

# Gang Gang Cockatoo

(*Callocephalan fimbriatum*)

by John McGrath  
Yass, New South Wales, Australia

## Description

This sturdy bird is close, sizewise, to the familiar Galah (*Eolophus roseicapillis*) with a soft, forward curving crest. The plumage is basically sooty grey in color. The adult cock

tion on the face and crest that is seen on the cock bird. My own hen is over ten years old. She is showing a faint red tinge to the very tips of the feathers of her crest. She shows a lot of red tinging to the edges of the feathers on the chest and abdomen. Under tail coverts are barred as with the cock bird. The mantle feathers are edged in color similar to the cock and her tail is grey.

Immature birds show a fair amount of red edging to the feathers underneath. Their back is a basic solid grey color and the tail is barred light yellow through the grey. Young cocks show red on the crest. This is very evident based on my own observations of young feeding with the parents. This also makes for easy sexing in the nest. The crest of both sexes is

unique in the Australian cockatoos, in that it curves forward.

Their feet are fleshy and grey in coloration. These birds use their feet extensively to hold their food. The bills are greyish white. Their bills form a large part of the bird's head and the beak is very strong. This is evidenced by their feeding habits, i.e. the seed pods they break up. If you ever have the opportunity to handle one of these birds, investigate the head/bill structure yourself.

## Voices

The Gang Gang voice is like no other bird I know of. It has a raspy speech, hard to describe, except it is often said the sounds are like someone removing a cork from a bottle not including the pop at the end.

They have a curious little growling



Photo by George D. Dodge & Dale R. Thompson

*The Gang Gang Cockatoo is the smallest cockatoo found in Australia. They are sexually dimorphic with the male having the red face and crest. They are found in the mountainous forests and valleys of southern New South Wales and eastern Victoria.*

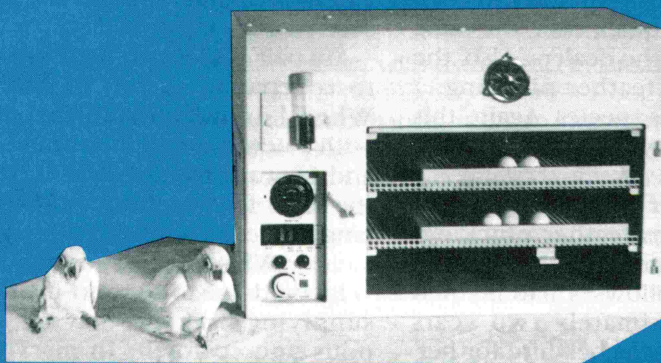
bird's crest, forehead and cheeks are red. The cock's flight feathers appear dull olive grey when the bird is not in flight. The cock's chest feathers are lightly barred with a reddish, light orangish hue. The undertail coverts are barred yellowish-orange. The feathers of the mantle edges are tinged light grey to whitish. The tail feathers are grey.

The adult hen lacks the red coloration

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voice when in close contact with each other (when preening each other or just being close together on a perch).

The begging sound emitted by the young is very similar to that heard by a great many of us on a summer's afternoon wherever Galahs are feeding their young.

#### **Range and Habitat**

The basic range of these birds is Southeastern Australia, from mid New South Wales coastal to southeastern south Australia, as well as northern Tasmania. They seem to be confined to the coastal areas and inland to the higher ranges of the Blue Mountains.

I imagine their original habitat would have been the thicker eucalyptus forest areas. Now, much of this type of habitat has been replaced as a result of clearing for the pastoral industry or for complete forest changes, i.e. Pinus plantations for associated industries.

#### **Aviary Notes**

The Gang Gang Cockatoo is a very desirable aviary bird, although not readily available in good feather condition. If they are in peak feather condition, they can command premium prices here in New South Wales. Then again, Gang Gangs do not come on the market all that regularly from private aviculturists. Dealers seem to get first "crack" at these birds, for several reasons. First, the dealer seems to be "in the know" and snaps up any available birds. People may keep Gang Gangs for several years, not breed them and when they see another bird species they fancy that will breed readily and raise quick cash, the Gang Gangs end up at the dealers. Also, the birds may start feather plucking, a "scourge" of this species. Again, this may cause the owner to give up and sell the birds.

