

The First Captive Breeding of the Hoffman's Conure

by Chris Rowley

Hoffman's conures range from southern Costa Rica to northern Panama. The nominate race (*Pyrrhura hoffmanni hoffmanni*) is confined to Costa Rica, and *P.b. gaudens* is restricted to Panama.

The subject of this paper shall be the first breeding of the sub-species *P.b. gaudens*. The breeding stock was acquired in Panama by Dr. Nathan B. Gale in 1980.

I received the pair in question in early 1981 and had them surgically sexed. In May the weather was cool with highs in the upper 60s and rainy. May 5, 1981 the hen laid her first egg and three more followed. The eggs were laid in a plywood nestbox that measured 18"x9"x9", with three inches of material in the bottom. The boxes are checked periodically, often twice a day in the breeding season. The hen began sitting immediately and was very diligent. She remained tight on the nest for a full 30 days at which time the eggs



The first two Hoffman's conures raised in captivity.

were removed and found to be infertile.

In 1982 the male was seen feeding the hen in early February. Copulation was observed starting mid-February and by the end of the month the time spent mating increased in length from less than a minute up to 15 minutes. By this time the hen frequently entered the nest box for short periods.

The eggs were laid on March 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, and 15 totalling six eggs. The eggs were incubated by the hen. Inspection of the eggs revealed that they were usually partially buried in the dirt and wood compost nesting material.

All of the eggs were fertile but two of the babies died in the shell at early stages. Incubation is estimated to be 24 days. The first hatching was on March 29th, the next on the 31st and then nothing else hatched until April 6th. The last one to pip was putting up a good struggle early in the day but in the afternoon it became very weak. As a last ditch effort I felt it necessary to assist the youngster out of the shell, but in his weakened condition he did not survive. On April 20th the youngest of the three remaining babies, being substantially smaller than his siblings, died leaving his two elders fat and healthy.

By the end of April the two were fully pin-feathered and brooding was done by both parents. The parents' food intake had tripled during the feeding process. The diet consisted of a seed mixture of 20% safflower, 10% white millet, 10% sunflower, 10% horse pellets, 7% Wayne monkey diet, 7% red millet, 5% canary seed, 5% milo

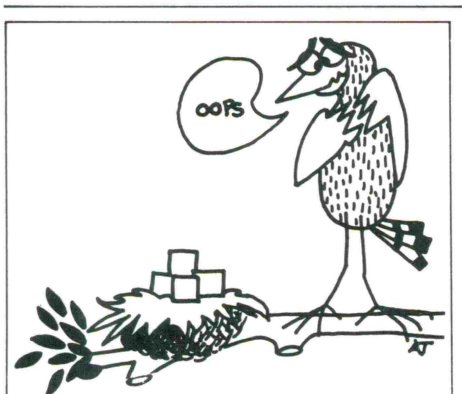
maize, 5% whole corn, 5% oat groats, and 5% dried peas. In addition to the mix and a variety of greens, the birds were fed apples and other fresh fruits in season including peaches, mulberries, pomegranates, tangerines, and pyracantha berries. No other supplements were added to food or water. Both food and water are offered in 8" crocks.

A baby was seen peering out of the nest for the first time on May 17th, and on the 19th the oldest sat perched in the nest box doorway for an hour. The next day it left the nest.

On the 20th both youngsters were out but spent the next several nights in the box. By the 27th both appeared to be completely weaned.

This breeding took place in one of 12 welded wire cages measuring 3'x3'x3', made of 1x1 wire and sitting on a steel framework 2' off the ground. These small cages are all enclosed in a large aviary measuring 24'x24' by 12' tall with a half shaded lath roof. Foggers are used in the summer to keep the high temperature down. Natural perches are provided using eucalyptus, mulberry and mesquite. The pair is in clear view of many other pairs of parrots, including several other pairs of *Pyrrhura* and one other pair of *hoffmanni*. Visitors are allowed to tour the aviary throughout the year, but very few during breeding season.

After being separated from their parents, the young Hoffman's conures were housed with two maroon-bellied conures of the same age where they have done well so far. ●



Two U.S. First Breeding Awards missed the listing in the Oct/Nov '84 issue, Avy Award Winners, 1984, page 48. Our apologies to the accomplished breeder/winner:

Tom Ireland
St. Thomas Conure
Aratinga p. pertinax
December 30, 1982

Tom Ireland
Yellow-faced Mountain Parakeet
Bolborhynchus aurifrons
November 4, 1982

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SCARLET CHESTED PARAKEETS \$75. Split Yellow Bourkes sexed \$75, Yellow Bourkes \$225, Rosey Bourkes \$500, Blue Rosellas \$125, Rock Peblars \$450 pr., RINGNECKS — Lutino hens \$300, unsexed \$350, Green split lutino cocks \$150. '84 White Crown Pionus cock \$250, HANDFED'S — Umbrella Cockatoos \$800, Timneh African Grey Parrots \$350. LOVE BIRDS — Cherrys \$25, Lutinos \$65. Olive & Jacarina Finch. Hen Cuban Melodius. D. Cavender — MOCTEZUMA BIRD GARDENS, P.O. Box 1973, Escondido, CA 92025. Will ship, trades considered. (619) 741-3421 anytime. SASE please.

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