



Female seriema protecting chicks.



Male Burmeister.

Burmeister's Seriema

a worthwhile challenge

by Donald Koetting
Greater Baton Rouge Zoo
Baton Rouge, Louisiana



Chicks at two weeks of age.

The Burmeister's or black-legged seriema, *Chunga burmeisteri*, is a native of northwest Argentina and southwest Paraguay. It is a tall, long-legged, dark grey bird with a pronounced white stripe above the eye. Its white underside and black and white tail are accented by its black beak and legs, which provides good camouflage for its mostly terrestrial habits. Dry woodlands and savannahs with sufficient undergrowth for cover is preferred for remaining well hidden while hunting their favorite foods such as snakes, mice, insects, and grain. Often the only hint of their presence is their very loud call, which has become a daily occurrence at the Baton Rouge Zoo.

In 1975 the Greater Baton Rouge Zoo purchased from Charles P. Chase Company, a pair of imported seriemas which made a great addition to our bird collection. In the following years we were fortunate to be one of the few zoos to breed the Burmeister's seriema. In this article we hope to share our knowledge on the propagation of this somewhat rare bird, so that others will be able to enjoy the success that we have had.

When our birds first arrived, they were placed in one of the individual cages at the Bird House. Their cage is fairly spacious, (15 feet wide, 20 feet long, and 8-11 feet high). The cage is made from aluminum tubing on the east and south side which is covered by one inch mesh chain link. The remaining two sides are cinder block walls which offer shade and some privacy from

some of the surrounding cages. About one-third of the rear of the aviary is sheltered and is eleven feet high and covered with chain link. Under the sheltered area of the aviary is located the nest box which is situated about eight feet high. The open nest box is eighteen inches square and four inches deep. During the winter, heat lamps are provided under the sheltered area.

The substrate is mostly sand with some topsoil. Plantings include yucca, prickly pear cactus and ligustrum bushes. Several vines are provided for use as perches, but because the birds are primarily terrestrial, they are seldom used. There is a concrete pool with continuously flowing water and the feeding platform is located at the rear of the exhibit, approximately two feet from the ground and it is under shelter. The pair is kept on exhibit year-round but there is sufficient cover for the birds to seclude themselves as they wish. Fecal samples are checked monthly and worming or dusting is seldom needed.

In the early spring of 1977 we observed nest building and mating activities. During the mating season, which is mid-spring through early summer, the nest is checked every few days, usually by one attendant. The somewhat flimsy nests are constructed of small twigs, rocks and some mud. The nests are very sparse and the eggs actually laid on the bottom of the box. The pair seemed to show no interest in incubating in the beginning and were

Continues on page 6

Specialists

IN DOMESTIC BRED
(NON-QUARANTINE)
HAND FED BABY BIRDS

Macaws
Cockatoos
Amazons
Eclectus
African Greys
And Others

Our babies are hand raised in one of our specially designed nurseries. Health care is supported by a full time veterinarian and a complete diagnostic laboratory.



BIRDS  **UNLIMITED** INC.™

Call or write for a price list or additional information
16425 PLACERITA CANYON ROAD NEWHALL, CALIFORNIA 91321 PHONE: (805) 252-3455



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF AVICULTURE

Dedicated to conservation of bird wildlife through encouragement of captive breeding programs, scientific research, and education of the general public.

MEMBER NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

African Love Bird Society American Budgerigar Society, Inc. American Cockerel Society, Inc.
American Pigeon Fanciers' Council American Racing Pigeon Union, Inc.
British Columbia Avicultural Society Canadian Parrot Association National Cockerel Society
National Finch Society Southeastern Aviculturists Association

MEMBER CLUBS

ALABAMA

Central Alabama Aviculture Society

ARIZONA

Arizona Aviculture Society
Arizona Budgerigar Society
Avicultural Society of Tucson
The Seed Crackers