#### **Feather Plucking**

With regard to feather plucking. This problem came to light with the pair I have as follows: I had my hen bird for approximately two years prior to obtaining a cock bird for her. Things were great at first. "Love at first sight" so to speak, with mutual preening from the onset. Several weeks later, when their annual end of the summer molt had finished, the hen's crest feathers did not reappear. It was obvious at that time, the cock bird was paying too much attention to the spouse. Shortly after this, I entered the flight and the cock bird hurtled past me and sort of crashed

into the front of the flight. He had been chewing his own flight feathers. In my case, the introduction of a new bird had caused problems. Up until then, the hen had been in perfect feather.

Even though "feather plucking" was a problem, this pair remained very devoted to each other and in good condition by adhering to the following.

#### **Overcoming Feather Plucking**

"Feather plucking" can be remedied by relieving boredom. I feel when these cockatoos get bored, they turn to self mutilation as a form of anti-boredom.

The Gang Gang Cockatoo is a natural chewer, spending much of his idle time in his native habitat stripping leaves, buds, bark and branchlets from trees. If you are to keep them in good feather condition, you should, as a prerequisite, supply them with fresh, natural hardwood perches with branches and, if possible, with seed pods. The birds love eucalyptus, especially String Bark (*Eucalyptus macrorhyncha*) and other subspecies. The Gang Gangs relish Acacia, Teatree and the branches of Pinus subspecies (with smaller nuts). I make a special effort to obtain Hawthorn branches in the autumn when this introduced tree is in "full berry." It is a favorite food replacement for Gang Gangs in the wild. The birds really enjoy these branches. They search them for insects and seed pods and finally strip the branch of its leaves and bark. In the end, a branch that will fill the bulk of the aviary flight is reduced to a heap of splinters, leaves and chewed seed pods by the next day.

My pair is like two little kids about to receive a bag full of new toys. When I arrive outside their aviary with a new branch, they bounce back and forward from the front perch to the flight front, calling and head bobbing excitedly.

#### **Why I Use Branches**

I would like to support my ideas of supplying branches having leaves, pods and so forth. In my younger days, when the road to town was littered with eucalyptus leaves and small branchlets, I knew this was a good indication that Gang Gangs were about. This "mat" of litter was an indication to me that these birds were great chewers. I use the litter on the road as an example, because the best strands of Stringy Bark were the ones dropped on the road by the Gang Gangs.

#### **Feeding**

My basic Gang Gang feed consists of small seeds which include millets, panicum, canary seed with sunflower and oats added in the colder months to give the birds extra energy.

The reason for feeding small seed: it is another anti-boredom ploy. The idea was put forward to me by a leading black cockatoo aviculturist from Sydney. The basic diet of Gang Gangs in the wild state is small seed. I mentioned those earlier as wild foods, eucalyptus and so forth. So, if you can supply birds with seeds that are small in size, you can stop them from thinking about other things.

The combinations I've outlined have, indeed, helped rid my birds of their feather plucking problem. I cannot see why it should not work with other Gang Gangs, if similar problems occur.

#### **Other Foods**

In addition to the basic food mixture mentioned, I occasionally supply fresh fruit in the form of apples, which are torn open for the seeds. Oranges are supplied and the birds eat skin, flesh, seeds and all. My birds also get a variety of nuts, such as peanuts, almonds, walnuts and acorns. I feed pits of peaches and apricots, which are basically a nut anyway. The birds will eat and enjoy dog nuts, especially the smaller round ones which are made of wholemeal bread (multi-grained type). My birds also get paddie melons, a wild type of melon. These grow on vines like watermelon in paddocks along creeks and in cultivated paddocks. They are usually about four inches in diameter, looking very much like the cultivated jam melons and the seeds are the same as such. The birds enjoy these seeds. My birds enjoy these melons so much, that at the time I had only the hen I rolled a paddie melon in on the aviary floor in the off chance she would be interested. These melons have formed a regular part of my other cockatoos' winter diet. The next morning that particular melon was desiccated. This was very unusual as the paddie melon is not a part of a Gang Gang's normal diet. Besides, as far as I was aware, this particular hen had never before seen the cultivating of a paddie melon. I also give my birds fresh corn on the cob when in season (autumn).

