

COCKATIEL BREEDING 3 UNIT CAGE WITH NEST BOXES.

- SPACE SAVING AND HYGIENIC
- ATTRACTIVE AND PRACTICAL

cost \$249.00

- Made with **Corner** tough nylon molded corners 15/16 Sq. 040 wall aluminum tubing. 1/2 x 2 16 Ga. G.B.W. galvanized before welded wire. Galvanized sheet metal trays, 28 Ga.
- Size of each cage is 36" w x 18" d x 18" h (inside)
- Nest box size 10-1/2" w x 9" d x 10" h
- Cage shipped unassembled
- The above price includes U.P.S. shipping to anywhere in the Continental U.S.A.

Please send order to:

P.O. Box 3025
Kalamazoo, MI 49003
Phone (616) 345-2174

Corner Limited
James Pestoor, President



Surrogate Parents

by A.A.J. Stoodley
Broadhalfpenny Down Conservation
Sanctuary, United Kingdom

CLIP & MAIL

SINCE 1965



WHOLESALE ANIMAL SUPPLIES

Animal City Dept WB
8500 Alvarado Rd. P.O. Box 1076
La Mesa, CA 92041-0318 (619) 469-0188

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

- VACCINES
- NOVELTIES
- REMEDIES
- VET SUPPLIES
- FLEA PRODUCTS
- ODOR CONTROLS
- GROOMING EQUIP.
- TRAINING EQUIP.
- CAGES, CAT TREES
- BOOKS ON BREEDS, TRAINING
- RANCH & KENNEL SUPPLIES
- BIRD & AQUARIUM SUPPLIES

SEND TODAY!
FREE
MAIL ORDER CATALOG

WHOLESALE PRICES

- GUARANTEED FIXED PRICES
- FREE DELIVERY — SHIP SAME DAY



Natural parents are not always successful in rearing their young. This occurs not only with the human race, but with all God's creatures.

As aviculturists, we tend to think captive birds are less than perfect as parents when eggs are not set or chicks are abandoned for no apparent reason. In the wild, however, these incidents happen all too frequently. The little partridge who sits so tight on her eggs throughout rain storms will ignore the "peep" of the still-damp chick, obviously late in hatching out, as she walks away from the nest with a line of babies following behind her. The need to find cover and food for the majority overcomes the claims of any weaklings left behind in the nest.

Birds of prey, too, are not always successful in rearing a full clutch, especially if food is in short supply or if there are several days between hatching of chicks. The strongest chick will always demand what food there is by calling loudest, the smaller chicks therefore being neglected by the parents.

In the aviary many disasters involving both eggs and chicks can be avoided

with the help of surrogate parents. Most of the parakeets will accept an extra egg or two if they are added to the hen's clutch in a sensible manner. Old trustees will tolerate the interference, but a less experienced hen must be fooled into taking additional eggs. If she is rudely pushed aside and cold eggs are mixed in among her own there is every chance she will abandon her nest, but if a little thought is exercised she will have no idea the keeper is playing cuckoo!

I consider the best time to introduce eggs or chicks to a nest is early morning when the hen leaves to defecate and take water. Some hens will spend a little time in feeding, especially if their favorite food has been put out; others will return to the nest quickly, demanding food from the male bird. The advantage of adding to the nest in

Continued on page 36

NOTICE TO DISPLAY ADVERTISERS
Watchbird display ad rates will increase approximately 20% as of October 1, 1986.



Apply today to
take part in the

1st INTERNATIONAL PARROT CONVENTION

due to be held in Puerto de la Cruz
from 16 to 19 October 1986 under the patronage of

LORO PARQUE

Well-known parrot experts from all over the world
will be discussing the following subjects:

DR. WOLFGANG AECKERLEIN, G, "The importance of the direct factors and biological needs about the successful breeding of parrots." ROBERT J. BERRY, USA. DR. ROMUALD BURKARD CH, "Parrot nourishment in general and during the breeding season." NORMAN COOPER, GB, "White and red tailed black cockatoos." DR. JESUS ESTUDILLO LOPEZ, M, "Mexicos psittacine, their nature conditions and conservation." DR. ANDREW GREENWOOD, GB, "Respiratory disease in parrots - an anatomical approach." JIM HAYWARD, GB, "Queens, Kings. Eclectus and the Shining parrot." DR. G. KAAL, NL, "Practical experiences in nebulisation and ecography therapies. - Diagnostic by endoscopy." ROSEMARY LOW, GB, "Endangered parrots." RAMON NOEGEL, USA, "The Philosophy and Psychology of bird keeping." THEO PAGEL, G, "Loris." WAYNE SCHULENBURG, USA, "San Diego Zoo psittacine activities." TONY SILVA, USA. JOHN STOODLEY, GB, "Last consciousness in parrot production." DR. HANS STRUNDEN, G, "Signification of parrots through the history and culture." DALE THOMSON, USA, "Avicultural techniques in Laroe Macaws."