CALIFORNIA

American Canary Fanciers Association
Antelope Valley Bird Society
Aviary Association of Kern
Avicultural Association of San Francisco
Budgerigar Research Association
Butte County Bird Club
California Game Breeders' Association
Capitol City Bird Society
Central California Cage Bird Club
Contra Costa Avian Society
Exotic Bird Breeders Association
Exotic Hookbill Society
Finch Society of San Diego County
Foothill Bird Fanciers
Fresno Canary and Finch Club
Golden Gate Avian Society
Golden West Game Breeders and Bird Club, Inc.
Great Western Budgerigar Society, Inc.
Hookbill Hobbyists of Southern California
Humboldt Cage Bird Society
Inland Game Bird Breeders
Long Beach Bird Breeders
Norco Valley Bird Breeders
North County Aviculturists
Northern California Budgerigar Society
Nu-Color Bird Association
Orange County Bird Breeders
Redwood Budgie Hobbyists
San Diego County Bird Breeders Association
San Diego County Canary Club
San Gabriel Valley Parakeet Association
Santa Clara Valley Canary & Exotic Bird Club
South Bay Bird Club
South Coast Finch Society
Tri City Budgerigar Society
Valley of Paradise Bird Club
Ventura County Bird Club
West Valley Bird Society
Western Bird Breeders Society

COLORADO

Rocky Mountain Society of Aviculture, Inc.

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut Association for Aviculture, Inc.

FLORIDA

Aviary & Cage Bird Society of South Florida
Central Florida Bird Breeders
Feathered Friends of Florida Avian Society
Gold Coast Exotic Bird Club, Inc.
Greater Brandon Avian Society
Greater Jacksonville Avicultural Society, Inc.
Greater Miami Avicultural Society, Inc.
Polk County Avicultural Society
Suncoast Avian Society
Sunshine State Cage Bird Society, Inc.

GEORGIA

Georgia Cage Bird Society
Greater Middle Georgia Cage Bird Society

IOWA

Mid-America Cage Bird Society

ILLINOIS

Greater Chicago Cage Bird Club, Inc.

KANSAS

Kansas Avicultural Society, Inc.

KENTUCKY

Kentuckiana Bird Society

LOUISIANA

Gulf South Bird Club

MARYLAND

Baltimore Bird Fanciers, Inc.
Maryland Cage Bird Society, Inc.

MASSACHUSETTS

Exotic Cage Birds of New England
The Boston Society for Aviculture, Inc.
Western New England Cage Bird Society

MICHIGAN

Ann Arbor Cage Bird Club
Mid-West Canary Club, Inc.
Motor City Bird Breeders, Inc.

MINNESOTA

Minnesota Cage Bird Association
North Star Parrot Breeders Society

MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi Budgerigar Society

MISSOURI

Greater Kansas City Avicultural Society
Heart of America Parrot Society
Missouri Cage Bird Association

NEBRASKA

Greater Omaha Cage Bird Society

NEVADA

Northern Nevada Cage Bird Society
Vegas Valley Caged Birds Association

NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Hampshire Avicultural Society

NEW YORK

Finger Lakes Cage Bird Association
The Greater Rochester Hookbill Association
Rochester Cage Bird Club

NORTH CAROLINA

Carolina Avicultural Society
Smoky Mountain Cage Bird Society

OHIO

Central Ohio Bird Fanciers, Inc.
Cleveland Canary & Cage Bird Club
Golden Crescent Cage Bird Club
Mid-American Exotic Bird Society, Inc.

OREGON

Columbia Canary Club
Emerald Exotic Bird Society
Exotic Bird Club of Oregon
Northwest Bird Club
Northwest Pigeon Fanciers Association

PENNSYLVANIA

Central Pennsylvania Cage Bird Club
Delaware Valley Bird Club
The Greater Pittsburgh Cage Bird Society
North Star Parrot Breeders Society
York Area Pet Bird Club

TENNESSEE

Middle Tennessee Cage Bird Club

TEXAS

Alamo Exhibition Bird Club
Capital City Cage Bird Club
Dallas Cage Bird Society
Fort Worth Bird Club
Gulf Coast Aviculture Association
North Texas Cockerel Club
Williamson County Bird Breeders Association

UTAH

Avicultural Society of Utah

VIRGINIA

Commonwealth Avicultural Society
National Capital Bird Club
Parrot Breeders Association
Peninsula Cage Bird Society
Virginia Ornamental Bird Society

WASHINGTON

Avicultural Society of Puget Sound
Northwest Aviculture Society
Northwest Exotic Bird Society
Washington Budgerigar Society, Inc.

WEST VIRGINIA

Tri-State Cage Bird Fanciers

WISCONSIN

Wisconsin Cage Bird Club, Inc.

suspected of breaking their eggs.

Finally, the pair started incubating their eggs, but several clutches disappeared two or three days before they were due to hatch. It became apparent after many tries that artificial incubation was our only alternative. Because of this, we began to pull the clutches. The eggs were incubated at 81°F wet bulb and 97.3°F dry bulb, and were turned three times daily by hand. In June of 1978 our first clutch and several clutches thereafter were hatched out in this manner.