The Gang Gang is an arboreal feeder and it normally only comes to the ground to drink.

#### **Special Feed Tray**

Because the Gang Gang Cockatoo is

an arboreal feeder and since that first feeding of the paddy melon, I have constructed a mesh "green feed tray." It is used to hold food items adjacent to the perch at the rear of the aviary in the shelter. At the same time the seed mixture is supplied in a feeder consisting of an old metal garbage can lid that is placed upside down on a pipe stand 48 inches above the floor of the shelter.

My birds have grit available all the time. This is supplied on the floor by means of a shovel full of sand/gravel. They get cuttlefish (bone) as often as possible. The birds are provided with water in an enamel dish (due to the cockatoo's chewing abilities).

### Housing

Housing for the Gang Gangs should be steel framed aviaries, covered in a heavy fabricated mesh. Dimensions of my aviaries are ten feet long, four feet wide and seven feet high with a perch at either end. The aviary is covered six feet in from the rear with corrugated iron; the flight faces north. The aviary is housed in a group of six cockatoo flights, all having the same dimensions. They are housed between a pair of Major Mitchell Cockatoos (*Cacatua leadbeateri*) and a pair of Longbilled Corellas (*Cacatua tenuirostris*). The aviary has a full concrete floor.

### Adequate Breeding Facilities

The housing provided for these birds may not be the best for breeding results. They would probably be better if housed in a flight away from other birds, or if they were completely partitioned off from view of their neighbors. I anticipate doing just that for all of my flights in the near future. My aviaries could be enlarged, primarily in height. These birds do fly high over the forest canopy. When flying through the forest, they twist and wheel. Then again, while they are feeding, they prefer to move from branch to branch either by climbing or by means of short flights of a few wing beats, between trees, as when feeding in a group of Hawthorn trees. Yet again, as an alternative to this, some birds of a flock will take off in a type of semi-display show-off flight, twisting and wheeling, emitting their harsh call, to alight almost exactly where they left.

In my view, as long as they have flight length to help combat obesity and plenty of wing clearance, they should be alright. Height would be an important prerequisite, as these birds

spend almost all their time in trees. They should feel more secure off the ground. The normal end of a flight pattern is to sweep up to perch. Height would then give them a chance to loop down and back up to alight.

Although I have not bred these birds, I am hopeful of doing so, given a flight of either type mentioned above to give them privacy. To get them to accept a suitable box or log, I have supplied them with more than one choice in various locations.

I have a friend who has bred from

his pair of Gang Gangs. Several interesting facts have emerged from the breeding of this pair.

The first year, they bred in a log about six feet high, one end sitting on the earthen floor of his aviary. Prior to a successful mating and raising of young, they evicted a pair of Major Mitchell's from this log. They had been, up until then, successfully sharing the aviary with the Mitchell's.

The second year, they deserted their original log and opted for a four foot suspended log. They are still using this log.

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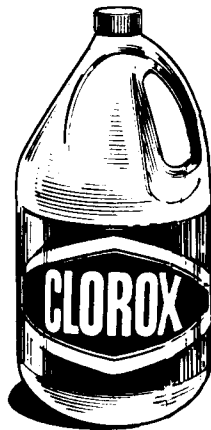
# AVI-TIPS

by Laurella Desborough  
Martinez, California

## Disinfecting With Liquid Chlorine Bleach

All bird breeders and pet bird owners are faced with the necessity of routinely disinfecting equipment such as bird bowls, perches, cages, flights, baby brooders, and nurseries. An all around disinfectant that is inexpensive and readily available at your local grocery store is liquid chlorine bleach. In order to achieve maximum effectiveness using bleach, certain procedures should be followed.

