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*Young hen red-fronted macaw shows colorful underside of wings, age 29 weeks.*



*Youngsters feathering out nicely at six weeks of age.*



*Having fun after their feeding, six weeks old.*

# breeding the Red-fronted Macaw

(*Ara rubrogenys*)

by Juanita DeLoach, Lytle, Texas

My breeding pair of Red-fronted Macaws were first purchased and resold in 1976 by my father H.I. Gregory. When the owner decided to sell his birds we repurchased them in Dec. of 1980. After having the birds a safe length of time we had them surgically sexed along with the other three we had. The sexing showed we had four hens and one male. Since we had a hen which had laid previously for my father in 1978 and had only one male I tried pairing them. After about three weeks I realized he wanted no part of the other hen, so I put him in a pen two pens away from the other hens, with the hen he had been with since 1976.

In about a month I noticed the Vinaceous Amazons, which were in the pen with the Red-fronteds, were trying to keep the Red-fronteds away from the nest in which they had raised their young. The Red-fronteds were going into the two nests which were in the pen and which were identical. We immediately separated the 10 ft. x 18 ft. x 6 ft. pen into two pens. They then started going into the one nest and worked it when they weren't feeding each other or mating. The nest is a 15 gal. barrel hanging at the top corner of the cage on its side, with the opening on the side in the end. Wood shavings, some sand and some pine needles were put in the nest for nesting material.

They became very protective of the nest and then on May 8, 1981 they would not let us look in the nest. Two days later on May 10, both birds were caught off the nest at which time two eggs were seen. After that the hen was always in the nest and when the male saw anyone moving toward their pen he went into the nest to help protect the eggs. On May 12 she had three eggs. The hen sat during the day and the male joined her at night. On June 3, while checking the nest, an egg shell was seen close to the opening of the barrel. The next shell was seen two days later. The next one was not seen for almost a week because they tried to bury it in the shavings.

The male would eat and feed the hen and she in turn fed the babies. Their diet at this time consisted of sunflower seeds, monkey chow, carrots and some green grass. The hen stayed with the young most of the time coming out occasionally to bathe or sun herself. At times we were in doubt if the babies were alive, because

the parents would not let us get a good look in the nest and they made so much noise it covered the sounds made by the babies. Occasionally we got a glimpse of one baby. On June 17, I knew without a doubt we had three babies, the oldest being two weeks old. Since I remove all baby birds from the nest for hand feeding these were no exception. On June 26, the three were carefully taken from the nest and put with the rest of the babies. They were then fed a diet of soaked ground monkey chow. The oldest was three weeks and two days old and had started to pinfeather.

On August 5, at the age of nine weeks the oldest Red-front was eating soaked chunks of monkey chow from a bowl. At the age of eleven weeks he was eating sunflower seed completely on his own. On Sept. 12, at the age of fourteen weeks and three days, the three were surgically sexed by Kenneth C. Fletcher D.V.M. of San Antonio, Texas. The results were two hens and one male.

The coloring of the young as they feathered out was an olive green. The bend of the wings became edged with an orange red. The ends and tips were blue edged with black. The underside of the wings were a blend of a paler green orange and yellow. They had the red ear patches, orange red on the legs and breast, and a brownish strip of feathers across the nostril area. When the male was just over five months old he started getting his red feathers on his head. The oldest hen started getting her red feathers about a week later and the youngest one followed about a week later. At the age of 8 months the male has an almost solid red head above the nostril and eyes. The male was also opening his cage and talking when he was four and one-half months old. Followed by the two hens about a month later. It is now the first of February and the spoiled young Red-fronts are getting prettier every day. Their parents have been working the nest for over a month. I also have two other pair working their nests. One of the other hens, the one that laid in 1978, also laid three infertile eggs in 1981.

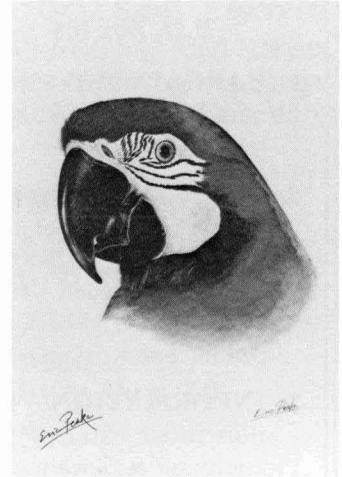
When the young were one week old I called Rosemary Low in England at which time she told me there had not been any Red-fronteds raised in captivity in the U.S.A. and only in one other place in the world. ●

Full color

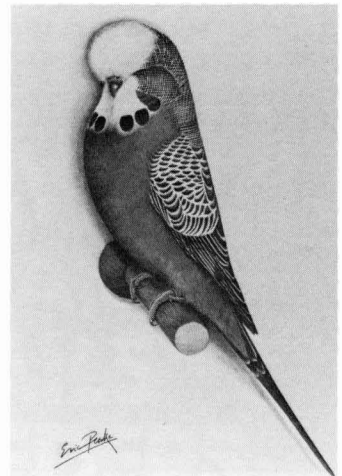
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