When the breeding season of 1983 rolled around, our pair again began to nest build and show mating activities. Eggs were laid on March 19 and 21 and were pulled for artificial incubation. Twenty-six days later the first egg hatched, followed two days later by the second egg. Both chicks were brought to the nursery for handraising. About two weeks after the first clutch was pulled, our pair laid a second clutch of two eggs. It was decided to give the pair another chance at incubating their eggs. To our pleasant surprise, the female became very attentive to the nest and her eggs, and began to incubate with regularity. The female spent the vast majority of time incubating with the male taking over the responsibility for short periods of time. This allowed the female to feed. The pair did not hesitate to defend the nest box if we persisted on checking on their progress, and the keepers had to be especially careful not to endanger themselves or the clutch.

On May 2 our first chick hatched, and on May 4, the second chick followed. The parents began feeding and caring for the chicks like "old pros". The pair kept a close watch on the chicks but, after a week, allowed us to take a few pictures. After approximately two weeks, it was noted that one of the chicks was growing at a rate that was much greater than its nestmate. On the nineteenth day, after the second chick hatched, the smaller chick disappeared. The larger chick then grew rapidly and was fledged after thirty-four days. The fledged chick began feeding on its own at eleven weeks of age, and by summer's end it was nearly as large as its parents.

The diet for the Burmeister's seriema is fed twice a day. The feed consists of 2/3 Purina Hen Scratch and 1/3 Game Bird Chow in the morning. In addition to their grain, several pieces of soaked Monkey Chow is added per bird. In the evening, small meatballs are prepared at the kitchen consisting of Nebraska Bird of Prey Diet mixed with hen scratch and game bird diet. Crickets are fed daily

COMMERCIAL MEMBERS

Animal Exchange, Rockville, MD Pritchard Bookkeeping Service, El Cajon, CA
Southeast Aviaries, Alexandria, VA Luv-Them-Birds, Miami, FL Valentine Equipment Co., Hinsdale, IL
Nekton U.S.A., Inc., St. Petersburg, FL Rainbow Bird Ranch, Asheboro, NC
Kellogg, Inc., Milwaukee, WI Birds of a Feather, Santa Rosa, CA Sandy Creek Farm, Sarasota, FL
Fins, Furs, 'N Feathers, Boca Raton, FL Mason's Exotic Bird Services, San Bruno, CA

For information about contacting any of these member clubs, please call that club's closest state coordinator. There is a state coordinator listing with phone numbers elsewhere in this publication.

and pinky or adult mice are fed when available. The pair has also been observed eating seeds and insects in their enclosure. They have also been known to catch and eat sparrows.

With the arrival of the chicks, the evening meal was served twice a day with an increase in the amount of crickets fed. Hen scratch and game bird diet was given free choice, and the consumption of the soaked monkey chow increased.

Several clutches of chicks had to be handraised after being artificially incubated. The eggs were not turned after twenty-four days and when the eggs hatched the chicks were kept in the incubator for several hours. After they were completely dry and they were able to hold up their heads, they were transferred to the nursery. In the nursery they were placed in a small box with a heating pad which served as a brooder. After several days, when they were able to stand on their own, they were placed in a larger box. Handfeeding at this point in time is now routine for us. The formula we have found best is a mixture of Purina Dog Chow soaked in water, Nebraska Bird of Prey diet, and Avitron liquid vitamin supplement. The first week, the mixture is warmed and is fed at three hour intervals, between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. The second week, the chicks are fed at four hour intervals, and after three weeks the chicks were being fed three times daily. The earlier feedings were done using surgical hemostats and when the chicks grew larger, fingers were substituted. After eleven weeks the chicks began to feed on their own.

Several zoos and some individuals house the Burmeister's seriema and hopefully the success rate of their propagation will improve. With the limitations on importing, better propagation programs will be very important for this and many other species of birds. With a little patience and work, the Burmeister's seriema could make a nice addition to any collection and would be greatly enjoyed by the general public. ●

Acknowledgements: Special thanks to Tim Schexnaydre for providing the majority of the information on the keeping of our Burmeister's, and to Mrs. George Felton for providing data on handraising the young.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Encyclopedia of Aviculture, Volume 1, Bradford Press Limited, 1970, London
- Grzimek's, Animal Life Encyclopedia, Volume 8, Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., New York, 1972
- The International Wildlife Encyclopedia, Volume 15, B.P.C. Publishing Limited, Great Britain, 1970