1. Prior to using the bleach solution, thoroughly wash and rinse any item to be disinfected.
2. Make up the bleach solution fresh daily. Testing reveals significant deterioration of the bleach solution within 24 hours.
3. Use the correct proportions of bleach to clean water: a three percent (3%) to five percent (5%) solution is effective. Three percent solution: use 1/2 cup (4 oz.) of bleach to one gallon of water. Five percent solution: use 3/4 cup or 6 oz. of bleach to one gallon of water.
4. Leave objects to be disinfected in the bleach solution (covered by the solution) at least one minute for non-porous surfaces, and five minutes for clean, porous surfaces and 15 minutes for organic surfaces.
5. Rinse thoroughly with clean water to remove caustic bleach residues prior to returning to use.
6. The disinfecting bleach solution may be sprayed onto surfaces such as walls, cages or floors unless it beads up, then it should be wiped onto these cleaned surfaces, and allowed to stand for five to 15 minutes, depending on the nature of the surface (non-porous, porous, or organic).
7. Don't use the disinfecting chlorine solution in conjunction with most dishwashing detergents, hand soaps/detergents, some rug shampoos, hair shampoos, car shampoos, and *some* automatic dishwashing detergents as they are not compatible with bleach and destroy its effectiveness. Calgon and Electrasol are compatible with bleach. Laundry detergents are generally compatible with bleach, but most laundry soaps are not.
8. Chlorine bleach, correctly used at the 3% to 5% solution, is effective as a disinfectant for all the known viruses, fungi, and bacteria, *with the exception of chlamydia* (which causes chlamydiosis or psittacosis). Therefore, liquid chlorine bleach as a disinfectant would not be recommended where chlamydiosis was a suspected or known disease in a pet or breeder situation. Glutaraldehyde products (Wavicide) or quaternary ammonium products (Roccal D) would be recommended disinfectants for chlamydiosis.



Prepared by Laurella Desborough, Professional Standards Committee. For more detailed information, refer to L.M. Withey's article in the 1990 Proceedings of the Avian Pediatric Seminar.

One other interesting thing happens when breeding season approaches. They will devour partridge eggs from the floor of the aviary. One can only speculate as to the reason for this.

I definitely would not consider confining these beautiful cockatoos in a small cage for any extended time.

### Natural Habitat Changes

The introduced Hawthorn tree seems to have filled a gap in the Gang Gang's winter food requirements in this area. They tend to ripen in later summer and early autumn when the Gang Gangs traditionally flock, after breeding season. This traditional "non-native" food supply will last a number of birds for several months.

Hedges of these and other exotic flora to the Gang Gang taste sustain them in the cooler months in quite a few of the southern Tableland's towns. Unfortunately for the Gang Gang, these hedges tend to be planted along busy arterial roads, thus on approach to or leaving some hedges, many Gang Gangs lose their lives in collisions with motor vehicles.

The Gang Gangs appear regularly every year in the late summer, early autumn months in flocks with their season's young. They are particularly common in some of Canberra's suburbs at that time of year.

When I was younger, I was always led to believe these birds only bred in the mountains. Now, after speaking with a senior colleague who has been involved with cockatoos in his younger days, he has informed me that they nest a lot closer to home than that. He has promised to show me some nesting sights some day. Apparently the Gang Gangs will nest anywhere from six and one half feet off ground level to nearly 100 feet. My friend also told me they did not enter inside a limb very far, only about 24 to 35 inches from the entrance.

I had thought when flocks of these birds appeared in late summer, early autumn, they came down from the mountains. This may well have been the fact, as all the breeding pairs and their young congregate in flocks.

I can remember in autumn, the major food supply, the Stringy Barks, were about. The Gang Gangs would clamber about feeding in the large Stringy Barks. These trees, laden with nuts, are not a common sight anymore. The birds spend a lot of time stripping these trees of nuts for food and passing the time. Now, unfortun-

ately, most of these trees have been cleared in the wake of the pastoral industry in our area. This clearing also reduces nesting sites.

The Gang Gang's traditional flocking coincides with this Stringy Bark "banquet." This has now been replaced by a certain amount of the introduced Hawthorn.

Over the past few years, I've had the opportunity to study an area of Hawthorn trees on the Yass River where the Gang Gangs arrive in their small flock. The young birds usually wait, initially in their creche area in tall eucalyptus above the Hawthorns. After several days, they will follow their parents down to the Hawthorns, continually begging for food. The parents usually succumb to the begging and feed their offspring. At the same time the young are being introduced to the food they are being fed, and would obviously take time to sample it for themselves. Thus weaning is complete.

