



Photo by Mario Paulik

The Striated Lorikeet is one of the rarest species known. They are found in only a few localities along the southern mountain slopes of western New Guinea.

Breeding Striated Lorikeets

(*Charmosyna multistriata*)

by Mario Paulik and Dyann Kruszona
Pacific Palisades, California

The *Charmosyna multistriata* lorikeet is one of the rarest species known. These predominately green lorikeets are about seven inches long (18 cm). Their most striking identifying characteristic is the iridescent yellow streaks on the breast extending to the red-orange vent. Another characteristic is the two-toned beak; steel blue toward the cere, changing to orange. The forehead is yellowish green with a brownish grey nape tipped with orange. Their feet are grey and they have dark green wings and rump. The sexes are identical, necessitating surgical sexing. Their distribution in the wild is the southern slopes of the main ranges in western New Guinea between the Snow Mountains and the upper Fly River. The Striated Lorikeet is a rare bird known from only a few localities between 200 and 1,800 m. Nothing is known of its habits.

We purchased two pairs of these rare birds in November 1989. They were housed in a cage 2 x 3 x 1.5 feet inside our home. Initially we had all four birds together. After a few days, we observed that one of the cock birds was feeding one of the hens. At this point, we put the pairs into separate cages and supplied them with budgie nest boxes. They were housed in the den of our apartment along with Fairy, Goldie's, and Red-flanked Lorikeets.

The diet of the Striated Lorikeets is the same as most of our other *Charmosyna*: Avico Lory Life nectar and

fresh fruit daily.

The first pair went to the nest box surprisingly soon after we separated them into pairs. The first egg was laid on January 18, 1990 followed by a second on January 20. The eggs were incubated by the hen for approximately 18 days. At this point, something must have frightened them as the parents ate both eggs. Both eggs had been fertile. This disappointment was immediately followed by another when both pairs of birds fell ill. We had them cultured for bacteria. They were diagnosed as having a severe *E. coli* infection. After ten days of treatment by injection, the pair that laid eggs in January laid another egg on June 15, 1990. A second egg was laid on June 18. The eggs were strictly incubated by the female. The male remained on guard outside the nest box most of the time.

On July 10, 1990, the first egg hatched after 26 days of incubation. Three days later, on July 13, the second egg hatched. We were extremely concerned and kept a close watch to be certain the parents were feeding the chicks. The female rarely left the nest box during the first few days. The diet remained the same during this stage; however, greater quantities were consumed. The normal

daily noises around our apartment did not seem to bother them. Even the airplane noise from nearby Los Angeles International Airport did not seem to distract their attention from their chicks.

The chicks fledged on August 31, 1990, following 50 days in the nest. The plumage on the youngsters differed from the parents in that the beak was solid, bluish grey and the yellow streaks on the breast were not as vibrant. The beaks changed to the two-tone color of the mature birds after approximately three months.

The chicks had to be separated from the parents ten days after fledging when a routine check of the nest box revealed another egg had been laid. A second egg was laid three days later on September 13, 1990. At the end of September, we moved to another house. The eggs were temporarily placed in an incubator during the actual physical move of the birds and their cages. The eggs were subsequently placed back into the nest box with the parents and both hatched successfully. The new chicks are two weeks old at the time of writing this article (mid-October 1990). ●

Editor's Note: This breeding of the Striated Lorikeet was submitted to the AFA's Avy Awards Committee for a U.S. First Breeding Award. Any person having any knowledge of a prior successful breeding, please contact Dale R. Thompson, Chairman, Avy Awards Committee, through the AFA home office in Phoenix, Arizona.

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