1985 OFFICERS

LEE PHILLIPS/*President*
 CLIFTON WITT/*Legislative Vice President*
 PHILLIS K. MARTIN/*1st Vice President* TOM C. MARSHALL/*2nd Vice President*
 HUBERT MORRIS/*Chief Financial Officer* JACQUELINE M. SPELL/*Corresponding Secretary*
 LORENE CLUBB/*Executive Secretary*

REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS

Linda Rubin/*Northeastern* • William C. Wilson/*Mideastern* • Ray H. Rudisill/*Central* • George Hilder/*Southeastern*
 Davis A. Koffron/*Western* • James H. Coffman/*Northern California* • Aletta M. Long/*Southern California*

LEGISLATIVE LIAISON

Clifton Witt (301) 774-0303

STATE and REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Ray H. Rudisill (314) 645-6757

REGIONAL COORDINATORS

NORTHEASTERN Tim Dahle (301) 760-4626	CENTRAL Garrie Landry (318) 828-5957
SOUTHEASTERN Steve Silver (904) 775-8657	WESTERN Jeff L. Wigginton (206) 939-8267
MID-EASTERN Craig Hendee (312) 724-2578	CALIFORNIA Patricia Barbera (707) 996-4266

STATE COORDINATORS

ALABAMA Lorene Clibb (205) 857-3817	LOUISIANA John C. Lawrence (504) 343-2622	OHIO
ALASKA	MAINE Archie Fairbrother (207) 394-2252	OKLAHOMA Dr. Roger W. Harlin (405) 636-1484
ARIZONA Mickey Olsson (602) 939-1003	MARYLAND Ro Dahle (301) 551-6967	OREGON Kay Mahi (503) 543-6042
CALIFORNIA (north) Jim Smith (916) 534-1505	MASSACHUSETTS Gary Lilienthal (617) 542-7070	PENNSYLVANIA Bill Lumley (717) 234-0732
CALIFORNIA (central) Hank Johnson (209) 233-3322	MICHIGAN Glen Pace (313) 785-0757	SOUTH CAROLINA Jerry Sanders (803) 578-6541
CALIFORNIA (south) Dick Schroeder (213) 645-5842	MINNESOTA Carol Schmitz (612) 890-6164	TENNESSEE Don Warmbrod (901) 685-5261
COLORADO Kevin Wirick (303) 623-5959	MISSISSIPPI James Duroy (601) 625-7262	TEXAS Karen Bookout (713) 864-9759
CONNECTICUT Walter J. Willoughby (203) 528-7296	MISSOURI Eileen Karius (314) 351-2580	UTAH Rex Kennedy (801) 571-6183
DELAWARE Diane Korolog (302) 731-0170	MONTANA G. Allan Taylor (406) 587-3338	VERMONT Heather J. Beck (802) 948-2371
FLORIDA Mrs. M. Simmons (305) 772-2632	NEBRASKA Robert G. Travnick (402) 821-2490	VIRGINIA Carole Wheeler (703) 323-5048
GEORGIA Christer Jonsson (404) 344-0816	NEVADA	WASHINGTON Joe Longo (206) 631-4245
HAWAII Richard Hart (808) 239-8146	NEW HAMPSHIRE F. Lawrence Brandt (603) 642-5074	WASHINGTON, D.C. Ruth Hanesian (301) 424-PETS
ILLINOIS	NEW JERSEY Terry Veraldo (201) 447-3378	WEST VIRGINIA Patty Knoblauch (304) 725-5601
INDIANA	NEW MEXICO Clifford Brane (505) 864-7496	WISCONSIN John Nero (414) 499-9013
IOWA Ted Pulla (515) 225-0302	NEW YORK Arthur Freud (516) 265-6479	WYOMING Jerry Youmans (307) 237-9564
KANSAS John R. Stocker (316) 788-6552	NORTH CAROLINA Mike Miller (919) 848-7770	
KENTUCKY Dr. Thomas B. Angel, Jr. (606) 371-4929	NORTH DAKOTA/SOUTH DAKOTA Carol Hamilton (605) 535-2541	

SCHEDULE FOR AFA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS Mark these dates and plan to attend!

May 18, 1985
 Houston, Texas — Shamrock Hotel
 For meeting and hotel information call:
 David Mellard (713) 665-4485

August 7 thru 12, 1985
 San Francisco, California — Cathedral Hill Hotel
 11th Annual Convention