I would imagine this clearing of trees affects the seasonal movement of the Gang Gangs. I still believe the majority of Gang Gangs come down to lower altitudes to avoid the harsh winter conditions of the alps. What I am saying is, these birds will eventually have no "winter home," due to the fact that the once traditional food supply will be non-existent. It follows, if more birds are forced to lower altitudes to less food, or forced to stay in the high country to winter out, there will be a higher mortality rate for the species. This will eventually lead to the decline of the species.

#### Cacatua Affinities

On the other hand, this land clearance has benefitted the Gang Gang's close relative, the Galah (*Eouphus roseicapillus*), a bird suited to the open country. They moved in here in the late 1930s, a fact confirmed by my late father. Land clearance, more stock watering points, cereal crops and split grain have aided this new cockatoo wave. The Galah now outnumbered the previous Gang Gang numbers.

I have mentioned that I think the Galah and the Gang Gang are closely related. I will give a few reasons for my beliefs. Apparently, the Gang Gang and the Galah have hybridized in captivity. If you look closely at their basic plumage color, one is very much like the other.

Both sexes have a reddish orange fringe to the feathers on their chest and abdomen. The Galah has a pink

crest and the chest and back are grey. The lighter grey probably suits their ground feeding habits. The former bird's darker plumage suits feeding in the shadowy branch areas. Therefore, both have adapted to blend in with their main surroundings. If you have ever had the opportunity to study these two birds in flight, it is very hard to distinguish between them. This is particularly true near dusk. When giving their pre-roosting display flights, their calls obviously give them away. The begging note of the young birds is virtually identical. Both species have the habit of forming a creche area for their young. The creche is a type of area where the young sit and wait patiently for their parents to bring food to them (I have observed this characteristic myself).

The two species, as well as having extremely similar flight patterns while feeding, have the habit of taking off and performing very similar aerobatics. They consist of calling, rapid flock formation and unison flight forming, wheeling and especially spiralling downwards to alight and resume feeding.

#### Conclusion

My own observations of this species in my local area over the last 30 years gives me a guide to the future of the species in the wild.

The Gang Gang is a species with a "narrow" food source. It needs the habitat of a basic eucalyptus forest for survival. Additionally, its main nesting sites are in the same stands of eucalyptus. Therefore, its very existence depends on the protection and maintenance of the large tracts of such stands of forests. As I have stated earlier, the Gang Gang is a very desirable aviary bird. The way this bird clammers about on the mesh of its aviary and its calls are unique. The way it flicks its crest out forward when excited shows it is decidedly Cacatuine.

I would stress here, that this is not a bird that should be subjected to aviary conditions unless you are prepared to provide a good environment. By this I mean the food and branch requirements I have mentioned earlier. We need to encourage this species to propagate itself in captivity.

#### References

References and recommended reading:  
Caley, Neville W., *Australian Parrots in Field and Aviary*  
Revised London, Alan H.  
Forshaw, Joseph M., *Australian Parrots* ●



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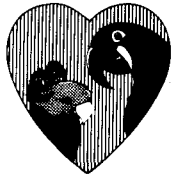
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## Ground Birds (continued from page 31)

**Barbary Partridge, *A. barbata***  
**Philby's Rock Partridge, *A. philbyi***, is a species recently introduced to this country, again by courtesy of San Diego Zoo, and one which by its impressive fecundity is destined to become permanently established in American collections.

**Erkels Francolin, *Francolinus erkelii***, Ethiopia and Egypt/Sudan plateau.

One of only a handful of species in captivity representing quite a large and mostly unknown family. This is one of the largest species and males can be quite pugnacious to both keeper and hens. They are famous for their snake killing ability. These birds can be extremely noisy and cannot be recommended for built up neighborhoods.

**Grey Partridge, *Perdix perdix***, Europe and west Asia.

Also known as the Hungarian Partridge. Another bird often overlooked by the aviculturist, these sweet natured, subtly patterned little birds make delightful pets and are an ideal beginner's bird.

**Harlequin Quail, *Coturnix delegorguei***, Africa south of the Sahara and southern Arabia. Described in "The Birds of Africa" Volume 2 as common to very abundant, the birds are trapped very heavily in areas of human habitation. Typically one or more birds are caged on a pole above the long grass where they will call incessantly, attracting wild quail to their vicinity where they are snared in nooses. As many as 80 in a morning are reported as being caught. The species is both migratory and nomadic. Aviculturally, their fortune seems to go up and down. Presently they appear to be in short supply and very few people are breeding them.

