this one sentimentality.

The Parrot Disease section of the book does not detract from the whole, but neither does it add. If one is interested in parrot diseases, he should get a full-fledged book on the subject.

I recommend the book. It is worth the very modest price.

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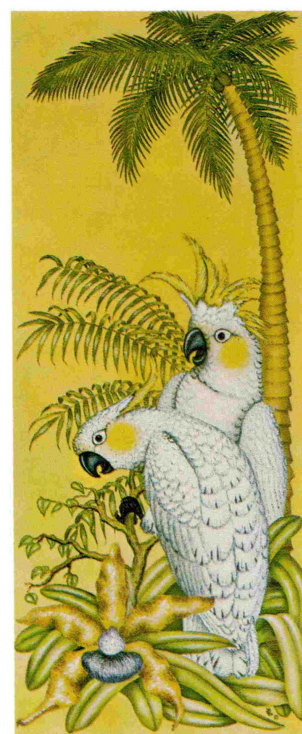
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