Write or phone for information:

LORO PARQUE · PUERTO DE LA CRUZ · TENERIFE · TEL. 38 30 12 / 38 30 90 · TX. 92498 loro e · OR
USA · TONY SILVA · 8225 WEST · 30th STREET · NO. RIVERSIDE · IL 60546 · TEL. 312 - 447-3147

THE PET RANCH

3015 Pioneer Way, P.O. Box 744
Jamul, California 92035
(619) 698-5878



AMAZONS • MACAWS
COCKATOOS • PARAKEETS
AFRICAN GREYS • COCKATIELS

Tame Birds

Hand Fed Domestic Babies

Surgically Sexed Pairs

Mature Breeding Birds

SHIPPING NATIONWIDE, REFERENCES UPON REQUEST

All birds are hand selected and housed in outdoor aviaries.

PLEASE WRITE OR CALL FOR OUR FREE PRICE LIST

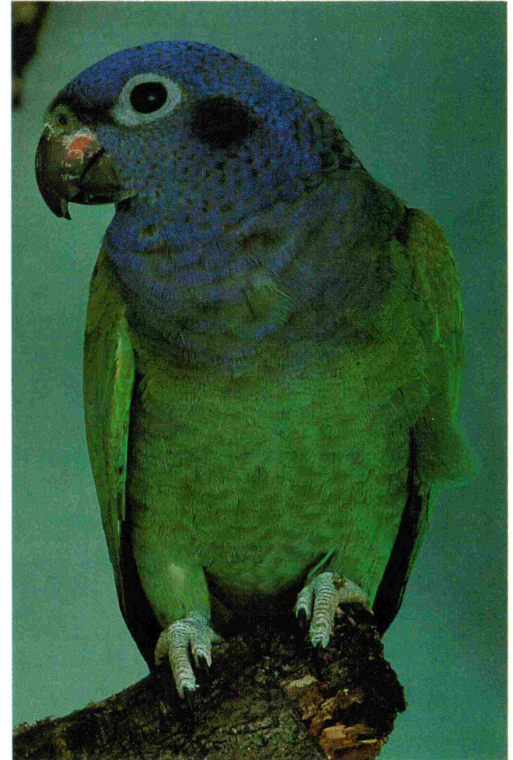


Mixed nest (double yellow head, white front Amazon, bronze winged and plum crown pionus).

the early part of the day is that an eye can be kept on the nesting pair to ensure that the hen continues to set her eggs or brood the young, as the case may be. New laid eggs, that is, eggs that have not been set, can be warmed for a few hours or even over night in a hospital cage before they are put in the nest of the sitting surrogate hen. Eggs that have started development need to be kept at about 98.5 °F (36.9 °C).

It is best to choose hens with a full

Continued on page 38



The blue headed pionus have proven to be very good foster parents.



Cuban Amazons, *Amazona leucocephala leucocephala*, finished weaning, on their own.

Amazona vinacea, very significant. Note how much difference in development there is in this nest of four.





*Easy nest inspection is essential. Two *Ara rubrogenys* (red fronted macaws) raised by an odd colored blue fronted.*

Unusually colored blue headed pionus — the best foster male.



A group of pionus.

clutch of eggs to be surrogate mothers since they can count; if the full clutch for a particular parakeet is usually six eggs, and the eggs to be fostered are introduced before the full clutch is completed, then it is my experience that the hen will not complete her clutch. Many small parakeets arrange their eggs in a circle and lay no more than they can cover, therefore if too many extra eggs are added to her clutch a hen will fail to cover them properly. This results in many of the eggs becoming chilled at some time during incubation, and chicks will die.

The nest chosen to receive abandoned eggs should have eggs at the same stage of development and of approximately the same size. This will ensure a greater chance of success. If large eggs near to pipping are given to a hen setting small, newly laid eggs, then you can expect the hen to concentrate on the foster chicks as they hatch at the expense of her own eggs.

In my view there is no better way of hatching eggs than the incubator, but not all aviculturists can give the time to hand-feed and raise the chicks. Fostering is often the only course open to them.

In the wild it is not uncommon to find cockatoo chicks of more than one species in the same nest. This clearly indicates that the cockatoos raising the young came upon an unguarded nest hollow already containing eggs, or that nesting hollows were in short supply, and the dominant pair by virtue of their size or breeding urge drove a weaker breeding pair away. This works well for parrots originating from similar terrain, but in captivity placing eggs of large parrots under surrogate hens requires a little skillful observation.

Eggs vary between species in the number of cylinder-shaped pores they bear. This can be a problem if eggs of parrots originating from an arid terrain are placed under a sitting parrot coming from a humid area. In an incubator this would not create a problem since eggs requiring a dry atmosphere would not be kept in the same incubator as those requiring a more humid atmosphere. Remember that eggs need to lose nearly 16% of their new-laid weight during incubation.

At one time all chicks hatched in the incubators here at the sanctuary were hand-raised, but not any more. I just could not find the time to do this and still do all the other things I enjoyed. Surrogate parents are now used extensively. Eggs are collected still as clutches are completed, and they are placed in

one of several incubators we have running. Breeding pairs selected as foster parents are given a clutch of warmed false eggs to replace those we take.