**Button Quail, *Coturnix chinensis***, Africa, Asia and Australia.

One of the most popular of all gamebirds in aviculture, the species can be found in a number of different mutations — white, silver, red-breasted, fawn, blue and pied. A delightful little bird, easy to keep and breed. Compatible with even the smallest of finches and can be successfully kept and bred in relatively tiny cages. Button Quail can become ridiculously tame and can be really recommended as first birds. The **Blue Quail, *C.c. adansonii*** is the African form and much bluer and darker than the nominate form.

**Jungle Quail, *Perdicula asiatica*** and the **Painted Bush Quail, *Perdicula erythrorhyncha*** are not birds with which I have had any personal experience. I understand that small populations of them do still exist in California and that they are treated much the same as Button Quail but with extra supplies of live food and chopped fruit and greens.

**Crimson-headed Wood Partridge, *Haematortyx sanguiniceps***, Northern Borneo.

An exquisite little bird about the size of a Roul Roul, some birds were imported for the first time in decades earlier this year. Recently bred in Sarawak, they appear to have rather peculiar breeding behavior (although it should be noted that only a single breeding occurrence was described) in that only one egg is laid which is not incubated for five to seven days. The chick hatches after an incubation period of 24 days and can fly when five days old. (W.P.A. News, May 1990).

**Roul Roul, *Rollulus roulroul***, Southeast Asia.

Strikingly beautiful in both male and female plumages. Still being maintained in reasonable numbers in this country although the population appears to have declined in recent years. Delightful, tame little birds with mellow, whistling calls and conversation. They build domed nests on the ground out of leaf litter, but will use a small box in which to incubate their clutch of only two eggs. The parents feed their chicks from the bill. Absolutely charming though not at all cold hardy, they can really be recommended for the experienced aviculturist.

**Chinese Bamboo Partridge, *Bambusicola thoracica***, China.

Handsome little birds with good numbers at present in this country. San Diego Zoo imported birds about four or five years ago which really revitalized captive stocks. Chicks are delicate initially and may require hand feeding. They will nest up off the ground and a nest box should be provided.

**Spurfowl: Ceylon, *Galloperdix bicalcarata***, Sri Lanka.

**Painted, *G. lunulata***, India.

**Red, *G. spadicea***, India.

Inhabiting dry scrub-jungle in the wild, all were formerly represented in captivity in this country and I have seen all species at one time or

another. Unfortunately, it seems that the Ceylon stock has died out and the Painted barely survives, but the Red is still to be found in good numbers and is breeding quite regularly.

Strange little birds resembling and behaving rather like miniature Peacock Pheasants, they deserve greater popularity than they have hitherto enjoyed.

**Pheasants.** A very popular group of birds with a following all their own. They are not tough to keep and can be kept safely with other birds.

**Western Tragopan, *Tragopan melanocephalus*,** Western Himalayas.

**Satyr Tragopan, *T. satyra*,** Central and east Himalayas.

**Temminck's Tragopan, *T. Temminckii*,** West China, north Burma and southeast Tibet.

**Cabot's Tragopan, *T. caboti*,** China.

**Koklass, *Pucrasia macrolopha*,** Western Himalayas and China.

**Edward's Pheasant, *Lophura edwardsi*,** Vietnam.

**Swinhoe, *Lophura swinhoei*,** Taiwan.

**Malayan Fireback, *Lophura ignita rufa*,** Malaya.

**Bornean Fireback, *Lophura i. ignita*,** Borneo.

**White-eared Pheasant, *Crossoptilon crossoptilon*,** Tibet and China.

**Elliot's Pheasant, *Syrmaticus elliotti*,** Southeastern China.

**Congo Peacock, *Afropavo congensis*,** Africa.

The only pheasant to be found in Africa. Terribly rare in captivity and very difficult to maintain. A bird for the well connected specialist, since all captive birds are, I believe, owned by the Antwerp Zoo in Belgium, which both maintains the International Studbook and controls the placement of stock produced.

The females are quite different in color with moss-green upperparts and cinnamon neck and underparts.

