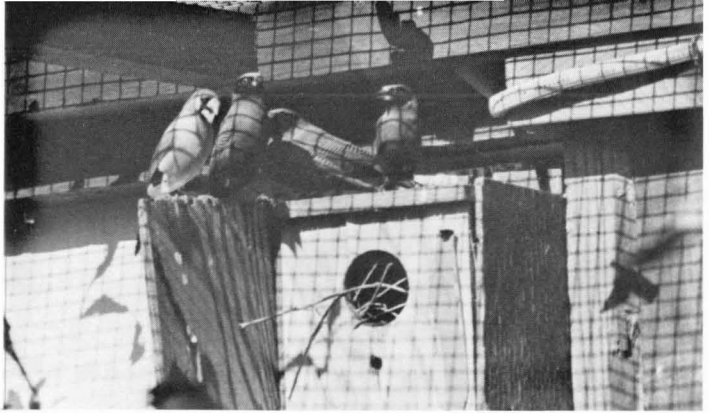


DON'T TAKE DOWN THOSE NEST BOXES!

by Jerry Jennings



It is a frequent practice among finch breeders to remove nesting facilities from the aviary during the off-season. This is done in an effort to prevent over-breeding and exhaustion of the birds. Such action bespeaks the breeder's lack of knowledge of the natural behavior of finches. Rather than beneficial, this practice is detrimental to the health and welfare of these small passerines.

Finches characteristically have a high body temperature and metabolic rate, which makes them more sensitive to change in climatic conditions and food supply than are larger birds. Many species of finches have adapted through the use of roosting nests.

Roosting nests may be especially built for the purpose of roosting. They differ from a breeding nest in that they are not as elaborate and are not lined with plant wool, animal fur, etc. Roosting nests may

also be old breeding nests, or the abandoned nests of other birds taken over for this purpose. Roosting nests may be occupied by a mated pair, siblings from a recent breeding nest, or unrelated individuals of a highly social species.

The behavior of finches in captivity closely parallels that in the wild. Therefore, it is necessary to meet the birds' needs to the extent that they can behave naturally. In that vein, nest boxes, baskets, etc. should remain in place the year around.

If all nesting facilities are removed from the aviary during the non-breeding season, several things can transpire. First, the birds will be unduly stressed, because they are restrained from behaving naturally. Second, they may be unnecessarily exposed to breezes, weather, etc. Third, they are likely to perish as a

result. Perhaps this is a partial explanation for deaths heretofore attributed to so-called "night frights", or other unknown reasons.

Ah, but what about over-breeding? Rest assured that birds do know when to stop. Finches that breed throughout the year in captivity are the same species that breed throughout the year in the wild. They are only behaving naturally. Examples of such year round breeders are the Cordon Blue, Violet-eared Waxbill, Melba Finch, Shaftail Grassfinch, and Zebras. Their breeding cycle is geared to rainfall as well as photoperiod. They commonly have 3-6 nests per year in wet years, and are known not to breed at all during periods of drought.

Birds that are allowed to behave naturally are healthier birds. If that is what we want, let's leave the nests up.

Valentine's New 130 page CATALOG

Featuring a New Line of Equipment for the raising of Birds and Animals (Domestic and Wild) such as

- MINK • CHINCHILLAS • RABBITS • FOX • DEER • DOGS
- LABORATORY ANIMALS • BIRDS • PHEASANTS • QUAIL
- FANCY FOWL AND POULTRY.

SEND \$3.00 (to cover cost of handling and mailing). Price of catalog will be credited to first purchase of \$25.00 or more.

Please send _____ copies of VALENTINE'S CATALOG

Enclosed \$ _____ to cover cost.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____



Valentine
EQUIPMENT COMPANY

9706 SO. INDUSTRIAL DRIVE
BRIDGEVIEW, ILL. 60455
PHONE (312) 599-1101