

# A.F.A. Visits A Member's Aviaries

by Jerry Jennings

## BERNARD ROER'S BIRD FARM

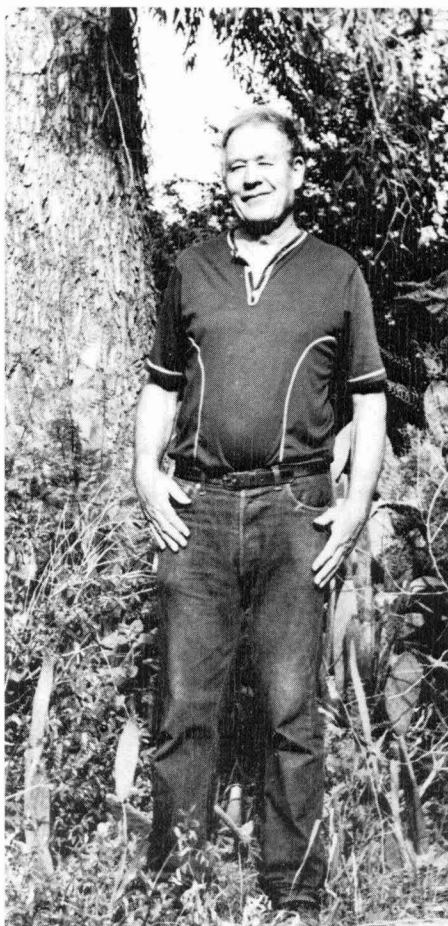
To many longtime aviculturists, Bernard Roer needs no introduction. The diversity and size of his collection, coupled with his marvelous breeding success has earned him an international reputation of excellence. Bernard's collection is unquestionably the most comprehensive of any in private hands in North America and would rival any zoo, surpassing most in breeding accomplishment.

Featuring Psittacines, Finches, Softbills, Doves, Pheasants, Waterfowl, Curra-sows, Spurfowl, and Cranes, the history of the collection extends back to 1926, when Bernard was ten years old.

Born in western Kansas, Bernard's family brought him to Arizona at the age of one. The Roers settled in Phoenix, Arizona, then a small western town, where they took up farming. Bernard grew up in the great outdoors with a special feeling for the soil and the pastoral lifestyle. He attended St. Mary's Catholic Elementary and High School.

As a young lad, Bernard assisted his folks with chores after school. His inter-

Photos by Jerry Jennings



Bernard Roer

est and eagerness earned him the responsibility of caring for the chickens at age ten. That same year he acquired his first exotic — a Peacock. Later came some pigeons, which he bred; thus was planted that avicultural seed, which would grow so well in the years to come.

In 1941 Bernard acquired three acres in what was then the country on 27th Avenue, west of Phoenix. His original plan called for the establishment of a commercial poultry ranch, which he hoped to vary with a few ducks and Guinea Fowl. At that time he was also dabbling with Budgies. Soon he came to the realization that chickens were not as economically attractive as Budgies, nor as much fun.

Like so many aviculturists, Bernard decided his avocation would become his vocation. Beginning with his Budgies, he expanded breeding operations into Doves, his once and favorite birds. The first were a pair of Greenwings obtained from J.W. Steinbeck in 1935. Since Mr. Steinbeck resided in Concord, California, near San Francisco, the birds had to be shipped. In those days shipping was done by rail and the freight cost Bernard a mere \$1.50.

The Roer collection of Doves today boasts of Nicobar, Zebra, Ruddy Ground,

Inca, Peruvian, Ground, Mourning, Bar-tailed Cuckoo, Crested, Tambourine, Violet, Mountain Witch, Luzon Bleeding Heart, Cape, Diamond, Dwarf Turtle, African Turtle, Senegal, Band-tailed Pigeons, and Gourra Crowned Pigeons.

Doves, of course, do not occupy all of Bernard's interest. His first fancy with Budgies has expanded into many other Psittacine species. His favorites are the Amazons, of which he has many varieties including the rare Vinaceous and Caiman Island species, the former being on the endangered species list.