Of the four forms of **Guineafowl** in this country, the most popular and beautiful has to be the **Vulturine Guinea, *Acryllium vulturinum*** from East Africa. So called for the naked, vulturelike head and not for any behavioral peculiarity, these are most interesting and attractive birds. They can be very prolific and I have had birds which laid in every month of the year.

Two other forms, the **Kenya Crested, *Guttera pucherani*,** and **Edwards, *Guttera edouardi*,** have a much smaller representation in this

country and are equally beautiful and interesting, though less spectacular than the Vulturine.

**Ocellated Turkeys, *Agriocharis ocellata*,** Yucatan and Belize.

Resembling a small, beautifully colored common turkey, these birds are simply breathtaking when seen displaying in the sun.

Non-aggressive (I have kept these birds with ducks, touracos, finches and doves), they do require a good-sized pen to show themselves off in. They cannot handle the cold and are very susceptible to chicken borne diseases.

**Black-rumped Button Quail, *Turnix hottentotta*,** Southwest Cape Province of South Africa.

A quail-like bird, properly called a hemipode which is more closely related to the bustards and cranes, than to the pheasant family.

Particularly interesting for their polyandrous behavior, males are smaller and duller than females which take a number of mates during the breeding season. The hen deposits a clutch which the male then incubates alone and rears the chicks by himself.

**Cranes.** These, of course, are a gorgeous ground dweller for those who have the space. Presently the most commonly available are these three species which can be kept safely with waterfowl, although they are likely to eat a duckling or five, so one would need to be alert during the breeding season.

**Demoiselle Crane, *Anthropoides virgo*,** Eastern Europe, Asia and north Africa.

**Stanley Crane, *Anthropoides paradisea*,** Africa.

**Crowned Crane, *Balearica pavonina*,** Africa.

**Black Crake, *Amaurornis flavirostra*,** Africa south of the Sahara.

Busy, entertaining and quite vocal. I have kept only one pair of these birds, which shared their four foot square cage with a Greater Kiskadee Flycatcher in perfect amity. The Crakes repeatedly built and rebuilt their large nest of long leaves and grasses until the materials literally fell apart and had to be replaced. A serious breeder would undoubtedly accommodate their birds in a much larger pen with appropriate dense vegetation and a body of water.


**Sun Bittern, *Eurypyga belias*,** tropical America.



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These birds are consistently being bred now at some zoos, although only in small numbers, and are very expensive when they do appear on the open market. We have kept ours with birds as small as seedeaters (*Sporophila* sp.), with no problems, although I'm sure they would eat a callow nestling should they discover one.

**Bustards** are an Old World family of some 25 species of generally large ground birds, inhabiting open, grassy plains and savannahs.

Few species are kept in captivity, although increasing attention is being paid to the rare and endangered species, of which this small family has quite a number.

Probably the most common representative in captivity is the **Little Black Bustard**, *Afrotis atra*, from Africa, although a preponderance of males currently exists. Very handsome but with a raucous barking call at times, they will become very tame and sometimes even aggressive towards their keepers.

**Waders** are an enormous group of aviculturally ignored birds which certainly merit a closer look.

Two of the most popular in North American collections are the **Southern Lapwing**, *Vanellus chilensis*, from South America, and the **Black-smith Plover**, *Vanellus armatus*, from eastern and southern Africa.

Both of them are beautiful birds, boldly patterned and totally terrestrial but with a butterfly-like flight which shows off the flashy wing patterns.

The **Sandgrouse** are a group to make the mouth water and to make even the most conservative aviculturist want more. Superficially resembling grouse but with a pigeonlike head and behavior, all species are beautifully patterned and plumaged. Totally terrestrial, only a handful of the 16 species have been kept and bred successfully in this country, although last year saw an influx of three forms through a west coast importer.

When hatched, the chicks are precocial and are self feeding on seeds and vegetable matter. Curiously the chicks drink from the water soaked belly feathers of the male which are physically designed for that purpose.

A closely related group, the **Pigeons**

and **Doves**, are another large family which have their fans in the avicultural world.

