

Carrying on a Scheibe Family Tradition

by Dale R. Thompson, Lemon Cove, CA



Scheibe breeds for both yellow and red Sun Conures. No color enhancers are used.

George Scheibe acquired his first bird when he was only five years old. It was a Blue and Gray Tanager and it was a beloved pet. By the age of eight he was color breeding Budgies to get select mutations. That was many years ago and Scheibe still breeds birds. Indeed, it is a family tradition.

Scheibe's son, Greg, began working in his father's aviaries when he was just a child of five years. He took well to the work and now, with nine years of experience under his belt, he manages the aviary while his father and sisters assist him. Greg Scheibe plans to become a zoo curator in addition to keeping his own birds. He will carry on the family tradition of aviculture.

Scheibe's central Florida aviary is located in an agricultural area far from neighbors who might object to the noise made by the parrots. The aviary is, in effect, a closed aviary with little access given to anyone but family and close friends at need. Security is assured by dogs, good fencing, and an excellent response time by local law enforcement.

Not many birds are sold right now

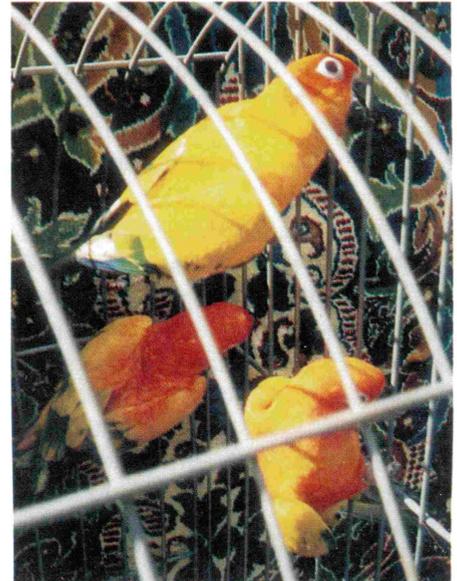
while the primary objective is breeding for color enhancement. This selective breeding has resulted in striking red or yellow variations of the Sun Conure — the main species focused on. Although most clutches are parent raised for the first three weeks, this applies to average sized clutches. When there is only one chick, it is allowed to remain with the parents an additional week. Larger than average clutches are removed at two weeks. Most clutches are allowed to raise only two or three clutches per year and, occasionally, eggs, for one reason or another, are fostered under other Sun Conures or are given to proven pairs of Jendays or Gold-cappeds. Nest boxes are monitored occasionally but more importance is placed on observation of each bird's activities.

Free standing cages are placed within an outer pool-enclosure type of screening which limits access by mosquitoes and prevents the birds' escapes beyond that perimeter. Cages are 2 feet x 2 feet x 3 feet made of a 1 x 2 inch mesh galvanized before and after welding. Framing is made from 2 x 4 lumber and the cages are suspended approximately three feet above a bare soil floor.

Cages that are not placed under shade trees have their roofs partially covered for shade and shelter. Those placed under trees have their roofs completely covered. All nest boxes are sheltered from the elements. The cages



This is a beautiful bird with a bright yellow body and a deep red head.



These year-old Sun Conures are being held back for breeding stock.

are double stacked with trays separating the upper unit from the bottom unit. Nest boxes alternate front to rear in each stack which causes all nest openings face either east or west. The nest boxes are made of wood but are lined with wire. Seven dust (5%) is powdered *very* lightly in the areas of the nest boxes but never when there are chicks present in a box. It is never placed inside a box. Between breeding seasons the nest boxes are taken down for inspection and repairs after which they are sprayed with an insecticide, disinfected and refilled with fresh nesting material.

Perches are made of 2 x 4 or 1 x 2 white pine wood which allows easy chewing.

Food and water are provided in crockery or metal containers, some of which are placed inside the cages on the floor while others are attached to the outside of the cages.

Feed is given daily and consists of a mixture of seeds (80%) and a commercial pellet (20%). This is supplemented with fruits, frozen vegetables thawed for feeding, endive, and dark green spinach. Liquid and powdered vitamins are sprinkled over the wet food. During the winter there is a shift to a diet higher in fat content.

The avicultural tradition is well established within the Scheibe family and the condition and beauty of their birds reflects it. May the tradition continue for generations. 