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by Mark Crossley



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Three years ago I started control breeding cockatiels in individual cages. Using five specially selected breeding pairs I experienced results beyond my wildest expectations. An average of five babies per clutch were successfully hatched and reared to maturity by each pair. These averages were maintained for three clutches per year for two years.

Then, I began hearing information and advice . . . birds needed more flying space . . . they needed this to build up their bodies. I read what I could find on the subject, listened to all kinds of advice and finally I was convinced that colony breeding was the way to go and that I should try it.

I had built a nice, sturdy, roomy two-door aviary 4 feet wide, 8 feet high, and 9 feet long. The birds loved these new quarters also so I decided everything was just great. Everything was fine until I started my breeding season in these new surroundings. As the nest boxes went up, so did my problems. The birds fussed over the nest boxes and among themselves. They fought and bit each other and some of them were injured. This sort of feuding and bickering resulted in (1) one bird having a disfigured foot, (2) eggs being abandoned, (3) eggs being broken, (4) babies being plucked, (5) babies being abandoned. Out of eight breeding pairs only thirteen babies were raised during the entire season. I will never impose such an injustice upon my birds again.

With this new experience under my belt I went all-out for the individual cage breeding system for my birds. I enclosed

my carport and converted it into a 10' x 20' bird room. Not the largest room but at least a beginning. Now I have in this room eleven all wire 3' x 3' x 4' cages each housing one pair of breeders. Each cage rests on three nails protruding from the sides of a wooden frame, thirty-six inches above the floor and with a wooden "catch-all" drawer underneath. Each cage has its own nest box attached. A real neat, simple, clean-cut set up. The room is insulated, has light ash paneling walls and ceiling. There are white "black out" drapes on the windows, carpeting on the floors, and most important . . . Vita Lites for healthful illumination. Truly a most enticing atmosphere for breeding . . . even for we humans.

Now my birds are chirping, setting, and looking very healthy and content. They look good enough to show and indeed several of them have been on the show bench. The ultimate advantage is the simple, easy upkeep. I feel very proud as I survey these lovely homes I've provided for my birds. I feel that if you expect your birds to perform for you, then you must give them the very best you can.

Naturally, when the breeding season is over they will still enjoy their extended flying and frolicing in the aviary. This will strengthen and condition their bodies.

I wish to acknowledge and thank Mr. & Mrs. Dave Marten of Plantation for their friendship and for their guidance and help in planning and building my new bird room. And to all bird lovers my best wishes for success in all of your bird-breeding endeavors.