I shall only mention a few species here commencing with the **Luzon Bleeding Heart Dove**, *Gallicolumba luzonica*, from the Philippines. A beautiful little bird, quiet and non-aggressive, easily maintained on a seed and chopped fruit diet with a few mealworms. A good sized population exists in this country and birds can generally be found available at most times of the year.

The elegant little **Plumed Pigeon**, *Petrophassa plumifera*, from Australia can be extremely aggressive to its mate and care must be taken to provide hiding places for the birds to escape an aggressive spouse.

The fabulous **Crowned Pigeons** can be kept at liberty and look wonderful strutting around in the garden. All three forms are represented in captivity and have their own studbook:

**Blue-crowned Pigeon**, *Goura cristata*, Northwest New Guinea.

**Victoria Crowned Pigeon**, *G. victoriae*, Northern New Guinea.

**Maroon-breasted Crowned Pigeon**, *G. scheepmakeri*, Southern New Guinea.

My personal favorite family, the **Pittas**, or Jewel Thrushes, are beautifully colored and patterned with long legs and very short tails. Totally terrestrial except when roosting, the families' center of distribution is in southeast Asia where most of the 25 or so species are found. The family actually ranges from Africa to Australia, but only one form is African while three can be found in Australia. Some of the species are:

**Giant Pitta**, *Pitta caerulea*, Thailand, Malaya.

**Blue-winged**, *Pitta p. molluccensis*, East India, southwest China, southeast Asia.

**Hooded Pitta**, *P. sordida*, India, southwest China.

**Elliot's Pitta**, *P. ellioti*, Indochina.

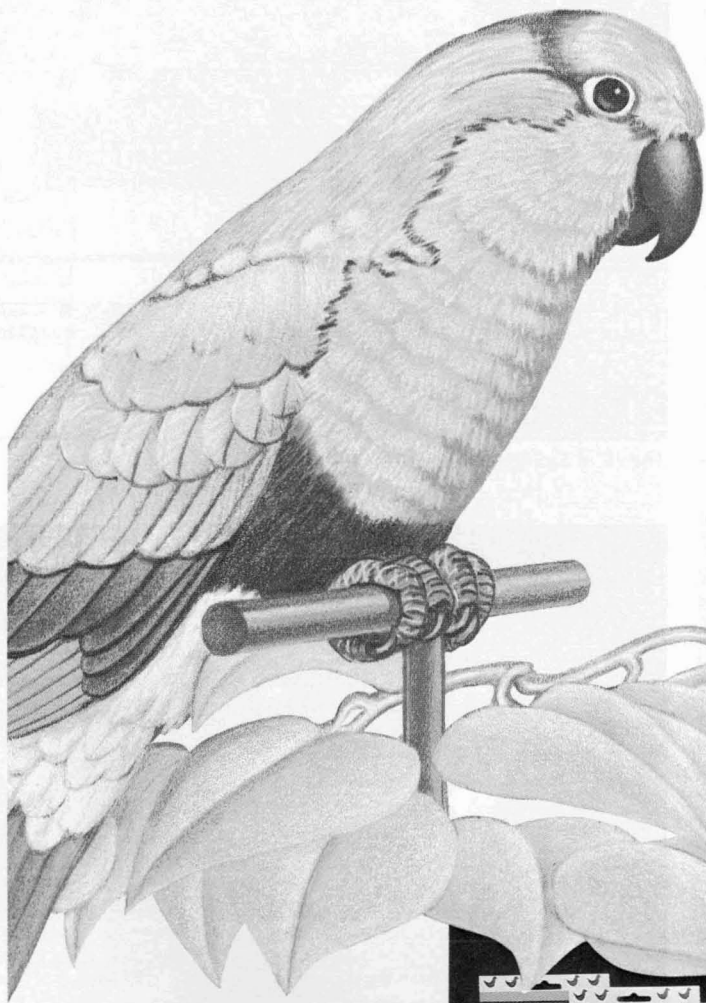
The **Banded Pitta**, *Pitta guajana*, is one of the few sexually dimorphic species and an exceptionally lovely bird.

Finally, the **Quail Finch**, *Ortygospiza atricollis*, from Africa is the truly tiny terrestrial referred to at the start of my article. A waxbill of bogs and swamps which, in the wild, is never known to perch, these birds need considerable live food when rearing young, but have been bred on a number of occasions in captivity. ●



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