



PAT'S BIRD RANCH
 Birds • Nest Boxes
 Carriers
 Special Boxes Made
 to Order
(213) 443-2886
 Roger Compton
 8397 6th Street
 Hesperia, Ca 92345



SMITTY'S
Turquoise Aviaries
 specializing in
 TURQUOISINES
 SCARLET CHESTED and
 YELLOW MUTATION
 BOURKE PARRAKEETS
 Catering to serious breeders only
RALPH V. SMITH
 P.O. Box 27, Calimesa, CA 92320
 (714) 795-7272



*The Gilded
 Bird Cage
 Aviary*
 Selective Cage Bred Birds
 for the discriminating breeder
 Cockatiels • Finches • Lovebirds
 Dr. Richard E. Baer (614) 836-5832
 Telephone inquiries only,
 No correspondence



**AVICULTURAL
 SOCIETY
 OF QUEENSLAND**
 An Australian Society catering to all
 birds, care, breeding and their habitat
 in the wild. We put out a bi-monthly
 magazine on all aspects of aviculture and
 conservation. Any one interested in
 becoming a member, please write to:
 President, Mr. Ray Gardood,
 19 Fahey's Road, Albany Creek, 4035,
 Queensland, Australia
ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION \$7.00 (Aust.)
 1st Jan. to 31 Dec.

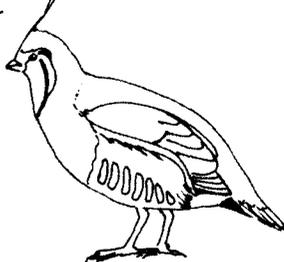


Sky Kings Aviary
 5165 ROUTE 43
 KENT, OHIO 44240
 Vicky and Kent
 Kibler
 — WE SHIP —
 LARGE SELECTION OF
 IMPORTED AND DOMESTIC BIRDS
216 / 678-0488
 Telephone inquiries only,
 No correspondence



Mountain Quail

by R.O. Taylor



Most people think that a Mountain Quail is a Mountain Quail but there are, in fact, five subspecies. Very subtle differences in color serve to distinguish the various subspecies; there seems to be no difference of size. Most people who keep Mountain Quail in captivity do not know the difference between the subspecies and consequently tend to mix them together.

Mountain Quail are very difficult to sex as the male and the female resemble each other very much. The males tend to have a slightly longer crest (Mountain Quail have a long stiff two-feather crest that is quite distinctive) but the crest can be used only as a general hint regarding the bird's sex. Most males have bluer breasts and blue on the back of the neck. The male also carries himself a little prouder than the hen does. During the breeding season the male will get onto a stump, extend his head and give one whistle then a few chuckles. This is his announcement that he rules the roost. His hen will remain on the ground. If this takes place in a pen or enclosure the hen may run the fence making chattering noises. If the male gets serious about his courting he will run around the hen with his tail fluffed out and his wings extended.

Just because one acquires a pair of Mountain Quail it does not necessarily follow that the quail will breed or lay eggs. A few hens will lay the first year but most will not. Often a pair will not be compatible and they will not mate. The best way to get mated pairs is to put eight or ten birds in a large pen. The birds should have color coded bands on. As the birds pick and choose their mates you can keep records by observing the various colored bands. When true pairs are established they can be put into smaller individual pens.

Now, when you think everything is going well, is the time most of your quail will die. Seventy-five percent of captive quail die within six months to a year. The chief reasons for this high mortality is the quails susceptibility to worm parasites and a propensity to develop mouldy stomachs.

Since most worm parasites are trans-

mitted bird to insect to bird, I keep my quail off the ground in wire-bottom cages. The worm parasite problems are greatly reduced when the quail do not pick around the ground and eat sowbugs, earthworms, other bugs, and other bird droppings. Each pair of quail should have a pen about four feet wide by eight feet long.

Mouldy food causes mouldy stomachs. Bad food also causes the stomach or gizzard to form ulcers. Once the quail have reached this state of debilitation there is nothing that can be done for them. Avoid the problem by keeping the pens, food and water dishes spotlessly clean. Don't allow food to get wet or old. Along with the commercial game bird crumbles feed plenty of greens. Don't kill your birds with kindness. They should not be allowed to get too fat.

Keep the quail on wire until January then put each pair in regular pens on the ground. The floor of these pens should be covered with good clean sand. The sand will help the birds get into top condition.

Here in California the Mountain Quail start mating in February and March. They will lay several clutches but the first and second clutch have the highest fertility and hatchability. Of course, all of the eggs are gathered and hatched in an incubator. Some hens will lay thirty to forty eggs. When they are done laying the pairs should be put back into their wire cages off of the ground until the next breeding season. Then worm them. Check with your veterinarian for the proper medicine and dosage.

As in all bird husbandry, one thing may work for me in my location and not work for you in yours. Experience is the best teacher. The weather seems to effect Mountain Quail more than it does many other birds. In the wild the quail will refuse to breed during a really dry year. A drought seems to effect the captive birds also.

Mountain Quail are beautiful but difficult birds. They are a real challenge in aviculture but then, isn't that what aviculture is all about? •