

RECORD KEEPING — INFORMATION OR PAPER POLLUTION?

(Editorial note prepared by Ruth Hanesian.)

Record keeping can be the most exciting part of a breeding program, or a depressing chore that never seems to provide the necessary information. Some of us keep lengthy narrative descriptions of each bird, others are not sure who is the father of the best bird in the house. Why should you keep records of your birds or indeed any animals, and what is the best way?

First lets decide what we want records for. Can you remember your very first bird? How long it lived? How much it cost? Sometimes it is of interest to document the good old days just for the record.

If you started with a pair of Zebra Finches, how many birds were fledged, are the birds you just purchased from Ann Jones perhaps related to that very first pair twenty five years ago? If they are related, should you add them to your breeding population? These and many more questions can be answered by a good set of records. Furthermore,

creative breeding ideas will often originate from clearly kept records.

The most crucial part of any record keeping system is individual identification of the birds. Bands are one way, and cards kept with each individual are another. Lets face it — not all birds are banded. A three by five card that follows a bird from cage to cage can work, especially if you do not lose the card or the bird does not eat it. Cards can accompany birds that are sold or traded and add greatly to the value of the bird.

Zoo record keeping, offers a starting point for the type of information needed and the way to record the information to gain the maximum benefit.

The following article describes the International Species Inventory System or ISIS, currently being used by many Zoos to enhance their breeding capabilities. AFA could become a member institution if there are individuals interested in participating.

The Rothchilds or Bali Mynah has been suggested as a species that would be

a good bird to start with. If you have Rothchilds Mynahs in your collection and would be interested in participating, please contact:

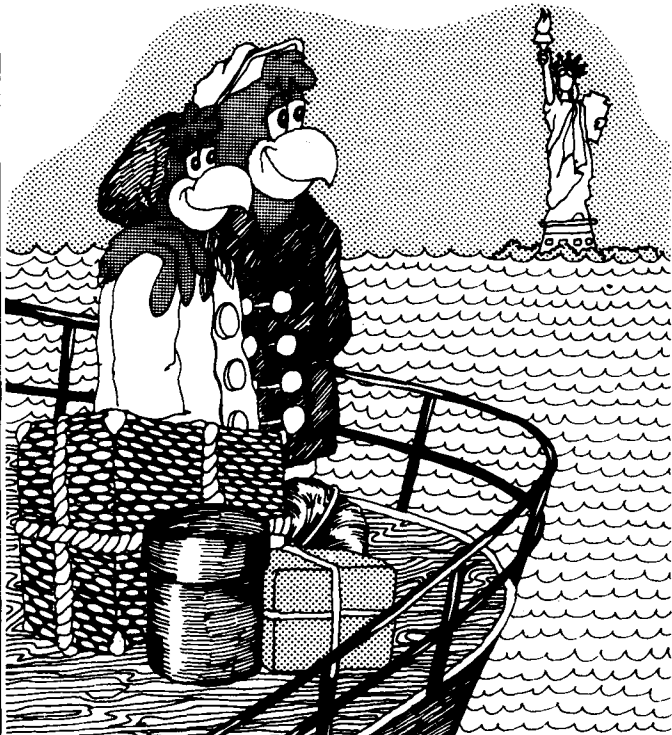
Ruth Hanesian
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Include in your letter number of birds you have, number of years you have bred Rothchilds Mynah (if any) and any other information you can share.

Please also indicate if you are interested in having AFA participate in ISIS or prefer to have the information remain with AFA. We will honor any request to keep names and addresses confidential and will not release any information without the specific permission of the individual.

Do you have a good record keeping system for your breeding population of any species? Send that along also. Standardizing record keeping will help to alleviate many of the problems we all encounter. The best systems will be discussed in a future issue of the Watchbird.■

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