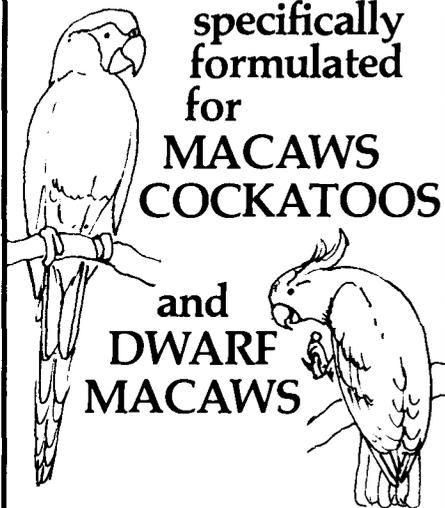


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Questions and Answers

Edited and Researched
by Richard Tkachuck, Ph.D.
Perris, California

Editor's Note: Dr. Tkachuck has graciously volunteered his time and effort on behalf of this new column. Your avicultural questions—any sort whatever—will be presented by Dr. Tkachuck to the most knowledgeable authorities available. Often several authorities will be contacted so more than one answer may appear. The success of this effort depends upon you so don't be bashful. Send your questions to P.O. Box 340, Norco, Ca., 91760. Mark Q&A on the envelope.

Question: *I should like to raise green-winged doves but as yet do not know what size of aviary they should be placed in. Any suggestions? D.K. Southern California*

Answer: I contacted two breeders of green winged doves, Ted Koperman and Tracy Kinches. Ted recommended a flight 10-12 feet long with a 3 foot width minimum. A 6' x 6' might also be adequate. Tracy thought a 4' x 12' by 6' would do well. They strongly suggested that the aviary be planted so that the pair has something to hide in. Both these breeders are in Southern California and maintained the birds out doors year round. A wooden covering over one end was suggested to keep out the elements. In addition to your question I asked if other birds could be kept with the doves as the size of the flight was large compared to the size of the birds. Various game birds were suggested but with the warning that they might fly up to the dove nest and take either eggs or young. That is a risk you will have to decide on. Wild bird seed and turkey crumbles were suggested as food. The latter especially when they are young. One pair of doves per flight was the limit prescribed. (A common recommendation for most doves. Doves may be harmless to other living things but act as serpents to each other.) After you put the doves in the flight, both of our authorities said that it took from 6 months to 2 years for them

to settle down and start making babies. But once they start, up to 5 clutches per year can be expected. At that rate, they deserve a place to themselves.

Question: *I have heard of people breeding cockatiels in colonies. Since I have limited space, the idea of doubling up is attractive. R.D., California*

Answer: If your question is whether one can colony breed cockatiels the answer is yes. I called Bernie Teunissen who has fantastic success breeding everything in colonies. In an 8' x 20' pen he has put nine pairs of birds. 15 pairs were in 16' x 20' enclosures and three pairs in a 4' x 20' flight. (He also mentioned that he colony bred turquoisines (4 pr) in an 8' x 14' flight.) The number of nest boxes is 1 1/2 times the number of pairs. Now as to the question of *should* you breed cockatiels in this manner. Here opinion is divided. If you plan to do so, start with very young birds so that they can grow up together. This will minimize later conflicts between breeders, especially females. These tempermental ladies will sometimes take a liking to an already occupied box with eggs or babies. If that happens it is not uncommon for the invading female to destroy the clutch. It does not always happen but it does enough times so that it should be considered. So the decision rests on whether the chances of greater productivity per flight are greater than the potential losses.

Question: *I have had success hatching out small quail but lose a large number of them when they fall into the water dish and drown. S.M.*

Answer: The solution is an easy one. Largely the problem is one of the bird being overturned in the dish with nothing for it to right itself with. To solve this problem place a layer of marbles in the bottom of the dish with just enough water to come to the top of the marble. The small bird can place its beak between the marbles and drink but the spaces are too narrow for it to drown in. One caution, remember that the amount of water in the dish is drastically reduced because of the marbles so keep a sharp eye or the little ones will die of a *lack* of water and not the reverse.

A question we need help with. If you can help, please contact us with the information. Be sure to include a phone number just in case we need to clarify a point.

Question: *I have a limited space for raising birds and was wondering if it is possible to raise Gouldian finches in cages. If so, what size, shape and how should the furniture be arranged? ●*

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