

How to Choose Breeding Stock

by Paul Gildersleeve
Oyster Bay, New York

Birds should be purchased from a reputable breeder who is reducing his breeding stock. It is crucial that you know as much as possible about the breeder. Even if you are familiar with the breeder, you will need answers to questions such as: Why are you reducing your breeding stock? Are you liquidating your stock completely? Are you selling your best breeders or problem breeders? What are the problems, if any, with the pairs being offered for sale? What price are you asking for each pair? How long have you been breeding birds? How long have you owned these particular birds? Where did you originally acquire your breeding stock? How many eggs has each female laid? How many eggs have hatched? How many eggs were fertile? Do you incubate the eggs or will the birds incubate the eggs? Do you handfeed the babies or will the parents feed the babies? When was the last time these birds went to nest? Do you keep breeding records of your birds? Will you provide references from the people who have purchased your birds? Do you close band your birds? What type of aviary do you use for breeding? What type of nest boxes do you use? Do you breed inside or outside? What type of lighting do you use? What comprises the complete diet of the birds? Are there any foods that give them problems? Are these birds on any medication now? Do you medicate all birds each year at a specific time? When was the last time these birds were seen by a

veterinarian? Who is your veterinarian? Where do you buy your bird food? Do you use vitamin supplements? At what time of day are the birds fed? How much outside interference do the birds receive each day?

These are the type of questions that you must have answered satisfactorily before making a decision to purchase breeding stock. By purchasing proven breeders, you are starting out with an advantage. You will know that the birds have bred in the past and the chances are good that the birds will nest again in the future. By duplicating as much of the previous owner's regimen as possible you are further increasing your chances for early nesting. You must assure yourself that the breeder is telling the truth, thus the reason for all the questions. You should check his credentials, veterinarian, food suppliers, and those who have purchased babies from him. You are making an important investment and you must be sure you know what quality you are purchasing. Remember, caveat emptor or 'let the buyer beware.'

We, at Pampered Parrot Haven, Inc., try to ascertain from the breeder answers to the above questions when purchasing large birds such as Amazons, pions, African greys, cockatoos, conures, rosellas, lorries, macaws, etc. I do not always ask all the above questions when purchasing cockatiels or the smaller parakeets or some of the more common

finches, but it certainly would not hurt to ask the questions.

If you have been unable to secure all proven breeding birds for your breeding stock you will then be searching for birds that are acclimated to each other. Again, you need to ask the same questions as you did for the proven pairs. By buying acclimated pairs, you are attempting to obtain birds that will nest within a reasonable period of time. I have purchased pairs of birds that other breeders have had for anywhere from one to four years and, in a majority of cases, the birds went to nest within a year of the purchase. It is possible that the birds only needed a change of environment to go to nest. You may want to remember this if you have a pair of birds that have not nested for you. Move the birds to a new location and see if that helps.

The above ways of purchasing birds are, in my opinion, the best ways to acquire breeding stock. The first way will be the most expensive since you are obtaining known breeders. The second way will be less expensive since you are buying under the assumption that the birds will nest for you even though they did not nest for the previous owner. The next method of purchase will be less expensive than buying proven breeding birds but more expensive than purchasing acclimated pairs. This is the purchasing of tame pet stock.

When purchasing pets for breeding, you will need to know answers to all the above questions that relate to a pet bird. You would also want to know: has the bird ever laid eggs? Has the bird been surgically sexed? Do you have the papers verifying sexing? This kind of bird should be tame and very friendly to its owner. This will assure you that you are buying a true pet bird and not one that is just tame. You will need your veterinarian to give the bird a medical examination prior to purchase to check for any potential problems. The bird will also need to go to the veterinarian after the purchase for surgical sexing to determine first, the sex and then, the condition of the sex organs. The chances are that the owner will not let you have the bird sexed until after the purchase. You may end up purchasing a very nice, tame, gentle bird that proves to be a female with tumors on the ovaries. This is one of the drawbacks to this way of pairing breeders. However, with the first

AVIAN TRADER CLASSIFIEDS

100% OF OUR SUBSCRIBERS READ THE CLASSIFIEDS!!



- *Buy, Sell, Trade Your Birds, Equipment, Supplies nationwide.
- *Subscriptions: 12 Issues \$7. 25 Issues \$14. 38 Issues \$21.
- *Ads due 25th of each Month. 35¢ a word. \$7 Min. per Ad.
- *Published Monthly. Mailed 1st Class.
- *We accept Checks and VISA/MASTERCARD.
- *NO LONG WAIT FOR CIRCULATION!!

MAIL SUBSCRIPTIONS and ADS to: ATC, Dept. A, P.O. Box 6215,
Traverse City, MI 49685-6215 Fax # (616) 946-9317

two methods of purchasing, you do not know the sex unless you have the birds sexed, again, even if they were represented as proven breeders.