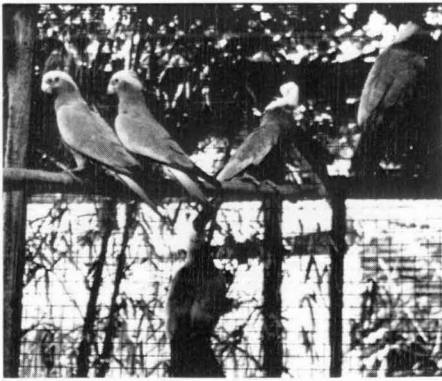
Numerous representatives of the Cockatoos and Macaws are also in abundance at the Roer Bird Farm. These include the Leadbeater, Rose-breasted, Sulphur Crested, Citron Crested Cockatoos; Scarlet, Blue & Gold, and Military Macaws — all of which have been bred at various times over the years. Many of the young have been hand fed with a formula Bernard obtained from K.C. Lint, Curator Emeritus of the San Diego Zoo (see Watchbird, Oct. 76 for formula).



African Crowned Cranes

Other Psittacine birds include Grand Eclectus, Scarlet-chested Parrakeets, Red Rumps, Many Color Parrakeet, several Rosellas, Lovebirds, and Crimson Wing Parrakeets, which Bernard colony breeds!

The Softbill collection features several species of Jay and Starlings. The latter



*Rose Breasted Cockatoos*

category includes the lovely Amethyst, Superb, and Glossy.

The gamebird department is too numerous in its variety to list. There are many species of ducks, geese, swans, currasows, spurfowl, and quail. Some of these are roaming free and may be seen perched in the trees overhead.

Particularly striking are the majestic African Crowned Cranes and Demoiselle Cranes. These are housed in spacious, well landscaped enclosures outfitted with a pond in which the birds may wade.

Bernard attributes his breeding success to the diet he feeds. It would be impossible to enumerate the diets of each grouping of birds, however, Bernard feeds large quantities of vegetables to all of them. Food is not left in front of the birds all day. Rather it is provided in the morning, and again in the evening. For the Psittacines, the vegetables are given early in the day, then seed in the late afternoon. The Psittacines also receive fruit and greens, such as chard or spinach. The gamebirds are given a mixture of seed, vegetables, dogfood, and gamebird crumbles or a laying mash in quantities that can be consumed in a half hour.

Bernard is also a family man, having raised nine children. His 13-year old daughter, Cathy, assists him in caring for the birds and may someday carry on the fine tradition at the Roer Bird Farm.

Bernard is a member of the Avicultural Society of America, the Avicultural Society of England, American Pheasant and Waterfowl Society, American Gamebird Breeders Co-operative Federation, the Arizona Avicultural Society, and the AFA.

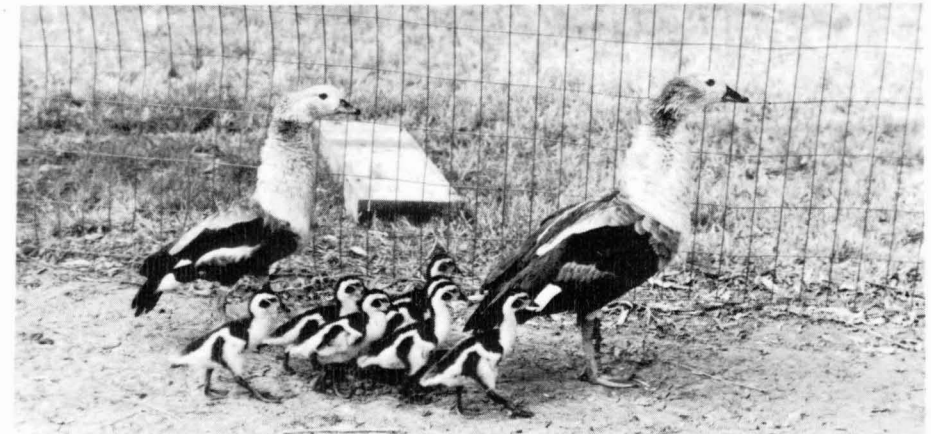
The Roer Bird Farm is an impressive stop on the circuit of Aviary tours, even for the most seasoned enthusiasts. Seldom is found a collection of such enormity anywhere. AFA members attending the 3rd Annual Convention in Phoenix, September 16-18, 1977, will be treated to a comprehensive tour of the Roer collection — an event not to be missed.



*Baby Cockatoos*



*Demoiselle Cranes*



*Orinoco Geese with young*



*Male Peacock*