Those pairs that are not given a dummy clutch of eggs we expect to lay again, and in the main they will keep their second clutch, hatching and raising their own babies. These are the less common parrots which cannot now be imported, as it is so important to breed as many chicks as we can to establish them in aviculture.

Some of the chicks hatched weigh only 8 grams. At one time I could give these small babies all the care and time they need, but now I share the chore with a group of willing pionus parrots. I use mostly the white capped pionus *P. senilis* which comes from parts of Mexico and western Panama in Central America, and the blue headed pionus *P. menstruus* which is found throughout most of tropical South America. These chubby little parrots make excellent foster parents. They sit well and can be expected to go a week or more past the normal 26 days it takes to incubate pionus eggs. On the other hand, if they have been setting their false eggs for only a week they will accept pipping eggs.

Only trial and error will prove a bird's value as a surrogate parent, but those pairs that have raised chicks of their own and are steady birds are the most likely candidates. Once they prove reliable they are worth their weight in gold.

In an emergency, abandoned chicks that cannot be hand-raised are usually placed as best the keeper can, one here and two there in the nests of any brooding hen. If the adults are kept away from the nest box for a few minutes the newly-added chicks will mingle with those already in the nest and the parent birds on return will not distinguish them from their own brood.

Here at the sanctuary we expect great things of our little surrogate parents. Whilst chicks are small, each nest will hold six babies. Eggs due to hatch are taken from the incubator once they have filled the air sac and have started pipping, and are placed one to each hen sitting on dummy eggs. A later inspection of the nest box will determine if the hen can be given more pipping eggs and the dummy eggs removed from her nest box. Once the hen has started feeding her adopted babies others are given, bringing her brood up to six. In a few days the largest of the chicks are removed from the

nests and other newly-hatched babies take their place.

Our surrogate parents tolerate a change-over of babies two or three times a day, and this gives a greater number of babies the chance to benefit from being in a natural nest. Whilst a hen can only comfortably cover an extra egg or two in addition to her own clutch, she can feed the extra chicks with no difficulty.

This system of giving the newly-hatched chicks to the surrogate hen to feed works well for about two weeks, as after this time the hens start to feed a more lumpy food to the chicks. Small parrots like the Cuban Amazon *A. leucocephala leucocephala* and the Cayman Amazon *A. l. caymanensis* need a very fine food when first hatched, whereas macaw chicks have no difficulty a few days after hatching in taking a coarser food.

The natural brooding period differs among the different parrot species. Pionus hens usually brood close for a month to six weeks, depending on the temperature. If it is very warm they will lift their bodies off the chicks and, once the chicks have pin feathers, will spend more time outside the nest.

Night brooding will be for about 12 weeks. These brooding patterns are much shorter in the smaller parakeet, whose young are quicker growing and are not dependent on the parents for as long as the young of larger parrots. Once surrogate hens lose interest in brooding their adoptive off-spring they are not so occupied with feeding and the chicks are best removed.

The fact that our pionus group raise so many different species of parrot does not appear to bother them. They have fostered some 20 species of Amazons, five species of the larger macaws and seven of their own pionus species. At one time it was thought the adults would attack a strange chick in their nest; not only would they object to its strange call, but would single it out from their own by its different scent. I consider my pionus parrots have disproved this old chestnut.

Babies raised by surrogate parents here at the sanctuary cannot be distinguished from those raised by the natural parent. They are accepted by their own species, and in a communal flight will seek out their own kind to perch near.

Hand-raising parrots does have its rewards for those willing to give a commitment, but there is also satisfaction in watching a pair of birds give such care and attention to a whole bunch of foster chicks. ●

American Federation of Aviculture

CONVENTION 86

August 6-10, 1986

Schedule

Tuesday, August 5 . . . Hospitality
Wednesday, August 6 . Registration, Board of Directors Meeting, Luncheon
Installation of Exhibits, Exhibits Open.
Thursday, August 7 . . . Exhibits, Seminars, Registration, Hospitality
Friday, August 8 Exhibits, Seminars, Luncheon, Hospitality
Saturday, August 9 . . . Exhibits, Seminars, Cocktails, Banquet and Entertainment
Sunday, August 10 . . . Registration, Vet Seminars, Luncheon
Exhibits until 3:00 p.m.

Help Yourself . . .

Come and visit one of America's most fascinating cities. The unique atmosphere of New Orleans is derived from many cultures. It is a magical blending of tradition, language, music, cuisine and architecture. New Orleans offers fun, music, excitement, beauty, history and some of the finest food in the world. Come on down and help yourself to a taste of New Orleans.

Registration

Registration Fee: \$95.00
Checks should be made payable to:
American Federation of Aviculture and mailed to:
5615 Corporate Blvd., Suite 400
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

Hotel

Fairmont Hotel
University Place
New Orleans, LA 70140
(504) 529-7111

OFFICIAL REGISTRATION FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone Number () _____



For information contact:
Trish Smith or Patsy Lyon
504/928-9329
Registration Fee: \$95.00

PLEASE MAIL WITH YOUR CHECK TO:
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF AVICULTURE
5615 Corporate Blvd., Suite 400
Baton Rouge, LA 70808