We are now at the point where securing the breeding stock will be the least expensive in dollars but probably the most expensive in time. If we have been unable to find the birds we need through the above mentioned methods, we will then be looking for birds from a quarantine station or bird broker. The birds will be newly captured wild birds of unknown age, sex, health, disposition, etc. What we will attempt to do here, if allowed, is sit in front of a cage of birds and see how they look and interact. We are trying to pick birds that seem to have paired off and look healthy. We will need to inspect the bird for any imperfections that may inhibit breeding. We look for clear eyes, clean vent, alert reaction, the flying ability, how the bird walks or anything that may show the slightest sign of a problem. You will have to select a number of birds because the chances of picking two birds and having them be male and female (in monomorphic species) are unlikely. Some facilities have already had birds sexed and this will be to your advantage, although I still would have the bird checked internally by my veterinarian to make sure that the bird is able to breed.

Once you know which birds you want and when you will be taking possession of them, I would suggest that you leave the station or broker and go directly to your veterinarian for the medical work-up. You now need a place to quarantine the birds for whatever period of time you have determined would be adequate. A 45 to 60 day holding time is what most people seem to favor. Remember the birds are new arrivals and have been medicated to eliminate the possibility of Psittacosis only. This way of choosing birds is the least expensive but the one fraught with many possible problems.

Well you now have, by one way or the other, chosen your breeding stock and the rest is up to you and the birds. We need all the new aviculturists who wish to take up the challenge of breeding birds. We are in the process of losing much of the world's tropical bird habitats and need to act now before it is too late. I am hopeful that all experienced breeders will extend a helping hand to all new aspirants to aviculture. •

ABOUT BIRDS
 (815) 648-4078
 **Roudybush Diets** 
 Handfed & imported birds
 11508 Rt. 173 HEBRON, IL 60034

 Kathleen Szabo Harring
 domestic handraised babies
 (305) 258-2373
 LUV THEM BIRDS, INC.
 P.O. Box 0285, Goulds, FL 33170

BIRDS OF DISTINCTION
 Healthy, Handfed Birds
 Breeder Supplies
 Greys • Conures • Cockatiels
 White-faced Cockatiels • Finches
 (704) 821-6998
 5822 Highway 74 W., Monroe, NC 28110 

The Wright Roost
 Jeri Wright
 (206) 838-9802
 NOW HAND-FEEDING
 Hyacinths & other macaws, Cockatoos
 Conures & Amazons
 Domestic, Close-Banded
 Roudybush Distributor 

3rd Annual

Midwest Avian Research Expo
 July 11 & 12, 1992
 Hyatt Regency Hotel, Lexington, Kentucky


The Wind Beneath Their Wings

This event is sponsored by dedicated avicultural clubs & hobbyists for the purpose of raising funds in support of avian research.

THE 1992 RECIPIENTS & SPEAKERS ARE:
Dr. Branson Ritchie, Research Director, University of Georgia, College of Veterinary Medicine.
Dr. Kevin Flammer, Antibiotic Research, North Carolina State University.
Dr. Jack Gaskin, University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine.

In addition, the following are just some of the support speakers:
 Dr. David Graham, Sally Blanchard, Gloria Allen, Dr. Robert Clipsham, Dave Blynn, Dr. Robert Dahlhausen, Marjorie Gibson and many more.

LOCATION
 The Hyatt Regency Hotel is located in beautiful downtown Lexington, Kentucky, next to several shopping malls. Special conference room rate of \$60.00 per room. Hyatt Regency Hotel 1-800-233-1234 (local phone) 606 / 253-1234

Please mention Midwest Avian Research Expo to receive discount room rates.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND
The Midwest Avian Research Expo is designed to benefit those individuals involved with the Pet Bird Industry. These would include pet bird owners, bird breeders, pet store owners, fanciers, hobbyists and veterinarians handling pet birds. Attendance and registration is open to any person interested in the care and management of pet or breeder birds.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURE
 To register, mail the completed form below with payment (check or money order) before June 15, 1992. All registrations will be confirmed by mail, time permitting.
This is a non-profit fundraiser for avian research, therefore no refunds will be given.

COMMERCIAL EXHIBITS
 9:00am - 6:00pm (Sat. & Sun.)
 Open to the Public
 Raffles, Displays, Prizes & More

RECOGNITION DINNER
 An evening of entertainment, with Keynote Speaker **Dr. Peter Sakas**. Kentucky theme buffet dinner at the Hyatt Regency at 7:30pm, Saturday evening - Cost \$25.00

VENDOR SPACE AVAILABLE
 8' x 8' Booth, includes pipe & drape.
 Write for information.

1992 Midwest Avian Research Expo
 Please register one person per form. Duplicate this form for additional registrants. PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____

I have enclosed \$ _____
 Please check appropriate boxes. Registration Fee Recognition Dinner 

Conference Registration (includes both days)
 Recognition Dinner is additional \$25.00.
 \$105.00 Registration Deadline - June 15, 1992
 \$115.00 After deadline, space permitting
 Special discount - Registrations postmarked by May 15, 1992 only \$75.00.

Send completed order form and check or money order to:
Midwest Avian Research Expo
 3508 Trails End
 Lexington, Ky. 40517

After registering a letter of confirmation will be sent to you along with hotel & travel information.

Airline discount travel arrangements via Cathy Sutherland 1-800-874-7783
 Hyatt Regency Hotel (606) 253-1234