

Breeding the Fairy Lorikeet

(*Charmosyna pulchella pulchella*)

by Dick Schroeder
Inglewood, California

This little gem is every bit as exquisite as its name implies. Being primarily red below and dark green on the upper parts, it gives the impression of a miniature Stella's Lorikeet (*C. papou stellae*), although at 7" (18 cm) its less than half the Stella's size. The rump is blue. The thighs are purple-black as is the nape and the top of the head. The tail is green at the base, red in the middle, and yellow at the tip, with bright yellow on the underside. The red breast is streaked with bright yellow. There is a sub-species (*C. pulchella rothschildi*) which has a broad green band on the upper breast, as well as the yellow streaks. As with the red Stellas, they are dimorphic, the females having yellow on the sides of the rump.

Their distribution in the wild is in the mountains of New Guinea, particularly from the Vogelkop, West Irian,



The subspecies *Charmosyna pulchella pulchella* was first reproduced in captivity by Dick Schroeder on October 10, 1989. This photo shows the adult (left) with a youngster.

east to the Huon Peninsula and southern Papua.

The genus *Charmosyna* has always held some of my favorite psittacines. They are among the most colorful of all parrots, as well as having a certain dignity that's hard to describe unless you've experienced it. So, in July of 1988, when I heard that Fairy Lori-



This photo shows the subspecies *Charmosyna pulchella rothschildi*. The difference between these subspecies is that the *C.p. rothschildi* has a large, green chest patch that is lacking in *C.p. pulchella*. *C.p. rothschildi* was first bred by the San Diego Zoo.

keets were soon to be available from a local importer, I had to have some.

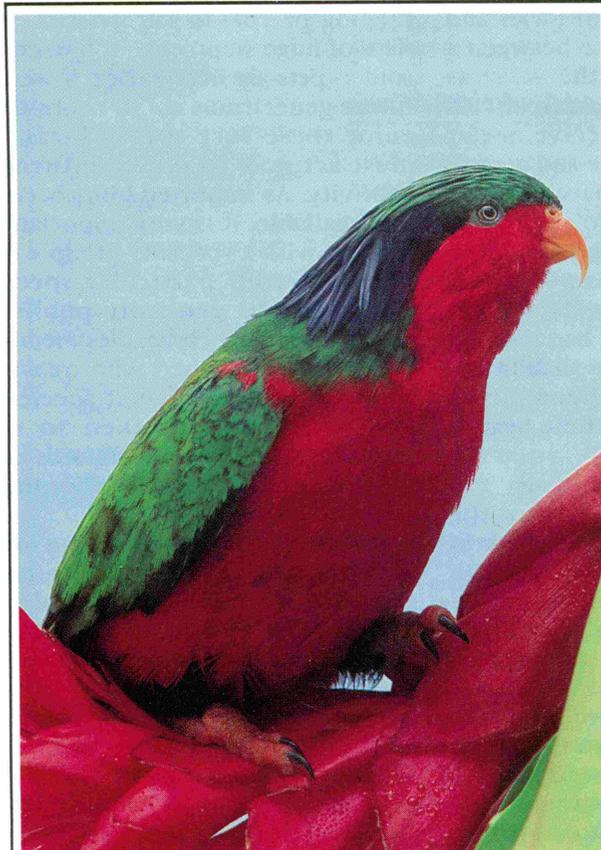
I purchased nine birds (all he had). They included both subspecies. After an observation/quarantine period in my garage, they were set up in three pairs, two pairs of *C.p. rothschildi* and one pair of the nominate race. There were three extra males.

They were all housed in identical cages, being 2'x2'x4' with 6" square x 10" deep nest boxes. The entrance holes were 2" in diameter. These units were stacked three high and were originally planned for holding cages for babies, and not intended for breeding, but you know how that goes when space is limited.

The diet of the Fairies is the same as most of our other *Charmosynas* — Avico Lory Life Nectar and fresh fruit. The Stellas will eat the Lory Life dry diet just fine (with the addition of nectar), but the Red-flanked (*C. placensis*) and the Striated (*C. multi-striata*) seldom touch the dry diet. In fact, they seldom eat the fruit although they are fond of grapes. I feel that nectar is a necessity with the smaller members of this genus.

The first Fairies to go to nest for us were a pair of *C. rothschildi*. They laid in July of 1989. Two eggs were laid, which is typical of lorries. Having not bred this species before, we weren't sure of the exact hatch date. As luck would have it, the first chick hatched the morning that Maurine and I were leaving for the AFA convention in Phoenix, Arizona. My in-laws were staying at our house to care for the birds and other critters. I didn't want to burden them with the extra worry of a newly hatched chick. I knew that the regular amount of

Photo by Dick Schroeder



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